



BRANDON M. SCOTT
MAYOR

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HB 1279

March 4, 2021

TO: Members of the House Ways and Means Committee
FROM: Natasha Mehu, Director of Government Relations
RE: HB 1279 - Regional Institution Strategic Enterprise Zone Program - Alterations

POSITION: SUPPORT

Chair Kaiser, Vice Chair Washington, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** House Bill (HB) 1279.

HB 1279 would expand the purposes of the Regional Institution Strategic Enterprise (RISE) Zone Program and establish the RISE Zone Fund in the Department of Commerce. It would prohibit the Secretary of Commerce from approving a RISE Zone the geographic area that exceeds 500 acres. This bill would also alter eligibility for tax incentives that a business entity located in a RISE Zone may receive under certain circumstances.

This bill has two features that would be advantageous for RISE Zones within Baltimore City. First, it would expand the purpose of the program to incentive the location of innovative start-up businesses based on technology developed, licensed, or commercialized at or in collaboration with qualified Maryland institutions. Secondly, it would allow for the creation of rental assistance programs to business entities that move into a RISE Zone. Together, these two features encourage business attraction and formation in City.

For these reasons, the BCA respectfully request a **favorable** report on House Bill 1279.