

1 ENGROSSED HOUSE  
2 BILL NO. 2038

By: Nichols and Hefner of the  
House

3 and

4 Matthews of the Senate  
5  
6

7 An Act relating to cities and towns; enacting the  
8 Municipal Code Lien Enforcement Act of 2023; defining  
9 terms; providing applicability to all municipalities;  
10 providing that the provisions do not apply to owner-  
11 occupied property; providing that any fees,  
12 penalties, and abatement costs imposed against  
13 property for violations of a municipality's housing  
14 and building codes may be enforced in rem as a lien;  
15 providing that municipalities may proceed with  
16 judicial in rem foreclosures of municipal code liens  
17 by an enactment of an ordinance or resolution of the  
18 governing authority of the municipality in which the  
19 real property is located; providing requirements for  
20 a municipal ordinance or resolution authorizing liens  
21 and foreclosures pursuant to this act; providing this  
22 act does not constitute an action for personal  
23 liability for the municipal code liens against the  
24 owner or owners of the real property; providing that  
the rights and remedies set forth in this act are  
available solely to the governmental entities  
authorized by law to enforce municipal ordinances;  
providing that a municipality that seeks to enforce a  
municipal code lien through the sale of real property  
shall utilize the judicial in rem proceedings of this  
act as the sole remedy; providing that enforcement  
proceedings may be initiated only by the  
municipality; providing timeframe for filing a  
petition for judicial in rem foreclosure for a  
municipal code lien; providing requirements for  
filing a petition for judicial in rem foreclosure  
when the property is subject to unpaid taxes;  
providing notice requirements needed prior to a  
judicial in rem foreclosure; providing for  
codification; and providing an effective date.

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

SECTION 1. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 22-140 of Title 11, unless there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

This act shall be known and may be cited as the "Municipal Code Lien Enforcement Act of 2023".

SECTION 2. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 22-141 of Title 11, unless there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

As used in this act:

1. "Code enforcement director" means an employee of a municipality who is tasked by the municipal governing body with the enforcement of state law or local ordinances related to the condition of real property within the jurisdiction of the municipality;

2. "Interested party" means:

- a. the person who last appears as owner of the real property in the county records,
- b. the current mortgagee of record of the property or assignee of record of the mortgagee,
- c. the current holder of a beneficial interest in a deed of trust recorded against the real property,
- d. a tax certificate holder, or

1 e. any party having an interest in the real property, or  
2 in any part thereof, legal or equitable, in severalty  
3 or as tenant in common, whose identity and address are  
4 reasonably ascertainable from the records of the  
5 municipality or records maintained in the county  
6 records or as revealed by a full title search,  
7 consisting of fifty (50) years or more.

8 An interested party shall not include the holder of the benefit  
9 of an easement which burdens the real property, the holder of the  
10 benefit or burden of a real covenant which burdens the real  
11 property, or the holder of the benefit of a utility easement which  
12 burdens the real property;

13 3. "Minimum bid price" means the price that equals the  
14 redemption amount;

15 4. "Municipal code lien" means any lien that has been levied  
16 against real property by a municipality that is the result of the  
17 nonpayment of any fine, penalty, abatement cost, or enforcement cost  
18 incurred by a municipality related to the enforcement of state or  
19 local housing and building codes. Such lien shall include only  
20 those liens which arise out of a failure to comply with any law of  
21 the State of Oklahoma, or from the failure to comply with a  
22 municipality's ordinances or resolutions.

23 A municipal code lien shall not include any lien that has  
24 previously been certified to the tax collector of the county for

1 inclusion on the property tax bill associated with the real  
2 property;

3 5. "Municipal code lien payoff" means the principal amount of a  
4 municipal code lien, interest accrued at the rate of seven and one-  
5 half percent (7.5%) per annum from the date the municipal code lien  
6 was filed in the office of the county clerk, any fees or costs  
7 incurred in the collection of such a lien under this act including,  
8 without limitations, the cost of title examinations and publication  
9 of notices, and any other penalties allowable under either the laws  
10 of the State of Oklahoma or under an ordinance or resolution enacted  
11 by the municipality;

12 6. "Owner-occupied" means real property that is lawfully  
13 occupied as a principal residence that is any of the following:

- 14 a. a homestead as described in Section 2888 of Title 68  
15 of the Oklahoma Statutes,
- 16 b. exempt from ad valorem taxation under Sections 2904  
17 through 2911 of Title 68 of the Oklahoma Statutes, and
- 18 c. eligible for the designations listed in subparagraph a  
19 or b or this paragraph, but which has not yet been  
20 granted such designation and which is lawfully  
21 occupied by the family of a deceased individual;

22 7. "Redemption amount" means the sum of:  
23  
24

1 a. the full amount of the municipal code lien payoff for  
2 each municipal code lien on which the municipality is  
3 seeking to foreclose under this act, and

4 b. any tax payoff that may be applicable to the property  
5 on which the municipality is seeking to foreclose  
6 under this act;

7 8. "Taxes" means those taxes assessed against real property by  
8 either the State of Oklahoma, the county in which the real property  
9 is situated, or the municipality that are delinquent as of the date  
10 a proceeding under this act is commenced or at any time before final  
11 resolution of the same, and shall also include any taxes assessed  
12 against real property that are unpaid from any previous year and any  
13 amounts required for redemption. As provided in Section 3103 of  
14 Title 68 of the Oklahoma Statutes, a lien for taxes shall be  
15 superior to all other liens, including municipal code liens;

16 9. "Tax certificate holder" means any of the following:

17 a. a tax sale purchaser who holds a certificate of  
18 purchase,

19 b. the state, where it has accepted and recorded a  
20 certificate of purchase obtained at a tax sale,

21 c. any party to which a certificate of purchase obtained  
22 at a tax sale has been assigned, or

23 d. the purchaser or assignee of a tax lien certificate;  
24 and

1        10. "Tax payoff" means all amounts necessary to satisfy any  
2 claims for delinquent taxes assessed against the real property on  
3 which the municipality is seeking foreclosure under this act. Those  
4 amounts shall include:

- 5            a. if the taxes associated with the property are  
6 delinquent, but the property has not yet been sold for  
7 taxes, the full amount of delinquent taxes, costs,  
8 fees, and charges due to the county tax collector,
- 9            b. if the property has been sold for taxes to either the  
10 state or to a party other than the state, those  
11 amounts required for redemption, except for when a  
12 municipality is the prevailing bidder, the tax payoff  
13 amount shall be the lesser of these amounts, and
- 14            c. if a tax lien has been sold by a county, the amount  
15 required for redemption.

16        SECTION 3.        NEW LAW        A new section of law to be codified  
17 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 22-142 of Title 11, unless there  
18 is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

19            A. The provisions of this act shall apply to any municipal  
20 governing body that adopts the provisions of this act, and are  
21 applicable to the collection of municipal code liens as to real  
22 property, other than owner-occupied property, in the municipality.

23            B. The provisions of this act shall not apply to owner-occupied  
24 property.

1 SECTION 4. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified  
2 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 22-143 of Title 11, unless there  
3 is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

4 Notwithstanding any law to the contrary, any fees, penalties,  
5 and abatement costs imposed against property other than owner-  
6 occupied real property for violations of a municipality's housing  
7 and building codes adopted pursuant to the statutes of the State of  
8 Oklahoma may be enforced in rem as a lien in accordance with this  
9 act.

10 Every municipal code lien, as defined in this act, shall be  
11 superior to all other liens, except those liens for taxes described  
12 or referenced in Section 3103 of Title 68 of the Oklahoma Statutes.

13 SECTION 5. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified  
14 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 22-144 of Title 11, unless there  
15 is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

16 A. Any municipality to which this act applies may proceed with  
17 judicial in rem foreclosures of municipal code liens in accordance  
18 with the provisions of this act by enactment of an ordinance or  
19 resolution of the governing authority of the municipality in which  
20 the real property is located, which ordinance or resolution shall be  
21 sufficient authority for use of this act by the municipality to  
22 enforce its municipal code liens.

23  
24

1 B. The ordinance or resolution of a municipality authorizing  
2 and approving the use of this act shall include all of the  
3 following:

4 1. The initial effective date for application of these  
5 procedures;

6 2. The explicit exclusion of owner-occupied properties from the  
7 application of the judicial in rem foreclosure procedures authorized  
8 in this act;

9 3. The nature and extent of notices, support services, and  
10 referrals to be provided to the owners and occupants of owner-  
11 occupied properties; and

12 4. Any other matters the municipality specifies to be addressed  
13 through administrative regulations and policies.

14 C. Proceedings in accordance with this act are to solely  
15 enforce the municipal code lien for real property subject to the  
16 municipal code lien and shall not constitute an action for personal  
17 liability for the municipal code liens against the owner or owners  
18 of the real property.

19 D. The rights and remedies set forth in this act are available  
20 solely to the governmental entities authorized by law to enforce  
21 municipal ordinances and shall not extend to any nongovernmental  
22 transferee of municipal code liens.

23 E. A municipality that has adopted the provisions of this act  
24 and that seeks to enforce a municipal code lien through the sale of



1 real property shall utilize the judicial in rem proceedings of this  
2 act as the sole remedy for the enforcement through the sale of real  
3 property.

4 F. The enforcement proceedings authorized by this act may be  
5 initiated only by the municipality.

6 SECTION 6. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified  
7 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 22-145 of Title 11, unless there  
8 is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

9 A. After a municipal code lien has been recorded with the  
10 office of the county clerk of the county in which the real property  
11 is located, the code enforcement director may identify those  
12 properties on which to commence a judicial in rem foreclosure in  
13 accordance with this act, except that those properties the code  
14 enforcement director identifies as owner-occupied shall not be  
15 subject to judicial in rem foreclosure under this act. The code  
16 enforcement director shall not file a petition for judicial in rem  
17 foreclosure in accordance with this act for a period of six (6)  
18 months following the date upon which the municipal code lien is  
19 recorded in the office of the county clerk. A petition for judicial  
20 in rem foreclosure may include any other municipal code lien that  
21 has been filed prior to the date the petition is filed. After  
22 enforcement proceedings have commenced in accordance with this act,  
23 the enforcement proceedings may be amended to include any

24

1 subsequently arising municipal code liens and, if applicable, any  
2 and all taxes as defined in this act.

3 B. If the property on which the municipality is seeking to  
4 foreclose under this act is subject to taxes as defined in this act,  
5 then, at least sixty (60) days prior to the filing of the petition,  
6 the code enforcement director shall notify all other taxing agencies  
7 within the jurisdiction of the municipality and the State of  
8 Oklahoma of the code enforcement director's intention to file a  
9 petition for judicial in rem foreclosure of the real property on  
10 which a municipal code lien exists.

11 C. In the name of the municipality, the code enforcement  
12 director shall, in the appropriate lis pendens record in the office  
13 of the county clerk of the county in which the real property is  
14 located, file a notice of his or her intent to file a judicial in  
15 rem foreclosure action. The notice shall include a legal  
16 description of the property, street address of the property if  
17 available, a statement that the property is subject to judicial in  
18 rem foreclosure proceedings under this act, and a statement that  
19 those proceedings may extinguish any legal interests in the  
20 property.

21 D. Simultaneous with the filing of his or her notice of intent  
22 to file a judicial in rem foreclosure action, the code enforcement  
23 director, in the name of the municipality, shall file a petition  
24

1 with the clerk of the district court for the district in which the  
2 real property is located.

3 E. The petition shall be filed against the real property  
4 against which the municipal code lien has been recorded and shall  
5 provide all of the following:

6 1. The identity of the municipality and the name and address of  
7 the code enforcement director;

8 2. The real property address;

9 3. A description of the real property;

10 4. The tax identification number of the real property;

11 5. The municipal code lien which is being foreclosed;

12 6. The principal amount of the municipal code lien together  
13 with applicable interest and penalties;

14 7. The principal amount of any additional municipal code liens  
15 together with applicable interest and penalties in accordance with  
16 this section, if any;

17 8. The year or years for which the taxes are delinquent, if  
18 any;

19 9. The principal amount of the taxes together with interest and  
20 penalties, if any;

21 10. A statement that upon final sale in accordance with this  
22 act and payment of the amount due for taxes, if applicable, an  
23 interested party's rights of redemption shall be extinguished; and  
24

1 11. The names and addresses of all interested parties to whom  
2 copies of the petition are to be sent in accordance with subsection  
3 F of this section.

4 F. The municipality shall mail copies of the petition by both  
5 certified mail, return receipt requested, and by regular mail to all  
6 interested parties whose identities and addresses are reasonably  
7 ascertainable. Copies of the petition shall also be mailed by  
8 first-class mail to the real property address to the attention of  
9 the occupants of the property, if any. In addition, notice shall be  
10 physically posted on the real property and shall include the  
11 following statement: "THIS PROPERTY IS SUBJECT TO A JUDICIAL IN REM  
12 FORECLOSURE ACTION AND MAY BE TRANSFERRED TO [NAME OF MUNICIPALITY]  
13 OR ANOTHER PARTY. PERSONS WITH INFORMATION REGARDING THE CURRENT  
14 OWNER OF THE PROPERTY ARE REQUESTED TO CONTACT [NAME OF  
15 MUNICIPALITY]."

16 G. Within thirty (30) days of the filing of the petition, the  
17 municipality shall cause a notice of the filing of the petition to  
18 be published once each week for three (3) consecutive weeks in a  
19 newspaper of general circulation in the county in which the property  
20 is located. Such notice shall specify:

- 21 1. The name and address of the code enforcement director;
- 22 2. The real property address;
- 23 3. A description of the real property;
- 24 4. The tax identification number of the real property;

