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**Council Passes Thomas Bill to Restrict Payments of DPR Funds to DCHA and Require Council Notification of all DPR Transactions of \$75,000 or More**

**Washington DC**—Ward 5 Councilmember Harry “Tommy” Thomas, Jr., Chair of the Council’s Committee on Libraries, Parks and Recreation, today introduced emergency legislation to restrict payments of the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) funds to the District of Columbia Housing Authority (DCHA) and require Council notification of all DPR transactions of \$75,000 or more. The Council passed the bill by a vote of 10 to 3.

Specifically, the “Department of Parks and Recreation Budget Transparency Emergency Act of 2009” prohibits the Office of Chief Financial Officer for a 90 day period from transferring, issuing, or disbursing DPR funds to DCHA or any DCHA subsidiary, agent, instrumentality or board. The legislation also requires, in addition to any other reporting requirements, that the Office of Chief Financial Officer send written notification to the Council at least five business days prior to any expenditure, contract, transfer, memorandum of understanding, memorandum of agreement, or any other transaction or agreement, excluding agency personnel salaries, in the amount of \$75,000 or greater by the Department of Parks and Recreation. The bill stipulates that the written notification must include the dollar amount of the expenditure, its purpose, the vendor, and the date of the transaction.

Councilmember Thomas introduced the legislation after discovering that DPR capital improvement funds for nearly two dozen park and recreation projects—totaling more than \$170 million—had been transferred via memorandums of understanding from the agency to DCHA, through the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development. The transfer of District funds to an agency outside the purview of the Office of Chief Financial Officer—such as DCHA—creates the potential for contract awards that do not comply with municipal procurement competition and regulations.

“I am determined to get to the bottom of this alleged scheme and ensure we have an open and transparent process,” stated Councilmember Thomas. “Restricting the movement of DPR funds to DCHA and requiring Council notification of transaction valued at \$75,000 or more is a step in the right direction, and a necessary one at this time,” said Thomas.

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