



December 17, 2022

Governor Mike DeWine
Riffe Center
77 South High Street, 30th Floor
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Subject: Request to Veto Sections of HB 45 Related to Emergency Rental Assistance Restrictions

Dear Governor DeWine:

We write to you today to respectfully ask you to veto language in House Bill 45 that would impose artificial restrictions on the use of federal Emergency Rental Assistance funds intended to stabilize tenants and landlords in financial distress.

We support the General Assembly's inclusion of a \$161 million appropriation of federal Emergency Rent and Utility Assistance (appropriation item 195559) in HB 45. However, we oppose an amendment that would restrict the use of these funds to rent and utility arrearages incurred before December 31, 2021.

This provision is not in the public interest and we therefore ask that you please veto this language in HB 45 for the following reasons:

1. Restricting ERA2 funds to arrearages incurred before December 31, 2021 renders these funds practically unusable. Local Community Action Agencies report there are no remaining applications from households with rental arrears incurred prior to December 31, 2021. These tenants have already moved out or have been evicted.
2. While this artificial deadline will restrict legitimate applications for assistance, criminals will see an opportunity to devise fraudulent applications to attempt to access these funds.
3. This amendment will prevent Ohio from meeting federal ERA2 expenditure deadlines and will likely result in the U.S. Department of Treasury recapturing these dollars to redistribute them to large high-needs states, such as New York and California.
4. As of June 2022, ERA had already helped over 220,000 vulnerable Ohioans pay arrears to their landlords and utilities to avoid getting evicted. Allowing Community Action Agencies to continue using Ohio's remaining ERA2 funds will stabilize thousands more families, ensure that children can keep attending school without disruption, enable parents to keep their jobs, and prevent vulnerable Ohioans from becoming homeless.

For these reasons, we urge you to veto the following provision from HB 45 (see lines 5877-5881):

Notwithstanding any other law to the contrary, the funding disbursed under the foregoing appropriation item 195559, Rent and Utility Assistance, shall be used to provide payments towards an eligible household's rent and utility arrearages incurred before December 31, 2021.

Governor DeWine, we thank you in advance for exercising your veto powers to remove this damaging language from the Omnibus Bill (HB 45).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amy M Riegel". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "A" and "M".

Amy Riegel
Executive Director, COHHIO