



Testimony
HOUSE BILL 1128
Environment and Transportation Committee
February 25, 2025
Position: FAVORABLE

Dear Chairperson Korman and Members of the Environment and Taxation Committee:

The Community Development Network of Maryland (CDN) is the voice for Maryland's community development sector and serves nearly 150 member organizations. CDN—focuses on small affordable housing developers, housing counseling agencies and community-based non-profits across the state of Maryland. The mission of CDN is to promote, strengthen and advocate for the community development sector throughout Maryland's urban, suburban and rural communities. CDN envisions a state in which all neighborhoods are thriving and where people of all incomes have abundant opportunities for themselves and their families.

CDN has been a part of the effort to encourage the use of land banks in the state of Maryland as a strategy to address vacant and abandoned property. A land bank is a public entity with unique powers to put deteriorated properties back to productive use according to community goals.

A land bank's primary purpose is to acquire blighted properties and temporarily hold and take care of them until they can be transferred to new, responsible owners. State laws give land banks their unique powers. Land banks can acquire tax-foreclosed property cost-effectively; flexibly sell property to a responsible buyer or developer, driven not by the highest price but by the outcome that most closely aligns with community goals; extinguish liens and clear title; and hold property tax exempt.

This bill expands the land bank authority statute so that land banks could create a special fund to make loans or grants and create partnerships to include in the sale, lease, transfer, or disposition of the land bank authority's property a certain agreement. Further, the bill allows land banks to foreclose and use in rem foreclosure to address liens.

We urge a favorable report for House Bill 1128.

Submitted by Claudia Wilson Randall, Executive Director, Community Development Network