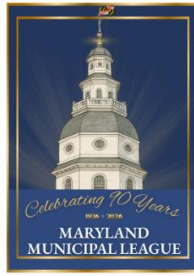


SB 819 - FAV - MML.pdf

Uploaded by: Angelica Bailey Thupari

Position: FAV



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.

47 State Circle Suite 403 Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(410) 295-9100 www.mdmunicipal.org

SB819

Uploaded by: Antonio Hayes

Position: FAV

ANTONIO HAYES

Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Legislative District 40



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony for Senator Hayes in Support of Senate Bill 819 — Judicial In Rem Tax Foreclosure –
Notice Requirements

February 26, 2026

Dear Madam Chair and Fellow Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

Senate Bill 819 improves the judicial in rem tax foreclosure process by modernizing notice requirements for vacant and abandoned properties. This legislation strengthens procedural clarity while ensuring that interested parties receive notice consistent with established Maryland court procedures.

Under current law, counties and municipalities must send notice by first-class and certified mail when initiating a judicial foreclosure action. SB 819 updates this requirement by providing that complaints be served in accordance with the Maryland Rules. This change aligns statutory notice procedures with existing court service standards, promoting consistency, reliability, and due process protections.

The bill supports local governments' ability to address long-term vacant and unsafe properties that contribute to neighborhood decline and public safety concerns. By clarifying service requirements, SB 819 helps reduce procedural barriers that can delay remediation, rehabilitation, or productive reuse of abandoned properties while preserving property owners' opportunity to cure delinquent taxes prior to judgment.

This legislation represents a practical and balanced approach that enhances efficiency in the foreclosure process while maintaining fair notice to all interested parties.

I urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 819.

Respectfully,

Senator Antonio L. Hayes

40th Legislative District — MD

Position: Favorable

SB819 In Rem Notice Requirements.pdf

Uploaded by: Dan Ellis

Position: FAV



Neighborhood Housing Services of Baltimore, Inc.

February 24, 2026

Senator William Smith, Chair
2 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: Senate Bill 819

Honorable Chair Smith and Members of the Committee:

I am the Chief Executive Officer of Neighborhood Housing Services of Baltimore (NHS), and a resident of Baltimore City. Our organization believes that economic and social justice are a right for all residents and communities. We promote this belief by removing barriers of access to homeownership, helping resident access resources to maintain their homes, and supporting communities historically impacted by systemic disinvestment. I also served as co-chair of Mayor Scott's Tax Sale Work Group, established in 2021.

SB 819 creates alignment of state law so that notice requirements for the *in rem* tax sale process align with other state notice requirements. This adjustment will simplify the *in rem* process and remove some confusion that has resulted from having rules that differ from other states. The *in rem* process is a critical strategy in Baltimore being used by the city to acquire significantly delinquent vacant properties for redevelopment. Bringing the process in line with other established Maryland processes will enhance the success of this tool.

SB819 brings the *in rem* tax sale process into alignment with other established state processes. We ask that the Committee issue a **favorable** report on SB819.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. T. Ellis", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Daniel T. Ellis
Chief Executive Officer



25 E. 20th Street, Suite 170 Baltimore, Maryland 21218
Office: 410-327-1200
Fax: 410-675-1855
www.nhsbaltimore.org

SB0819_DHCD_SUPPORT.pdf

Uploaded by: Jake Day

Position: FAV

DATE: February 26, 2026

BILL NO.: Senate Bill 819

TITLE: Judicial In Rem Tax Foreclosure - Notice Requirements

COMMITTEE: Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

Letter of Support

Description of Bill:

Senate Bill 819 would eliminate a requirement in statute for local jurisdictions to send notice and a copy of a complaint for an in rem foreclosure to all interested parties within 5 days of the locality filing the complaint. This requirement is replaced by a reference to serve the complaint in accordance with the Maryland Rules.

Background and Analysis:

Maryland DHCD understands the need for local processes to become more efficient and applauds local jurisdictions in those efforts. One way to accomplish this is the consolidation of processes, like those employed within in rem foreclosures. In removing the statutory requirement to provide notice within 5 days of a complaint filing, the State would be eliminating a duplicative requirement within the Maryland Rules. As a result, a simple incorporation of the Maryland Rules, by reference, will have no negative impact on local homeowners going through the foreclosure process, as their notice period would remain the same. Local governments would benefit from the resource-savings in staff time resulting from the cost of providing duplicative notices to local homeowners.

DHCD Position

The Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development respectfully requests a **favorable** report on Senate Bill 819.

SB0819-JPR-FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Nina Themelis

Position: FAV



BRANDON M. SCOTT
MAYOR

*Office of Government Relations
88 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401*

SB 0819

February 26, 2026

TO: Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Nina Themelis, Director, Mayor's Office of Government Relations

RE: Senate Bill (SB) 819 Judicial In Rem Tax Foreclosure - Notice Requirements

POSITION: Favorable

Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher and members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** Senate Bill (SB) 819

This Bill would alter the code requirements for providing notice to interested parties when a county or municipal corporation files a complaint for a judicial in rem foreclosure on certain vacant and abandoned property.

Specifically, the proposed legislation would eliminate the code requirement for mailings to all defendants within 5 days of a case being filed and instead refer to the Maryland Rules. The Maryland Rules currently require the same 5-day post-filing mailings, as well as posting or publication, but removing specificity in the code would provide flexibility should the Maryland Rules change.

This change would have no effect on the timing of Judicial In Rem acquisitions or dispositions but could eventually lead to a "streamlining" of the process and resource savings should the Rules change to amend or alter its 5-day mailing requirement. In addition to the requirements of the Maryland Rules, the City has adopted a robust service of process requirement, so we are certain any change to the Rules would not negatively affect the amount of notice that owners or other interest holders would receive.

The BCA is in support of eliminating the explicit 5-day mailing requirement, and instead relying on the Maryland Rules, as a way of streamlining the notice provisions in the Judicial In-Rem Tax Foreclosure process. Judicial In-Rem Tax Foreclosure is one of many important DHCD tools used to address vacancy reduction and blight elimination in the city of Baltimore. This process efficiency bill is necessary as the City moves to increase the utilization of in rem tax sale foreclosure over other lengthier acquisition and disposition tools.

For these reasons, the BCA respectfully request a **favorable** report on SB 819.

SB819 Ramos Testimony JPR 2.26.pdf

Uploaded by: Odette Ramos

Position: FAV



Odette Ramos

Baltimore City Councilwoman

District 14

(410) 396 - 4814

odette.amos@baltimorecity.gov

100 N. Holliday Street, Room 553

Baltimore MD 21202

SB819 – Judicial In Rem Tax Foreclosure – Notice Requirements

February 26, 2026

FAVORABLE

Honorable Chair Smith and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee:

I am writing to urge your support of **SB819 – Judicial In Rem Tax Foreclosure – Notice Requirements**. Thanks to Senator Hayes for introducing the bill.

This bill simply replaces language for the post-filing notice in Judicial In Rem Tax Foreclosure cases to conform with the Maryland Rules of service. We seek to streamline the process to have a more efficient process.

In Rem Tax Foreclosure was first passed by the General Assembly in 2019 and so far only implemented in Baltimore City. When a vacant and abandoned property has liens that exceed the value of the property, the jurisdiction can foreclose and take possession of the property. The process is the fastest acquisition process in the state, taking 6-8 months from filing of the case to the judgement. Baltimore City has partnered with the Circuit Court to have a dedicated docket of cases.

Since the first cases were filed in November of 2022, Baltimore City has acquired 719 vacant and abandoned properties and lots with this acquisition strategy. We have a dedicated set of lawyers and paralegals for this work, and have learned a lot about the process.

The changes to In Rem that we are seeking come from practicing In Rem the past three years. The change we are seeking does not compromise the stringent notice requirements that make In Rem work.

Thank you for your consideration, and I look forward to your favorable report. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions. I can be reached on 410-396-4814 or via email at odette.amos@baltimorecity.gov.

Respectfully Submitted:

Odette Ramos

Baltimore City Councilwoman, District 14

CLC Testimony SB 819 in rem notice testimony 2.24.

Uploaded by: Shana Roth-Gormley

Position: FAV



SB 819

Judicial In Rem Tax Foreclosure - Notice Requirements

Hearing before the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

Feb. 26, 2026

POSITION: Favorable

Community Law Center (CLC) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, which is a legal partner to Maryland neighborhoods and nonprofits in pursuit of more just and vibrant communities. CLC provides direct legal representation to communities and nonprofits on issues like tax exemption and organizational governance, real estate, contracts, intellectual property, employment law, and more. We advocate on issues that impact our Maryland neighborhood and nonprofit clients, including nuisance and vacant properties and tax sale.

CLC supports SB 819 to clarify the rules for judicial in rem tax foreclosures, and to make it easier to use to this tool to address vacant and abandoned properties. The bill will change the notice requirements when an in rem foreclosure complaint is filed, bringing it in line with the Maryland Rules for serving complaints on interested parties. Interested parties will still receive proper notice and have the opportunity to respond to the filing. The bill will merely remove an additional requirement to send notice and a copy of the complaint within five days of filing the complaint, a turnaround time which is not always possible. This will streamline the process for filing judicial in rem foreclosure cases, without impacting the constitutional due process requirements of providing notice to interested parties. The result will be increased capacity for Baltimore City and Maryland counties to bring these judicial in rem foreclosures and address the negative impacts of vacant properties.

CLC supports SB 819. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

For the above reasons,

CLC urges a FAVORABLE VOTE ON SB 819.

Please contact Shana Roth-Gormley, Staff Attorney at Community Law Center, with any questions.

ShanaR@communitylaw.org | 410-366-0922