



MEMORANDUM

STEPHANIE
RAWLINGS-BLAKE,
Mayor

PAUL T. GRAZIANO,
Executive Director, HARC
Commissioner, HCD

To: The Honorable President and Members of the Baltimore City Council
c/o Karen Randle, *Executive Secretary*

From: Paul T. Graziano, *Commissioner*

Date: April 12, 2012

Re: **City Council Bill 12-0027R – Demolition Funds for Deconstruction**

The Department of Housing and Community Development has reviewed City Council Bill 12-0027R, which was introduced for the purpose of supporting the Baltimore Safe and Sound Campaign's request to dedicate a portion of the City's demolition budget to fund the deconstruction of vacant homes by ex-prisoners.

City Council Bill 12-0027R, if adopted, would express the sense of the Baltimore City Council that the City should dedicate a portion of the money spent by the City for demolition to fund the deconstruction of vacant houses by trained ex-prisoners. This request of the Baltimore Safe and Sound Campaign (BSASC) asserts that trained ex-offenders would benefit from dedicated funding for deconstruction because it is more labor intensive. The Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) is not expert enough to respond to BSASC's policy arguments concerning recidivism reduction rates among ex-offenders that might result from such a program; however, HCD does concur with BSASC's assertion that deconstruction is, generally speaking, a more labor intensive process than demolition.

HCD believes it is important to consider the scale of Baltimore City's blight elimination need in order to view this resolution from an appropriate perspective. Recently, HCD and Planning undertook a block-by-block analysis to assess costs and practicability of demolishing Baltimore's stock of vacant, abandoned buildings in severely distressed areas, which estimated a three-to-five year capital need of \$165 million to accomplish the most cost-efficient demolition of whole- and half-blocks of vacant, abandoned buildings. Given this scale of the above need versus the current funding levels for demolition, HCD believes that a more appropriate time to pursue deconstruction over demolition would be when funding allocations more closely match the actual capital needs for demolition.

The Department of Housing and Community Development would like to explore how some of the demolition and deconstruction assumptions in City Council Bill 12-0027R were derived, and has no objection to continuing a dialogue with the Baltimore Safe and Sound Campaign concerning the deconstruction and demolition processes.

cc: Ms. Angela Gibson, *Mayor's Office of Government Relations*
Ms. Kaliopé Parthemos, *Deputy Mayor*

