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## NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

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# **New Land Bank Report Shows Progress in Fight Against Blight**

***Capital Region Land Bank has partnered with Schenectady County, the City of Schenectady and City of Amsterdam to demolish over 100 blighted buildings while improving dozens of homes and creating high quality housing***

Schenectady, N.Y., May 22, 2017 - , The New York Land Bank Association (NYLBA) today released [New York State Land Banks: A New National Standard](#), summarizing the first five years of land bank activity since the state's passage of the 2011 Land Bank Act. The report serves as a resource for local officials, state leaders, public and private funders, and other parties to learn the strategies and achievements of land banks in combating vacant, abandoned, and deteriorated properties.

*New York State Land Banks: A New National Standard*, published in partnership with the Center for Community Progress, highlights the impact of New York land banks. Collectively, 1,989 vacant and abandoned properties have been stabilized, renovated, or demolished where necessary, to support clear development goals and beneficial uses. As of the end of 2016, NYLBA's members have leveraged approximately \$32 million in initial funding from the New York Attorney General's Office to attract over \$77 million in private development investment and return over \$28 million in assessed value to the tax rolls.

The Capital Region Land Bank serves the City of Schenectady, Schenectady County and the City of Amsterdam. In the past two months, the Land Bank has won grants totaling \$2.325 million to help improve neighborhoods in the cities of Schenectady and Amsterdam as well as towns in Schenectady County. The local Land Bank has partnered with Schenectady County, the City of Schenectady and Schenectady Metroplex to demolish over 100 blighted buildings while improving dozens of homes and creating high quality housing in City of Schenectady neighborhoods. The Land Bank is leading efforts to improve the Eastern Avenue corridor including the new Tribute Park and many other renovation and demolition projects. The Land Bank is working across the City including efforts to build new homes on the City's Northside and on Barrett Street and is helping to turn the former DSS building on Nott Street into new apartments. The Land Bank has also successfully completed blight-removing demolitions in Rotterdam and Rotterdam Junction and has partnered with the development arm of the Amsterdam

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Housing Authority to renovate housing and establish community gardens.

The new grant funding will allow the Land Bank to expand its efforts to Crane Street in Mont Pleasant, continue its work on Eastern Avenue, complete renovations in Rotterdam, and continue demolition activity in Amsterdam.

Richard Ruzzo, Capital Region Land Bank Chairman and a member of the Schenectady County Legislature said, “We are happy to participate in the New York State Land Bank Association and this report clearly highlights all the positive activity that Land Banks are generating across New York State. The Capital Region Land Bank appreciates the tremendous efforts of Attorney General Schneiderman to make funding available to Land Banks in support of the important neighborhood revitalization efforts that we have in process throughout the Capital Region.

Assemblyman Angelo Santabarbara, said, “The Capital Region Land Bank continues to improve our neighborhoods and we are seeing the progress first-hand in cities like Schenectady and Amsterdam. Identifying and demolishing vacant and abandoned properties is critically important to building more vibrant communities here in our area of Upstate New York.”

Assemblyman Phil Steck said, "I commend the Capital Region Land Bank for their work in reducing vacant properties in our area. Such efforts are critical to encouraging people to move into our cities, maintaining property values, and keeping neighborhoods safe."

*New York State Land Banks: A New National Standard* is being distributed statewide by NYLBA members and was developed with support from the Center for Community Progress and the Newburgh Community Land Bank. It is available online at [www.nylandbanks.org](http://www.nylandbanks.org).

“Communities across New York are finding land banks to be flexible tools that can be adapted to their local challenges and enable them to take control of abandoned properties, giving them more options for short-term intervention and the ability to plan for longer-term neighborhood revitalization,” said Katelyn Wright, president of the NYLBA. “There are now 20 land banks across New York, created by local governments ready to proactively address the problems of abandoned property. The New York Land Bank Association has evolved over the past five years into a powerful advocate for land banks and for communities facing blight and abandonment. We’re excited to share this report outlining our collective achievements over the past five years and the challenges that lie ahead.”

“The accomplishments of the New York land banking movement in its first five years are quite remarkable and show what’s possible when there are dedicated public sector leaders working with community partners on a shared commitment to transform vacant, abandoned, and deteriorated properties into assets for neighbors and neighborhoods,” said Kim Graziani, VP and Director of National Technical Assistance of the Center for Community Progress. “New York has set the bar high in the national field of practice. We congratulate all those who have made this work happen and look forward to supporting continued success across the state.”

While the Land Bank Act had previously capped the number of authorized land banks at 20, the limit was increased to 25 as part of the most recent state budget negotiation. The land banks currently in operation are:

- Albany County Land Bank Corporation
- Allegany County Land Bank Corporation
- Broome County Land Bank Corporation

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- Buffalo Erie Niagara Land Improvement Corporation
- Capital Region Land Reutilization Corporation
- Cattaraugus County Land Bank Corporation
- Chautauqua County Land Bank Corporation
- Chemung County Land Bank Corporation
- Finger Lakes Regional Land Bank Corporation
- Greater Mohawk Valley Land Bank Corporation
- Greater Syracuse Property Development Corporation
- Nassau County Land Bank Corporation
- Newburgh Community Land Bank
- Oswego County Land Bank Corporation
- Rochester Land Bank Corporation
- Steuben County Land Bank Corporation
- Suffolk County Land Bank Corporation
- Sullivan County Land Bank Corporation
- Tioga County Property Development Corporation
- Troy Community Land Bank

According to research by the Center for Community Progress, there are approximately 170 land banks and land banking programs across the country as of 2016. New York now has the third highest number of land banks, behind only Ohio and Michigan.

#### **About the Capital Region Land Bank**

The Capital Region Land Bank was one of the first land banks formed in New York State. The Land Bank's mission is to strengthen neighborhoods within Schenectady and Amsterdam by mitigating blight. More information and a list of Land Bank and City of Schenectady owned properties for sale can be found at [www.capitalregionlandbank.com](http://www.capitalregionlandbank.com)

#### **About the New York Land Bank Association**

NYLBA offers legal and policy guidance to its member land banks, develops annual legislative priorities, boasts a successful track record of legislative advocacy, and hosts an annual summit dedicated to sharing best practices and exploring more effective cross-sector solutions to the challenges posed by problem properties. NYLBA currently has 14 dues-paying members and is operated by a volunteer board of directors. More information is available at [www.nylandbanks.org](http://www.nylandbanks.org).

#### **About the Center for Community Progress**

The mission of the Center for Community Progress is to foster strong, equitable communities where vacant, abandoned, and deteriorated properties are transformed into assets for neighbors and neighborhoods. Founded in 2010, Community Progress is the leading national, nonprofit resource for urban, suburban, and rural communities seeking to address the full cycle of property revitalization.

The organization fulfills its mission by nurturing strong leadership and supporting systemic reforms. Community Progress works to ensure that public, private, and community leaders have the knowledge and capacity to create and sustain change. It also works to ensure that all communities have the policies, tools, and resources they need to support the effective, equitable reuse of vacant, abandoned and deteriorated properties. More information is available at [www.communityprogress.net](http://www.communityprogress.net).