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SENATE LOCAL GOVERNMENT, PUBLIC SAFETY AND VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

SENATE BILL 356 -- PROPONENT TESTIMONY (written only)

December 8, 2020

**Jon Honeck
Senior Policy Analyst**

Chairman Manning, Vice Chairman Brenner, Ranking Member Maharath, and members of the Senate Local Government, Public Safety, and Veterans Affairs Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on Senate Bill 356, sponsored by Senator Dolan. This bill contains a number of important, common sense reforms that will streamline the disposition of abandoned and delinquent property. Taken together, these reforms will make it easier for county land banks to succeed in their critical mission of cleaning up properties and returning them to productive use. Land banks are a vital tool in our economic development toolkit. County commissioners often serve on the boards of land banks to show their support and to help ensure their success.

The bill enables commissioners to approve, by resolution, the transfer of up to 50 percent of the property taxes collected from a property conveyed by a land bank to the county land reutilization fund for up to five years. Commissioners have the discretion to exclude certain taxing districts from the resolution if their fiscal condition warrants this consideration. This revenue stream will enable land banks to rehabilitate more properties and return them to productive use.

We are especially grateful that the draft includes a new section, RC 5723.20, which removes liability from county government for receiving forfeited property that has existing environmental contamination. This language was included in House Bill 598 of the 132nd General Assembly, which passed the House, but was not able to move through the Senate before the end of legislative session. This provision will make it easier to acquire contaminated property and speed up the rehabilitation process.

We urge the committee to favorably report this legislation. Thank you for your attention.



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