Law gives cities power over blighted foreclosures

By Andrew Edwards, Contra Costa Times

Cities will keep their power to issue heavy fines against the owners of foreclosed properties that are not kept up to city code following Gov. Jerry Brown's signing of an inland lawmaker's bill.

Assemblywoman Wilmer Amina Carter, D-Rialto, introduced the bill, which allows cities to levy maximum fines of $1,000 per day to property owners who fail to maintain residential properties obtained at a foreclosure sale or through the foreclosure process under a mortgage or deed of trust.

The bill also gives property owners a grace period of up to 60 days to make a good-faith effort to correct any code violations.

The governor's office announced Brown's signing of the bill on Monday.

Without Carter's bill, cities would have lost their power to issue $1,000 per day fines on Jan. 1. The new legislation, AB2314, allows cities and other California governments to keep that power indefinitely.

"The Inland Empire has been hit hard by home foreclosures, and untended properties encourage blight and bring down property values. Well-kept properties make for safer, cleaner neighborhoods," Carter said in a statement provided by her office on Monday.

The city of San Bernardino has given its code enforcement officers, city attorney's investigators, police, fire inspectors and some others power to issue $1,000 per day fines for any municipal code violation since 2008.

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