

The Senate Banking and Financial Institutions Committee offered the following substitute to HB 110:

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
AN ACT

1 To amend Article 1 of Chapter 14 of Title 44 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated,  
2 relating generally to mortgages, conveyances to secure debt, and liens, so as to provide for  
3 a vacant real property registry; to provide for definitions; to provide for required elements  
4 of a form for such registration; to provide for exemptions from registration; to provide for  
5 maximum fees and penalties for registration and failure to register; to provide for appellate  
6 rights; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

7 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

8 SECTION 1.

9 Article 1 of Chapter 14 of Title 44 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating  
10 generally to mortgages, conveyances to secure debt, and liens, is amended by adding a new  
11 Code section to read as follows:

12 "44-14-14.

13 (a) For purposes of this Code section, the term:

14 (1) 'Agent' means an individual with a place of business in this state at which he or she  
15 is authorized to accept inquiries, notices, and service of process on behalf of a vacant real  
16 property owner.

17 (2) 'Department' means the Department of Community Affairs.

18 (3) 'Street address' means the street or route address. Such term shall not mean or  
19 include a post office box.

20 (4) 'Vacant real property' means real property that has a building, structure, or  
21 wastewater collection system on it that:

22 (A) Is intended for habitation, has not been lawfully inhabited for at least 60 days, has  
23 no evidence of utility usage, and is not actively being marketed for sale, lease, or rent  
24 with prominent signage posted on such property bearing the name and valid phone  
25 number of the vacant real property owner or the individual licensed pursuant to Chapter  
26 40 of Title 43 representing the vacant real property owner;

27 (B) Is partially constructed or incomplete, without a valid building permit; or

28 (C) Is held pursuant to a judicial or nonjudicial foreclosure of a mortgage, deed of  
 29 trust, security deed, deed to secure debt, or other security instrument securing a debt or  
 30 obligation owed to a creditor or a deed in lieu of foreclosure in full or partial  
 31 satisfaction of a debt or obligation owed to a creditor.

32 Such term shall not include a building or structure containing multiple units with  
 33 common ownership that has at least one unit occupied with evidence of utility usage. A  
 34 county or municipal corporation may define such term as using all of this definition or  
 35 any combination of the entirety of subparagraph (A), (B), or (C) of this paragraph.

36 (b) Effective July 1, 2011:

37 (1) A county or municipal corporation may establish by ordinance or resolution for the  
 38 requirement of registration of vacant real property as provided in this Code section;

39 (2) No county or municipal corporation shall require registration of vacant real property  
 40 or real property that is vacant, unoccupied, uninhabited, abandoned, foreclosed, or  
 41 advertised for foreclosure on any basis other than as set forth in this Code section or as  
 42 may be hereafter authorized by general law, and all existing county or municipal  
 43 ordinances or resolutions to the contrary shall hereby be preempted; provided, however,  
 44 that county or municipal ordinances or resolutions that require registration for repeated  
 45 ordinance violations that remain uncorrected for at least 60 days shall not be preempted;  
 46 and

47 (3) No county or municipal corporation shall require for purposes of a vacant real  
 48 property registry established pursuant to this Code section any information or  
 49 documentation other than as set forth in this Code section.

50 (c) Each registrant shall be required to file with a specifically identified office or officer  
 51 a registration form, in paper or electronic format, as required by the county or municipal  
 52 corporation, requiring submission of only the following information:

53 (1) The vacant real property owner's name, street address, mailing address, phone  
 54 number, fax number, and e-mail address;

55 (2) The agent's name, street address, mailing address, phone number, fax number, and  
 56 e-mail address;

57 (3) The vacant real property's street address and tax parcel number;

58 (4) The transfer date of the instrument conveying the vacant real property to the owner;  
 59 and

60 (5) At such time as it becomes available, recording information, including deed book and  
 61 page numbers, of the instrument conveying the vacant real property to the owner.

62 (d) The department may promulgate a standard vacant real property registry form that  
 63 requires only the information set forth in subsection (c) of this Code section, in paper and

64 electronic format. If such form is promulgated by the department, all counties and  
 65 municipal corporations with a vacant real property registry shall use such form.

66 (e)(1) When any vacant real property is acquired by foreclosure under power of sale  
 67 pursuant to Code Section 44-14-160 or acquired pursuant to a deed in lieu of foreclosure  
 68 and:

69 (A) The deed under power of sale or deed in lieu of foreclosure contains the  
 70 information specified in paragraphs (1) through (5) of subsection (c) of this Code  
 71 section;

72 (B) The deed is filed with the clerk of superior court within 60 days of the transfer; and

73 (C) Proof of the following is provided to the office or officer in charge of the county  
 74 or municipal vacant real property registry:

75 (i) A filing date stamp or a receipt showing payment of the applicable filing fees; and

76 (ii) The entire deed under power of sale or entire deed in lieu of foreclosure,  
 77 a county or municipal corporation shall not require the transferee to register such vacant  
 78 real property pursuant to this Code section or the payment of any administrative fees  
 79 pursuant to subsection (h) of this Code section.

80 (2) The provisions of paragraph (1) of this subsection shall also apply to the transferee  
 81 and the deed for the first subsequent transfer of vacant real property after the vacant real  
 82 property has been acquired by foreclosure under power of sale pursuant to Code Section  
 83 44-14-160 or acquired pursuant to a deed in lieu of foreclosure.

84 (3) No county or municipal corporation may require registration of vacant real property  
 85 pursuant to this Code section within 60 days of such vacant real property's transfer:

86 (A) Pursuant to a deed under power of sale or deed in lieu of foreclosure; or

87 (B) To the first subsequent transferee after the vacant real property has been acquired  
 88 by foreclosure under power of sale pursuant to Code Section 44-14-160 or acquired  
 89 pursuant to a deed in lieu of foreclosure.

90 (f) An ordinance or resolution establishing a registry pursuant to this Code section may  
 91 require a vacant real property owner to update the information specified in paragraphs (1)  
 92 through (5) of subsection (c) of this Code section within 30 days after any change in such  
 93 required information.

94 (g) A vacant real property owner, or the agent of such owner, may apply to remove such  
 95 vacant real property from the registry at such time as the real property no longer constitutes  
 96 vacant real property. The county or municipal corporation shall grant or deny such  
 97 application within 30 days, and if no such determination is made within 30 days, the  
 98 application shall be deemed granted.

99 (h) An ordinance or resolution establishing a vacant real property registry may require the  
 100 payment of administrative fees for registration which shall reasonably approximate the cost

101 to the county or municipal corporation of the establishment, maintenance, operation, and  
102 administration of the registry. Such fees shall not exceed \$100.00 per registration.

103 (i) An ordinance or resolution establishing a vacant real property registry may require  
104 penalties for failure to register or failure to update the information specified in paragraphs  
105 (1) through (5) of subsection (c) of this Code section, provided that such penalties shall not  
106 exceed \$500.00 per month.

107 (j) A county or municipal ordinance or resolution requiring the registration of vacant real  
108 property shall provide for administrative procedures. The administrative procedures shall  
109 include the right to appeal to the municipal or recorder's court in the city where the vacant  
110 real property is located or to the magistrate or recorder's court of the county in which the  
111 vacant real property is located, subject to applicable jurisdictional requirements. Any  
112 vacant real property owner affected by a county or municipal ordinance or resolution  
113 requiring vacant real property registration may challenge any determination made pursuant  
114 to such ordinance or resolution.

115 (k) An ordinance or resolution adopted by the governing authority of a county to establish  
116 a registry pursuant to this Code section may, subject to and in accordance with the  
117 requirements of this Code section, require registration of vacant real property within the  
118 entire territory of the county, except territory located within the boundaries of any  
119 municipal corporation, unless otherwise allowed by intergovernmental agreement between  
120 the county and municipal corporation.

121 (l) Nothing in this Code section shall be construed to prohibit a county or municipal  
122 ordinance or resolution requiring the registration of vacant real property from providing for  
123 exemptions from such registration.

124 (m) Nothing in this Code section shall be construed to impair, limit, or preempt in any way  
125 the power of a county or municipal corporation to enforce any applicable codes, as defined  
126 in Code Section 42-2-8, or to define or declare nuisances and to cause their removal or  
127 abatement by summary proceedings or otherwise.

128 (n) Notwithstanding Code Section 36-74-30, an ordinance or resolution establishing a  
129 vacant real property registry may require the registration of residential rental property if  
130 such property is vacant real property."

131 **SECTION 2.**

132 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.