



Legislation Text

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Introductory*

**City of Baltimore
Council Bill R
(Resolution)**

Introduced by: Councilmember Ramos

A Resolution Entitled

A Council Resolution concerning
Request for State Action - Passage of HB002/SB138 - Baltimore City Property Taxes - Authority to Set a Special Rate for Vacant and Abandoned Property

For the purpose of calling on the General Assembly to pass and Governor Wes Moore to sign HB002/SB138 - Baltimore City Property Taxes - Authority to Set a Special Rate for Vacant and Abandoned Property.

Recitals

Just under 14,000 vacant and abandoned properties are designated as vacant and abandoned in Baltimore City. In addition, there are several thousand vacant lots. These properties are mostly privately owned. The City only owns fewer than 1,000 vacant properties and roughly one-half of the vacant lots in the City.

Setting a special tax rate on the vacant and abandoned properties and lots will do two things. First, it will reduce speculators investing in vacant properties and holding them without renovating. They would be disincentivized from neglect if developing the property would reduce their tax burden.

Second, it is likely the increased liens from the vacancy tax will never be paid, thereby stacking the liens to make more properties eligible for in rem foreclosure. While this City Council has worked to increase fines and fees for leaving properties and lots vacant and uninhabitable, the City's capacity to continue to cite a vacant property is inconsistent for lack of inspectors.

In rem foreclosure currently allows for the City to foreclose on the vacant property or lot when the liens exceed the assessed value of the property. Currently, about one-third of the City's privately owned vacant properties are eligible for in rem foreclosure. While we are working on expanding in rem foreclosure laws to make more properties eligible for in rem foreclosure, the vacancy tax will help move vacant and abandoned properties into this process for quick acquisition and disposition to someone who will return the property to productive use.

Now, therefore, be it resolved by the City Council of Baltimore, That the Baltimore City Council calls on the General Assembly to pass and Governor Wes Moore to sign HB002/SB138 - Baltimore City Property Taxes - Authority to Set a Special Rate for Vacant and Abandoned Property.

And be it further resolved, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor of Baltimore City, the Governor of Maryland, the Secretary of the Department of Budget and Management, the President of the Maryland Senate, the Speaker of the Maryland House of Delegates, the Baltimore City Senate and House Delegations to the General Assembly, the Baltimore City Council President and the President's legislative staff, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.