



BRANDON M. SCOTT
MAYOR

*Office of Government Relations
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Annapolis, Maryland 21401*

HB 867

February 28, 2023

TO: Members of the House Ways and Mean Committee
FROM: Mayor Brandon M. Scott, City of Baltimore
RE: House Bill 867 – Baltimore City - Collection of Unpaid Property Taxes

POSITION: Support

Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** House Bill 867.

HB 867 would allow Baltimore City to create our own tax and lien collection system, and not have to use the traditional tax sale system. This bill is essential for keeping our most vulnerable homeowners residing in, and owning, their homes. Homeowners receiving Final Bill and Legal Notices (FBLNs) have very little time to react and settle to avoid tax sale; this bill would potentially take owner-occupied properties out of tax sale and give owners additional time to pay bills in arrears with payment plans. Currently, payment plans are offered for future bills only.

The Bill also creates a new section – 14-894 for In Rem foreclosure on “residential property”, that would not likely interfere with the current In Rem foreclosure process on vacant lots and buildings, in sections 14-873 – 14-877. This bill creates extensive notice requirements for In Rem foreclosure on “residential property” - including documented offers of assistance to the owners at least 3 years prior to foreclosure, and at least 10 documented attempts to contact the property owner.

The passage of HB 867 would provide for a more effective remedy to assist homeowners in avoiding tax sale and understanding and navigating the tax sale process.

For these reasons, the BCA respectfully request a **favorable** report on HB 867.