Dear Members of the Georgia General Assembly,

As business leaders, we are writing to express our opposition to the Buckhead City legislation and ask for your consideration of our request.

Despite the challenges of a global pandemic, the city of Atlanta and state of Georgia enjoy remarkable growth and success. This includes major economic development wins and other exciting achievements. Much of this success is due to the positive climate created by our state and local political leaders.

Amid these milestones, Atlanta faces challenges as well. Some of these challenges, particularly incidents of violent crime, have grown over the last couple of years. This has fueled an effort by a vocal group to extract a vital neighborhood from Atlanta and create a Buckhead City.

As business leaders, we are significant stakeholders in this conversation. The signatories of this letter, many of whom are led by Buckhead residents, collectively represent approximately $4.7 billion of real estate value located in Buckhead that accounts for approximately $57 million in annual property taxes to the City of Atlanta. We represent large corporations, small business owners, entrepreneurs, and everything in between. While our companies are not voters, we have a large, vested interest in the long-term prosperity of Buckhead, Atlanta, and Georgia.

We have evaluated the proposal of a standalone Buckhead City. In doing so, we analyzed the merits and considerations of the plan and its impact on our employees, residents, customers, and guests. Our conclusion: the proposed Buckhead City worsens many of the problems it aims to solve in Atlanta and simultaneously creates new issues across the state. Here’s why:

- **Doesn’t Reduce Crime:** The spike in crime, particularly violent crime, is a serious concern in Buckhead, and across the state. However, Buckhead City would significantly weaken the City of Atlanta. The result will be more criminal behavior across the entire Metro region. Bad actors do not respect city limit signs. Buckhead will not be spared regardless of the size of the police force. A strong Atlanta is the path to a safe Buckhead.

- **Negative Brand Implications:** A Buckhead City will harm the brand of Buckhead, Atlanta and the state of Georgia. Our city is known for positive and productive collaboration among public leaders, residents, and the business community. It’s the “Atlanta way.” The initiative to carve up Atlanta casts history aside and divides the city. This will negatively impact economic development across Atlanta and Georgia.

- **Dangerous Precedent:** A neighborhood has never seceded from an existing city in the 250-year history of the state of Georgia. If this movement were successful, Buckhead City would be the first, but certainly not the last. Other neighborhoods in Atlanta and around the state would likely consider similar moves. Today, secession may be an Atlanta issue, but it would undoubtedly rear its head in Athens, Macon, Savannah, Augusta, and all around the state.
• **Higher, Duplicative Costs:** There would be increased upfront costs – from creating a city council, electing a new mayor, installing municipal courts and jails, buying city of Atlanta property, creating new municipal services and potentially funding Buckhead’s pro rata share of outstanding city of Atlanta municipal bonds. Residents and businesses in Buckhead would likely pay higher real estate taxes and incur more costly public services.

• **Public School Chaos:** A great public education system is key to attracting new investment into the state. As former Atlanta Board of Education Chair Jason Esteves has already previously outlined, Atlanta Public Schools (“APS”) owns all public schools in the Buckhead area, and the Georgia constitution prohibits the creation of a new school district. As a result, children in a proposed Buckhead City, by default, will either attend Fulton County schools, which are not equipped to take on 5,000 new students, or apply and pay tuition for an out of district spot in APS, subject to availability. Both are bad options for students.

Our newly elected Mayor Andre Dickens is already acting on his pledge to prioritize public safety. Mayor Dickens announced a new police precinct in the heart of the Buckhead and pledged support for a state-of-the-art public safety training facility for the Atlanta Police Department. We are encouraged by the mayor’s early actions, which highlight his commitment to reducing crime. He deserves the time to succeed.

The lack of support for a Buckhead City from Atlanta City Hall, the Atlanta City Council or any state lawmakers representing Atlanta should not be overlooked. If the General Assembly approves Buckhead City legislation against the will of local elected leaders, the state of Georgia will undoubtedly be inundated with countless, divisive, and distracting referendums in the future.

To that end, we respectfully request that the General Assembly table the proposed legislation to create Buckhead City. If the General Assembly is unwilling to do this, we request that the General Assembly exclude the commercial district of Buckhead from the proposed Buckhead City. Simply put, the risk to our companies, employees, residents, and customers is too great to bet our tax dollars on a start-up city with no experience.

**We choose Atlanta,** the Capital City of the proud State of Georgia.

Sincerely,

Alliance Residential  
AMLI Residential  
Atlanta Property Group  
Atlanta Tech Village  
Banyan Street Capital  
Camden Property Trust  
Coro Realty  
Cortland  
Cousins Properties  
EDENS  
Gables Residential  
Grand Hyatt Buckhead  
Granite Properties  
Highwoods Properties  
Jamestown LP  
JLB Partners  
JW Marriott Atlanta  
Buckhead  
LMC  
MAA  
Mill Creek Residential Trust  
Piedmont Office Realty Trust  
Portman Holdings  
Regency Centers  
Regent Partners  
Selig Enterprises  
Songy Highroads LLC  
The Ardent Companies  
The Loudermilk Companies  
TPA Group  
Trammell Crow Residential  
Wood Partners