

STATE OF NEW YORK

8146

IN SENATE

January 26, 2022

Introduced by Sen. SKOUFIS -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Finance

AN ACT to amend the state finance law and the real property tax law, in relation to authorizing certain municipalities in a pilot emergency repair program to add unpaid emergency repair charges and housing code violation penalties, costs and fines to such municipalities' annual tax levy in accordance with applicable law; and providing for the repeal of certain provisions upon the expiration thereof

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. Subdivision 3 of section 54-g of the state finance law, as
2 added by chapter 707 of the laws of 1981, is amended to read as follows:

3 3. Beginning November first, two thousand twenty-two, the secretary of
4 state shall receive additional funding from the state to support a pilot
5 program for activities related to the administration and enforcement of
6 the fire prevention and building codes. The secretary of state, with
7 assistance from the division of housing and community renewal, shall
8 establish a pilot program with participating municipalities for an emer-
9 gency repair program. The secretary of state shall only select munici-
10 palities designated as a city for such pilot program. The emergency
11 repair program which shall be funded for a minimum of three years and
12 shall require a municipality awarded participation to enact a local law
13 to enable the municipality to repair immediately hazardous code
14 violations in buildings where the owner has not undertaken such repairs
15 in a reasonable time. The municipality shall bill the owner for such
16 repair costs and in the event payment is not received within thirty
17 days, the secretary shall reimburse the municipality for such repairs.
18 Any subsequent recovery of monies due from the owner for such repairs
19 shall be forwarded to the state. The secretary of state in conjunction
20 with the division of housing and community renewal shall file a report
21 annually to evaluate the effectiveness of the emergency repair pilot
22 program with the legislature and the governor. Such report shall include
23 recommendations as to whether the program shall be continued or modified
24 in any way and the reasons therefor.

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets
[-] is old law to be omitted.

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1 4. The terms used in this section shall have the meanings ascribed to
2 them in section fifty-four of this article.

3 § 2. The real property tax law is amended by adding a new section 903
4 to read as follows:

5 § 903. Collection of unpaid housing code violation penalties; levy. 1.
6 Authorization. In addition to and not in limitation of any power other-
7 wise granted by law, municipalities participating in the emergency
8 repair program pursuant to section fifty-four-g of the state finance
9 law, are hereby authorized to collect any unpaid emergency repair charg-
10 es, housing, building and fire code violation penalties, costs and fines
11 through placement by the municipality's commissioner of finance, treas-
12 urer, or other public official charged with the duties of overseeing tax
13 collections on the municipality's annual tax levy in accordance with the
14 provisions of this section.

15 2. Eligibility. In order to be eligible for placement on the munici-
16 pality's annual tax levy such unpaid emergency repair charges, code
17 violation penalties, costs and fines shall have been adjudicated and
18 imposed through a judgment in a court of competent jurisdiction on an
19 owner of real property within the municipality and recorded by the coun-
20 ty clerk, as certified by the municipal counsel to the commissioner of
21 finance, treasurer or other public official charged with the duties of
22 overseeing tax collections and have remained unpaid for one year after
23 the final adjudication and exhaustion of all appeals relating to the
24 imposition of the fines for a code violation preceding the placement on
25 the municipality's tax levy.

26 3. Minimum amount owed. To qualify for placement on the tax levy the
27 amount owed for unpaid emergency repair charges and/or the code
28 violations shall be at least five percent of the amount of the tax
29 assessed value of the property.

30 4. Levy. Such unpaid emergency repair charges and/or code violation
31 penalty, cost or fine as set forth in a copy of the judgment certified
32 by the municipal counsel to the commissioner of finance, treasurer or
33 other public official charged with the duties of overseeing tax
34 collections shall be set down in the annual tax levy under the heading
35 uncollected fines and penalties and in accordance with this section
36 shall be levied, enforced and collected in the same manner, by the same
37 proceedings, at the same time, under the same penalties and having the
38 same lien upon the property assessed as the general municipal tax and as
39 a part thereof.

40 5. Notice. The municipality shall notify all owners or known inter-
41 ested parties of record of the placement of the unpaid emergency repair
42 charges and/or code violations on the municipal tax levy as uncollected
43 fines and penalties within thirty days of placement, pursuant to section
44 three hundred eight of the civil practice law and rules. The notice
45 shall include the date or dates of such violations, the description of
46 the violations, the amount owed, a statement detailing the foreclosure
47 process that will occur if the violations remain unpaid, the process to
48 claim any surplus funds and the contact information for the municipal
49 office in charge of receiving payments.

50 6. Tax year. Any unpaid emergency repair charges and/or code
51 violations shall be placed on the tax roll the municipality is currently
52 in and shall not be placed on a list, roll or levy of delinquent taxes.

53 7. Owner occupied. Notwithstanding any other applicable provisions of
54 law, nothing in this section shall be applied to a residential dwelling
55 that is owner-occupied or is the primary residence of a homeowner.

1 8. Tenants. Prior to the placement of any property with unpaid emer-
2 gency repair charges and/or code violations on the tax levy, the munici-
3 pality shall develop a program to assist tenants residing in a dwelling
4 at risk for tax foreclosure due to unpaid emergency repair charges
5 and/or code violations. Such program shall include housing counseling
6 assistance or other support in relocating the tenants to suitable hous-
7 ing prior to the tax foreclosure.

8 9. Payment plan. Nothing in this section shall preclude an owner from
9 entering into a payment plan with a municipality for past amounts due
10 for emergency repair charges and/or code violations.

11 10. Curing code violations. (a) If all of the violations for which the
12 penalties, fees and costs have been assessed are cured, removed or
13 corrected prior to the expiration of the period for redemption pursuant
14 to section eleven hundred ten of this chapter, the property shall be
15 removed from the levy and auction and the balance of the amount owed
16 shall be placed as a lien on the property pursuant to applicable laws
17 for debt collection and an action for foreclosure of the property shall
18 not be maintained for the amount owed.

19 (b) The determination of whether or not the code violations have been
20 cured shall be made by the local municipal enforcing officer in charge
21 of ensuring compliance with applicable housing, building, and fire codes
22 such as a code enforcement officer or through a certification by the
23 owner filed with the code enforcement officer. An appeal of this deter-
24 mination may be made to the municipality's zoning board of appeals or
25 other local administrative body as provided for in local law. The final
26 determination made by the administrative body shall be reviewable pursu-
27 ant to article seventy-eight of the civil practice law and rules.

28 (c) This section shall not be applicable to any cause of action
29 brought for money due based on the curing of emergency repair charges
30 and/or code violations under any form for receivership or a mechanics
31 lien.

32 11. Payment prior to auction. (a) If the balance owed for emergency
33 repair charges and/or code violations placed on the tax levy is paid
34 prior to the expiration of the period for redemption pursuant to section
35 eleven hundred ten of this chapter and there is no balance due for
36 unpaid real property taxes, the property may not be auctioned, and the
37 property shall be removed from the tax levy.

38 (b) The owner shall have the right to pay the full balance prior to
39 the expiration of the period for redemption pursuant to section eleven
40 hundred ten of this chapter in order to redeem the property.

41 12. Surplus. Any surplus funds remaining after the sale of a property
42 at a tax foreclosure for unpaid code violations shall be returned to the
43 former owner of the property in a manner provided under local law. This
44 provision shall not apply to a sale of a property at a tax foreclosure
45 due to unpaid taxes. If a property has: (a) unpaid taxes; and (b) unpaid
46 emergency repair charges and/or unpaid code violations on the same tax
47 levy and is auctioned at a tax foreclosure, the amount of the surplus
48 funds returned to the former owner shall be proportionate to the amount
49 of unpaid emergency repair charges and/or code violations owed in the
50 total amount of debt owed to the municipality. For the purpose of this
51 section, "surplus funds" shall mean the balance of money received after
52 auction of a property at a tax foreclosure sale minus the amount owed
53 for emergency repair charges, code violations and the costs and attor-
54 neys fees incurred in the collection of the fees by the municipalities.

1 13. Balance due. If after an auction a balance is due for emergency
2 repair charges and/or code violations, the municipality may proceed with
3 any action against the former owner pursuant to applicable laws.

4 14. Exclusions. The provisions of this section shall not apply to any
5 municipality that sells their tax liens in a tax lien sale.

6 § 3. This act shall take effect immediately; provided, however,
7 section one of this act shall expire and be deemed repealed May 1, 2026.