

VISUAL 15.1

WHY ARE PROPERTY OWNERS' RIGHTS IMPORTANT?

- In a market economy, most resources are owned by individuals and businesses, not by government.
- Private ownership means that people and businesses are able to obtain, use, and transfer property as they see fit, according to applicable laws.
- Private ownership provides incentives for people to take care of their property because, with proper care, it can gain in value, benefitting its owner.
- If private property could be taken from owners without their consent, the threat of loss would discourage people from investing in their property—their homes and businesses—or caring for it.
- Private owners need to have confidence that their rights will be protected by the courts or they will have less incentive to make productive use of their property.
- Despite the importance of private ownership, governments are permitted under certain circumstances, according to specified legal procedures, to acquire privately owned land for a public use.

VISUAL 15.2

THE FIFTH AMENDMENT TO THE U.S CONSTITUTION

The text of the Fifth Amendment:

No person shall be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a presentment or indictment of a grand jury, except in cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the militia, when in actual service in time of war or public danger; nor shall any person be subject for the same offense to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb; nor shall any person be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself, ***nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation [emphasis added].***