

Honorable Chairman Roemer, Vice Chair Lorenz, and Ranking Member Troy.

My name is Matt Fralick, and I manage a portfolio that includes 2 units in Cleveland, along with several others throughout the greater Cleveland area. I take pride in offering quality housing to low- and middle-income families, and I uphold a commitment to safety and compliance that sets me apart from the majority. For context, a mere 20% of properties meet recertification deadlines, according to auditor reports.

In 2021, I procured a 2-year lead-safe certificate for a duplex located on Longmead in Cleveland. By 2023, opportunities for a 20-year certificate emerged, prompting me to reengage with the certification process. Following expert advice, I invested more than \$20,000 in vinyl siding to encase any potential exterior lead hazards, aligning with the city's lead-free standards. Despite these improvements and additional renovations, including new windows, the property did not pass inspection due to minor issues that I would characterize as negligible.

The first deficiency notice arrived on June 14, 2023 (refer to Exhibit B on page 7) and was promptly addressed at no additional cost by my inspector. Yet, a subsequent notice on October 16, 2023 (see Exhibit A on page 6), listed entirely new concerns, unmentioned in the initial review. This suggests a non-standardized and arbitrary inspection process, potentially at odds with HUD, ODH, and even Cleveland's own ordinances, as delineated in CCO 365.04.

After an appeal was filed on October 29, 2023, a staggering six months have passed without resolution, leaving me in a state of non-compliance. The protracted nature of this process stands contrary to the wise words of Martin Luther King Jr., "Justice delayed is Justice denied." Perhaps the introduction of an ombudsman or similar mediator at the state level could rectify this inefficiency.

House Bill 280 promises to usher in uniformity, mandating adherence to HUD, ODH, and Ohio laws across municipalities. Such standardization is crucial, particularly when Cleveland imposes daily non-compliance fines of \$200 per unit. A response time of 30 days post-application submission, and a 180-day window for addressing specified deficiencies, are pragmatic provisions of HB 280 that merit support.

Additionally, the bill's tax credit reform would be a significant motivator for landlords to comply. The current non-refundable credits are limited in scope. HB 280's transformation of these credits into refundable ones, accessible to all taxpayers, could spur broader compliance. Considering the legislature's allocation of \$5 million for this initiative, yet less than \$50,000 being utilized, these changes are not just beneficial but necessary.

Your attention to these matters is invaluable. Ensuring the health of Ohio's children and the safety of our housing market is a shared priority. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Matt Fralick

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