

**AMENDMENTS TO COUNCIL BILL 20-0593
(1st Reader Copy)**

By: Councilmember McCray
{To be offered to the Taxation, Finance, & Economic Development Committee}

Amendment No. 1 {Establishment of Tax Sale Ombudsman}

On page 1, in line 6, after the semi-colon, insert “requiring the Commissioner of Housing and Community Development to designate a City Tax Sale Ombudsman; providing for the duties of the City Tax Sale Ombudsman; providing for a special effective date;” and, on that same page, strike line 7 in its entirety and substitute “Chapter 730, 2019 Laws of Maryland.”; and, on that same page, strike lines 9 through 11 in their entireties and substitute:

“Chapter 730
2019 Laws of Maryland”;

and, on that same page, strike line 14 in its entirety and substitute “Sections 8-5 and 8-6”;
and, on page 3, after line 24, insert:

“§ 8-6. CITY TAX SALE OMBUDSMAN.

(A) “HOMEOWNER” DEFINED.

IN THIS SECTION, “HOMEOWNER” HAS THE MEANING STATED IN STATE TAX-PROPERTY ARTICLE § 9-105 {“HOMESTEAD TAX CREDIT”}.

(B) IN GENERAL.

(1) THERE IS A CITY TAX SALE OMBUDSMAN IN THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT.

(2) THE OMBUDSMAN SHALL:

(I) BE DESIGNATED BY THE COMMISSIONER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT TO CARRY OUT THE DUTIES OF THIS SECTION; AND

(II) HAVE SUBSTANTIAL KNOWLEDGE OF THE PROPERTY TAX COLLECTION PROCESS.

(C) DUTIES OF OMBUDSMAN.

THE OMBUDSMAN SHALL:

- (1) ASSIST HOMEOWNERS TO UNDERSTAND THE PROCESS FOR COLLECTION OF DELINQUENT TAXES;
- (2) ACTIVELY ASSIST HOMEOWNERS TO APPLY FOR TAX CREDITS, DISCOUNT PROGRAMS, AND OTHER PUBLIC BENEFITS THAT MAY ASSIST THE HOMEOWNERS TO PAY DELINQUENT TAXES AND IMPROVE THEIR FINANCIAL SITUATION;
- (3) REFER HOMEOWNERS TO LEGAL SERVICES, HOUSING COUNSELING, AND OTHER SOCIAL SERVICES THAT MAY ASSIST HOMEOWNERS TO PAY DELINQUENT TAXES AND IMPROVE THEIR FINANCIAL SITUATION; AND
- (4) MAINTAIN A WEBSITE THAT FUNCTIONS AS A CLEARINGHOUSE FOR INFORMATION CONCERNING:
 - (I) THE PROCESS FOR COLLECTION OF DELINQUENT TAXES; AND
 - (II) SERVICES AND PROGRAMS THAT ARE AVAILABLE TO ASSIST HOMEOWNERS TO PAY DELINQUENT TAXES AND IMPROVE THEIR FINANCIAL SITUATION.”

Amendment No. 2 {Eligibility}

On page 3, in line 1, strike “3” and substitute “15”; and, on that same page, in line 3, strike “COMBINED” and substitute “TOTAL ANNUAL HOUSEHOLD”; and, on that same page and line, strike “\$40,000” and substitute “\$36,000”; and, on that same page, in line 4, after “OLD”, insert “AND HAS ANNUAL EARNED INCOME OF \$75,000 OR LESS”; and, on that same page, in line 7, after “PROGRAM”, insert “AND HAS ANNUAL EARNED INCOME OF \$75,000 OR LESS”.

Amendment No. 3 {Effective date}

On page 3, in line 28, strike beginning with “the” down through and including “enacted” in line 29 and substitute “July 1, 2021”.

Amendment No. 4 {Requiring homeowner application}

On page 2, after line 29, insert “(1) IN GENERAL.”; and, on that same page, in line 30, strike “IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 14-811(F) OF THE STATE TAX-PROPERTY ARTICLE” and substitute “ON RECEIPT OF AN APPLICATION FROM AN ELIGIBLE HOMEOWNER AND SUBJECT TO THE LIMITATION SET FORTH IN PARAGRAPH (3) OF THIS SUBSECTION”; and, on that same page, in line 31, strike beginning with “FROM” down through and including the colon in line 32 and substitute “THE HOMEOWNER’S DWELLING FROM TAX SALE FOR 1 YEAR.”; and, on that same page, after line 32, insert:

“(2) ELIGIBILITY.

A HOMEOWNER IS ELIGIBLE TO HAVE THE HOMEOWNER’S DWELLING WITHHELD FROM TAX SALE UNDER THIS SECTION IF THE HOMEOWNER:”;

and, on page 3, in lines 1 and 2, strike “(1)” and “(2)”, respectively, and substitute “(I)” and “(II)”, respectively; and, on that same page, in lines 3, 4, and 5, strike “(I)”, “(II)”, and “(III)”, respectively, and substitute “(A)”, “(B)”, and “(C)”, respectively; and, on that same page, after line 7, insert:

“(3) LIMITATION.

IN ANY TAX YEAR, THE AGGREGATE TAX AND LIEN LIABILITY OF ALL HOMEOWNERS FOR WHOM THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE HAS WITHHELD THEIR DWELLINGS FROM TAX SALE UNDER THIS SECTION MAY NOT EXCEED \$2 MILLION.

“(4) RENEWAL APPLICATIONS.

SUBJECT TO THE LIMITATION SET FORTH IN PARAGRAPH (3) OF THIS SUBSECTION, A HOMEOWNER MAY SUBMIT A RENEWAL APPLICATION ANNUALLY TO HAVE THE HOMEOWNER’S DWELLING WITHHELD FROM TAX SALE FOR AN ADDITIONAL YEAR PROVIDED THAT THE HOMEOWNER DEMONSTRATES CONTINUING ELIGIBILITY UNDER THIS SECTION.”

and, on that same page, in line 8, strike “{RESERVED}” and substitute “APPLICATION SUBMISSIONS”; and, on that same page, after line 8, insert:

“A HOMEOWNER MAY SUBMIT AN APPLICATION UNDER THIS SECTION ONLINE, IN PERSON, OR BY MAIL.”;

and, on that same page, in line 11, strike “MAY” and substitute “OF FINANCE SHALL”; and, in line 12, after “SECTION”, insert “INCLUDING APPLICATION AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION PROCEDURES”.