

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Stephanie Rawlings-Blake, President

# BALTIMORE

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## **COUNCIL PRESIDENT INTRODUCES LEGISLATIVE PACKAGE TO HELP BALTIMORE SMALL BUSINESSES DURING ECONOMIC CRISIS**

**Measures Focus on Creating Opportunities for Baltimore's Small Businesses, 'Green Collar' Job  
Creation and Ensuring Prompt Payment for Businesses Working with the City.**

BALTIMORE- Baltimore City Council President Stephanie Rawlings-Blake introduced a series of legislative measures to assist local small businesses in light of the current national economic crisis. The package of legislation seeks to create new opportunities for small businesses in city contracts, develop a citywide plan to create 'green collar' jobs in Baltimore and expedite city payments to small businesses for rendered services.

"Small businesses provide up to 80% of the total number of jobs in America's inner cities," Rawlings-Blake said. "The more we do to help small businesses, the more we can help our citizens obtain and retain employment during these difficult economic times."

### **Creating New Opportunities for Baltimore Small Businesses**

The primary legislation creates the 'Baltimore Small Business Opportunity Program' and requires major city agencies to award at least 10% of the combined dollar value of contracts for goods, services, or construction to certified small businesses located in Baltimore City. "With our economy in turmoil and with jobs at risk, now is the time to do what we can to create more opportunities for small businesses in Baltimore City," Rawlings-Blake said.

The legislation seeks to buttress small emerging businesses in Baltimore and foster greater competition for city contracts. The legislation also mandates that major procurement agencies submit reports on the effectiveness of the program to the Board of Estimates.

### **Establishing Baltimore's 'Green Collar' Jobs Coalition**

Experts on the economy and globalization believe that Energy Technology (ET) related industries will be the next great industrial revolution. What is Baltimore doing to prepare to be a leader in this new "Green" economy? To help answer this question, the Council President is proposing to create a Baltimore City Green Collar Jobs Creation Coalition. The coalition, made-up of city, business and labor leaders, is charged with developing a plan to help create green collar jobs in Baltimore City.

"Green jobs are the future of our national economy and we need to make sure that Baltimore is prepared to take part in this new energy revolution," Rawlings-Blake continued.

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## **Ensuring Prompt Payment for Small Businesses working with the City**

Finally, the Council President introduced a resolution calling for an investigative hearing to review CitiBuy, Baltimore's Government Purchasing system. The resolution calls on City agencies to develop a comprehensive plan to revise current policies to ensure prompt payment to small and minority businesses and 2nd tier sub-contractors for services rendered. Many small and minority businesses perceive the lapse in time between services rendered and compensation to be a barrier that discourages participation in government procurement. Often, these businesses do not have the capital to endure prolonged periods without receiving revenue for delivered goods and services.

"Because small businesses do not have access to large capital reserves like big businesses, late payments can have a greater impact" Rawlings-Blake said. "By making CitiBuy more efficient and responsive, we can encourage growth and potentially create new job opportunities for small companies doing business with the City."

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