

BALTIMORE REGIONAL WATER GOVERNANCE TASK FORCE
MEETING #2 – GOVERNANCE MODELS
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2023
6:00 – 9:00 P.M.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

List of Follow-ups from Meeting 2 for Future Meetings

1. Clarity on whether the existing cost sharing model/formula for O&M costs is adequate,
2. Details on how bulk rates for the County are set and revised periodically under the existing 1972 water and 1974 sewer agreements specifically,
3. Cost sharing arrangements with the City’s wholesale customers for capital improvements,
4. Explain rate setting from the wholesale and retail perspective,
5. Graphically explain the \$/ccf rate that a County resident pays and the \$/ccf rate that a City resident pays,
6. For the utilities studied, provide a chart or table showing what model each utility follows,
7. Note down historical experiences of individual or separate jurisdictions moving to a special district/authority model, and
8. Provide additional information on stormwater management practices for the utilities that the Consultant is already studying.

No.	Public Comment	Action Requested	Taskforce Response
1.	<p>Name: Andrew Hinz</p> <p>Comment: Thank you for letting me comment. I would like to bring up the issue of sewage back-ups. With the current consent decree back in about 2018, EPA and MDE directed the City to address sewage back-ups happening due to City infrastructure. The City attempted to do that with a reimbursement program that was inequitable and did not work and has decided to make a pilot program to reimburse people on the spot, permanent. However, the City has (for reasons unfathomable to me as a resident and tax payer) decided to limit the on-the-spot remediation to instances that occur only due to wet weather. This affects thousands of people and 80 percent of those affected have their sewage back-ups in dry weather which the City refuses to accept even though the MDE and EPA are telling the City that they are required to do this. As a resident and taxpayer, this makes no sense. My fundamental comment is that whatever governance model is selected please don't allow this type of abusive behavior. I don't understand if it is someone at the Department level trying to avoid costs or is it because of the spreadsheet that you were talking about or why anyone would come to the conclusion that this is the way to treat customers. A model that addresses these issues would be the right one. If we want people to move into the City and not leave, we need to address these issues and select a human/citizen centered governance model.</p>	<p>Taskforce should select a governance model that solves this issue.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment.</p> <p>Baltimore City DPW representatives are available to address questions or immediate concerns about current operations.</p> <p>This comment will be recorded and kept in mind for any future implementation and policy work around the new model.</p>

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2.	<p>Name: Jomar Lloyd - Organizer with Food and Water Watch</p> <p>Comment: While we have been assured that the water system will not be privatized, there is the matter of what will happen after the recommendations are made. We are urging the taskforce and consultant to conduct necessary racial and economic and equity analysis to ensure the recommended model will not harm the City's vulnerable and underserved communities. A legal analysis is also needed to ensure that water affordability programs can continue under the new governance model. No model should supersede the City's autonomy over its water. Protections under existing laws should be able to continue under the new model. The recommendation should not lead to circumstances and laws where homes were sealed for not paying their water bills.</p>	<p>Task force should conduct the necessary legal, economic, racial, and equity analysis before making its recommendation.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment.</p> <p>This comment will be recorded and kept in mind for any future implementation and policy work around the new model.</p>
3.	<p>Name: Councilwoman Ramos</p> <p>Comment: Good evening everyone, thank you Mr. Chair for giving me a couple of minutes. I really do appreciate it. As Mr. Chair said, my name is Odette Ramos, I represent the 14th district in Baltimore City. I know that the chair read our resolution that we passed on Monday so I'm not going to reread it. I'm just going to emphasize the points that the council has been very clear that this panel should consider. Obviously, stormwater is extremely important. The equity piece is the highest priority because we represent a majority black and increasingly diverse city that has increasingly borne the brunt and the burden of the system in terms of paying for the system and higher water rates for a long time. So that's actually an opportunity that I have always thought would be important as we think about looking at a regional system in terms of the relationship between the County and the City. And also whatever format you all are thinking about--I don't know what C, D, and E is but I will find out--and making sure that Baltimore City has majority votes on the board. And last, we as county and city governments, particularly the elected officials, I'm grateful my colleagues, our senator and our delegate are here, but we really need to be involved. Because we would have to approve anything that you all come up with, so we will continue to have our oversight hearings and invite you to come to our oversight hearings, but we definitely need to be part of this process. I actually see this as</p>	<p>Taskforce should consider the points made in the resolution specifically, addressing stormwater management, equity considerations, and the City's representation on the Board of the chosen governance model.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment.</p> <p>The Taskforce subsequently took a vote to address stormwater management practices as part of the information gathering specific to the governance models that the task force voted on for further study.</p>

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	an opportunity for Baltimore, so we want to make sure that we're getting the best opportunity for our city. So thank you for the opportunity to speak. I'll be trying to come to the other meetings. I apologize I wasn't here earlier, but I'm grateful you are spending so much time on this as well. Thank you so much, thank you Mr. Chair.		