

**Testimony of Leonard Greenberger, Partner, Potomac Communications Group
At the January 10, 2018, Hearing on Bill 22-223
Before the Committee on Transportation and Environment**

Council Member Chech, other members of the committee, and others, my name is Leonard Greenberger and I appear before you today to speak in favor of Bill 22-0223. In doing so I'm wearing many hats: As a long-time D.C. resident who is restroom challenged, as the father of three children, including my perfect, beautiful 11-week-old daughter, as a runner, and as a partner of a professional services firm that's operated in D.C. since 1981.

Each one of those hats makes 24/7 access to safe, clean, accessible restrooms important to me. As a runner, I depend on public restrooms – especially when I'm training for a long race. When my wife was pregnant, she needed a bathroom frequently. My newborn daughter will eventually be out of diapers, and I'm sure most of you have experienced how quickly a young child can go from being fine to writhing on the floor complaining that they need a bathroom NOW or they're going to explode. With my two older children, this often happened just as our plane was about to take off.

But I want to focus my testimony today on two more specific issues: First the importance of this bill to me as a business owner; and second, to share with you two viable options for stand-alone public restrooms.

Now my business is not a retail establishment, so we don't have to clean up anything that someone may have left behind when they couldn't get to a restroom in time. But I can tell you if you ever need a reminder that it's Monday, simply walk down the alley between 20th and 19th and L and M streets and the odor will make it clear. We have clients who often drive or, in good weather, walk through that alley. It can be embarrassing.

And now onto the two options...

Focusing on the two models for stand-alone public restrooms

Marcia Bernbaum, in an earlier testimony, pointed out how the guidelines for selecting stand-alone restroom sites as well as criteria for selecting models included in Bill 22-0223, have been taken from lessons learned/best practices in other cities in the US that have recently successfully installed and maintained clean, safe, available public restrooms.

The PFFC Downtown DC Public Restroom Initiative, of which I am a proud member, provides information on its website (www.pffcdc.org/what-we-do/public-restrooms) on three options. Assuming Bill 22-0223 is passed, it is the responsibility of the Working Group to carefully examine both options for stand-alone public restroom following the guidelines that are based on lessons learned/best practices from elsewhere.

Based on our extensive research, we know quite a lot about the Portland Loo. For example, the designers are constantly looking for improvements in design and performance. We have less information on the Automated Public Toilet (APT). We compare them below based on a number of criteria. There are nine of them, but I will move through them quickly and then be happy to answer questions you may have:

1. Space required for installation:

- Both are the size of a parking place and thus relatively easy to find locations to install them.

2. Access to water, sewer, electrical connections:

- Both require close access to water and sewer facilities as well as in some cases an electrical connection. The farther way water and sewer hooks up are the more expensive it will be to install them.
- The Portland Loo has an option, where appropriate, for installing solar panels so as not to require an electrical connection

3. Located in an open area with a lot of pedestrian traffic:

- Portland Loo: this is a fundamental criterion for the Portland Loo;
- APTs: we don't know whether this is the case (although from some of our observations we believe this isn't always taken into account).

4. Provisions for community input, including the police, other:

- Portland Loo: (1) requires prior consultation/buy in from community (ANCs, BIDs, citizens association, businesses in the vicinity) so that once installed the community will keep an eye out on what is happening at/near the Loo; (2) arrangements are usually made with the local police for them to drive by especially at night so that they can see if there is anything unusual going on.
- APT: we are not aware of any provisions

5. Maintenance:

- Portland Loo is maintained manually by someone who comes 2 – 5 times a day (depending on usage) to provide a comprehensive interior cleaning including collecting trash and other items on the floor;

- APT is cleaned after each use internally with a water spray (in some cases just to/around the toilet area, in other cases the whole interior). If there is trash/fecal matter or other on the floor it won't address it.

6. Safety:

- Portland Loo: has many safety features built in to the design: (1) louvres along the bottom so that you can see how many people are inside (and if necessary ask a policeman to come to ask inhabitants to leave); (2) due to open design you can easily hear conversations inside; (3) lighting at night both inside and around the outside (4) structure should be in the public eye to foster self-policing; (5) locate near busy pedestrian area;
- APTs: once someone (or more) goes in it is entirely closed in many cases up to 20 minutes; you can't either see or hear what is happening inside, or know how many people are in there.

7. Problems with illicit use:

- Portland Loo: due to safety features, along with community policing and periodic drive by on part of police, no known use for prostitution in cities where operational.
- ADT: depends on location and siting. In some places works well; in others, multiple programs with illicit use.

8. Usage:

- Portland Loo: designed to maximize usage – in heavily trafficked areas each Loo receives up to 200-300 visits/day: (1) no sink inside, water station available outside to wash hands/fill water bottles (most include sanitized handiwipes inside); (2) because of the slats above and below it is open to the elements; one therefore isn't going to want to spend much time inside.
- APT: doesn't optimize usage since people can stay up to 20 minutes, followed by an interior water cleaning after each use

9. Economical:

- Portland Loo: More economical (1) costs less to purchase and install (\$94,000) and maintain (\$12-20,000/year including repairs): (2) less use of water since uses water efficient toilet.
- APT: More expensive (1) \$250,000 to \$1,000,000 to purchase and install and \$100,000 to \$150,000/year to maintain; (2) much higher use of water due to cleaning with water after each use.

That concludes my prepared remarks. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you to discuss this important issue. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

ATTACHMENT TO TESTIMONY: LEONARD GREENBERGER

Public Restroom Options for Washington DC

PORTLAND LOO



Designed to avoid being used for illicit activities and for easy maintenance.

Installed and successfully maintained In 12 cities in US and Canada; number of cities in US growing.

Attractive

Open 24/7

Clean

Safe

\$94,000 purchase/transport.

\$32,000 - \$38,000 installation if close to water/sewer lines

\$12,000 - \$ 20,000/yr. maintenance

AUTOMATED PUBLIC TOILET



Several models: Found in New York City, San Francisco, many cities in Europe & Asia

Attractive

Open 24/7

Generally clean, issues with cleanliness in some locations

Safety issues in some locations

\$250,000 - \$1,000,000 purchase

\$25,000 - \$35,000 installation if close to water/sewer lines

\$100,000 - \$150,000/yr. maintenance

CITY OF LONDON COMMUNITY TOILET SCHEME



Government provides a financial incentive (600 Euro/year) to private businesses to make their toilets available to public

Businesses display special stickers in their windows

Signs indicate where they are located

75 participating businesses in downtown London borough.

In use in other cities in England, Germany, and throughout Australia