

654.15 Continuance moratorium.

1. In all actions for the foreclosure of real estate mortgages, deeds of trust of real property, and contracts for the purchase of real estate, when the owner enters an appearance and files an answer admitting some indebtedness and breach of the terms of the designated instrument, which admissions cannot be withdrawn or denied after a continuance is granted, the owner may apply for a continuance of the foreclosure action if the default or inability of the owner to pay or perform is mainly due or brought about by reason of drought, flood, heat, hail, storm, or other climatic conditions or by reason of the infestation of pests which affect the land in controversy. The application must be in writing and filed at or before final decree. Upon the filing of the application the court shall set a day for hearing on the application and provide by order for notice to be given to the plaintiff of the time fixed for the hearing. If the court finds that the application is made in good faith and is supported by competent evidence showing that default in payment or inability to pay is due to drought, flood, heat, hail, storm, or other climatic conditions or due to infestation of pests, the court may continue the foreclosure proceeding as follows:

a. If the default or breach of terms of the written instrument on which the action is based occurs on or before the first day of March of any year by reason of any of the causes specified in this subsection, causing the loss and failure of crops on the land involved in the previous year, the continuance shall end on the first day of March of the succeeding year.

b. If the default or breach of terms of the written instrument occurs after the first day of March, but during that crop year and that year's crop fails by reason of any of the causes set out in this subsection, the continuance shall end on the first day of March of the second succeeding year.

c. Only one continuance shall be granted, except upon a showing of extraordinary circumstances in which event the court may grant a second continuance for a further period as the court deems just and equitable, not to exceed one year.

d. The order shall provide for the appointment of a receiver to take charge of the property and to rent the property. The owner or person in possession shall be given preference in the occupancy of the property. The receiver, who may be the owner or person in possession, shall collect the rents and income and distribute the proceeds as follows:

(1) For the payment of the costs of receivership.

(2) For the payment of taxes due or becoming due during the period of receivership.

(3) For the payment of insurance on the buildings on the premises.

(4) The remaining balance shall be paid to the owner of the written instrument upon which the foreclosure is based, to be credited on the instrument.

An owner of a small business may apply for a continuance as provided in this subsection if the real estate subject to foreclosure is used for the small business. The court may continue the foreclosure proceeding if the court finds that the application is made in good faith and is supported by competent evidence showing that the default in payment or inability to pay is due to the economic condition of the customers of the small business, because the customers of the small business have been significantly economically distressed as a result of drought, flood, heat, hail, storm, or other climatic conditions or due to infestation of pests. The length of the continuance shall be determined by the court, but shall not exceed two years.

2. In all actions for the foreclosure of real estate mortgages, deeds of trust of real estate, and contracts for the purchase of real estate, an owner of real estate may apply for a moratorium as provided in this subsection if the governor declares a state of economic emergency. The governor shall state in the declaration the types of

real estate eligible for a moratorium continuance, which may include real estate used for farming; designated types of real estate not used for farming, including real estate used for small business; or all real estate. Only property of a type specified in the declaration which is subject to a mortgage, deed of trust, or contract for purchase entered into before the date of the declaration is eligible for a moratorium. In an action for the foreclosure of a mortgage, deed of trust, or contract for purchase of real estate eligible for a moratorium, the owner may apply for a continuance of the foreclosure if the owner has entered an appearance and filed an answer admitting some indebtedness and breach of the terms of the designated instrument. The admissions cannot be withdrawn or denied after a continuance is granted. Applications for continuance made pursuant to this subsection must be filed within one year of the governor's declaration of economic emergency. Upon the filing of an application as provided in this subsection, the court shall set a date for hearing and provide by order for notice to the parties of the time for the hearing. If the court finds that the application is made in good faith and the owner is unable to pay or perform, the court may continue the foreclosure proceeding as follows:

a. If the application is made in regard to real estate used for farming, the continuance shall terminate two years from the date of the order. If the application is made in regard to real estate not used for farming, the continuance shall terminate one year from the date of the order.

b. Only one continuance shall be granted the applicant for each written instrument or contract under each declaration.

c. The court shall appoint a receiver to take charge of the property and to rent the property. The applicant shall be given preference in the occupancy of the property. The receiver, who may be the applicant, shall collect the rents and income and distribute the proceeds as follows:

(1) For the payment of the costs of receivership, including the required interest on the written instrument and the costs of operation.

(2) For the payment of taxes due or becoming due during the period of receivership.

(3) For the payment of insurance deemed necessary by the court including but not limited to insurance on the buildings on the premises and liability insurance.

(4) The remaining balance shall be paid to the owner of the written instrument upon which the foreclosure was based, to be credited against the principal due on the written instrument.

d. A continuance granted under this subsection may be terminated if the court finds, after notice and hearing, all of the following:

(1) The party seeking foreclosure has made reasonable efforts in good faith to work with the applicant to restructure the debt obligations of the applicant.

(2) The party seeking foreclosure has made reasonable efforts in good faith to work with the applicant to utilize state and federal programs designed and implemented to provide debtor relief options. For the purposes of subparagraph (1) and this subparagraph, the determination of reasonableness shall take into account the financial condition of the party seeking foreclosure, and the financial strength and the long-term financial survivorship potential of the applicant.

(3) The applicant has failed to pay interest due on the written instrument.

3. As used in this section, "*small business*" means the same as defined in section 16.1.

85 Acts, ch 250, § 1, 2; 86 Acts, ch 1216, § 79; 87 Acts, ch 115, §80