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HB 86 – Sponsor Testimony

Chairman Hoops, Vice Chairman Lorenz, Ranking Member Abdullahi, and members of the House Development Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 86. This bill streamlines the land bank process, making it more efficient in reclaiming blighted and underutilized properties across Ohio. It is a reintroduction of House Bill 375 from the last General Assembly, which was carried by now Sen. Tom Patton and myself.

For those unfamiliar, land banks acquire vacant properties through purchase, donation, or public foreclosure, clear their titles, and prepare them for redevelopment via a sale or transfer to a responsible third party.

Many provisions in HB 86 were included in Senate Bill 112 from the 134th General Assembly, which passed the Senate unanimously, but simply ran out of time to become law. I want to recognize Senator Matt Dolan and Representative Derek Merrin for their work on previous versions of this legislation.

Key updates in HB 86 include the following:

1. The bill extends the authorization to make safety and environmental inspections on delinquent abandoned property during a tax foreclosure under the supervision of the Court. This would limit unwholesome speculation by having an inspection report available as to the condition of a property at the time of a sheriff's sale.
2. The bill strengthens local government partnerships in addressing blighted properties by granting townships the ability to enter into agency agreements with

county land banks to address nuisance properties, ensuring a more streamlined approach to removing abandoned and unsafe structures.

3. The bill enables a board of county commissioners to provide supplemental funding for land banks upon sale of a property from a land bank to a responsible property owner, and back on the tax duplicate by a county land bank. Commissioners may choose to authorize up to fifty percent (50%) of future real estate taxes be paid to the county's land reutilization fund as a Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) for up to five years.

HB 86 strengthens a system that already benefits Ohio communities, improving outcomes for prospective property owners, developers, and neighborhoods alike.

This bill is named the Gus Frangos Act in honor of my friend Gus Frangos, a driving force behind the creation and implementation of Ohio's land bank system. He was the long time CEO of the Cuyahoga County Land Bank, the first in Ohio. Gus attended every hearing for HB375 during the 135th General Assembly before passing away unexpectedly last year. Naming this legislation after him is a fitting tribute to his service to our State.

I appreciate your time and look forward to your questions.