



Odette Ramos

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Testimony

**HB721 – Baltimore City - Tax Sales – Owner Occupied Residential Property
Letter of Information
February 20, 2024**

Honorable Chair Atterbeary and Distinguished Members of the House Ways and Means Committee:

I am writing this letter of information regarding HB721 Tax Sales – Owner Occupied Residential Property.

Mayor Scott has removed homeowners from tax sale for the past three years. The first year was in response to the COVID pandemic, and the additional years because Baltimore City is in the midst of reforming our tax sale system, and he understands the predatory nature of the system. Providing relief to long time homeowners has been important as we establish our complete tax sale process reforms such as payment plans systems and outreach to work with residents long term.

The Mayor's authority to do this already exists in the Tax Article section 14-811 Section (a) (2) which gives any municipality or county governing body the authority remove owner-occupied properties based on set criteria. Such language was installed in the code using HB1169 sponsored by Delegate Chanel Branch in 2022. Here is the link to the chapter https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2022RS/chapters_noln/Ch_663_hb1196E.pdf

It was just brought to my attention that the section in 14-811 Section (a) (2) was not included in the online version of the code. So, it seems the sponsor didn't see that our authority already exists.

HB721 makes it clear that Baltimore City has this authority, but it is already established in the Tax article.

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.ramos@baltimorecity.gov.

Respectfully Submitted:

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