



**Bill Title:** Senate Bill 138, Baltimore City - Property Taxes - Authority to Set a Special Rate for Vacant and Abandoned Property

**Committee:** Budget & Taxation

**Date:** January 24, 2024

**Position:** Favorable

This testimony is offered on behalf of the Maryland Multi-Housing Association (MMHA). MMHA is a professional trade association established in 1996, whose members consist of owners and managers of more than 210,000 rental housing homes in over 958 apartment communities. Our members house over 538,000 residents of the State of Maryland. MMHA also represents over 250 associate member companies who supply goods and services to the multi-housing industry.

Senate Bill 138 authorizes Baltimore City to set a special property tax rate for a vacant lot or improved property cited as vacant and unfit for habitation or other authorized use on a housing or building violation notice.

A recent report from the Johns Hopkins 21st Century Cities Initiative finds that Baltimore's roughly 15,000 vacant properties cost the city an estimated \$210M each year in lost revenue and other costs. Baltimore has the third highest rate of vacant properties of any city in the U.S according to one of the report's authors. Efforts are underway to address this crisis by the Mayor and community and business organizations seeking to invest \$7.5 billion in vacant properties in Baltimore.

Senate Bill 138 is another important tool to address vacant properties but ensure preservation of affordable housing in single-family and multi-family residential properties.

For these reasons, we respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 138.

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