

House Bill 753

By: Representatives Berry of the 56th, Frye of the 122nd, Herring of the 145th, Olaleye of the 59th, and Reese of the 140th

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Chapter 8 of Title 50 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to the
2 Department of Community Affairs, so as to establish the Better Georgia Without Blight Fund
3 for the purpose of providing financing and technical assistance for the rehabilitation of
4 blighted properties; to provide for definitions; to provide for such fund; to provide for criteria
5 and standards; to provide for rules and regulations; to provide for reporting; to provide for
6 automatic repeal; to provide for related matters; to provide for a short title; to provide for
7 legislative findings; to provide for an effective date conditioned upon appropriations; to
8 repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

9 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

10 **SECTION 1.**

11 This Act shall be known and may be cited as the "Better Georgia Without Blight Act."

12 **SECTION 2.**

13 The General Assembly finds that:

14 (1) The existence of real property that is maintained in a blighted condition increases
15 burdens on state and local governments by increasing the need for government services,

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16 including but not limited to social services, public safety services, and code enforcement
17 services;

18 (2) Notwithstanding current methods of addressing blighted properties, there is a need
19 for the state to provide financing and technical assistance to help local, municipal, county,
20 or consolidated governments throughout this state to take on the formidable task of
21 encouraging the rehabilitation of blighted properties or the actual rehabilitation of such
22 properties;

23 (3) The rehabilitation of blighted properties decreases the need for state and local
24 government services, which saves resources;

25 (4) The rehabilitation of blighted properties improves communities by making them safer
26 and more attractive places in which to live, work, and play, and the improvement of
27 communities leads to better residents, better employees, and better customers; and

28 (5) Improved communities will strengthen Georgia's status as number one for business
29 and number one for homes.

30 **SECTION 3.**

31 Chapter 8 of Title 50 the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to the Department of
32 Community Affairs, is amended by adding a new article to read as follows:

33 "ARTICLE 14

34 50-8-400.

35 As used in this article, the term:

36 (1) 'Better Georgia Without Blight Fund' or 'fund' means the assistance program
37 established pursuant to this article.

38 (2) 'Blighted property' shall have the same meaning as set forth in Code Section 22-1-1.

39 (3) 'Commissioner' means the commissioner of community affairs.

40 (4) 'Department' means the Department of Community Affairs.

41 50-8-401.

42 (a) The Better Georgia Without Blight Fund is established within the department for the
43 purpose of assisting local, municipal, county, or consolidated governments with financing,
44 including loans, loan guarantees, and matching grants, and technical assistance to
45 encourage the rehabilitation of blighted properties.

46 (b) The commissioner shall serve as the director of the fund.

47 (c) The department shall be authorized to apply for, receive, administer, and use any grant,
48 other financial assistance, or other funds made available to the department from any
49 government or other source for furthering the purposes of the fund.

50 50-8-402.

51 (a) The department shall establish criteria and standards for eligible applicants and eligible
52 blighted properties.

53 (b) The department shall establish criteria, implement an application process, and provide
54 financing and technical assistance consistent with the provisions of this article. Such
55 criteria shall include documentation of:

56 (1) A public inspection of the parcel of property and an official identification of such
57 property as blighted property;

58 (2) Written notice of the identification of the parcel of property as blighted property to
59 the property owner;

60 (3) At least one stakeholder meeting allowing for response from the property owner and
61 the community;

62 (4) Revenue loss from blighted property's condition;

63 (5) Local commitment to the rehabilitation of the property; and

64 (6) Any other requirements that the department determines as necessary for the
65 successful rehabilitation of a blighted property.

66 50-8-403.

67 The department shall be authorized to promulgate any rules and regulations necessary to
68 implement and administer this article.

69 50-8-404.

70 Beginning July 1, 2026, and annually thereafter, the commissioner shall submit a detailed
71 report to the Governor and notify members of the General Assembly of the availability of
72 such report in the manner which it deems to be most effective and efficient. The annual
73 report shall contain the department's findings and recommendations regarding the
74 implementation of this article. Such annual reports shall be published on the department's
75 internet website and shall be made publicly available.

76 50-8-405.

77 This article shall be automatically repealed on June 30, 2031, unless continued in effect by
78 the General Assembly prior to such date."

79 **SECTION 4.**

80 (a) This Act shall become effective only if funds are specifically appropriated for the
81 purposes of this Act in an appropriations Act enacted by the General Assembly.

82 (b) If funds are so appropriated, then this Act shall become effective on the later of:

83 (1) The date on which such appropriations Act becomes effective; or

84 (2) The beginning date of the fiscal year for which such appropriations are made.

85

SECTION 5.

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