



Ohio Land Bank Association Testimony
Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee
Support for the Brownfield Remediation Program, Building Demolition and Site
Revitalization and Welcome Home Ohio Program

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Chair Manchester, Vice Chair Brenner, Ranking Member Weinstein, and members of the Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of the Ohio Land Bank Association (OLBA) and its members. Today, I am here to express strong support for several critical programs that play an essential role in revitalizing Ohio's communities: the **Brownfield Remediation Program**, the Building Demolition and Site Revitalization Program and the **Welcome Home Ohio Program**.

Brownfield Remediation & Site Revitalization Program Amendments (SC1207)

While this program has been incredibly successful and impactful, the demand for funding continues to far exceed availability. In each funding cycle, applications nearly double the amount of funds available, leaving many critical projects unfunded. Moreover, many communities have conducted extensive site assessments and are prepared to move forward with remediation but are stalled due to insufficient funding.

While we are asking the Ohio Senate to maintain the House's proposed \$250M allocation in funding, we are advocating for critical programmatic improvements that will ensure equitable access to the program for all 88 counties. These improvements are as follows:

1. Local Control and Lead Entity Designation: Each board of county commissioners will designate one lead entity responsible for administering the program. This maintains local decision-making and allows counties to prioritize their most pressing redevelopment projects. Current law allows county land banks and for-profit developers to be lead applicants.
2. Expanded Eligibility for Subrecipients: We recommend expanding subrecipient eligibility to allow for-profit developers to participate as subrecipients, expanding capacity and leveraging private-sector expertise.
3. Equal Distribution in FY26 (\$125M): Every Ohio county will receive an equal allocation of funds for brownfield remediation, with no local match required. This ensures that all communities, regardless of size or resource capacity, have access to critical funding.
4. Population-Based Allocation in FY27 (\$125M): Any unused funds from FY26 will roll into FY27 and be redistributed based on each county's share of Ohio's population, as determined by the 2020 Census. These funds will require a 25% local match, promoting local investment while ensuring proportional distribution.
5. Reallocation of Unused Funds: Any funds that remain unencumbered in FY27 will be made available to communities based on need, as determined by Development.



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During the 135th General Assembly lame duck session, the Senate passed SB315, which included amendments allowing for-profit developers to apply directly to the Brownfield Remediation Program and removing the 25% local match requirement. While this may appear to expand access, it would instead shift state funds to subsidize large-scale, for-profit developments in Ohio's major metropolitan areas, creating an imbalance in fund distribution and likely leaving out many rural counties. We also believe that the 25% local match is a fair policy, as the local community should also be invested in these projects and help drive local priorities.

Welcome Home Ohio Program

Ohio is facing a housing crisis, with rising costs preventing many working families from becoming homeowners. The **Welcome Home Ohio Program (WHO)** was created by the General Assembly to directly address this challenge by increasing the available housing stock, creating affordable homeownership opportunities and ensuring we can house the growing workforce in our communities. While the program rolled out slowly due to its new creation and complexity, when funding became available, land banks were prepared and able to utilize the funding. The program has already demonstrated success, awarding \$60M to create 440 homes in 24 counties.

We appreciate the Ohio House of Representatives, who supported these efforts through the inclusion of funding and important programmatic changes and ask that the Senate maintain these changes. These programmatic changes were also included in SB145 introduced in this General Assembly. Only one provision in the SB145 was not included in the Ohio House that we ask the Senate to consider, which would favor the promissory note and mortgage instead of a deed restriction for WHO projects, which is how the program operates currently. These changes improve access to traditional financing. Many large lenders resell their mortgages on the secondary market. Deed restrictions tied to WHO properties complicate this process, making it less appealing for lenders to originate loans in the first place. By utilizing a secondary Ohio promissory note and mortgage, the primary lender maintains first-priority status, ensuring smoother resale and greater willingness to finance WHO properties. Meanwhile, the State's interest remains protected as a second mortgage, aligning with WHO's affordability goals and maintains a similar protection as a deed restriction. This structure not only encourages broader lender participation but also allows homeownership without unnecessary barriers.

Building Demolition and Site Revitalization Program

We are asking the Ohio Senate to maintain the Ohio House's continued investment in this initiative, which would commit \$40M over the biennium to demolition commercial and residential buildings and allow for the revitalization of surrounding properties on sites that are not considered brownfields. Current law evenly distributes this amount amongst the 88 counties, meaning each county would receive an equal distribution of about \$450,000. This is especially important to the rural communities that have built their internal capacity to take on more demolition in areas of need throughout their counties.



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Chair Manchester, Vice Chair Brenner, Ranking Member Weinstein, and members of the Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee, the results have shown that the **Brownfield Remediation Program, the Building Demolition and Site Revitalization Program** and the **Welcome Home Ohio Program** are vital to Ohio's future. These programs are truly making a difference in every community.

On behalf of OLBA and our members, we urge you to support these critical initiatives. Thank you for your time and consideration. I welcome any questions and look forward to working with the committee to advance these essential programs.

Sincerely,

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Ohio Land Bank Association

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The following organizations and individuals stand in strong support of the Ohio Land Bank Association's proposed amendments to the **Brownfield Remediation Program**. Their collective endorsement reflects the widespread need for equitable, predictable, and efficient funding to ensure all Ohio communities have the resources necessary to address blight, revitalize properties, and drive economic growth.

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- A&R
- Adams County Land Bank
- Alchemy
- Allied Environmental Services, Inc.
- AmSpirit Business Connections
- Ashtabula County Land Bank
- Board of Miami County Commissioners
- Bridgewater Counseling
- COCIC
- Clark County Land Bank
- Columbiana County Land Bank
- CTL Engineering, Inc.
- Cuyahoga Land Bank
- Delaware Depot District Properties, LLC
- EnviroCore, Inc.
- Environmental Remediation Contractor
- Global Petro Advisors
- Highland County Land Bank
- Howard Hanna Real Estate Services
- Jefferson County Land Bank
- Jennings TWS
- Knox County Land Bank
- Lacheta & Associates
- Lehner Company
- Lighthouse YT LLC
- Logan County Land Bank
- Lucas County Land Bank
- Mahoning County Land Bank
- MAKsolve Environmental & Safety Consultants
- Marion CANDO
- Marion County Land Bank
- Miami County Board of Commissioners
- Monroe County
- Monroe County Land Bank
- Montgomery County Land Bank
- Partners Environmental Consulting, Inc.
- Patriot Engineering and Environmental Inc.
- Petrohio, LLC
- Phoenix Environmental, LLC
- Port Authority of Northwest Ohio
- Putnam County CIC
- Putnam County Port Authority
- Richland County Land Bank
- Ross County Land Bank
- Sandusky County Land Bank
- Shelby County Land Bank
- Summit County Land Bank
- Tetra Tech
- The Port of Greater Cincinnati Development Authority
- The Robert Weiler Company
- Van Wert Area Economic Development Corporation
- Abbott, Taylor
- Agin, Frank
- Ahlers, Douglas
- Alshahal, Ali
- Boehmer, James
- Bowling, Kimberly
- Boyer, Kurt
- Boyer, Steven
- Boyer, Susan
- Bravo, Patrick
- Brown, Dan
- Carr, Steve
- Clarey, Michael
- Comstock, Gus
- Cummons, Cynthia
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- Fender, Rich
- Filkins, Sam
- Fleck, Joe
- Flora, Debora
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- Glover, Tabatha
- Grauwelman, Michael
- Hall, Tricia
- Hamrick, Amy
- Harris, Ethan
- Hasson, Thomas
- Heitmeyer, Mel
- Herold, Tad
- Hill, Tedd
- Hull, Matt
- Hupp, Jenni
- Iarocci, Alex
- Jamshidimehr, Ali
- Jaros, Chris
- Johansen, Jason
- Kelich, Katherine
- Lacheta, Darrin
- Lawrence, Robert
- Lehner, Matt
- Leon, Ricardo
- Link, Aaron
- Mann, David
- Martin, Christina
- Martin, Heather
- Masefield, Jennifer
- Matthews, Antoine
- McClelland, Matt
- McGovern, Chris
- Mercer, Ted
- Michael, Rahiel
- Michailidis, Bill
- Michailidis, Vasilios
- Miller, Ronald
- Morrison, Rick
- Mullett, Sydney
- Norris, Darren
- O'Neal, Sean
- Oren, Ruth
- Oren, Stan
- Paetz, Erik
- Paetz, Jaris
- Paetz, Jeff
- Raman, Samir
- Reichert, Kevin
- Roberts, Andy
- Sakian, Nicholas
- Sealts, Amy
- Sinopoli, Rebecca
- Ultican, Dustin
- Wagner, Matthew
- Wehrle, Richard
- Weinstein, Michael
- Westfall, Wade
- Williams, Curtiss
- Young, Jared