

Act No. 190
Public Acts of 2015
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**STATE OF MICHIGAN
98TH LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION OF 2015**

Introduced by Rep. Bumstead

ENROLLED HOUSE BILL No. 4039

AN ACT to amend 1893 PA 206, entitled “An act to provide for the assessment of rights and interests, including leasehold interests, in property and the levy and collection of taxes on property, and for the collection of taxes levied; making those taxes a lien on the property taxed, establishing and continuing the lien, providing for the sale or forfeiture and conveyance of property delinquent for taxes, and for the inspection and disposition of lands bid off to the state and not redeemed or purchased; to provide for the establishment of a delinquent tax revolving fund and the borrowing of money by counties and the issuance of notes; to define and limit the jurisdiction of the courts in proceedings in connection with property delinquent for taxes; to limit the time within which actions may be brought; to prescribe certain limitations with respect to rates of taxation; to prescribe certain powers and duties of certain officers, departments, agencies, and political subdivisions of this state; to provide for certain reimbursements of certain expenses incurred by units of local government; to provide penalties for the violation of this act; and to repeal acts and parts of acts,” by amending sections 78f and 78i (MCL 211.78f and 211.78i), section 78f as amended by 2003 PA 263 and section 78i as amended by 2006 PA 611, and by adding section 78s.

The People of the State of Michigan enact:

Sec. 78f. (1) Except as otherwise provided in section 79 for certified abandoned property, not later than the February 1 immediately succeeding the date that unpaid taxes were returned to the county treasurer for forfeiture, foreclosure, and sale under section 60a(1) or (2) or returned to the county treasurer as delinquent under section 78a, the county treasurer shall send a notice by certified mail, return receipt requested, to the person to whom a tax bill for property returned for delinquent taxes was last sent and, if different, to the person identified as the owner of property returned for delinquent taxes as shown on the current records of the county treasurer and to those persons identified under section 78e(2). The notice required under this subsection shall include all of the following:

(a) The date property on which those unpaid taxes were returned as delinquent will be forfeited to the county treasurer for the unpaid delinquent taxes, interest, penalties, and fees.

(b) A statement that a person who holds a legal interest in the property may lose that interest as a result of the forfeiture and subsequent foreclosure proceeding.

(c) A legal description or parcel number of the property and the street address of the property, if available.

(d) The person to whom the notice is addressed.

(e) The unpaid delinquent taxes, interest, penalties, and fees due on the property.

(f) A schedule of the additional interest, penalties, and fees that will accrue on the immediately succeeding March 1 pursuant to section 78g if those unpaid delinquent taxes, interest, penalties, and fees due on the property are not paid.

(g) A statement that unless those unpaid delinquent taxes, interest, penalties, and fees are paid on or before the March 31 immediately succeeding the entry in an uncontested case of a judgment foreclosing the property under section 78k, absolute title to the property shall vest in the foreclosing governmental unit.

(h) A statement of the person's rights of redemption and notice that the rights of redemption will expire on the March 31 immediately succeeding the entry in an uncontested case of a judgment foreclosing the property under section 78k.

(2) The notice required under subsection (1) shall also be mailed to the property by first-class mail, addressed to "occupant", if the notice was not sent to the occupant of the property pursuant to subsection (1).

(3) A county treasurer may insert 1 or more additional notices in a notice publication circulated in the county in which the property is located. If no notice publication is circulated in the county in which the property is located, the county treasurer may insert 1 or more additional notices in a notice publication circulated in an adjoining county. Additionally, a county treasurer may post 1 or more additional notices on a website, including, but not limited to, a website maintained by the county treasurer.

(4) The county treasurer may insert in a notice publication circulated in the county in which the property is located, notice of the street address, if available, of property subject to forfeiture under section 78g on the immediately succeeding March 1 for delinquent taxes or the street address, if available, of property subject to forfeiture under section 78g on the immediately succeeding March 1 for delinquent taxes and the name of the person to whom a tax bill for property returned for delinquent taxes was last sent and, if different, the name of the person identified as the owner of the property returned for delinquent taxes as shown on the current records of the county treasurer. If no notice publication is circulated in the county in which the property is located, the county treasurer may insert a notice under this subsection in a notice publication circulated in an adjoining county. Additionally, a county treasurer may post on a website, including, but not limited to, a website maintained by the county treasurer.

Sec. 78i. (1) Not later than May 1 immediately succeeding the forfeiture of property to the county treasurer under section 78g, the foreclosing governmental unit shall initiate a search of records identified in subsection (6) to identify the owners of a property interest in the property who are entitled to notice under this section of the show cause hearing under section 78j and the foreclosure hearing under section 78k. The foreclosing governmental unit may enter into a contract with 1 or more authorized representatives to perform a title search or may request from 1 or more authorized representatives another title search product to identify the owners of a property interest in the property as required under this subsection or to perform other functions required for the collection of delinquent taxes under this act.

(2) After conducting the search of records under subsection (1), the foreclosing governmental unit or its authorized representative shall determine the address reasonably calculated to apprise those owners of a property interest of the show cause hearing under section 78j and the foreclosure hearing under section 78k and shall send notice of the show cause hearing under section 78j and the foreclosure hearing under section 78k to those owners, and to a person entitled to notice of the return of delinquent taxes under section 78a(4), by certified mail, return receipt requested, not less than 30 days before the show cause hearing. If after conducting the search of records under subsection (1) the foreclosing governmental unit is unable to determine an address reasonably calculated to inform a person with an interest in a forfeited property, or if the foreclosing governmental unit discovers a deficiency in notice under subsection (4), the following shall be considered reasonable steps by the foreclosing governmental unit or its authorized representative to ascertain the address of a person entitled to notice under this section or to ascertain an address necessary to correct the deficiency in notice under subsection (4):

(a) For an individual, a search of the records of the probate court for the county in which the property is located.

(b) For an individual, a search of the qualified voter file established under section 509o of the Michigan election law, 1954 PA 116, MCL 168.509o, which is authorized by this subdivision.

(c) For a partnership, a search of partnership records filed with the county clerk.

(d) For a business entity other than a partnership, a search of business entity records filed with the department of labor and economic growth.

(3) The foreclosing governmental unit or its authorized representative or authorized agent shall make a personal visit to each parcel of property forfeited to the county treasurer under section 78g to ascertain whether or not the property is occupied. If the property appears to be occupied, the foreclosing governmental unit or its authorized representative shall do all of the following:

(a) Attempt to personally serve upon a person occupying the property notice of the show cause hearing under section 78j and the foreclosure hearing under section 78k.

(b) If a person occupying the property is personally served, orally inform the occupant that the property will be foreclosed and the occupants will be required to vacate unless all forfeited unpaid delinquent taxes, interest, penalties, and fees are paid, of the time within which all forfeited unpaid delinquent taxes, interest, penalties, and fees must be paid, and of agencies or other resources that may be available to assist the owner to avoid loss of the property.

(c) If the occupant appears to lack the ability to understand the advice given, notify the department of human services or provide the occupant with the names and telephone numbers of the agencies that may be able to assist the occupant.

(d) If the foreclosing governmental unit or its authorized representative is not able to personally meet with the occupant, the foreclosing governmental unit or its authorized representative shall place the notice in a conspicuous manner on the property and shall also place in a conspicuous manner on the property a notice that explains, in plain English, that the property will be foreclosed unless forfeited unpaid delinquent taxes, interest, penalties, and fees are paid, the time within which forfeited unpaid delinquent taxes, interest, penalties, and fees must be paid, and the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of agencies or other resources that may be available to assist the occupant to avoid loss of the property. If this state is the foreclosing governmental unit within a county, the department of treasury shall perform the personal visit to each parcel of property under this subsection on behalf of this state.

(4) If the foreclosing governmental unit or its authorized representative discovers any deficiency in the provision of notice, the foreclosing governmental unit shall take reasonable steps in good faith to correct that deficiency not later than 30 days before the show cause hearing under section 78j, if possible.

(5) If the foreclosing governmental unit or its authorized representative is unable to ascertain the address reasonably calculated to apprise the owners of a property interest entitled to notice under this section, or is unable to notify the owner of a property interest under subsection (2), the notice shall be made by publication as provided in this subsection and section 78s. A notice shall be inserted for 2 successive weeks, once each week, in a notice publication circulated in the county in which the property is located. This notice shall be instead of notice under subsection (2). If a notice publication is not circulated in the county in which the property is located, the foreclosing governmental unit shall insert the notice in a notice publication circulated in an adjoining county. In addition to provision of notice in a notice publication, the foreclosing governmental unit may also post the notice under this subsection for not less than 14 days on a website, including, but not limited to, a website maintained by the foreclosing governmental unit.

(6) The owner of a property interest is entitled to notice under this section of the show cause hearing under section 78j and the foreclosure hearing under section 78k if that owner's interest was identifiable by reference to any of the following sources before the date that the county treasurer records the certificate required under section 78g(2):

(a) Land title records in the office of the county register of deeds.

(b) Tax records in the office of the county treasurer.

(c) Tax records in the office of the local assessor.

(d) Tax records in the office of the local treasurer.

(7) The notice required under subsections (2) and (3) shall include all of the following:

(a) The date on which the property was forfeited to the county treasurer.

(b) A statement that the person notified may lose his or her interest in the property as a result of the foreclosure proceeding under section 78k.

(c) A legal description or parcel number of the property and the street address of the property, if available.

(d) The person to whom the notice is addressed.

(e) The total taxes, interest, penalties, and fees due on the property.

(f) The date and time of the show cause hearing under section 78j.

(g) The date and time of the hearing on the petition for foreclosure under section 78k, and a statement that unless the forfeited unpaid delinquent taxes, interest, penalties, and fees are paid on or before the March 31 immediately succeeding the entry of a judgment foreclosing the property under section 78k, or in a contested case within 21 days of the entry of a judgment foreclosing the property under section 78k, the title to the property shall vest absolutely in the foreclosing governmental unit and that all existing interests in oil or gas in that property shall be extinguished except the following:

(i) The interests of a lessee or an assignee of an interest of a lessee under an oil or gas lease in effect as to that property or any part of that property if the lease was recorded in the office of the register of deeds in the county in which the property is located before the date of filing the petition for foreclosure under section 78h.

(ii) Interests preserved as provided in section 1(3) of 1963 PA 42, MCL 554.291.

(h) An explanation of the person's rights of redemption and notice that the rights of redemption will expire on the March 31 immediately succeeding the entry of a judgment foreclosing the property under section 78k, or in a contested case 21 days after the entry of a judgment foreclosing the property under section 78k.

(8) The published notice required under subsection (5) shall include all of the following:

(a) A legal description or parcel number of each property.

(b) The street address of each property, if available.

(c) The name of any person or entity entitled to notice under this section who has not been notified under subsection (2) or (3).

(d) The date and time of the show cause hearing under section 78j.

(e) The date and time of the hearing on the petition for foreclosure under section 78k.

(f) A statement that unless all forfeited unpaid delinquent taxes, interest, penalties, and fees are paid on or before the March 31 immediately succeeding the entry of a judgment foreclosing the property under section 78k, or in a contested case within 21 days of the entry of a judgment foreclosing the property under section 78k, the title to the property shall vest absolutely in the foreclosing governmental unit and that all existing interests in oil or gas in that property shall be extinguished except the following:

(i) The interests of a lessee or an assignee of an interest of a lessee under an oil or gas lease in effect as to that property or any part of that property if the lease was recorded in the office of the register of deeds in the county in which the property is located before the date of filing the petition for foreclosure under section 78h.

(ii) Interests preserved as provided in section 1(3) of 1963 PA 42, MCL 554.291.

(g) A statement that a person with an interest in the property may lose his or her interest in the property as a result of the foreclosure proceeding under section 78k and that all existing interests in oil or gas in that property shall be extinguished except the following:

(i) The interests of a lessee or an assignee of an interest of a lessee under an oil or gas lease in effect as to that property or any part of that property if the lease was recorded in the office of the register of deeds in the county in which the property is located before the date of filing the petition for foreclosure under section 78h.

(ii) Interests preserved as provided in section 1(3) of 1963 PA 42, MCL 554.291.

(9) The owner of a property interest who has been properly served with a notice of the show cause hearing under section 78j and the foreclosure hearing under section 78k and who failed to redeem the property as provided under this act shall not assert any of the following:

(a) That notice was insufficient or inadequate on the grounds that some other owner of a property interest was not also served.

(b) That the redemption period provided under this act was extended in any way on the grounds that some other owner of a property interest was not also served.

(10) The failure of the foreclosing governmental unit to comply with any provision of this section shall not invalidate any proceeding under this act if the owner of a property interest or a person to whom a tax deed was issued is accorded the minimum due process required under the state constitution of 1963 and the constitution of the United States.

(11) As used in this section, "authorized representative" includes all of the following:

(a) A title insurance company or agent licensed to conduct business in this state.

(b) An attorney licensed to practice law in this state.

(c) A person accredited in land title search procedures by a nationally recognized organization in the field of land title searching.

(d) A person with demonstrated experience searching land title records, as determined by the foreclosing governmental unit.

(12) The provisions of this section relating to notice of the show cause hearing under section 78j and the foreclosure hearing under section 78k are exclusive and exhaustive. Other requirements relating to notice or proof of service under other law, rule, or legal requirement are not applicable to notice and proof of service under this section.

Sec. 78s. (1) For insertion of a notice in a notice publication under sections 78a to 78r, this section and sections 78a to 78r apply, notwithstanding any other law to the contrary.

(2) A requirement for insertion of a notice publication under sections 78a to 78r is satisfied by including the notice in a separate insert within the notice publication. A foreclosing governmental unit may exercise its discretion in selecting the notice publication in which the notice shall be inserted based on the notice publication's cost and circulation.

(3) As used in this section and sections 78a to 78r:

(a) "Internet" means that term as defined in 47 USC 230.

(b) "Notice publication" includes a newspaper, as that term is defined under section 1 of 1963 PA 247, MCL 691.1051, a legal newspaper, or other print publication for the dissemination of news, editorial content, and other information of a public character or nature, including, but not limited to, a print publication to which all of the following apply:

(i) The print publication is published and distributed in not less than weekly intervals.

(ii) Not less than 50% of the words in the print publication are in the English language.

(iii) The print publication has a bona fide list of subscribers in 1 or more counties in this state or is available to the public at newsstands or other retail locations in 1 or more counties in this state, or both.

(iv) The print publication accepts and publishes official and other notices.

(v) The print publication annually averages not less than 25% news and editorial content per issue. As used in this subparagraph, "news and editorial content" means any printed matter other than advertising.

(vi) The print publication has been published or distributed for not less than 1 year.

(c) "Website" means a collection of pages of the Internet, usually in HTML format, with clickable or hypertext links to enable navigation from 1 page or section to another, that often uses associated graphics files to provide illustration and may contain other clickable or hypertext links.

Enacting section 1. This amendatory act takes effect 90 days after the date it is enacted into law.

This act is ordered to take immediate effect.



Clerk of the House of Representatives



Secretary of the Senate

Approved

Governor