



BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF
WASHINGTON COUNTY, MARYLAND

February 7, 2025

Delegate Vanessa E. Atterbeary, Chair
Ways and Means Committee
130 Taylor House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: **Opposition to HB 1372 - Washington County-Notice of Tax Sale-Alterations Bill**

Dear Delegate Atterbeary:

This correspondence serves as the Board of County Commissioners of Washington County's (the "Board") formal and unanimous opposition to HB 1372, which would reduce the number of tax sale notices published by the Washington County Treasurer from four (4) to two (2).

Often, an individual's greatest asset is his or her home. Losing one's home or other real property through tax sale is a significant stroke of misfortune and upheaval, particularly if the real property is one's primary residence. The notice requirements of the tax sale process are in many ways the final opportunity for the property owner to pay the taxes and redeem the property. The Board does not support reducing the notice opportunity to the property owners by cutting the number of notices in half.

Notably, the only other jurisdiction that allows for fewer than three notices is Baltimore City, currently a defendant in a lawsuit before the United States District Court for the District of Maryland (*Edmondson Community Organization, Inc., et al. v. Mayor and City Council of Baltimore, et al.*). Among the suit's allegations are that the tax sale procedure followed by the City of Baltimore is unconstitutional. A ruling from the US District Court would potentially be binding on Washington County. Moreover, a change in Washington County's tax sale procedure to bring it more in line with that of Baltimore City could force the Board to defend a lawsuit, ultimately to be underwritten by the tax-paying citizens of Washington County.

The Board opposes the passage of HB 1372 and respectfully encourages any changes to the County's tax sale procedure not be considered until after final resolution of the Baltimore City lawsuit.

Sincerely,

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF WASHINGTON COUNTY, MARYLAND

BY: 

John F. Barr, President