



SB 756- Baltimore City- Economic Development Project in Downtown RISE District- Payment
in Lieu of Taxes
Budget and Taxation
March 3, 2026
Unfavorable
Tracy Lingo, President, UNITE HERE Local 7

Chairman Guzzone and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in opposition to Senate Bill 756. Our Union represents 3000 hospitality workers throughout Maryland. Our members work at the Baltimore Convention Center, the Hyatt Regency on Light Street, M&T Bank and Camden Yards stadiums, the Baltimore Hilton, the Baltimore Waterfront Marriott and the concessions program at BWI Thurgood Marshall Airport. Our members care deeply about development in downtown Baltimore and the state of our hospitality industry. We support smart, targeted, development that makes our city a walkable, vibrant hospitality hub. Our members are predominantly Baltimore residents who depend on the city services provided by our Public Employee Union siblings. Our members children, like my own children, go to Baltimore City Schools. We swim in Park and Recs pools and depend on DPW employees to pick up our trash, fix our roads and clear the snow so we can get to work.

Historically in the hospitality industry, PILOT projects, like the PILOT that allowed the Baltimore Waterfront Marriott to pay \$1 a year in lieu of property tax for twenty years, have decimated the city's tax revenue. This contributes to the need to charge higher property taxes to home owners and to reduced matching funds from the state for our schools. Like this proposed bill, those tax breaks to private developers were given without enforceable provisions to ensure that job creation promises were kept or that the jobs created were living wage jobs that would employ city residents. As a result, many of the jobs created in these publicly funded projects created low wage jobs. When city residents who worked at the Baltimore Marriott Waterfront took measures into their own hands to make sure that jobs would be good living wage, Union jobs, the city had to endure a multiyear, international, labor dispute when the Marriott chose to oppose workers efforts to exercise their right to organize a Union and later their efforts to bargain a fair contract.

We do not believe that future development should come at the expense of services for city residents, particularly without enforceable and transparent mechanisms to ensure that development benefits all Baltimore residents and does not reduce revenue for public services.

We ask you to oppose HB 1232 unless it is amended to include enforceable provisions around job creation, protections for tax payers' interests and mechanisms to ensure that it does not result in a net loss of revenue for the city.