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## House Bill 1224

*Property Taxes - Special Rate for Vacant and Abandoned Property -  
Charter County Tax Limitation PG 408-26*

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Budget and Taxation Committee

Date: March 31, 2026

From: Kevin Kinnally

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** HB 1224.

**HB 1224 provides charter counties with limited, targeted authority to address vacant and abandoned properties that undermine neighborhoods, reduce property values, and strain local services.**

The bill allows a charter county to set a special property tax rate on certain vacant lots or improved properties cited as vacant and unfit for habitation, even if the county charter places a general cap on property tax rates or revenues.

Vacant and abandoned properties create real public safety and community impacts. Counties must respond to code violations, emergency calls, and neighborhood deterioration associated with these properties. Current law already authorizes a special rate for such properties. This bill allows charter counties to apply that targeted rate even if a charter tax cap would otherwise limit it and permits the county to retain the additional revenue in the general fund.

This authority is narrow. It applies only to properties formally cited as vacant and unfit. It does not expand general taxing power, raise rates across the tax base, or weaken charter protections for ordinary taxpayers. Instead, it provides a focused tool to address nuisance properties while preserving local accountability.

Counties need practical options to encourage rehabilitation, promote adaptive reuse, and protect surrounding communities. HB 1224 strengthens local decision-making and provides charter counties with a focused tool to address vacant and unfit properties that undermine neighborhood stability.

For these reasons, MACo respectfully requests a **FAVORABLE** report on HB 1224.

**HB1224\_PGCC\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Therese Hessler

Position: FAV



# THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

(301) 952-3700  
County Council

**March 31, 2026**

## **Senate Budget & Taxation Committee**

### **House Bill 1224 - Property Taxes - Special Rate for Vacant and Abandoned Property - Charter County Tax Limitation PG 408-26**

#### **POSITION: FAVORABLE**

Chair Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Prince George's County Council, we respectfully submit this testimony in support of House Bill 1224.

Prince George's County continues to experience the real and visible impacts of vacant and abandoned properties ranging from neighborhood blight and public safety concerns to suppressed property values and stalled economic activity. These properties often place a disproportionate burden on local governments, requiring ongoing code enforcement, maintenance interventions, and public safety responses, all while contributing little to the local tax base.

House Bill 1224 provides a targeted and practical tool to address this challenge. By authorizing charter counties to establish a higher property tax rate on vacant and abandoned properties even beyond existing charter limitation, this legislation creates a meaningful incentive for property owners to return these properties to productive use. At the same time, it ensures that jurisdictions like Prince George's County have the flexibility to respond to long-standing community concerns without being constrained by structural tax caps.

Importantly, this bill is not about broadly increasing taxes. Rather, it is about aligning policy with accountability, ensuring that properties which negatively impact surrounding communities are addressed in a way that promotes reinvestment, redevelopment, and neighborhood stabilization.

For Prince George's County, this authority represents opportunities to encourage rehabilitation and occupancy of long-vacant properties; reduce the strain on local code enforcement and public safety resources; and generate revenue that can be reinvested into community revitalization efforts.

House Bill 1224 builds on existing efforts across Maryland to more effectively manage vacant properties and reflects a thoughtful approach to balancing local flexibility with community needs.

For these reasons, the Prince George's County Council respectfully urges the Committee to issue a favorable report on House Bill 1224.

*Prepared by: Ashlar Government Relations on behalf of Prince George's County Council*

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