



City of Baltimore

City Council
City Hall, Room 408
100 North Holliday Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Legislation Text

File #: 15-0251R, **Version:** 0

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INTRODUCTORY*

CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL R
(Resolution)

Introduced by: Councilmember Scott

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning
Request for State Action - Tax Credits for Vacant Lot Maintenance

FOR the purpose of calling on the General Assembly to enact, and the Governor to sign, legislation authorizing the City of Baltimore to issue tax credits to homeowners for providing a valuable public service by maintaining vacant lots adjacent to their homes.

Recitals

Vacant lots throughout Baltimore pose challenges to the city, but also present many opportunities for productive use. Depending on how they are maintained, these spaces can either be unsafe, overgrown, trash-covered blights ♦ or inviting green spaces that liven up their surrounding neighborhoods.

The City works to keep all City-owned lots well maintained and attractive, but a chronic lack of adequate resources for this task means that it sometimes falls short in its maintenance efforts. When this happens, adjoining property owners sometimes take it upon themselves to take care of these lots to prevent them from becoming blights.

Homeowners who step up like this are performing a public service. They deserve to be recognized and compensated for the benefit they♦re providing to their entire community. Given the limited resources available to the City for maintaining vacant lots, it is also very much in the City♦s interest to encourage others to similarly assist in keeping these properties clean and clear of hazards.

Granting homeowners who regularly maintain adjoining vacant properties a tax credit serves both of these purposes. Authorizing a tax credit for maintaining vacant lots as useful public spaces essentially would be allowing these good Samaritans to pay some of their taxes in-kind through their work improving the lots. If the credit is properly calibrated, the City will get much more value out of the transaction than it could generate by instead collecting the full taxes and spending them to

maintain the vacant properties.

The credit could also largely pay for its self by increasing property values in neighborhoods once held back by lots that are currently dangerous eyesores, but could be transformed by motivated neighbors into uplifting, and value-adding, open spaces.

Before Baltimore could grant a tax credit along these lines it would first have to be authorized at the State level. Tax credits to encourage homeowners to maintain vacant lots could be a win for the City's finances, engaged homeowners, and the public at large. Hopefully the City and State can work together to make this idea a reality in the coming fiscal year.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE, That the Council calls on the General Assembly to enact, and the Governor to sign, legislation authorizing the City of Baltimore to issue tax credits to homeowners for providing a valuable public service by maintaining vacant lots adjacent to their homes.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Governor, the Honorable Chairs and Members of the Baltimore City House and Senate Delegations to the Maryland General Assembly, the President of the Maryland Senate, the Maryland House Speaker, the Mayor, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.

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