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3	8	HOUSE BILL 2026
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5		g, D. Willtaker, Tucker
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8		To Be Entitled
9	AN ACT TO AMEND THE PROPER	
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18	BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY	OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:
19		
20	SECTION 1. Arkansas Code §§ 8-1	5-102 and 8-15-103 are amended to read
21	as follows:	
22	8-15-102. Definitions.	
23	As used in this chapter:	
24	(1) (A) "Bond" means a rev	enue bond or note issued under this
25	chapter.	
26	(B) "Bond" includes	any other financial obligation
27	authorized by this chapter, the laws o	this state, or the Arkansas
28	Constitution; "Assessment" means an an	nually recurring amount identified
29	within an assessment obligation that m	ay be pledged as cash flow and
30	collateral in support of repayment of	a district's financial obligation;
31	(2) "Assessment contract"	means a written agreement between a
32	district and an owner relating to a PA	CE improvement on or benefitting an
33	owner's property, under which an asses	sment is charged to repay an assessment
34	obligation between a district and an o	mer as part of a PACE program;
35	(3) "Assessment obligation	n" means an assessment and other
36	indebtedness and obligations, including	without limitation any

1 reimbursements, penalties, interest, or other charges, to be paid to a 2 district by an owner under an assessment contract; 3 (2) (4) "District" means a property assessed energy improvement 4 district established in this state by law under this chapter subject to the 5 general improvement district law contained in Title 14, Subtitle 5, of the 6 Arkansas Code, to the extent a conflict does not exist with this chapter, for 7 the express purpose of managing the PACE program; 8 (5) "Financial obligation" means a bond, note, lease purchase 9 agreement, certificate of participation, or other financial evidence of 10 indebtedness authorized by this chapter, the laws of this state, or the 11 Arkansas Constitution; 12 (3) (6) "Governmental entity" means a municipality, county, 13 combination of cities or counties, or both, or statewide district; 14 (7) "Lending entity" means an individual, partnership, 15 association, corporation, or other legal entity not prohibited by Arkansas law or federal law from lending money, either without security or upon the 16 17 security the lending entity may require; 18 (4) (8) "Owner" means an individual, partnership, association, 19 corporation, or other legal entity, that is recognized by law, and has with 20 title or interest in any real property on which a PACE project is located or 21 that benefits from a PACE project; 22 (9) "PACE improvement" means any combination of energy 23 efficiency improvements, water conservation improvements, or renewable energy projects that is district-approved to become a PACE project and is located on 24 25 or benefits an owner's real property; 26 (5) (10) "PACE program" means a property assessed clean energy 27 program under which a real property owner can finance an energy efficiency 28 improvement, a renewable energy project, and a water conservation improvement 29 on the real property under this chapter by which an owner may finance or 30 refinance a PACE project through financial obligations, the repayment of which are secured and collateralized by assessments; and 31 32 (11) "PACE project" means district-approved PACE improvements 33 located on residential, commercial, industrial, or agricultural real property 34 that, at the request of the owner, are financed or refinanced through a

secured and collateralized by assessments; and

financial obligation rendered by a lending entity, the repayment of which is

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1	(6) (12) "Person" means an individual, partnership, association,
2	corporation, or other legal entity recognized by law as having the power to
3	contract.
4	
5	8-15-103. Legislative findings.
6	The General Assembly finds that:
7	(1) It is in the best interests of the state to authorize
8	districts that make available to citizens one (1) or more financing programs,
9	including without limitation a PACE program, to fund energy efficiency
10	improvements, renewable energy projects, and water conservation improvements
11	on residential, commercial, industrial, and other real properties at the
12	request of the owner PACE projects;
13	(2) The \underline{PACE} programs described in subdivision (1) of this
14	section will benefit the citizens of this state by:
15	(A) Decreasing the cost of providing funds to
16	participating citizens and lowering the aggregate issuance and servicing
17	costs of loans financial obligations; and
18	(B) Making funds available to rural communities throughout
19	the state that might not otherwise create and finance the $\frac{PACE}{PACE}$
20	projects described in subdivision (1) of this section; and
21	(3) The $\frac{PACE}{PACE}$ projects described in subdivision (1) of
22	this section will further the public purpose of:
23	(A) Creating jobs and stimulating the state's economy;
24	(B) Generating significant economic development through
25	the investment of the proceeds of loans in local communities, including
26	increased sales tax revenue;
27	(C) Protecting participating citizens from the financial
28	impact of the rising cost of electricity produced from nonrenewable fuels;
29	(D) Providing positive cash flow in which the costs of the
30	$\underline{\mathtt{PACE}}$ improvements are lower than the energy savings on an average monthly
31	basis;
32	(E) Providing the citizens of this state with informed
33	choices and additional options for financing \underline{PACE} improvements that may not
34	otherwise be available;
35	(F) Increasing the value of the improved real property for

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participating citizens;

1	(G) improving the state's air quality and conserving
2	natural resources, including water;
3	(H) Attracting manufacturing facilities and related jobs
4	to the state; and
5	(I) Promoting energy independence and security for the
6	state and the nation.
7	
8	SECTION 2. Arkansas Code § 8-15-105, concerning the authority to
9	create a district under the Property Assessed Clean Energy Act, is amended to
10	add an additional subsection to read as follows:
11	(d)(1) Before the enactment of an ordinance under this section, a
12	public hearing shall be held at which interested persons may object to or
13	inquire about the proposed PACE program or any of the PACE program's
14	particulars.
15	(2) Before a public hearing is held under subdivision (d)(1) of
16	this section, notice of the public hearing shall be advertised at least one
17	(1) time per week for two (2) consecutive weeks in a newspaper of general
18	circulation in the proposed district.
19	
20	SECTION 3. Arkansas Code § 8-15-107(a), concerning the board of
21	directors of a property assessed energy improvement district, is amended to
22	read as follows:
23	(a) A district created under this chapter shall be operated:
24	(1) A body politic and corporate with all powers neccessary or
25	convenient to carry out and effectuate this chapter, including without
26	limitation the power to contract and be contracted with and sue and be sued;
27	<u>and</u>
28	(2) Operated and controlled by a board of directors.
29	
30	SECTION 4. Arkansas Code § 8-15-111 is amended to read as follows:
31	8-15-111. District boards of directors — Powers and duties.
32	(a) The board of directors of a district may:
33	(1) Issue revenue bonds on behalf of the district;
34	(2) Make and adopt all necessary and appropriate bylaws for its
35	organization and operation;
36	(3) Elect officers and employ personnel necessary for its

T	operation;
2	(4) Operate, maintain, expand, and fund a PACE project;
3	(5) Apply for, receive, and spend grants for any purpose under
4	this chapter;
5	(6) Enter into, modify, and terminate agreements and contracts
6	on behalf of the district, including without limitation assessment contracts,
7	and take all actions necessary and appropriate to perform a district's
8	obligations under an agreement or contract on behalf of the district;
9	(7) Receive property or funds by gift or donation for the
10	finance and support of the district;
11	(8) Reimburse a governmental entity for expenses incurred in
12	performing a service for the district;
13	(9) Assign assessments, contracts, and other assessment
14	obligations to a private lending institution entity in connection with the
15	issuance of any bond or otherwise;
16	(10) Create, maintain, supplement, modify, and operate PACE
17	programs;
18	(11) Sue and be sued;
19	(12) Under a PACE project:
20	(A) Charge and collect assessments and other assessment
21	obligations under assessment contracts with owners; and
22	(B) Record the assessment contracts, which creates the
23	assessment and other assessment obligations to evidence a lien on the
24	property subject to the assessment contract and secures payment and
25	performance in full of the assessment obligations under the assessment
26	contract, so long as any of the assessment obligations remain payable under
27	the assessment contracts; and
28	(10) (13) Do all things necessary or appropriate to carry out the
29	powers expressly granted or duties expressly imposed under this chapter.
30	(b) The board of directors shall <u>either</u> :
31	(1) Allow a commission of:
32	(A) One and five-tenths percent (1.5%) for the extension
33	of district assessments for each assessment contract by the county assessor
34	or county clerk;
35	(B) One and five-tenths percent (1.5%) for the collection
36	of district assessments for each assessment contract by the county collector:

1	and
2	(C) One-eighth percent (0.125%) for services of a county
3	treasurer in disbursing the moneys collected for district assessments; and $\underline{\text{or}}$
4	(2) Adopt rules a contractual fee arrangement consistent with
5	this chapter or with other legislation that in its the board of directors'
6	judgment $\frac{1}{2}$ may be $\frac{1}{2}$ necessary for the proper enforcement of this chapter.
7	including without limitation negotiating commissions lower than the
8	commission stated in subdivision (b)(1) of this section for services rendered
9	by a private entity that is assigned the authority to collect assessments and
10	disbursing the moneys collected.
11	
12	SECTION 5. Arkansas Code §§ $8-15-112-8-15-116$ are amended to read as
13	follows:
14	8-15-112. Reporting requirement — Collection of assessments.
15	(a)(l)(A) By March l of each year or upon the creation of a district
16	that uses or intends to use the county collector for collection of district
17	assessments assessment obligations, a district shall file an annual report
18	with the county clerk in any county in which a portion of the district is
19	located.
20	(B) The annual report required under this section shall be
21	available for inspection and copying by assessed landowners in the district.
22	(C) The county clerk shall not charge any costs or fees
23	for filing the annual report required under this section.
24	(D) The district shall deliver a filed copy of the annual
25	report required under this section to the county collector within five (5)
26	days of filing.
27	(2) The annual report required under this section shall contain
28	the following information as of December 31 of the current calendar year:
29	(A) A list of contracts, identity of the parties to the
30	contracts, and obligations of the district, including without limitation all
31	assessment contracts on which assessments or other assessment obligations
32	remain unpaid;
33	(B) Any indebtedness of the district, other than
34	assessment contracts, including bonded indebtedness, and the reason for the
35	indebtedness, including the following:

(i) The stated payout or maturity date of the

- l indebtedness, if any; and
- 2 (ii) The total existing delinquent assessments and
- 3 the party responsible for the collection;
- 4 (C) Identification of each member of the board of
- 5 directors of the district and each member's contact information;
- 6 (D) The date, time, and location for any scheduled meeting
- 7 of the district for the following year;
- 8 (E) The contact information for the district assessor;
- 9 (F) Information concerning to whom the county treasurer is
- 10 to pay district assessments assessment obligations collected by the county
- 11 collector;
- 12 (G) An explanation of the applicable statutory penalties,
- 13 interest, and costs <u>included in assessment obligations</u>;
- 14 (H) The method used to compute district assessments
- 15 <u>assessment obligations;</u> and
- 16 (I) A statement itemizing the income and expenditures of
- 17 the district, including a statement of fund and account activity for the
- 18 district.
- 19 (b)(1) A district that does not comply with subsection (a) of this
- 20 section commits a violation punishable by a fine of not less than one hundred
- 21 dollars (\$100) nor more than one thousand dollars (\$1,000) for each offense.
- 22 (2) A fine recovered under subdivision (b)(1) of this section
- 23 shall be deposited into the county clerk's cost fund.
- 24 (c)(1) On or before December 31, a district shall file its list of
- 25 special assessments and the assessment obligations due for the following
- 26 calendar year with the county clerk.
- 27 (2)(A) After filing the list of special assessments and
- 28 assessment obligations under subdivision (c)(1) of this section, the district
- 29 shall deliver a copy of the filed list of special assessments and assessment
- 30 <u>obligations</u> to the preparer of the tax books.
- 31 (B) If the county collector is not the designated preparer
- 32 of the tax books, the district shall deliver a copy of the filed list of
- 33 special assessments and assessment obligations to the county collector.
- 34 (3) The list of special assessments and assessment obligations
- 35 required under subdivision (c)(1) of this section shall contain:
- 36 (A) A list of each Each parcel with an subject to unpaid

- l assessment levied obligations against it within the district; and
- 2 (B) The contact information for the district assessor.
- 3 (4) The list of special assessments and assessment obligations
 4 required under subdivision (c)(1) of this section shall not include
 5 assessments on parcels that otherwise would not appear on the tax books for
 6 the following year.
 - (5) After the December 31 deadline to file the list of special assessments and assessment obligations required under subdivision (c)(1) of this section, the county collector may reject an assessment submitted by the district for inclusion in the list of special assessments and assessment obligations.
 - (d)(1) After Unless privately collected under § 8-15-111, after the district files the list of special assessments and assessment obligations required under subsection (e) subdivision (c)(1) of this section, the county collector shall collect the assessments assessment obligations at the same time the county collector collects the other taxes on the property subject properties.
 - (2) The county collector shall pay the funds collected under subdivision (d)(1) of this section to the county treasurer at the same time that the county collector pays all other taxes to the county treasurer.
 - (3) The county treasurer shall distribute the funds received under subdivision (d)(2) of this section to the district in the same manner as he or she distributes funds to other tax entities.
 - (e) Except as provided in § 8-15-111, the county shall not charge a fee, expense, or other charge to the district for performing the county's obligations under this section.

- 8-15-113. Financing projects.
- (a) A district may establish a PACE program to provide loans for the initial acquisition and installation of energy efficiency improvements, renewable energy projects, and water conservation improvements with consenting real property owners of existing real property and new construction.
- (b)(1) The (a)(1) A district may authorize approve by resolution the issuance of bonds or the execution of a contract with a governmental entity or a private entity to provide the loans under subsection (a) of this section

1	terms and conditions contractually agreed upon by a lending entity,
2	consenting owner, and district for a financial obligation by the lending
3	entity and the owner's execution of an assignable assessment contract and
4	assessment obligation to fund the costs, expenses, and reimbursements
5	associated with the initial acquisition, construction, and installation of
6	PACE improvements on existing real property or new construction.
7	(2) The \underline{A} resolution under subdivision (a)(1) of this section
8	shall include without limitation the following:
9	(A) The type of renewable energy project, water
10	conservation improvement, or energy efficiency improvement A description of
11	the PACE improvements for which the loan financial obligations may be
12	offered; and
13	(B) The proposed arrangement for the loan program by which
14	financial obligations issued to fund a PACE project shall be repaid,
15	including without limitation:
16	(i) A statement concerning the <u>financial obligation</u>
17	source of funding that will be used to pay for work performed under the loan
18	contract a PACE project entered into under an assessment contract for
19	repayment of the principal and interest on financial obligations, including
20	any applicable terms and conditions of the assessment obligation;
21	(ii) The interest rate and time period during which
22	contracting real property owners would repay the loan repayment of the
23	financial obligation would occur; and
24	(iii) The method of apportioning all or any portion
25	of the costs incidental to the financing, administration, and collection of
26	the arrangement among the consenting real property owners and the
27	governmental entity that has the authority to collect assessments; and
28	(iv) The form of the assessment contract, specifying
29	the terms and conditions of the assessment obligations of the owners'
30	proposed assessment obligations, to be agreed to by the district.
31	(C) A minimum and maximum aggregate dollar amount that may
32	be financed per property;
33	(D)(i) A method for prioritizing requests from real
34	property owners for financing if the requests appear likely to exceed the
35	authorization amount of the loan program.
36	(ii) Priority shall be given to those requests from

-	rear property emergence end error requirements on a rirect come,
2	first-served basis;
3	(E) Identification of a local official authorized to enter
4	into loan contracts on behalf of the district; and
5	(F) A draft contract specifying the terms and conditions
6	proposed by the district.
7	(c)(1) (b) The district may combine the loan payment include the
8	assessment obligations required by the loan contract assessment contracts
9	with the billing for the real property tax assessment for the real property
10	where the renewable energy project, water conservation improvement, or the
11	energy efficiency improvement is installed benefitting from the PACE project
12	or upon which the PACE project is located, as provided in § 8-15-112.
13	(2) The district may establish the order in which a loan payment
14	will be applied to the different charges.
15	(3) The district may not combine the billing for a loan payment
16	required by a contract authorized under this section with a billing of
17	another county or political subdivision unless the county or political
18	subdivision has given its consent by a resolution or ordinance.
19	(d) (c)(1)(A) The district shall offer private lending institutions
20	the opportunity to participate in local loan programs established under this
21	section. An assessment contract under this chapter may include provisions
22	for the payment of penalties and interest for delinquent assessment
23	obligations and the payment of fees, costs, and expenses for the collection
24	of any delinquent assessment obligations, including without limitation the
25	delinquent penalties provided under § 14-90-909.
26	(B) Assessment obligations, including without limitation
27	penalties and interest on delinquent assessment obligations, and the fees,
28	costs, and expenses for the collection of delinquent assessment obligations,
29	shall be secured and collateralized by a foreclosable lien that:
30	(i) Is created upon the filing of the underlying
31	assessment contract;
32	(ii) Is charged against the real property upon which
33	the PACE project, subject to an assessment contract, is located or the real
34	property that is otherwise benefited by the PACE project;
35	(iii) Shall remain until the assessment obligations
36	are paid; and

1	(iv) Is entitled to preference and priority over all
2	prior and subsequent mortgages, judgments, executions, encumbrances, or
3	liens, whenever created, except liens for general ad valorem real property
4	taxes, upon recording of the assessment contract describing the secured
5	assessment obligations in the county recorder's office of the county in which
6	an owner's real estate that is subject to an assessment contract is located.
7	(e)(1)(A) In order to secure a loan authorized under this section, the
8	district may place a lien equal in value to the loan against any real
9	property where the renewable energy project, water conservation improvement,
10	or the energy efficiency improvement is installed.
11	(B) The lien shall attach to the real property when it is
12	filed in the county recorder's office for record.
13	(2)(A)(i) The priority of the lien created under this chapter is
14	determined based on the date of filing of the lien.
15	(ii) Except as provided in subdivision
16	(e)(2)(A)(iii) of this section, the priority of the lien shall be determined
17	in the same manner as the priority for other real property tax and assessment
18	liens.
19	(iii) A lien created under this chapter shall be
20	subordinate to any real or personal property tax liens.
21	(iv) A district shall discharge the lien created
22	under this chapter upon full payment of the lien.
23	(B) If (C) So long as the underlying assessment
24	obligations remain unpaid, the lien created under subdivision (c)(1)(B) of
25	this section runs with the real property, and if the real property is sold,
26	the lien shall $\frac{1}{1}$ remain attached to the real property, and the $\frac{1}{1}$
27	assessment obligations created under the assessment obligation provided for
28	$\underline{\text{in}}$ this chapter $\underline{\text{will}}$ $\underline{\text{shall}}$ be owed by the new real property owner.
29	(C) (D) If the real property subject to an assessment
30	<pre>contract enters into default or foreclosure:</pre>
31	(i) Payment of the assessment obligations created by
32	the assessment contract shall not be sought from a member of the district who
33	does not own the real property subject to the assessment contract that
34	entered into default or foreclosure;
35	(ii) The portion of the assessment obligations not
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I	not eliminated by foreclosure of a property tax lien;
2	(iii) Repayment of the assessment assessments and
3	other assessment obligations not due upon default or foreclosure shall not be
4	accelerated automatically; and
5	(iii) (iv) The balance of the assessment obligation
6	shall be repaid according to the terms of the agreed-upon schedule $\underline{\text{and other}}$
7	provisions of the assessment contract; and
8	(v) Except as otherwise expressly provided in this
9	chapter, the district may elect to enforce its lien for delinquent assessment
10	obligations under this section in the same manner as delinquent assessments
11	and installments of assessments are collected under § 14-90-101 et seq.
12	(3) (2) The district may bundle or package the loans its
13	assessment obligations for transfer to private lenders in a manner that would
14	allow the liens to remain in full force to secure the loans assessment
15	obligations.
16	(f)(1) Before the enactment of an ordinance under this section, a
17	public hearing shall be held at which interested persons may object to or
18	inquire about the proposed loan program or any of its particulars.
19	(2) The public hearing shall be advertised one (1) time per week
20	for two (2) consecutive weeks in a newspaper of general circulation in the
21	district.
22	
23	8-15-114. Program guidelines.
24	The board of directors of a district, together with any third-party
25	administrator it may select, shall determine:
26	(1) The guidelines of the PACE program, including without
27	limitation that:
28	(A) The base energy performance evaluation shall be
29	completed by a certified and qualified energy evaluation professional to
30	determine existing energy use and options for improved energy efficiency;
31	(B) The approved \underline{PACE} improvements \underline{shall} create a positive
32	cash flow;
33	(C) Work shall be performed by qualified and certified
34	contractors in the field of energy efficiency and methods of renewable energy
35	installation;
36	(D) Performance testing and verification shall be

1	performed by a qualified professional after the work is completed;
2	(E) Adequate consumer protections are shall be in place;
3	and
4	(F) The applicable underwriting standards for the
5	participants in the PACE program are shall be established;
6	(G) A minimum and maximum aggregate dollar amount that may
7	be financed for each PACE project shall be established;
8	(H)(i) A method shall be established for prioritizing PACE
9	program requests if the requests appear likely to exceed the amount
10	authorized for the PACE program.
11	(ii) Priority shall be given to PACE program
12	requests that meet the eligibility requirements on a first-come, first-served
13	basis;
14	(I) A district official authorized to enter into
15	assessment contracts on behalf of the district shall be identified; and
16	(J) The district shall offer lending entities the
17	opportunity to finance PACE projects under this chapter;
18	(2) The qualifications of the vendors performing installations
19	under this chapter;
20	(3) The mechanisms by which the district $\frac{\text{will shall}}{\text{shall}}$ remit $\frac{\text{the}}{\text{the}}$
21	received special assessment obligation payments and any cost reimbursement;
22	and
23	(4) Any other matters necessary to implement and administer the
24	PACE program.
25	
26	8-15-115. Payment by special assessments assessment obligations.
27	The credit and taxing power of the State of Arkansas shall not be
28	pledged for the debt evidenced by the bonds <u>financial obligations of any</u>
29	district, which are payable solely from the revenues received by the
30	districts from the special assessments on the participants' assessment
31	obligations on owners' real property and other funds provided to secure the
32	payment of financial obligations under this chapter.
33	
34	8-15-116. Bonds Financial obligations.
35	(a) A district may:
36	(1) Issue financial obligations, including bonds, notes,

1	certificates of participation, and other evidence of indebtedness, to provide
2	the PACE program loans projects as authorized by this chapter; and
3	(2) Create a debt reserve fund of legally available moneys from
4	nonstate sources as partial security for the bonds.
5	(b) Bonds Financial obligations issued under this chapter and income
6	from the any bonds, including any profit made on the sale or transfer of the
7	bonds, are exempt from taxation in this state.
8	(c) Bonds Financial obligations issued under this chapter shall:
9	(1)(A) Be authorized by a As stated in the resolution of the
10	board of directors of a district authorizing the issuance of the financial
11	obligations:
12	(i) Bear interest at the rate or rates determined by
13	the board of directors;
14	(ii) Mature at the time or times determined by the
15	board of directors;
16	(iii) Be payable as to principal, any premium, and
17	interest at the places within or without the state and in the form, whether
18	bearer or registered, determined by the board of directors;
19	(iv) Be subject to any exchange privileges; and
20	(v) Have such other details as may be stated in the
21	resolution.
22	(B) The authorizing bond resolution may contain any terms,
23	covenants, and conditions that the board of directors deems to be reasonable
24	and desirable resolution of the board of directors authorizing the issuance
25	of financial obligations may provide for the execution and delivery of:
26	(i) A trust indenture or like instrument by the
27	board of directors of a district securing the financial obligations; and
28	(ii) Other writings pertaining to the financial
29	obligations; and
30	(2) Have all of the qualities of and shall be deemed to be
31	negotiable instruments under the laws of the State of Arkansas.
32	(d) Financial obligations may be executed by the manual or facsimile
33	signatures of the members of the board of directors of a district.
34	
35	SECTION 6. Arkansas Code § 8-15-118 is amended to read as follows:
36	8-15-118. Revolving fund.

T	(a) A district may maintain a revolving fund to be held in trust by a
2	banking institution chosen by the board of directors of the district separate
3	from any other funds and administered by the board of directors of the
4	district.
5	(b) A district may transfer into its revolving fund money from any
6	permissible source, including:
7	(1) Bond revenues;
8	(2) <u>Investment earnings;</u>
9	(3) Contributions; and
10	(3) (4) Loans and leases, including without limitation payments
11	and prepayments of principal, interest, and rental payments.
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