

SENATE BILL 764

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CF HB 877

By: **Senator Washington (Chair, Joint Committee on Ending Homelessness)**

Introduced and read first time: February 5, 2021

Assigned to: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Workgroup on Adaptive Reuse of Vacant Commercial Spaces**

3 FOR the purpose of establishing the Workgroup on Adaptive Reuse of Vacant Commercial
4 Spaces; providing for the composition, cochairs, and staffing of the Workgroup;
5 prohibiting a member of the Workgroup from receiving certain compensation, but
6 authorizing the reimbursement of certain expenses; requiring the Workgroup to
7 study and make recommendations regarding certain matters; requiring the
8 Workgroup to report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the
9 General Assembly on or before a certain date; providing for the termination of this
10 Act; and generally relating to the Workgroup on Adaptive Reuse of Vacant
11 Commercial Spaces.

12 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,

13 That:

14 (a) There is a Workgroup on Adaptive Reuse of Vacant Commercial Spaces.

15 (b) The Workgroup consists of the following members:

16 (1) two members of the Senate of Maryland, appointed by the President of
17 the Senate;

18 (2) two members of the House of Delegates, appointed by the Speaker of
19 the House;

20 (3) the Secretary of Housing and Community Development, or the
21 Secretary's designee;

22 (4) the Secretary of Planning, or the Secretary's designee;

23 (5) one member of the Maryland Association of Counties;

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 (6) one member of the Maryland Municipal League; and

2 (7) the following members, jointly appointed by the Presiding Officers of
3 the General Assembly:

4 (i) one representative of a commercial real estate developer;

5 (ii) one representative of a construction agency specializing in the
6 rehabilitation and renovation of commercial buildings;

7 (iii) one representative of an organization for owners and operators
8 of multifamily dwellings;

9 (iv) one representative of an organization for financial institutions
10 operating in the State; and

11 (v) one representative of an organization providing legal services
12 and advocacy for individuals who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

13 (c) The Presiding Officers of the General Assembly shall jointly designate the
14 cochairs of the Workgroup from the members of the General Assembly appointed by the
15 Presiding Officers.

16 (d) The Department of Housing and Community Development shall provide staff
17 for the Workgroup.

18 (e) A member of the Workgroup:

19 (1) may not receive compensation as a member of the Workgroup; but

20 (2) is entitled to reimbursement for expenses under the Standard State
21 Travel Regulations, as provided in the State budget.

22 (f) The Workgroup shall:

23 (1) study the feasibility and limitations of converting vacant or
24 underutilized commercial spaces into residential or mixed-use residential and commercial
25 spaces in order to increase the availability of affordable housing stock in the State,
26 including:

27 (i) housing exclusively for the benefit of persons receiving rental
28 assistance through a federally sponsored or State-sponsored program; and

29 (ii) mixed-use housing designed to house market rate renters and
30 renters receiving rental assistance through a federally sponsored or State-sponsored
31 program;

1 (2) identify the sources of State funds available to developers interested in
2 developing affordable housing by converting existing commercial spaces into residential or
3 mixed-use residential and commercial spaces for the purposes identified in item (1) of this
4 subsection, including any conditions on the receipt and use of these funds;

5 (3) identify and study any programs developed by other states for the
6 purpose of converting vacant commercial spaces into affordable housing; and

7 (4) make recommendations regarding legislation necessary to facilitate the
8 conversion of vacant or underutilized commercial spaces into residential or mixed-use
9 residential and commercial spaces.

10 (g) On or before November 30, 2021, the Workgroup shall report its findings and
11 recommendations to the Governor and, in accordance with § 2-1257 of the State
12 Government Article, the General Assembly.

13 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect June
14 1, 2021. It shall remain effective for a period of 1 year and 1 month and, at the end of June
15 30, 2022, this Act, with no further action required by the General Assembly, shall be
16 abrogated and of no further force and effect.