



House Bill 1128

Land Bank Authorities - Powers and Authority

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Environment & Transportation Committee

Date: February 25, 2025

From: Dominic J. Butchko

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** HB 1128. This bill provides additional tools for county-established land banks.

Land banks are public entities that acquire, manage, and repurpose vacant, abandoned, or tax-delinquent properties to support community development and economic revitalization. Their primary goal is to transform distressed properties into productive use, whether through resale, redevelopment, or public projects such as affordable housing or green spaces. By holding and maintaining these properties, land banks help stabilize neighborhoods, prevent blight, and attract investment. They often work in coordination with counties, developers, and community organizations to ensure that land is used in ways that align with long-term community needs and planning goals. Maryland counties have been hesitant to establish land banks, largely due to the intensive initial capital costs. Only Prince George's County has formally created a land bank, and they are still in the process of standing up the entity.

Counties thank the sponsor for introducing HB 1128, which seeks to give additional tools to county-established land banks, including new abilities to use *in rem* foreclosures to acquire vacant and abandoned properties. With affordable housing and a statewide sluggish economy both proving to be incredibly vexing challenges for both state and county leaders, smart outside-the-box solutions and additional tools are needed to meet the current moment.

HB 1128 gives counties clear authority for another tool in the toolbox to address many modern land use and development challenges. For this reason, MACo urges the Committee to give HB 1128 a **FAVORABLE** report.