Maryland Department of Transportation
The Secretary's Office

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The Daily Record
11 East Saratoga Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Dear Editor:

We request that you print this letter as a response to certain errors that were included in a recent Daily Record article ("Lawsuit over State Center redevelopment to go forward").

The article incorrectly states, without attribution, that "many state agencies currently leasing space in downtown Baltimore would move to the new development," and that the Maryland Attorney General's Office would move to State Center. The State is moving just one agency from the CBD to State Center, the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA), which will leave the State-owned building at 6 St. Paul and be replaced by an agency from the State Center site thus causing no net impact on the State's office presence in the CBD. This is consistent with the project's guiding principle to have no net impact on the State's office presence either in the CBD or at State Center, thus protecting both Midtown and the CBD.

The article then states, "the prospect of those moves prompted downtown property owners, including Angelos, to claim that such a scenario would saddle their properties with massive vacancies." However, the project does not include reducing the State's office space in the plaintiffs' or any other office buildings in the CBD, and so this sentence is inaccurate.

Other reasons that have been cited for the lawsuit have proven equally faulty. First, some report that the project will add one million square feet of private office space to a glutted market. However, Phase One, which is the only portion of the project that has been defined and approved, includes just 15,000 square feet of privately occupied office space, about one floor of space, which will have no impact on the market.

Other reports have said that the project costs the State too much. However, the State's independent national real estate consultants found that the public private partnership was the most feasible and cost effective way from the taxpayer's perspective to redevelop the site. Moreover, the State legislative Budget Committees and the Board of Public Works scrutinized and approved the project several times. The State Center complex currently generates great cost to the State but no taxes or other revenue whereas Phase One alone is expected to generate approximately $170 million in private investment, more than $100 million dollars in taxes, ground rents, and parking fees, and 1,000 jobs, and also should drive the revitalization of an important section of the City.

Finally, some have said that the project opponents want the State to vacate the 28-acre site and disperse the State agencies into privately owned buildings in the CBD. However, this would damage the nine adjacent neighborhoods, Midtown, the Cultural Arts District, Maryland General Hospital, and the other significant educational and cultural institutions located near State Center. It would also require the State at significant financial and operating cost to divide up and disperse the agencies across a much larger geographic area. Finally, it would halt a transit-oriented project for Baltimore that was named in 2010 to be one of the seven best redevelopment projects in the world by the Congress for New Urbanism.

Please visit the project's website at www.statecenter.org for more information.

Thank you for considering our letter,

Michael Gaines
Assistant Secretary for Real Estate
Maryland Department of General Services

Christopher Patusky
State Center Project Director
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