



Clear Sky Realty, Inc.

**202 - 49th St. SE
Canton, OH 44707
330-455-HOME (4663)**

Dear Chairman Wiggam:

I have been managing properties for almost two decades, and have witnessed many bad situations for rental property owners when it comes to water bills. One of the most recent examples was a property in Alliance, OH. The residents did not pay their water bill. We contacted the water company in April and asked if this property was on the shut-off list. They said yes. However, in May, the water bill showed an even higher amount. We called the water company and they told us that they couldn't find the curb box, but they were still planning to turn it off. In June, they supposedly found the curb box, but didn't have a key long enough to turn it off. The water company informed us of plans to dig down so they could access the box. The residents didn't pay rent in June either, so an eviction was filed. In July, the water company still didn't have the water turned off. We evicted the tenants and did the set out on August 17, 2021. On August 19, the water company finally turned off the water. Apparently, now that the tenants were out, they felt it a good time to turn it off. By this time, the bill was \$1560.36. The water company told us they would not waive any of the bill, even though we had been trying for months to get this turned off per the company's 90-day with no payment policy.

The water company had no motivation to turn it off because they knew that the property owner would have to pay it to get future service – even though the owners didn't use the water or allow the bill to be run up. Unfortunately, situations like this occur all too frequently to rental property owners.

Years ago, we had asked this same water company why they don't go after the tenants for the water bills that they incur. They were honest and told us that it was because they knew they could always find the property owner. However, this not only encourages tenants to not care about whether they pay their water bill or meet with their obligations, but it also punishes the people who are trying to provide affordable housing.

I believe that House Bill 422, which limits the amounts that property owners amounts are responsible for, will not only encourage water companies to follow logical policies in regards to non-payments and shut-offs, it will also encourage residents to pay their bills in order to continue receiving water service. It will also limit losses from municipalities and property owners, so it is a win for all involved.

Thank you for your consideration on this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lila Wohlwend, Broker". The signature is written in a cursive style and is placed over a light blue grid background.

Lila J. Wohlwend
Broker/Property Manager
Clear Sky Realty, Inc.