

Legislation Text

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Authorizing the Committee on Transportation and Public Utilities to hold a public hearing to examine the impact, circumstances, and possible solutions to problems regarding the Philadelphia Water Department's implementation of new stormwater run-off fees on independent business owners.

WHEREAS, In an urban, developed environment, like Philadelphia, stormwater runs off from impervious surfaces such as concrete, asphalt, and buildings; and

WHEREAS, Storm drains on the street and other surfaces allow the stormwater which is not absorbed into the ground to enter into the sewer system that the Philadelphia Water Department constructs and maintains; and

WHEREAS, As the City's stormwater system includes large segments where sewer and stormwater flows are combined causing effluent overflow during significant storms; and

WHEREAS, The Philadelphia Water Department reached an agreement with the United States Environmental Protection Agency to meet environmental standards by increasing stormwater retention by such means as porous ground covers, retention basins, etc., rather than incur the \$2 Billion expense of constructing an entirely separate stormwater system; and

WHEREAS, Stormwater management costs had been recovered by the Philadelphia Water Department charging customers on the basis of the size of their water meter, even though water usage was unrelated to stormwater run-off; and

WHEREAS, Consonant with the new stormwater management approach, the PWD has changed its stormwater cost recovery system so that nonresidential customers pay on the basis of stormwater run-off using an assessment of property footprint mitigated by the presence of permeable surfaces, water retention capacity, etc.; and

WHEREAS, This new stormwater run-off fee has seriously impacted independent business owners who have experienced significant increases in stormwater run-off charges, some in excess of 500%; even though scaled-in over 4 years; and

WHEREAS, These excessive charges will have a huge negative affect upon the ability of many Independent Business owners to continue to conduct business in Philadelphia, may lead to decreased revenues, job loss, and further reduction to the tax base due to businesses leaving for more business-friendly environments; and

WHEREAS, Independent business owners don't feel that they received enough notice of these changes, don't feel that they've been given good explanations of why these changes have been made, don't feel that enough attention has been given to mitigating the impact of such large increases in costs, don't feel that their voices have been heard--and do feel angry and that they "aren't going to take it anymore."

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That it authorizes a public hearing to examine the impact, circumstances, and possible solutions to problems regarding

the Philadelphia Water Department's implementation of stormwater run-off fees on independent business owners.