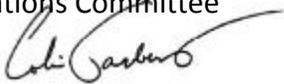




## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** September 8, 2020  
**TO:** Judiciary and Legislative Investigations Committee  
**FROM:** Colin Tarbert, President and CEO   
**POSITION:** Support  
**SUBJECT:** City Council Bill No. 19-0353 – Charter Amendment – Underground Conduit System – Sale, Transfer, or Franchise Prohibited

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The Baltimore Development Corporation (BDC) is reporting on City Council Bill 19-0353 introduced by Council President Young and Councilmembers Middleton, Schleifer, Stokes, Scott, Cohen, Burnett, Henry, Pinkett, Dorsey, Bullock, Reisinger, Clarke and Costello.

### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this Bill is to prohibit the sale, transfer, or franchise of the City's underground conduit system for cables, wires and similar facilities.

### **BRIEF HISTORY**

Baltimore City owns and operates an extensive underground conduit system that provides space for public and private utilities, including power, internet and telecommunications providers, public and private fiber optic networks, etc. Companies wanting to deploy their services in Baltimore City pay a fee to run cables through the conduit network. In this way, the City is able to generate revenue from the conduit system that is dedicated to the maintenance and upkeep of the system. In addition to conduit space currently leased to private companies, the conduit system, in many places has excess capacity that could allow for new or expanded services to Baltimore City residents and businesses.

A prohibition on the sale or transfer of the conduit system will allow the City to control and operate the system in the public interest separate from any specific non-public influence. Furthermore, City ownership of the conduit system provides the City with control over future opportunities that could be deployed broadly and quickly through the conduit system, including the expansion or proliferation of cable-dependent technologies that may benefit Baltimore City residents and businesses.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

None

### **AGENCY POSITION**

BDC supports City Council Bill #19-0353

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Kim Clark at [KClark@baltimoredevelopment.com](mailto:KClark@baltimoredevelopment.com) and 410-837-9305.

cc: Nicholas Blendy  
[DT]