

Dear committee members,

My name is Tony Guardado and I currently own and manage 150 single family rentals in the Stark County area. I try to provide quality housing at an affordable rate. That is becoming more and more challenging every day. Property taxes are up, city registration fees are up, supplies and maintenance costs are up. I shouldn't have to absorb the burden of unpaid utilities on top of that. As a local housing provider for over 13 years, I have dealt with hundreds of residents, and I can tell you from firsthand experience, when residents know they won't be held responsible for the bill, they have no incentive to report leaks, be conservative with use, or pay in full before moving out.

Where I work, I deal with both Aqua Ohio and Canton Water Department. I have never had issues with Aqua Ohio. Those residents call with issues or concerns, limit water use and rarely leave with unpaid bills. On the other hand, 90% of my residents with Canton Water leave owing at least the last one and often two or three months of water bills. They are fully aware that responsibility will not follow them, and the overdue amount will pass on to me. Those balances can be hundreds or thousands of dollars. Multiply that across my portfolio and it is a significant cost to my business. A cost that limits what repairs and upgrades I can do to my properties.

I have experienced retaliation from renters moving out and leaving water running in the faucet for days. This has happened to us multiple times, accumulating significant charges. One of the worst was when a resident moved out unannounced over the winter. The pipes froze, cracked, and leaked water all over the house for a period of weeks before being discovered. Sure enough, I was responsible for that whole bill and all the clean up and repairs.

I think we can all agree that holding a property owner responsible for a resident's public utility is an unfair practice and policy. I don't want to operate constantly worried about unplanned expenses or liens for expenses that are not mine. I recently had to pay \$2,500 in unpaid water bills across a couple of properties just so I could sell them!

Please pass HB92 through the committee and the full house. It is not unfair to ask residents to pay for their own utilities. It is not unfair to ask water companies to collect their own services. It IS unfair to ask housing providers to cover this gap.

Thank you.