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OHIO BECOMES FIRST STATE TO BAN PLYWOOD BOARDING ON VACANT AND ABANDONED PROPERTIES

New groundbreaking law is most proactive in the country in an effort to eliminate community blight

CLEVELAND – January 5, 2017 – Gov. John Kasich catapulted Ohio into the forefront in the battle against community blight yesterday when he signed into law HB 463, which bans the use of plywood boarding on vacant and abandoned property.

The new law is the first legislation of its kind in the United States and is a bold statement that will lead to increased use of clearboarding and modernize the fight against blight in Ohio.

“This is a significant advancement for those engaged in the battle against neighborhood blight in Ohio,” said Robert Klein, founder and chairman of Community Blight Solutions and an advocate for HB 463. “Plywood is an outdated solution to a growing modern-day problem. We need to apply 21st century solutions to reverse the trends that are decimating our neighborhoods. It is my hope that other states will follow Ohio’s leadership and enact similar legislation.”

For decades, plywood has been the standard material for boarding vacant and abandoned properties, but it also has become the ugly and stigmatizing symbol of community blight. Plywood announces that a building is vacant and abandoned, and sends a distress signal of a neighborhood in trouble. Plywood can be easily removed, extending an open invitation to vandals and squatters. It often must be replaced three times or more. For first responders, plywood boarded properties are a safety hazard, preventing them from seeing inside when arriving on the scene. [Click here](#) to view a short video.

Clearboarding is a preferable solution, and one that mortgage servicers will turn to as plywood use is phased out in Ohio, Klein said. The plywood ban is effective 90 days after HB 463 became law.



“Clearboarding is a new technology solution that is far preferable to plywood,” Klein said. “It is virtually unbreakable, resembles glass so it enhances neighborhoods, protects property values and secures properties so they can be returned to the market more quickly in a more stable and marketable condition.”

The ban comes less than two months after Fannie Mae issued a game-changing declaration to expand its reimbursement criteria to include clearboarding as a method to secure vacant properties, whether they are real-estate-owned or in a pre- or post-foreclosure state.

“The industry is recognizing what I have been advocating for some time, that plywood contributes to blight rather than prevents it,” Klein said. “It is critical that this momentum away from plywood and toward more favorable solutions such as clearboarding continue in 2017.”

Klein also played a significant role in the passage of HB 390, the fast-track foreclosure law Ohio passed in June to reduce the number of vacant and abandoned properties that remain vacant and vulnerable to vandalism and crime sometimes for years. That law also is a national model for states wishing to reduce the number of “zombie” properties in their neighborhoods.

About Community Blight Solutions

Community Blight Solutions is focused on understanding, solving and eliminating the problems of communities experiencing blight. Prominent solutions currently include Cleveland’s Slavic Village Recovery Project; SecureView, a window and door system that utilizes clear polycarbonate and offers a practical and attractive alternative to plywood; and advocacy of fast-track foreclosure legislation. For more information, go to <http://www.communityblightsolutions.com/>

About Robert Klein

Robert Klein is a successful entrepreneur and over the past 25 years, he has earned a reputation as a pioneer and innovator in the property preservation industry and strong advocate for eliminating blight in communities across the country. Klein is the Founder and Chairman of Safeguard Properties, Community Blight Solutions and [SecureView](#), all based in Cleveland. Klein is a frequent speaker at field service industry conferences.

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