



CITY OF BALTIMORE
MAYOR BRANDON M. SCOTT

TO	The Honorable President and Members of the Baltimore City Council
FROM	Bob Cenname, Deputy Finance Director <i>Bob Cenname</i>
DATE	June 23 rd , 2026
SUBJECT	26-0178, Baltimore Harbor – Transfer of Authority to Department of Transportation

The Honorable President and
Members of the City Council
City Hall, Room 400

Position: Support

The Department of Finance is herein reporting on City Council Bill 26-0178, Baltimore Harbor – Transfer of Authority to Department of Transportation (DOT), the purpose of which is to transfer responsibility for regulating and managing Baltimore Harbor from the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to the DOT and establishes a new Office of the Harbormaster within DOT.

Background

This legislation reflects an administrative reorganization and codification of existing harbor management functions. The bill modernizes and reorganizes the City’s harbor laws by repealing outdated provisions, redefining harbor boundaries and infrastructure regulations, and granting DOT authority over docks, piers, wharves, anchorage areas, and vessel operations. It also updates enforcement mechanisms, including civil citations and increased fines and penalties for violations such as obstructing navigation, unauthorized construction, pollution discharges, and unsafe vessel activity in the harbor. Additionally, the bill authorizes the Board of Estimates to establish fees for the use of City-owned harbor infrastructure and requires DOT to maintain maps, regulations, and oversight of harbor facilities. Finally, the legislation codifies ongoing harbor operations currently performed by the Harbormaster’s office. While the legal authority for the Harbor Master lies under DHCD, the budget for this office exists under the Dock Master in DOT, Service 687: Inner Harbor Services - Transportation.

Fiscal Impact

The Department of Finance does not anticipate a cost for the City as a result of this legislation.

Conclusion

The Department of Finance does not anticipate any material fiscal impact resulting from this legislation as it formalizes existing operational responsibilities within DOT, updates outdated provisions of the City Code, and consolidates harbor management functions under the Office of the Harbormaster.

For the reasons stated above, the Department of Finance supports City Council Bill 26-0178.

cc: Michael Mocksten
Nina Themelis