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**SB 226**

February 19, 2020

**TO:** Members of the Senate Finance Committee  
**FROM:** Nicholas Blendy, Deputy Director of Government Relations  
**RE:** Senate Bill 226 -  
**POSITION: SUPPORT**

Chair Kelley, Vice Chair Feldman, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** Senate Bill (SB) 226.

SB 226 authorizes any outdoor sign to be erected or maintained along an expressway, by removing the limitation allowing only for "on premise" outdoor sign. However, the law still requires that such signs must follow all applicable local zoning laws or ordinances governing signage as well as any State Highway Administration (SHA) rules and regulations, including obtaining a permit from SHA.

The section of Maryland Code impacted by SB 226 is a blanket prohibition on signage along expressways unless such signs are located in "an urban area" as well as "more than 660 feet from the nearest edge" of the expressway. As the entirety of Baltimore City meets the definition of "urban area", this blanket prohibition directly impacts us. However, a subsequent section of the code below grants an exception to this prohibition, which is the heart of SB 226, wherein certain signage is permitted within the 660 foot area, if the local zoning code covers the field of outdoor advertising. The BCA notes that the Baltimore City Zoning Code does, in fact, contain such a provision governing outdoor advertising, and believes that we are best situated locally to make decisions that balance the interests of the residents and businesses of the City of Baltimore. Given that SB 226 protects the BCA's power to make local decisions over outdoor signage, we think it is an important update to the Maryland Code.

For the foregoing reasons, we respectfully request a **favorable** report on SB 226.