



**OHIO SENATE LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE
OPPOSITION TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL 118**

Keary McCarthy, Executive Director

June 24, 2025

Chair O'Brien, Vice Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member Smith, and members of the Ohio Senate Local Government Committee, on behalf of the Ohio Mayors Alliance, thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in opposition to Senate Bill 118.

The Ohio Mayors Alliance represents both Republican and Democratic mayors from Ohio's 30 largest cities. We also represent the city of Athens, which participates in our coalition on behalf of the Mayors Partnership for Progress, a regional coalition in Southeast Ohio. Our priorities include protecting the fiscal health of Ohio's cities, preserving home rule and local control, and promoting bipartisanship and collaboration between state and local governments.

We appreciate the important state investments in water infrastructure in recent years and know that property owners who lease apartments and houses play a vital role in our communities. However, at its core, Senate Bill 118 is an attempt to shift a landlord-tenant dispute onto local governments and, by extension, the taxpayers. The bill creates a new bureaucratic burden for municipalities—not to improve water infrastructure or service quality, but to mediate billing disputes that typically arise from property owners failing to manage or monitor tenant usage.

More specifically, under the provisions of SB 118, municipalities could face the potential for increased costs and additional administrative burdens. This is because the bill requires local governments to establish and manage a complaint process for billing disputes, investigate and resolve those complaints within ten business days, and provide ongoing updates if a resolution is delayed. It also mandates new notice procedures for property liens, introduces revenue-sharing requirements that reduce the amount of lien collections retained by cities, and shifts certain collection responsibilities away from lien mechanisms to more costly and uncertain legal actions. Collectively, these changes could result in higher administrative costs, reduced revenue recovery for municipal water systems, and greater financial and procedural burdens on municipal service providers.

For these reasons we oppose SB 118 in its current form. However, we are committed to being part of the solution to this ongoing legislative issue and would welcome further discussions with our member communities, leaders in the real estate industry, and lawmakers. Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony on behalf of our member communities.