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

My name is Lynda Bowers. I am a real estate broker with more than three decades of experience, and I also served as a Lafayette Township Trustee for 24 years. Wearing both of those hats, I have a deep concern for the pervasive issue lead paint which presents significant safety and economic challenges.

I strongly support House Bill 280 for several crucial reasons:

1. There is an urgent need for safe housing: In my professional capacity, I witness firsthand the substandard conditions of numerous rental properties across our state, many of which lack essential lead-safe measures. The absence of such protocols poses a severe risk of lead poisoning, particularly affecting children in these residences. Unfortunately, many landlords in economically disadvantaged areas lack the financial means to undertake the necessary repairs independently. Legislative intervention will provide the financial aid necessary to reduce the decline in the availability of quality, safe housing for our most vulnerable populations.

2. Financial Incentives for Compliance: HB 280 proposes to transform non-refundable tax credits into refundable ones, offering up to \$10,000 per dwelling unit for lead testing, permanent encapsulations, new windows, and other lead-safe repairs. These funds are already allocated by the legislature but are currently underutilized due to their non-refundable nature, benefiting less than 1% of eligible landlords. By making these credits refundable and available to pass-through entities, we can significantly increase the uptake and impact of this funding.

3. Standardization of Regulations: The bill aims to standardize lead safety regulations statewide, eliminating the current patchwork of local ordinances that often conflict with state and federal guidelines. It mandates a 30-day response time for cities to applications, which will streamline the compliance process. Additionally, the provision of a 180-day period to correct deficiencies after an initial inspection will deliver a more effective and efficient use of funds, accommodating the reality that many necessary repairs, such as window replacements, require several months to complete.

By supporting HB 280, this committee has the opportunity to address a critical public health issue—the lead poisoning of children throughout Ohio—and to improve living conditions for countless families.

Thank you for considering this vital legislation and for your dedication to the health and safety of Ohio residents.