§ 1601. Legislative intent.

The legislature finds and declares that New York's communities are important to the social and economic vitality of the state. Whether urban, suburban, or rural, many communities are struggling to cope with vacant, abandoned, and tax-delinquent properties.

There exists a crisis in many cities and their metro areas caused by disinvestment in real property and resulting in a significant amount of vacant and abandoned property. For example, Cornell Cooperative Extension Association of Erie county estimates that the city of Buffalo has thirteen thousand vacant parcels, four thousand vacant structures and an estimated twenty-two thousand two hundred ninety vacant residential units. This condition of vacant and abandoned property represents lost revenue to local governments and large costs ranging from demolition, effects of safety hazards and spreading deterioration of neighborhoods including resulting mortgage foreclosures.

The need exists to strengthen and revitalize the economy of the state and its local units of government by solving the problems of vacant and abandoned property in a coordinated manner and to foster the development of such property and promote economic growth. Such problems may include multiple taxing jurisdictions lacking common policies, ineffective property inspection, code enforcement and property rehabilitation support, lengthy and/or inadequate foreclosure proceedings and lack of coordination and resources to support economic revitalization.

There is an overriding public need to confront the problems caused by vacant, abandoned and tax-delinquent properties through the creation of new tools to be available to communities throughout New York enabling them to turn vacant spaces into vibrant places.

Land banks are one of the tools that can be utilized by communities to facilitate the return of vacant, abandoned, and tax-delinquent properties to productive use. The primary focus of land bank operations is the acquisition of real property that is tax delinquent, tax foreclosed, vacant, abandoned, and the use of tools authorized in this

article to eliminate the harms and liabilities caused by such properties.