



BRANDON M. SCOTT
MAYOR

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

SB 0573

February 6, 2025

TO: Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

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

RE: Senate Bill SB 0573 Baltimore City - Ordinance Enforcement - Amount of Fines and Penalties

POSITION: Support

Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher and members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** Senate Bill (SB) 0573.

SB 0573 would amend Section (48) of Article II of the Baltimore City Charter to increase the cap on civil and criminal penalties from the current \$1,000 to \$10,000. This adjustment would provide the City with an essential tool to deter and punish illegal dumping and other offenses that harm public safety, community well-being, and drain City resources.

Illegal dumping has a major impact on Baltimore City. The Baltimore City Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) responds to over 15,000, 311 complaints of illegal dumping each year, each one requiring an investigator to respond and investigate, then costing Baltimore tax payers millions of dollars in cleanup. While we maintain a proactive illegal dumping camera campaign, which can lead to prosecution; DHCD also utilizes its citation authority to try and curb the behavior. Our involvement with this issue over the years shows us that people illegally dump out of convenience, but also in an effort to save money. The current maximum penalty of \$1000 does not serve as a sufficient deterrent. Increasing the fine amount would be a great step in helping not only send a message to those that illegally dump, but will also send a message to Baltimore residents that we are serious about holding dumpers accountable.

The current \$1,000 cap is insufficient to address the severity of certain other offenses beyond illegal dumping, for example; Failure to Abate Vacant Building Violations, Illegal Signage Posting and Unlicensed Street Vending. Increasing the cap in the Charter provides the necessary legal authorization to enable the City Council to separately pass ordinances to adjust penalties for specific offenses.

For these reasons, the BCA respectfully request a **favorable** report on SB 0573.