



**House Bill 1224 – Property Taxes – Special Rate for Vacant and Abandoned Property –
Charter County Tax Limitation**

Position: Oppose

Maryland REALTORS® opposes House Bill 1224, which would allow a charter county to exceed its voter approved charter tax limits to impose a higher property tax rate on certain vacant and abandoned properties and direct that additional revenue into the county's general fund.

While REALTORS® support efforts to address truly vacant and distressed properties, this bill raises significant concerns about tax policy and precedent. In counties where charter-based tax limits exist, those limits are contained in charter provisions that can only be adopted or changed through voter approval under Article XI A of the Maryland Constitution. Creating an exception that allows a special category of property to be taxed above those charter limits undermines those voter approved safeguards and sets a concerning precedent for future expansions of taxing authority.

Charter tax limits exist to provide predictability, transparency, and fiscal discipline in local tax policy. Carving out an override for one subclass of property alters that framework and shifts the balance of local taxing authority in a way that extends beyond the stated purpose of addressing blight.

If the goal is to address problem properties, solutions should be narrowly tailored and directly tied to remediation and redevelopment tools rather than structured as an override of charter-based tax limits.

For these reasons, Maryland REALTORS® respectfully requests an unfavorable report on House Bill 1224.

**For more information contact lisa.may@mdrealtor.org
or christa.mcgee@mdrealtor.org**