

PROPONENT TESTIMONY—HOUSE BILL 155

HOUSE ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

APRIL 21, 2021

Chair Edwards, Vice-Chair Powell, Ranking Member Upchurch and members of the House Economic and Workforce Development Committee thank you for the opportunity to address you on House Bill 155. The bill provides county land reutilization corporations additional tools and funding to continue our mission to abate blight in Ohio and reutilize property for future generations.

The county land reutilization corporations have been created by local leaders and have provided necessary leadership throughout the state for the problems of blight, abandoned properties and foreclosures as they exist in each locality. These problems are similar throughout the state but local leaders can prioritize for each county as they respond to existing conditions. These challenges may change over time as they have changed from the 2008 foreclosure crisis to the current financial fallout from the pandemic.

House Bill 155 continues a successful legislative model and provides a critical funding stream to continue the work to eliminate blight not only in our cities but also our townships. By keeping the definition of blight as defined by Section 1.08 of the Revised Code, there is uniformity throughout the state which provides lenders, property owners, citizens and all governmental levels certainty in dealing with property rights.

However, the changes permit local leaders to prioritize the most critical issues within each county and provide necessary tools which they might otherwise not have. The legislation also requires a local monetary component which creates a local investment and leverages local funds for maximum benefit.

Legislation which can benefit Athens, Butler and Cuyahoga counties provides a model to benefit all Ohio counties which participate in the grant program or provide necessary assistance to address nuisance enforcement issues in our townships.

I want to thank Representatives Upchurch and Smith for their leadership on the issues addressed in HB 155 and the committee members for your attention.