



## Mayor and City Council

**Mayor**  
Bill Saffo

**Mayor Pro-Tem**  
Margaret E. Haynes

**Council Members**  
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Kevin O'Grady  
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November 19, 2021

Dear WHA Board of Directors:

It is with great concern that I write this letter. It has come to my attention that there are potentially pervasive health issues at WHA properties, with scores of tenants being exposed to mold in their units and subsequently displaced with little warning and limited communication. The health, wellness, and safety of Wilmington residents is a high priority for myself and the City Council. The current problems at WHA's properties are counter to those core values.

According to recent media coverage, approximately 80 families who depend on WHA for safe housing are currently displaced as numerous WHA units experience potentially hazardous conditions. This is not an acceptable situation and immediate action is necessary to remediate any health issues and restore residents to safe living conditions as soon as possible.

As you are aware, WHA is an independent authority that operates autonomously from the City of Wilmington. While the Mayor is empowered to appoint members to WHA's board, it is the board's responsibility to exercise oversight of the authority's staff and operations. It appears as though WHA suffers from significant gaps in communication between the authority's staff and its board, between the authority and its residents, and certainly with myself and the wider community. To that end, I request the following information and actions be taken to facilitate the timely abatement of health concerns and resident displacement.

1. A comprehensive report on every WHA unit presently known or suspected to be affected by mold, including the date the mold was detected, if and when its tenants were notified of the mold, if and when its tenants were notified of the need to relocate, and when relocation took place.
2. A timeline for the remediation of all WHA units affected by mold.
3. A forecast date for the return of every displaced tenant to their unit.
4. A plan for how tenants are to be returned to their units or to alternative accommodations.
5. A budget per unit for mold remediation and temporary relocation, including the proper storage of belongings, and any problems encountered during the relocation and storage process.

6. An outline of proactive mold prevention steps and regular inspections of units.
7. An outline of direct communications with residents and a plan for regular updates to residents on the status of mold remediation, tenant relocations, and proactive steps to prevent similar problems in the future.
8. A bi-monthly report, provided to City Council, that updates the status and progress of remediating every affected unit, returning displaced tenants to their homes, and initiating proactive preventative steps.

This information is intended to provide a foundation of knowledge to support you in your role of overseeing WHA, improving operations and bringing accountability. I recognize that the pandemic disrupted WHA's work but tenants living in unhealthy conditions or remaining displaced from their homes for prolonged periods of time cannot be allowed to continue or to occur in the future. Again, while WHA operates independently from the city, as the one authorized to appoint its board members, I expect a timely resolution to these matters and insist that WHA take necessary steps to improve operations and repair trust with its tenants and the community.

I request this information be provided to my office no later than December 1.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Bill Saffo". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Bill Saffo  
Mayor of Wilmington