



Nick J. Mosby, *President*
Baltimore City Council

100 N. Holliday Street, Room 400 • Baltimore, Maryland 21202
(410) 396-4804 • Fax: (410) 539-0647

January 23, 2024

To: **Members of the House Ways and Means Committee**
Re: **HB 2 – Baltimore City - Property Taxes - Authority to Set Special Rates**
Position: **FAVORABLE**

Chair Atterbeary and Honorable Members of the House Ways and Means Committee,

I am writing to express my support for House Bill 2, Baltimore City – Property Taxes – Authority to Set Special Rates. If passed, this bill enables Baltimore City government to establish special property tax rates for vacant properties that are throughout our city.

As you are all aware, vacant properties pose a serious threat to development and revitalization efforts within the City. There are an estimated 16,000 vacant properties in Baltimore City. Many of these properties, through years of neglect, have since deteriorated, contributing to the blight we see predominately in our historically Black and disenfranchised neighborhoods.

Vacant properties lead to decreased home value and increased crime and research suggests that these properties also lower public health outcomes for communities. Vacant properties are believed to affect community well-being by overshadowing positive aspects of the community, while contributing to fractures between neighbors, attracting crime, and making residents fearful. Communities surrounded by vacant lots face the buildup of trash, attraction of rodents, dilapidated buildings and disinvestment in their lives. Numerous efforts have been made to address the City’s vacant property issues; however, elected officials have been limited in their ability to apply pressure on property owners. If passed, the ability to establish special property tax rates for owners that allow their properties to remain unoccupied and neglected will be a critical tool in the city’s toolbox when it comes to our fight against the vacant structures that today remain in the landscape of Baltimore’s future.

Enabling the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore to establish a special tax rate is critical to addressing the problem of vacant properties, holding property owners accountable, and driving revitalization in the City. I thank my former colleagues on the Ways and Means Committee for their attention to this bill and respectfully urge a favorable report for HB 2.

Sincerely,

Nick J. Mosby
President, Baltimore City Council