



BRANDON M. SCOTT
MAYOR

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

HB0777

February 20, 2024

TO: Members of the House Ways and Means Committee

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

RE: House Bill 777 – Baltimore City – Unpaid Water and Sewer Charges – Tax Sales of Non-Owner-Occupied Residential Property

POSITION: Favorable with Amendments

Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) is **favorable with amendments** for House Bill (HB) 777.

HB 777 provides additional authority for the City to place residential property into tax sale when the property is non-owner-occupied and has accrued a certain amount of fines.

The City currently has authority to remove owner occupied residential property from tax sale by establishing certain objective criteria with the local governing body. This legislation would expand the types of property that are able to go to tax sale, however, the BCA has reservations as to the effect the passage of this legislation would have. **The BCA recommends amending HB 777 so that the only additional residential properties that are able to be placed in tax sale are those that have water-only liens or overdue bills in excess of the statutory minimum when those properties are vacant or abandoned.** This would help to protect renters who may live in a residential property that is non-owner-occupied.

For these reasons, the BCA respectfully requests a **favorable with amendments** report on HB 777.