



BRANDON M. SCOTT
MAYOR

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

HB 1196

March 1, 2022

TO: Members of the House Ways and Means Committee
FROM: Natasha Mehu, Director, Office of Government Relations
RE: HB 1196 -Tax Sales - Alternative Collection Programs
POSITION: SUPPORT

Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Washington, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** House Bill (HB) 1196.

HB 1196 enables local jurisdictions to offer payment plans to residents who are in arrears of their property taxes. It also expands upon previously enacted laws that allow local jurisdictions to remove individuals who are low income, senior, or disabled from tax sale by allowing local jurisdictions to remove individuals from tax sale through clear and defined criteria that are established through a local ordinance – not just the three aforementioned categories of individuals. Finally, it enables local jurisdictions to cancel tax sales in cases of declared emergencies. The pandemic has made it very clear why such authority is necessary.

The BCA is committed to improving the tax sale process. Last year, Mayor Scott created a Tax Sale Workgroup that is tasked with studying the tax sale process in Baltimore City and recommending wholesale reform of the system. While their work continues, HB 1196 enables local jurisdictions, like Baltimore City, to have greater authority to address tax sale issues that commonly arise locally. The bill aligns with the spirit of the comprehensive reforms we hope to ultimately achieve.

For these reasons, we respectfully request a **favorable** report on HB 1196.