



# City of Philadelphia

City Council  
Chief Clerk's Office  
402 City Hall  
Philadelphia, PA 19107

**BILL NO. 110519**

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**Introduced June 16, 2011**

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**Councilmembers Sanchez and Green**

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**Referred to the  
Committee on Public Property and Public Works**

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## **AN ORDINANCE**

Amending Title 16 of The Philadelphia Code, entitled "Public Property," by adding a new Chapter, entitled "Philadelphia Land Bank," authorizing the creation of a land bank and providing for its appointment, powers, and duties, all under certain terms and conditions.

WHEREAS, Evidence demonstrates that the persistently high rate of vacant lots and structures has harmed the safety and economic strength of individual blocks and neighborhoods, as well as the City of Philadelphia as a whole; and

WHEREAS, Community members, business owners, and private and nonprofit developers alike face the challenges of navigating multiple City agencies with different procedures, policies, and inventory lists; and

WHEREAS, A municipal land bank would ensure clear, transparent, and efficient operations by serving as a single entity to acquire, hold, and dispose of vacant land with the approval of City Council; and

WHEREAS, Consolidation of publicly-owned land in a municipal land bank would reduce the administrative cost related to that land, and allow a greater proportion of public funds to be invested directly into community revitalization; and

WHEREAS, Extensive grassroots community planning over the last decade by local Community Development Corporations and advocacy groups, with the support of the private sector, supports the creation of a municipal land bank as necessary for the strategic redevelopment of Philadelphia; and

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WHEREAS, A municipal land bank should prioritize long-term community and economic development over short-term revenue generation, and should adopt disposition policies that encourage a range of beneficial uses by extending nominal or reduced price disposition to side and rear yards, community gardens and agriculture, nonprofit and small business development, as well as creative leasing options for start-up businesses; and

WHEREAS, A municipal land bank should ensure that communities affected by vacant land have substantial and meaningful involvement in a municipal land bank's decisions relating to those communities, with this goal strongly informing the land bank's governance, structure, and operations; and

WHEREAS, A municipal land bank should seek to preserve affordability in neighborhoods, and prioritize development that ensures permanent affordability and socioeconomic diversity within communities; and

WHEREAS, A process of deliberate and sustained public discussion should precede any actions to finally define the structure and policies of a municipal land bank, given that issues related to the City's acquisition and disposition of vacant land vary according to the needs and characteristics of different neighborhoods, and significant interests are at stake; and

WHEREAS, The City of Philadelphia, facing the economic and social burden posed by tens of thousands of vacant properties, anticipates and hopes that state legislation similar or identical to HB712, authorizing the creation of municipal land banks and granting to those certain powers, will be enacted in the near future, and intends to be prepared in advance for that eventuality; and

WHEREAS, In recognition that housing preservation is an integral part of neighborhood stabilization and development, any such state legislation authorizing the creation of municipal land banks and granting to them powerful new tools to acquire tax-delinquent properties should be accompanied by amendment of the State Municipal Tax Claim and Lien Act and related local policy to expand protections for low-income owner-occupants of tax-delinquent property and better protect families in need from foreclosure and displacement; now, therefore

*THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA HEREBY ORDAINS:*

SECTION 1. Title 16 of The Philadelphia Code is amended as follows:

TITLE 16. PUBLIC PROPERTY.

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## CHAPTER 16-700. PHILADELPHIA LAND BANK.

### § 16-701. Preliminary Provision.

(1) *This Chapter is in accordance with the provisions of Act \_\_, enacted by the General Assembly on \_\_\_\_\_.*

### § 16-702. Council Authorization to Create Philadelphia Land Bank.

(1) *Council finds and declares that there is a need for a land bank to function within the territorial limits of the City and County of Philadelphia.*

(2) *Accordingly, pursuant to § \_\_\_\_ of Act \_\_, the Council of the City of Philadelphia hereby authorizes the creation of a land bank, to be named the "Philadelphia Land Bank."*

SECTION 2. This Ordinance shall take effect only when authorized by the Pennsylvania General Assembly.

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**Explanation:**

*Italics indicate new matter added.*

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