



OHIO HOUSE STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

May 9, 2023

**Written Proponent Testimony
House Bill 85**

Chair John, Vice Chair Dean, Ranking Member Brennan, and members of the Ohio House State and Local Government Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written proponent testimony regarding the Ohio Municipal League's position on House Bill 85, legislation enhancing the ability of land banks to purchase property.

Although land banks are most typically found at the county level, they remain an essential tool for the municipalities within those counties to turn blighted properties around, increase property values, and – very often – lead to amenities or services that provide a higher quality of life for residents.

HB85 is a fairly straightforward bill allowing land banks to acquire property through two methods: purchasing the tax-foreclosed property before it is offered for sale to the public and exercising a right of first refusal to purchase property sold to another bidder at a foreclosure sale.

The bill lays out the requirements that must apply to the property for a land bank to purchase the property before it is offered for public sale, and we are supportive of them. Additionally, the right of first refusal option allows the land bank three days to request to purchase the property from the highest bidder at a county sheriff's foreclosure auction – in which case the land bank would purchase the property at that amount. This provides municipalities greater opportunity to attain the property at a reasonable cost, protecting taxpayer dollars.

We appreciate Rep. Patton for sponsoring this bill and providing land banks and communities with additional tools to attain these properties in an effort to continue opportunities for current and future homeowners.

Kent Scarrett
Executive Director
Ohio Municipal League