



TESTIMONY

COMMITTEE: Senate Judicial Proceedings

DATE: February 26, 2026

POSITION: Favorable

BILL: Senate Bill 819

The Maryland Municipal League supports Senate Bill 819. This legislation revises notice requirements in judicial in rem tax foreclosure actions involving vacant, unsafe, or unfit properties. Under current law, municipalities must send notice and a copy of the complaint by first-class and certified mail within five days of filing. This bill would instead require service on each interested party consistent with the standards used for serving complaints.

While this approach may increase upfront procedural rigor, and may involve additional time or expense in some cases, it provides important clarity and alignment with existing service standards in the Maryland Rules. Ensuring that notice is effectuated in a legally sound and defensible manner at the outset can reduce the risk of later challenges claiming improper notice, which often delay final resolution.

Judicial in rem foreclosure is an important revitalization tool for municipalities addressing vacant and abandoned properties. These properties create public safety concerns, depress surrounding property values, and strain local resources. When local governments initiate in rem actions, the goal is not punitive; it is to return long-neglected properties to productive use.

By aligning notice requirements with established service procedures, this bill promotes procedural consistency and strengthens the legal footing of these actions without altering the underlying authority of municipalities to pursue foreclosure on qualifying properties.

For these reasons, the League respectfully requests that the Committee provide Senate Bill 819 with a favorable report.

For more information relating to this piece of testimony, please contact:

Angelica Bailey Thupari: Director, Advocacy and Public Policy, angelicab@mdmunicipal.org

MML represents 161 local governments and about 2 million Maryland residents.