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April 14, 2026

Testimony

26-0152 – Installment Payment Plans – Property Taxes in Arrears – Residential Property SUPPORT

Dear Chair McCray and Members of the Budget and Appropriations Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to present 26-0152 Installment Payment Plans – Property Taxes in Arrears – Residential Property. I am humbly asking your support for this legislation. It has been a pleasure working with the Department of Finance and Mayor's Office on this important bill. There is no need for amendments.

This bill authorizes the Department of Finance to enroll residents who are behind on their property taxes into payment plans that are monthly. The bill clarifies that payment plans are for all residential properties, and that the property will be removed from tax sale once a payment plan is established.

This is one of the critical pieces to assisting residents so they can avoid tax sale. Many residents just need the opportunity to stretch out payments, or they had a financial hardship one year and need a payment plan to get back on their feet. Moreover, there are several residents who have been pulled from the tax sale for a few years in a row that will need payment plans to be current on their taxes over time.

The property tax payment plans are for all residential properties. This is because we want to capture any residents in tangled title situations. There are several hundred properties where a family member may not have gone through the estates process to transfer the property in their name after a parent passed and there was no will assigning the property. We want these families to be able to participate. Moreover, we are including non-owner occupied properties so that renters have stability, and landlords having financial challenges can spread payments over multiple months. Property tax payment plans are also the cornerstone of reforming our predatory tax sale system.

The outreach to enroll residents started several weeks ago when the interest forms were sent out to ensure residents who wanted payment plans will be contacted once this bill passes. Enrollment in Promise Pay takes minutes. Additional outreach was included in tax bills, Final Bill and Legal Notices, and more. I look forward to working with stakeholders and the Administration to ensure each resident who receives a payment plan is also enrolled in all of the programs they are eligible for to ensure they become financially stable.

I humbly request your favorable report for this legislation.

Respectfully Submitted:

Odette Ramos
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