



**Ohio House Ways and Means Committee
Proponent Testimony, Substitute Senate Bill 112
David Mann – President & CEO, Lucas County Land Bank
Tuesday, March 29, 2022**

Chair Merrin, Vice Chair Riedel, Ranking Member Sobecki, and members of the Ohio House Ways and Means Committee, the Lucas County Land Bank appreciates the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on Substitute Senate Bill 112, a bi-partisan bill that makes changes to improve tax foreclosure and land reutilization corporation laws.

Twelve years ago, the Lucas County Land Bank became the second county land bank to form in Ohio. We began small, but with the support of the Legislature and local government and private sector partners, we have returned thousands of vacant, abandoned, and tax-delinquent properties to productive use. Demolished over 3,500 blighted properties. Renovated almost 1,000 residential and commercial buildings. Made lasting impacts to neighborhood stability in almost every community in Lucas County, and preserved our property values for the betterment of our school systems and other key taxing districts.

Today, 64 counties in Ohio have formed a land bank, including sister counties in Northwest Ohio like Fulton, Allen, Defiance, Henry, Williams, Ottawa, and Van Wert.

Land banking is not an end in itself, but a major tool in the tool-kit of local government. Like all tools, it can get worn down with much use. New issues arise that were not fully anticipated until one started hammering away at the problem. Substitute Senate Bill 112 is an opportunity to build on the prior good work of the Legislature and advance provisions that will make tax foreclosure and land reutilization law cheaper, faster, and smarter.

One provision of the bill that is particularly important to us makes improvements to forfeited land sales conducted by county auditors. Under the bill, auditors and county land banks are provided the discretion to exclude certain problematic properties from a required annual sale. This new power will allow local government partners to work together to tackle complicated, multi-year clean-up efforts, especially on forfeited brownfield sites, without an arbitrary sale impeding this difficult work. With the funding already approved by the Legislature for brownfield remediation and passage of Substitute Senate Bill 112, more blighted buildings will be cleaned-up and more abandonment will be eliminated in communities throughout Ohio.

Chair Merrin and Members of the House Ways and Means Committee, thank you for the opportunity to share our thoughts on Substitute Senate Bill 112.