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SB 0819

March 24, 2026

TO: Members of the House Ways and Means Committee
FROM: Nina Themelis, Director, Mayor's Office of Government Relations
RE: Senate Bill 819: Judicial In Rem Tax Foreclosure - Notice Requirements

POSITION: FAVORABLE

Chair Wilkins, Vice Chair Feldmark and members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** Senate Bill (SB) 819.

This Bill would alter the code requirements for providing notice to interested parties when a county or municipal corporation files a complaint for a judicial in rem foreclosure on certain vacant and abandoned property.

Specifically, the proposed legislation would eliminate the code requirement for mailings to all defendants within 5 days of a case being filed and instead refer to the Maryland Rules. The Maryland Rules currently require the same 5-day post-filing mailings, as well as posting or publication, but removing specificity in the code would provide flexibility should the Maryland Rules change.

This change would have no effect on the timing of Judicial In Rem acquisitions or dispositions but could eventually lead to a "streamlining" of the process and resource savings should the Rules change to amend or alter its 5-day mailing requirement. In addition to the requirements of the Maryland Rules, the City has adopted a robust service of process requirement, so we are certain any change to the Rules would not negatively affect the amount of notice that owners or other interest holders would receive.

The BCA is in support of eliminating the explicit 5-day mailing requirement, and instead relying on the Maryland Rules, as a way of streamlining the notice provisions in the Judicial In-Rem Tax Foreclosure process. Judicial In-Rem Tax Foreclosure is one of many important DHCD tools used to address vacancy reduction and blight elimination in the city of Baltimore. This process efficiency bill is necessary as the City moves to increase the utilization of in rem tax sale foreclosure over other lengthier acquisition and disposition tools.

For these reasons, the BCA respectfully request a **favorable** report on SB 819.