



Statement of Opposition

September 6, 2023

**SB-23-12622 - Extension of Revenue Generating Contract -
Contract Number B50003190 – Residential Water Sewer Service Line Protection Program**

OPPOSE

The SOS Fund, an independent 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, addresses the systemic housing instability experienced by red-lined and disinvested communities in Baltimore City. This instability has resulted in generations of residents losing their homes, thus denying them the psycho-social benefits of stable neighborhoods and wealth-building capacity of homeownership. **The SOS Fund does not support this contract extension.**

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the renewal of the HomeServe contract for the provision of services within our city. While HomeServe may have initially appeared to be a promising partner, recent experiences have cast significant doubt on the quality and fairness of their services. Two particular incidents serve as glaring examples of their inadequacy and raise serious concerns about their reliability and commitment to the residents of Baltimore.

First, in July/August 2022, I received an exorbitant water bill for 703 N Fremont Ave, which is used solely as an office and community space. The bill claimed that over 60,000 gallons of water were consumed within a mere three weeks. Such a staggering volume of water usage, in a property without any visible signs of leakage either inside or outside, is deeply perplexing. To make matters worse, neither of the two plumbers dispatched by HomeServe were able to identify any leaks, and the high water usage inexplicably ceased after three weeks. This bizarre turn of events not only left me without the appropriate bill adjustment but also raises serious doubts about the competence of HomeServe's plumbers and the accuracy of the Department of Public Works' metering and billing practices.

Secondly, HomeServe's refusal to fully cover the cost of a boiler repair for a fellow city resident is another distressing example of their questionable practices. Despite holding a whole home protection policy with HomeServe, this resident was informed that only \$860 of the approximately \$1,500 repair cost would be covered, with the requirement that they use HomeServe's contractors. To bridge the considerable financial gap, the resident sought assistance from the SOS Fund. This refusal to fulfill their

obligations to a city resident, combined with an insistence on dictating contractor choice, is an affront to the principles of fair and just service provision.

These troubling incidents cast a shadow over HomeServe's ability to fulfill its contractual obligations to the residents of Baltimore. It is crucial that the Baltimore Board of Estimates thoroughly reevaluates its decision to renew the HomeServe contract in light of these concerns. Our residents deserve reliable, transparent, and fair service providers who uphold the highest standards of quality and integrity.

For the above reasons,

The SOS Fund urges a review of resident experience, satisfaction and service efficacy. The contract should not be renewed without certainty that quality of the services being marketed using the city seal are proficient or better.

I plan to deliver this testimony in person as well.

Please contact Nneka Nnamdi, Executive Director, with any questions.

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