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February 17, 2014

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Insert Inside Address

Dear _____:

On behalf of the Greater Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce, I am writing to express support for The Pittsburgh Land Bank Ordinance, which would establish a land bank in the city of Pittsburgh. The Chamber, along with Pennsylvania Economy League of Greater Pittsburgh and the Allegheny Conference on Community Development, has been working to bring more resources to our region's struggling communities, and one of the great challenges for those communities is the prevalence of vacant and blighted properties, particularly in the City's struggling neighborhoods. These thousands of deteriorating properties are a great cost to the City, not only in direct maintenance expenses, but in their impact on property values. For Pittsburgh's new renaissance to reach all of its residents, this blight needs to be addressed.

Although the City has worked, through its land recycling program, to return these properties to productive use, the existing process has not been able to work on the necessary scale; without a new model, we will never be able to adequately deal with Pittsburgh's blight. Fortunately, the passage of statewide land-banking legislation, modeled on best practices from around the country, provides us with a tool to address this issue in a strategic and streamlined manner. With the introduction of The Pittsburgh Land Bank, the City has an opportunity to take advantage of that tool and begin dealing systematically with the problems of blighted and abandoned properties.

This bill will establish a land bank that is transparent and accountable to the public, is financially self-sustaining, and provides a single unified system for developers and residents who are interested acquiring and rehabilitating properties. I hope that you will support this important effort to get property back on the tax rolls, stabilize struggling neighborhoods, and strengthen the Pittsburgh economy.

Sincerely,

Dewitt Peart



President, Greater Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce

cc: