

NEW YORK  
LAND BANK  
ASSOCIATION

January 30, 2025

Hon. Liz Krueger, Chair  
New York State Senate Finance Committee  
416 Capitol  
Albany, NY 12247

Hon. J. Gary Pretlow, Chair  
New York State Assembly Ways and Means Committee  
LOB 711-A  
Albany, NY 12248

*Sent electronically via [financechair@nysenate.gov](mailto:financechair@nysenate.gov) and [wamchair@nyassembly.gov](mailto:wamchair@nyassembly.gov)*

**RE: Written testimony for the 2025 joint legislative budget hearing on housing**

Dear Chairperson Krueger and Chairperson Pretlow,

On behalf of the New York Land Bank Association, I respectfully submit the enclosed written testimony regarding the FY26 New York State budget.

From Buffalo to Long Island, New York's 31 land banks serve an area that includes 68% of the state's population outside of New York City and consists of over 846 local governments and nearly all of New York's urban centers. ESD recently approved the creation of New York's 31<sup>st</sup> land bank in Monroe County and the number of land banks in New York is expected to increase as more communities turn to these proven organizations to combat the vacant property and affordable housing crises.

New York's land banks utilize grant funding to support property demolitions, acquisitions, stabilizations, lot improvements, and rehabilitation projects and work in partnership with state and local government, non-profits, residents, community groups, and responsible developers and investors to return abandoned properties to productive use and support community development.

**As communities throughout New York grapple with an increasingly acute housing crisis and persistent concentrations of vacant properties, New York's land banks have emerged as an invaluable resource. Land banks are a powerful tool to assemble the shovel-ready sites needed to meet our state's housing demand. As NYSHCR funds numerous new programs to support new construction of single- and two-family homes across the state, land banks are the logical partner to provide a pipeline of sites, mostly in areas with existing infrastructure to support new homes.**

Land banks are New York's most effective tool for reclaiming vacant properties and revitalizing both urban and rural communities. New York's land banks provide extra capacity for small municipalities and bring additional tools to the toolbox of local governments working to fight blight and increase

the supply of affordable housing. NY land banks have the state-wide presence and on-the-ground infrastructure to help address the state's severe shortage of quality affordable housing.

**Over the past 13 years New York's land banks have generated over \$500 million in new investment in historically underserved urban neighborhoods, village centers, rural main streets, and formerly contaminated industrial sites across the state.** New York has become a national leader in this movement, building one of the most effective networks of land banks in the United States. The progress our land banks have achieved over the past decade is remarkable:

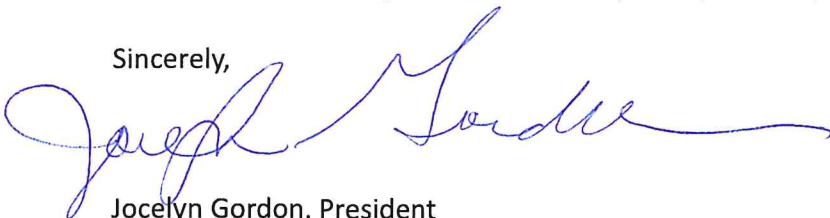
- ✓ **Acquiring over 5,000 problem properties**
- ✓ **Demolishing 1,567 vacant structures**
- ✓ **Returning 3,231 properties to productive use**
- ✓ **Generating more than \$300 million in private investment**
- ✓ **Returning \$135 million in assessed value to local tax rolls**

To build upon the tremendous success that New York's land banks have achieved over the past decade and equip our communities with the tools they need to combat New York's vacant property and affordable housing crises, the New York Land Bank Association requests a budget allocation of \$25 million. Grant funds deployed to land banks across the state ensure our communities remain equipped with the tools they need to combat New York's vacant property and affordable housing crises. While not all these funds have been spent yet, to skip a year would mean that no new funding would come online until April 2026, and we anticipate all the existing funds will be fully allocated by 12/31/25, creating a gap in the flow of funding. The need to keep up the pipeline of sites for new housing remains great as local governments throughout New York are still working to catch up on a backlog of tax-foreclosures resulting from the COVID pandemic and the pause resulting from Tyler v. Hennepin County.

**To support the important work of our land banks the New York Land Bank Association respectfully requests an additional \$25 million of funding be allocated in the Aid to Localities budget to NYSHCR's Land Bank Initiative so we can collectively continue to realize the tremendous and transformative return on the investment that New York's land banks have, and continue to, provide our state and local governments.**

We appreciate your time and consideration and look forward to discussing how we can work together to transform vacant and abandoned problem properties from harmful liabilities into opportunities to build more affordable housing and create more equitable, inclusive, healthy, and resilient communities.

Sincerely,



Jocelyn Gordon, President  
NY Land Bank Association

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