



BRANDON M. SCOTT
MAYOR

*Office of Government Relations
88 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401*

SB0138

January 24, 2024

TO: Members of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

FROM: Nina Themelis, Director, Mayor's Office of Government Relations

RE: Senate Bill 138 – Baltimore City – Property Taxes – Authority to Set a Special Rate for Vacant and Abandoned Property

POSITION: Support

Chair Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** Senate Bill (SB) 138.

SB 138 aims to authorize the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore City to set special property tax rates for certain vacant and abandoned property that is subject to the county property tax. This bill provides a step toward improving the current tax system in Baltimore City and allows the city to make informed decisions about how to allocate its resources as well as address the large number of vacant properties.

The current system does not give the Mayor and City Council the necessary authority to set special property tax rates for certain classes and subclasses of real property, which can limit the city's ability to respond to the changing needs of its residents. The proposed legislation will allow for the City to set special rates for certain classes which provides an additional tool to ensure that we are able to further our historic efforts in the reduction of the total number of vacant properties.

By passing this legislation and granting the Mayor and City Council the authority to set special property tax rates for certain vacant and abandoned property, the City will be able to support the growth and development of its communities as well as provide an additional tool toward furthering Mayor Scott's comprehensive vision to address vacant properties at scale.

For these reasons, the BCA respectfully requests a **favorable** report on SB 138.