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BGR Examines Charter Amendment on S&WB Governance

Today BGR releases a [report](#) on a proposed City of New Orleans charter amendment to change the composition of the Sewerage & Water Board's board of directors. On December 8, 2018, New Orleans voters will consider removing one citizen member and adding a City Council representative to the board, who may be either the chair of the City Council's public works committee, a committee member appointed by the chair, or a civil engineer appointed by the chair.

BGR Position:

AGAINST. Despite the proposition's intentions of making the S&WB more effective and accountable to citizens, its risks outweigh its potential benefits. Direct participation on the board by a council member would create a conflict of interest with the council's regulatory oversight role and potentially increase political decision making at the board level. While this risk would be reduced by the appointment of an engineer to fill the new seat, there is no guarantee this would occur. As an alternative to the amendment, BGR urges policy makers to continue to strengthen the City Council's regulatory oversight over the S&WB. Stronger council regulation of the S&WB would produce the same benefits – better oversight, communication and accountability – that motivated the proposed charter amendment.

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BGR is a private, nonprofit, independent research organization. Since its founding in 1932, it has been dedicated to informed public policy-making and the effective use of public resources in the Greater New Orleans area. For more information, call 525-4152 or visit BGR's website, www.bgr.org.