



BRANDON M. SCOTT
MAYOR

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

HB 1550

March 13, 2026

TO: Members of the Economic Matters Committee

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

RE: House Bill HB 1550: Eminent Domain and Condemnation Authority - Repeal (Property Rights Protection Act)

POSITION: UNFAVORABLE

Chair Valderrama, Vice Chair Charkoudian and members of the committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **opposes** House Bill (HB) 1550.

HB 1550 repeals certain authority of the State and local governments, including Baltimore City, to use the valuable tools of condemnation and eminent domain for a variety of land use and development purposes. Although the utilization frequency of condemnation and eminent domain may vary across the State, HB 1550 strikes at the fundamental ability of State and local governments to use these tools to address needs in housing, education, transportation, economic development, etc.

For example, although the City may still retain some ability to engage in condemnation pursuant to its express Charter powers, the bill could call into question the extent to which the City, through the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), could engage in many types of activities that use these tools, including infrastructure development and improvements, economic development, open space/park creation or expansion, and many blight elimination activities.

Although condemnation is not used as frequently as it has been in the past, it is still used as part of achieving whole block outcomes to acquire certain properties. Mayor Scott's Vacancy Reduction Initiative aims to address the vacant housing crisis in Baltimore through a comprehensive plan that includes historical levels of funding but also the use of all available tools to address blighting, deterioration, and vacant property.

The bill's proposed changes related to eminent domain and condemnation authority—including changes to the State Constitution--could negatively impact the City and BCA would not want to limit these valuable development tools in any way. For these reasons, the BCA respectfully request an **unfavorable** report on HB 1550.