

**2021-2022 Performance Oversight Hearing for the Department of General Services
March 2, 2022**

Testimony submitted by Marcia Bernbaum, DC Public Restrooms

Committee on Government Operations and Facilities Chair Robert White, Committee members, Department of General Services Director Keith Anderson,

My name is Marcia Bernbaum. I have testified at prior DGS Performance Oversight and Budget Hearings in my capacity as Mentor & Advisor to the People for Fairness Coalition (PFFC) Downtown DC Public Restroom Initiative. Last Fall we decided to become an independent entity, DC Public Restrooms. Our objective, as DC residents, is to follow the Implementation of [Law 22-280](#), Public Restroom Facilities and Installation Act of 2018, offering our assistance as needed in ensuring the successful implementation of the two restroom pilots provided for under this Law.

I am here today to indicate how pleased I am with progress made in preparing for the implementation of the Standalone Public Restroom Pilot, which is under the purview of the Department of General Services (DGS). This pilot calls for purchasing, installing, and maintaining two standalone public restrooms open 24/7 in needed areas of DC; evaluating the experience; and if successful progressively adding two new standalone public restrooms per year over a four year period.

Since Law 22-280 went into effect on October 1, 2019, two important steps have been taken to prepare for the implementation of this pilot:

On [April 23, 2021](#), the Mayor sent a *“Report on the Sites with Frequent Incidents of Public Defecation and Urination”* to the DC Council. DGS was responsible for collecting the information and preparing this well written and comprehensive report.

On [June 17, 2021](#), an interagency Working Group named by the Mayor, and including a representative from DGS, held its first meeting. The Working Group is charged with collecting the necessary information for and sending a report to the Mayor recommending the standalone public restroom model to be selected and two locations for its installation.

It is our understanding, after several months of deliberation that the Working Group submitted its report to the Mayor sometime last November or December and that the report is in its final stages of review.

We were pleased to be asked to deliver a presentation to the Working Group in August where we shared what we have learned from our research both on standalone restroom models and criteria for selecting locations for the pilot.

We look forward to the report's release for public review.

We were recently advised that, prior to today's hearing, this Committee sent a query to DGS asking whether DGS has prepared any estimates for the cost of the two standalone restrooms.

It is our understanding that DGS has sent its response indicating that *"pricing for installation and ongoing maintenance will be updated after the Public Restroom Working Group's report is released and site locations are vetted through the legislatively mandated public comment period"*.

Our estimate, which we will go into in more detail at the March 30 DGS FY 2023 Budget Hearing, is that there is a shortfall of approximately \$300,000 for this pilot which will need to be taken either from DGS's proposed FY 2023 budget or from another component of DGS's budget.

In closing, I would like to express our appreciation to: DGS Director Anderson for taking the lead in implementing this pilot; to Council Member Nadeau for her leadership in introducing the Bill that became Law 22-280; to you and Council Member Nadeau and for finding funds in the FY 2020 budget to finance both pilots; and to Olivia Warren, who has been assigned by DGS as a member of the Working Group, for keeping us apprised of progress in implementing this pilot.

I would also like, on behalf of DC Public Restrooms, to offer our assistance in monitoring the implementation of this pilot.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify today.