



ZACH KLEIN COLUMBUS CITY ATTORNEY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Monday, March 25, 2024
Contact: Pete Shipley, 614.965.0203
Email: pishipley@columbus.gov

Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein Announces Latitude Five25 Tenant Payments to Begin April 1

\$10,000 payments from insurance proceeds to benefit 149 households impacted by unlivable conditions after east side towers evacuated on Christmas Day 2022

COLUMBUS, OH—Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein today announced that insurance settlement payments to the 149 households formerly living in the Latitude Five25 Apartments will begin to be disbursed April 1. According to the terms of the settlement payment structure, each claim will be a \$10,067.11 lump sum payment administered through a Tenant Fund held by Legal Aid of Southeast and Central Ohio. Former tenants still retain the option to file against Paxe Latitude, the former landlord at Latitude Five25, to recoup additional funds.

The payments follow lengthy court battles where City Attorney Klein and his Property Action Team took unprecedented actions to hold Paxe Latitude accountable for deplorable living conditions that led to an emergency evacuation of the property on Christmas Day 2022. Property Action Team lawyers won historic judgements against the derelict landlords, tracked the ownership group to Bankruptcy Court in New Jersey where they won that case and eventually secured a \$1.5 million settlement for former tenants impacted by the shutdown.

Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein's statement is below:

“While no amount of money will make up for what these tenants have been through, this settlement is a step toward making them whole. From the start, our priority has always been the tenants—making sure they could access critical resources in their time of need and ultimately delivering a relief that puts thousands of dollars back into their pockets.

“With tenant checks now on their way, we’re focused on the future of the towers and exploring every option to hold those responsible for this crisis personally responsible for their role in subjecting tenants to deplorable living conditions and literally leaving them out in the cold on Christmas morning. We’re sending a message that landlords who operate like this will be run out of town and held accountable,” said Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein.

Melissa Benson, senior managing attorney of the housing team at Legal Aid of Southeast and Central Ohio, also issued a statement on the announcement that former tenant payments will begin April 1:

“We’re pleased to be able to provide this settlement money to our clients who were tragically displaced from their homes on Christmas Day 2022,” said Melissa Benson of Legal Aid of Southeast and Central Ohio. **“We’re thankful for the combined efforts of Columbus City officials and Lument Finance Trust who worked closely with us to ensure our clients received some compensation for their losses.”**