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House of Representatives
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MEMORANDUM

TO: Members of the House of Representatives
FROM: Representative Neal P. Goodman
DATE: September 10, 2012
SUBJECT: Proposed Legislation – Tax Liens on Abandoned and Blighted Property

In the near future, I will be introducing legislation to address an issue that has prevented many communities from addressing abandoned and blighted properties in their neighborhoods. The issue arises when tax liens have been filed against the properties by the various taxing districts.

It has been brought to my attention by local officials that in many instances where an abandoned property has been targeted for demolition – either by a municipality or by a concerned citizen willing to pay for the demolition - the demolition is prevented from going forward because at least one of the three entities with taxing abilities (the municipality, the county, and the school district) has a lien on the property and refuses to drop it. Local officials tell me that, in most cases, they can get two out of the three taxing entities to drop their tax liens. But it only takes one of the entities to refuse to drop its lien to stop the entire project. With little hope of having the final tax lien satisfied, many properties continue to fall deeper into disrepair.

In cases where two out of the three taxing jurisdictions agree to drop their tax liens, my legislation would allow one of the entities to petition the Court of Common Pleas to extinguish the liens of the third entity, as well, so that demolition of the abandoned, blighted property can go forward. It would also enable them to petition the court to require the third entity to pay the court costs associated with the action.

If you would like to co-sponsor this legislation, please contact Linda Reed at lreed@pahouse.net or (717) 787-2798.