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City Not for Sale: Baltimore Voters Push Back on Privatization

- **Measure to keep water works public passing by wide margin**
- **Baltimore would be the biggest U.S. city to take that step**

Baltimore's water works won't be sold off.

Voters in Maryland's largest city on Tuesday by a vote of 77 percent supported a ballot measure that bars it from privatizing the government-owned water and sewer system, with votes from all but six precincts reporting, according to preliminary returns.

The results promise to make Baltimore the biggest American municipality to ensure that its system remains in public hands, bucking a movement by companies including America Water Works Co. to run such utilities. Some cities, including Allentown, Pennsylvania, have relinquished control of utilities in order to raise needed cash, and Jacksonville, Florida, has weighed whether to privatize its electric and water system.

The election in the 612,000-resident city came as Democrats won the U.S. House of Representatives from Republicans. President Donald Trump unsuccessfully pushed for a broad expansion of private investment in America's infrastructure, seeing it as a way to reduce the federal cost of improving roads, bridges and other public works. To advance any infrastructure plans, he'll now have to work with a party less welcoming to privatization.

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