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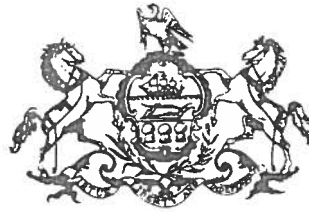
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House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

MEMORANDUM

TO: ALL HOUSE MEMBERS

FROM: Representative John Taylor

DATE: December 10, 2010

SUBJECT: Reintroduction of House Bill 712 from last session regarding Land Banks

In Pennsylvania, one abandoned property can cause the value of neighboring properties to depreciate by nearly \$6,500 each. Abandoned properties also cost cash-strapped municipalities and our constituents a lot of money for municipal services and to secure, maintain and demolish these structures when they become hazardous to the public. Fortunately, as eight other states have found, a land bank can help alleviate the problems our cities and towns are having with these dangerous eyesores. Therefore, I invite you to co-sponsor legislation that provides for the establishment of local land banks.

A land bank focuses on the conversion of vacant, abandoned and tax-delinquent properties into productive use. They can be pivotal in making property redevelopment more efficient and affordable and for reserving land for targeted purposes under local policy and planning goals.

My bill enables any county, city or borough with a population of 10,000 or more to establish a land bank and enables any township, borough or town to form a land bank with any land bank jurisdiction through an intergovernmental cooperation agreement. The bill also establishes the framework by which a land bank must operate, but it does not provide a systematic mandate for operations as blight situations and land planning differ from municipality to municipality.

Significant work has gone into the drafting and vetting of the language as has consideration for both the rights of property owners in hardship and law-abiding property owners who have to live next to abandoned, blighted, tax delinquent buildings.

In the previous legislative session, HB 712 cleared the House with overwhelming approval and the Senate Urban Affairs and Housing Committee reported it. Time ran out on the legislative session before it received full Senate consideration.

Like conservatorship, Act 135 of 2008, which is now in use in urban, suburban and rural areas throughout the state, land banks are a blight fighting, smart growth tool that local governments can use to stabilize and re-develop their communities.

I hope you will join me in supporting the land bank concept. If you are interested in cosponsoring this legislation, please contact Bonnie in my office by e-mail at bglatfel@pahousegop.com or by telephone at 787-3179.

Previous cosponsors: J. TAYLOR , PERZEL , GEIST , BEYER , DERMODY , FREEMAN , HARPER , HESS , W. KELLER , KILLION , KORTZ , MANN , MARSHALL , MILLER , MURT , M. O'BRIEN , REICHLEY , SAYLOR , SIPTROTH , K. SMITH , SWANGER , THOMAS , WALKO , YUDICHAK , HARHART , D. COSTA, DEASY and WAGNER