



Odette Ramos

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HB1128 – Land Bank Authorities – Power and Authority
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FAVORABLE

Honorable Chair Korman and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee:

I am writing to urge your support for HB1128 Land Bank Authorities – Power and Authority.

Land Banks were authorized in state law first for Baltimore City in 2009 and then for the entire state in 2018. Land Banks are quasi-governmental entities whose sole purpose is to acquire and dispose of vacant and abandoned properties, and facilitate their redevelopment. There are over 200 Land Banks across the country, supported by the National Land Bank Network. Cities and states with Land Banks include Detroit, Cleveland, Ohio, and Atlanta.

The 2018 Land Bank enabling legislation allowed for Land Banks to be created in any jurisdiction or municipality. So far, Prince George’s County and the City of Cambridge have passed legislation creating their Land Banks, and are working to set them up. In 2024, an effort to create a Land Bank in Baltimore City failed.

HB1128 is created to add more tools to the Land Bank enabling legislation and allow for jurisdictions to create them with these new powers. It is a statewide bill that addresses some of the shortcomings that were discovered during the local Land Bank deliberations. This bill strengthens the enabling legislation to authorize Land Banks to:

- Conduct In Rem tax sale foreclosure actions on behalf of the jurisdiction
- Create internal financing entities to attract investment for development projects
- Claw back properties that they may have sold but no redevelopment has occurred.

Currently, all jurisdictions are authorized to conduct In Rem tax sale foreclosure actions, yet Baltimore City is the only jurisdiction that has passed local legislation and implemented this process for acquiring vacant properties. It would be up to each jurisdiction or municipality to allow for their Land Bank to conduct such actions on behalf of the jurisdiction or municipality, and this adds another tool in the toolbox for acquiring vacant properties to then control the outcome of the property.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions. I can be reached on 410-396-4814 or via email at odette.ramos@baltimorecity.gov.

Respectfully Submitted:

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