



CITY OF BALTIMORE
MAYOR BRANDON M. SCOTT

TO	The Honorable President and Members of the Baltimore City Council
FROM	Erin C. Murphy Esq. – Chief of Staff and Government Affairs – Baltimore Police Department
CC	Mayor’s Office of Government Relations
DATE	06/08/2026
SUBJECT	26-0178 - Baltimore Harbor – Transfer of Authority to Department of Transportation

Position: Favorable

BILL SYNOPSIS

The Baltimore City Police Department has reviewed Council Bill 26-0178. Council Bill 26-0178 transfers responsibility for regulating and managing Baltimore Harbor from the Department of Housing and Community Development to the Department of Transportation and formally establishes an Office of the Harbormaster within DOT. The bill updates and reorganizes Baltimore Harbor laws by repealing provisions, updating terminology, and consolidating authority for harbor operations, infrastructure, navigation, and enforcement under the Director of Transportation. It also creates updated enforcement mechanisms, including civil citations, increased fines and penalties, authority to regulate vessel operations, remove obstructions and nuisances, and address environmental violations such as unauthorized discharges into the harbor. Finally, the bill authorizes the Board of Estimates to establish fees for the use of City-owned harbor facilities and preserves existing harbor pier structures.

SUMMARY OF POSITION

The Baltimore Police Department supports Council Bill 26-0178, which modernizes and streamlines the governance of Baltimore Harbor by consolidating harbor management and regulatory authority within the Department of Transportation. The legislation establishes clear lines of responsibility through the creation of the Office of the Harbormaster and updates outdated provisions of City law to reflect current operational and enforcement needs.

The bill strengthens the City's ability to address public safety, environmental hazards, navigational obstructions, and other conditions that may impact the safe use of Baltimore Harbor. By providing enhanced enforcement tools, including updated penalties and civil citation authority, the legislation promotes accountability and supports coordinated responses to

violations that threaten public safety and the harbor environment.

The Baltimore Police Department values the bill's emphasis on clearly defined regulatory authority and interagency coordination, which will improve operational efficiency and support effective management of one of Baltimore's most significant public assets. For these reasons, the Department respectfully recommends a favorable report on Council Bill 26-0178.

FISCAL IMPACT

The Baltimore Police Department does not anticipate a major fiscal impact.

AMENDMENTS

The Baltimore Police Department has no requested amendments.