Ms Emma Litton

My name is Emma Litton and I have lived in Liberty Green for 10 years. I was so excited to move downtown and be so close to the theaters, art galleries and parks, things that I wanted to enjoy in my retirement. This location was excellent for people who are retired. When I first moved in, Liberty Green was such a great place to live. It was like a dream, but quickly turned into a nightmare.

It started going sour about 4 years ago when I was first exposed to a gas leak and had to go to the hospital.

This most recent problem almost took me all the way out and by that I mean it almost killed me. Starting late 2021 I started to get dizzy, coughing and sneezing. I was really sick during Xmas. My cousin came and got me and took me to the hospital. The doctor ran every test imaginable on me and couldn't find anything wrong. I went in on Saturday. I had a fever, my pulse was high and my oxygen was 67. But the next day I started getting better. By Monday evening, I was back to normal. They brought me home on Tuesday and I felt good. By Wednesday evening, my eyes started burning again then I started coughing. Then my fever came back. By Saturday I was sicker than I was when I first went to the hospital. I thought I was going to die. While I was laying on the couch in tears, I remembered that I had felt like this before, 4 years ago when I got exposed to natural gas. I called LG&E and they had an inspector come out immediately. They checked the furnace and within minutes determined that there was a gas leak. He turned off the gas but since it was a Saturday, we couldn't call maintenance, because CT Group does not respond to weekend calls.

The LG&E inspector said to tell them to check the 3rd floor b/c there is something wrong within the walls. I called Monday morning and talked to Ct Group. Maintenance came and hooked the furnace back up. But afterward I was still getting sicker and sicker. I was running a temp of 103.7. I took a Covid test and it came back negative. My cousin took me to the ER and I was admitted to the hospital again. And once again, they didn't know what was the matter.

When I got home this time, the hallway was full of water. There was a leak while I was in the hospital and maintenance did not respond. When I entered my apartment, my eyes and throat started burning. That was when we found the mold. I called CT Group and told them I had mold in my apartment. This was on a Monday, they told us there was a leak on the 3rd floor and it took maintenance 3 days to fix the leak. Then they did mold treatment in my apartment, but not on the two floors above me, which means the mold is still there.

At that point, I went to stay in a hotel. Kathy Strom called me and told me that there was no gas leak found in my apt. I told her that I had the work order from LG&E saying otherwise. When I told her this, that woman changed her whole story. She is like Dr. Jekyll and Mr Hide, her personality changes so quickly based on whatever lies she’s telling. Once she knew I had proof of the gas leak, she started trying to intimidate me, telling me “Well, you need to go back to the apartment.”

We had a tense conversation to say the least. So I told her, you're not gonna harass and intimidate me because I'm getting some help. And that is when I contacted the Louisville Tenants Union. I didn't know how bad it was until I joined the tenants union. I thought I was the only one having these problems.

One of the most disturbing patterns we've uncovered in this campaign is the abuse of tenants' right to privacy. When I got back into town this last time, I found that maintenance staff had gone through my things and took some of my personal property. I called the police and made a report.

They stole very personal pictures from my family heirlooms, a lot of jewelry and some earrings made with precious stones from all over the world that I held near and dear to my heart. I asked Kathy how she would like for someone to come to her home and do the same to her, and she told me, "but you live in an apartment."

This is serious! We have no time to waste! There is still mold in my building and it is making me sick. I don't feel safe in my own home.

I have lived through Jim Crow, redlining, assanations, the murder of Emett Till, riots and lynchings, but I have never experienced anything like the way I've been treated since I moved into an LMHA property.

We have met with LMHA Director Lisa Osanka multiple times. Every time, she talked to us like the lawyer that she is and not the housing activist she claims to be. She knows all about our issues and refuses to believe us or take action.

Over the next few weeks, the CT Group and LMHA director Lisa Osanka will tell the public that we are lying. That there is no problem. That it has already been addressed. That the campaign is the work of outside agitators. That there is nothing they can do. That the Louisville Tenants Union is not legitimate. Please remember what you hear us say here today. Those things are real. And anything short of solidarity with us is giving in to the worst kind of white supremacy and oppression.

And one more thing before I finish. We have experienced threats, intimidation and retaliation for standing up to CT Group. Our homes have been invaded, one of our organizers has had threats made against their child, some of our members have been threatened physically by CT Group staff. Now, when we go home tonight, they still have keys to our apartment. We are taking a risk by standing up and we need to know that you have our back. Louisville Metro Council, do you have our back? Social justice organizations in Louisville, do you have our back? It is time to do the right thing and cancel this contract.