



**Representative Doug Green**

**66<sup>th</sup> House District**

**Representative Thomas West**

**49<sup>th</sup> House District**

**Sponsor Testimony- HB 598**

**(Rep. West)**

Chairwoman Anielski, Vice Chair Hambley, Ranking Member Holmes, and members of the House State and Local Government Committee, both Representative Green and I very much appreciate the opportunity to offer sponsor testimony today on House Bill 598.

Forfeited land sales consist of properties that have been foreclosed upon for delinquent taxes and have been offered at Sheriff's Sale on two separate occasions for the total amount of taxes, assessments, penalties and interest due, plus cost. When not sold at Sheriff's Sale, the properties are forfeited to the State of Ohio by court order and remanded to the county auditor for sale. Properties available for acquisition on the forfeited land sales list are not available for inspection by the general public prior to the sale, meaning there is no opportunity to assess the amount of work that may be required before a property can be habitable or available for rent or resale. As a result, these properties often slip back into tax delinquency and, ultimately, back on a forfeited land sale list. This means that the property cannot be sold until the auditor holds another annual sale.

**(Rep. Green)**

This legislation will provide County Auditors with the flexibility of holding these forfeited properties sales at their discretion. By allowing county auditors to more strategically auction off the properties, this bill will allow them to cut off this cycle of value depression and would enhance the opportunity to plan around a blighted area instead of having to watch this cycle of neglect repeat itself time and time again.

Furthermore, providing Auditors with the flexibility of holding these properties for longer periods provides county land banks – one of the potential acquires of the properties with preferred access-

with the opportunity to exercise their ability to acquire properties from the forfeited land list and perform the needed maintenance and upgrades that will enhance the neighborhoods overall quality of life.

Thank you. We would be happy to address any questions.