

## Written Testimony in Opposition to Senate Bill 118

Submitted to the Ohio Senate Committee on Government Oversight

By Mayor Jack Bradley, City of Lorain, Ohio

June 20, 2025

Chair Sandra O'Brien, Vice Chair Theresa Gararone, Ranking Member Kent Smith, and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in opposition to Senate Bill 118.

As Mayor of the City of Lorain, I urge you to reject this bill, which would prohibit municipalities and public utilities from using property liens to recover unpaid water and sewer bills. Lorain currently has over \$2,000,000 in unpaid utility bills and this bill would undermine Lorain's local fiscal stability, shift the cost burden onto responsible ratepayers, and erode the principle of local control in contravention of the Ohio Constitution.

Without the ability to attach unpaid utility charges to property tax rolls, delinquent account holders face little consequence, and municipalities are left with mounting arrears and no viable enforcement path.

Rate payers in Lorain, a community of low- and moderate-income families, already face high rates due to shortfalls from customers who do not pay. The inability to recover unpaid balances would create lost revenue each year—impacting those who pay, infrastructure maintenance, and public health protections.

This legislation would be a blow to local control and municipal home rule. Municipalities like Lorain should not be stripped of the tools necessary to manage local utilities effectively and equitably. This legislation would be a direct infringement on home rule powers enshrined in the Ohio Constitution.

The lien process has multiple layers of protection for those who do not pay. These processes include notice, appeal, and due process. There is no evidence that the lien process is being abused or that those who do not pay are being harmed in an unjust or disproportionate way. Legislation should not be enacted that creates a solution where there is no problem.

In closing, I strongly urge this committee to protect local decision-making, utility solvency, and fairness to ratepayers by rejecting this bill.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Jack Bradley

Mayor, City of Lorain