



5149 penn avenue
pittsburgh, pa 15224
phone 412-441-6950 fax 412-441-6956
www.bloomfield-garfield.org

March 19, 2014

Councilpersons Deborah Gross and Corey O'Connor
510 City-County Building
414 Grant Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

Councilpersons Gross and O'Connor:

On behalf of Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation, I am writing to express support for the Pittsburgh Land Bank as introduced by Councilwoman Gross and amended by Councilman O'Connor. The Land Bank is a powerful tool that will facilitate greater public control of abandoned property and empower communities to reverse the social and economic consequences of neglected and abandoned property. The Land Bank will help transform blight in our most disinvested neighborhoods into engines for economic development.

By viewing vacant and abandoned properties as potential opportunities—rather than barriers—for revitalization, communities can reinvest in their once-neglected neighborhoods. Vacant and distressed properties are predominantly in neighborhoods struggling with poverty. Failure by the public sector to act methodically and openly in taking the worst of these properties and holding them until a disposition plan is in place is a major shortfall of our current system. In the end, we are saddling the poorest neighborhoods with the burden of vacancy and blight. Land Banks can lessen this burden, and give community members a more active role in the revitalization of their neighborhoods. As amended, The Land Bank will give the community the standing and a stronger voice in deciding the fate of a tax-foreclosed property, rather than allowing each vacant parcel of land to be sold indiscriminately to buyers who may not have the community's best interests at heart.

We also want to thank you for taking our input into account in crafting your amendments. There have been many public meetings with diverse community groups asking for feedback on the bill. We feel our voices have been heard, and appreciate being included in the process of drafting these amendments.

Sincerely,

Richard Swartz
Executive Director
Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation

Aggie Brose
Deputy Director
Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation