



Representative Thomas F. Patton

H.B. 375 – House Economic & Workforce Development Committee

Sponsor Testimony

April 23, 2024

Chair Swearingen, Vice Chair Santucci, Ranking Member Upchurch, and members of the House Economic and Workforce Development Committee, thank you for allowing my joint sponsor, Rep. Steve Demetriou, and me the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 375.

In 2008, I introduced a bill that sought to create the first ever land bank in Ohio. With the help of Cleveland attorney Gus Frangos and Cuyahoga County treasurer Jim Rokakis, Senate Bill 353 was enacted into law, creating the Cuyahoga County land bank. This set the playbook for other Ohio counties, and today 69 of 88 Ohio counties have land banks. In 2021, the Legislature passed the Brownfield Remediation Act (HB110), allocating \$350 million in grants for brownfield projects across the state. Governor DeWine designated the county land banks as the county leads for distributing these funds, showing immense trust in the good work these land banks are doing.

Land banks function as a mechanism for acquiring, holding, and distributing property in service of community goals. The primary function of land banks is to take delinquent or nonproductive land and facilitate the sale or transfer to a responsible third party for productive use in the community. Land banks acquire vacant parcels through purchases, donations, or intergovernmental transfer from public foreclosure proceedings. They then ensure the title is clear and prepare the parcels for transfer to a third party. Parcels are then prioritized and sold for redevelopment or use by the responsible third party.

House Bill 375 makes some needed technical changes to the land bank law, and we have consulted at length with the Cuyahoga County Land Bank and Ohio Land Bank Association on these changes. My joint sponsor, Rep. Demetriou will give a synopsis of House Bill 375, at which point we welcome questions from the committee.