As Introduced

127th General Assembly Regular Session 2007-2008

H. B. No. 156

Representative Foley

Cosponsors: Representatives Driehaus, Luckie, Lundy, Koziura, Yuko, Skindell

A BILL

То	amend section 1321.21 and to enact sections	1
	1315.61 to 1315.72 of the Revised Code to regulate	2
	under the Superintendent of Financial Institutions	3
	the facilitation of refund anticipation loans and	4
	refund anticipation checks, including with respect	5
	to registration and surety bond requirements,	6
	consumer disclosures, interest rate limitations,	7
	prohibited acts, administrative penalties, and	8
	civil remedies.	9

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF OHIO:

Section 1. That section 1321.21 be amended and sections	10
1315.61, 1315.62, 1315.63, 1315.64, 1315.65, 1315.66, 1315.67,	11
1315.68, 1315.69, 1315.70, 1315.71, and 1315.72 of the Revised	12
Code be enacted to read as follows:	13
Sec. 1315.61. As used in sections 1315.61 to 1315.72 of the	14
Revised Code:	15
(A) "Consumer" means a natural person who, singly or jointly	16
with another consumer, is solicited for, applies for, or receives	17
the proceeds of a refund anticipation loan or refund anticipation	18

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check.	19
(B) "Refund anticipation check" means a check or other	20
payment mechanism that represents the proceeds of a consumer's	21
income tax refund or tax credits, that is issued by a depository	22
institution or other person that received a direct deposit of the	23
consumer's tax refund or tax credits, and for which a consumer has	24
paid a fee or other consideration.	25
(C) "Refund anticipation loan" means a loan secured by or to	26
be repaid, directly or indirectly, from the proceeds of a	27
consumer's income tax refund or tax credits. "Refund anticipation	28
loan" includes any sale, assignment, or purchase of a consumer's	29
income tax refund of tax credits at a discount or for a fee,	30
whether or not the consumer is required to repay a buyer or	31
assignee if the internal revenue service denies or reduces the	32
<pre>consumer's tax refund or tax credits.</pre>	33
(D) "Refund anticipation loan fee" means the charges, fees,	34
or other consideration charged or imposed directly or indirectly	35
by the registrant or person taking assignment of a refund	36
anticipation loan. The term includes any charge, fee, or other	37
consideration for a deposit account, if a deposit account is used	38
for receipt of the consumer's income tax refund or tax credits to	39
repay the amount owed on the refund anticipation loan. It does not	40
include any charge, fee, or other consideration usually charged or	41
imposed by the registrant in the ordinary course of business, such	42
as fees for tax return preparation and fees for electronic filing	43
of tax returns, if the same fees in the same amount are charged to	44
the registrant's customers who do not receive refund anticipation	45
loans or refund anticipation checks.	46
(E) "Refund anticipation loan interest rate" means the	47
interest rate for a refund anticipation loan calculated by	48
dividing the total amount of refund anticipation loan fees by the	49
loan amount, which loan amount is minus any loan fees; then	50

dividing by the number of days in the loan term; then multiplying	51
by three hundred sixty-five and expressing the product as a	52
percentage. In making this calculation, both of the following	53
apply:	54
(1) If a deposit account is established or maintained in	55
whole or in part for the purpose of receiving the consumer's	56
income tax refund or tax credits to repay the amount owed for the	57
refund anticipation loan, then the maturity of the loan for the	58
purpose of determining the refund anticipation loan interest rate	59
is the estimated date when the tax refund or tax credits will be	60
deposited in the deposit account, and any fee charged to the	61
consumer for the deposit account is considered a loan fee to be	62
included in the calculation of the refund anticipation loan	63
interest rate.	64
(2) If no deposit account is established or maintained for	65
the repayment of the refund anticipation loan, the maturity of the	66
loan is the estimated date when the tax refund or tax credits will	67
be received by the registrant or person taking assignment of the	68
refund anticipation loan.	69
(F) "Registrant" means a person that has been issued a	70
certificate of registration under section 1315.63 of the Revised	71
Code.	72
Sec. 1315.62. (A) No person, individually or in conjunction	73
or cooperation with another person, shall solicit, process,	74
receive, or accept an application or agreement for a refund	75
anticipation loan or refund anticipation check transaction, or	76
make, facilitate, or in any manner assist in making a refund	77
anticipation loan or refund anticipation check transaction, unless	78
the person has obtained a certificate of registration from the	79
superintendent of financial institutions pursuant to section	80
1315.63 of the Revised Code.	81
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(B) Sections 1315.61 to 1315.72 of the Revised Code do not	82
apply to a person that is a bank, savings bank, savings and loan	83
association, savings association, or credit union organized under	84
laws of the United States or of this state.	85
Sec. 1315.63. (A) An application for a certificate of	86
registration shall be in writing, under oath, and in the form	87
prescribed by the superintendent of financial institutions. The	88
application shall be accompanied by a nonrefundable fee, payable	89
to the superintendent, of two hundred dollars for each place of	90
business in this state where the applicant intends to solicit,	91
process, receive, or accept an application or agreement for a	92
refund anticipation loan or refund anticipation check transaction	93
or to make, facilitate, or in any manner assist in making a refund	94
anticipation loan or refund anticipation check transaction. The	95
application shall provide evidence of compliance with the surety	96
bond requirement of section 1315.65 of the Revised Code and all	97
other information that the superintendent requires.	98
(B)(1) Upon the filing of an application and payment of the	99
application fee, the superintendent shall investigate the	100
applicant. Upon conclusion of the investigation, the	101
superintendent shall issue a certificate of registration to the	102
applicant if the superintendent finds that the following	103
<pre>conditions are met:</pre>	104
(a) The applicant complies with the surety bond requirement	105
of section 1315.65 of the Revised Code.	106
(b) The responsibility and general fitness of the applicant	107
are such as to command the confidence of the community and to	108
warrant belief that the business of soliciting, processing,	109
receiving, or accepting an application or agreement for a refund	110
anticipation loan or refund anticipation check transaction, or of	111
making, facilitating, or in any manner assisting in making a	112

refund anticipation loan or refund anticipation check transaction,	113
will be operated in compliance with sections 1315.61 to 1315.72 of	114
the Revised Code.	115
(2) If the superintendent finds that the applicant does not	116
meet the requirements of division (B)(1) of this section, the	117
superintendent shall issue an order denying the application for a	118
certificate of registration and giving the applicant an	119
opportunity for a hearing on the denial in accordance with Chapter	120
119. of the Revised Code. The superintendent shall notify the	121
applicant of the denial, the grounds for the denial, and the	122
applicant's opportunity for a hearing.	123
(C) The certificate of registration issued pursuant to	124
division (B) of this section may be renewed annually on or before	125
the thirty-first day of December if the superintendent finds that	126
all of the following conditions are met:	127
(1) The renewal application is accompanied by a nonrefundable	128
renewal fee, payable to the superintendent, of two hundred dollars	129
for each place of business in this state where the applicant	130
intends to solicit, process, receive, or accept an application or	131
agreement for a refund anticipation loan or refund anticipation	132
check transaction or to make, facilitate, or in any manner assist	133
in making a refund anticipation loan or refund anticipation check	134
transaction.	135
(2) The applicant meets the conditions set forth in division	136
(B)(1) of this section.	137
(3) The applicant's certificate of registration is not	138
subject to an order of suspension or revocation by the	139
superintendent.	140
(D) The superintendent shall deposit all application and	141
renewal fees the superintendent receives pursuant to this section	142
into the state treasury to the credit of the consumer finance fund	143

(B) of this section in each place of business in this state where	148
the registrant solicits, processes, receives, or accepts an	149
application or agreement for a refund anticipation loan or refund	150
anticipation check transaction or makes, facilitates, or in any	151
manner assists in making a refund anticipation loan or refund	152
anticipation check transaction.	153
(B)(1) Each registrant shall prepare a schedule showing the	154
current fees for refund anticipation loans, refund anticipation	155
checks, and electronic filing of a consumer's tax return.	156
(2) Both of the following shall be included in the portion of	157
the fee schedule relating to refund anticipation loans:	158
(a) Examples of refund anticipation loan interest rates for	159
refund anticipation loans of two hundred dollars, five hundred	160
dollars, one thousand dollars, one thousand five hundred dollars,	161
two thousand dollars, and five thousand dollars.	162
(b) In one-inch letters, the following notice:	163
"NOTICE CONCERNING REFUND ANTICIPATION LOANS	164
When you take out a refund anticipation loan, you are	165
borrowing money against your tax refund or tax credits. If the	166
amount of your tax refund or tax credits is less than expected,	167
you still must repay the entire amount of the loan. If the receipt	168
of your tax refund or tax credits is delayed, you may have to pay	169
additional costs. YOU CAN GET YOUR TAX REFUND OR TAX CREDITS IN	170
ABOUT TEN DAYS WITHOUT GETTING A LOAN. You can have your tax	171
return filed electronically and the amount deposited directly into	172
your own bank account without obtaining a loan or paying fees for	173

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an extra product."	174
(3) The fee schedule shall be displayed in not less than	175
twenty-eight-point type on a document measuring not less than	176
sixteen inches by twenty inches.	177
(C) No registrant shall fail to comply with this section.	178
Sec. 1315.65. No registrant shall conduct business in this	179
state unless the registrant has obtained and maintains in effect	180
at all times a surety bond issued by a bonding company or	181
insurance company authorized to do business in this state. The	182
bond shall be in favor of the superintendent of financial	183
institutions and in the penal sum of one hundred thousand dollars	184
for each location at which the registrant conducts business. The	185
bond shall continue in effect for at least five years after the	186
registrant ceases operations in this state. The bond shall be for	187
the exclusive benefit of any consumer harmed by a violation of any	188
provision of sections 1315.62 to 1315.68 of the Revised Code.	189
Sec. 1315.66. (A) A registrant, including any officer, agent,	190
employee, or representative of the registrant, shall do all of the	191
following in connection with a refund anticipation loan or refund	192
anticipation check transaction:	193
(1) Promptly inform a consumer applicant for a refund	194
anticipation loan or refund anticipation check if the consumer's	195
application is rejected;	196
(2) Provide to a consumer applicant, prior to the	197
consummation of the loan or check transaction, both of the	198
following in a form that may be retained by the consumer:	199
(a) A copy of the completed refund anticipation loan or	200
refund anticipation check application and agreement;	201
(b) The disclosures, initialed by the consumer, that are	202

required by divisions (B) and (C) of this section, in English and,	203
if other than English, the language in which the refund	204
anticipation loan or refund anticipation check transaction is	205
negotiated.	206
(3) Provide to a consumer applicant, prior to the	207
consummation of a refund anticipation loan, the disclosures	208
required by the federal "Truth in Lending Act," 15 U.S.C. 1601	209
(1968), in a form that may be retained by the consumer.	210
(B) At the time a consumer applies for a refund anticipation	211
loan or refund anticipation check, the registrant shall disclose	212
all of the following to the consumer on a form separate from the	213
application and in fourteen-point type:	214
(1) The fee for the refund anticipation loan or refund	215
anticipation check;	216
(2) The fee for electronic filing of a tax return;	217
(3) The time within which the proceeds of the refund	218
anticipation loan or refund anticipation check will be paid to the	219
consumer if the loan or check transaction is approved.	220
(C)(1) For a refund anticipation check transaction, the	221
application shall disclose the following in eighteen-point type:	222
"NOTICE	223
You are paying [enter the amount of the refund anticipation	224
check fee] to get your tax refund or tax credits check through	225
[name of issuer of the refund anticipation check]. YOU CAN AVOID	226
THIS FEE AND STILL RECEIVE YOUR TAX REFUND OR TAX CREDITS CHECK IN	227
ABOUT 10 DAYS BY HAVING THE I.R.S. DIRECTLY DEPOSIT THE AMOUNT	228
INTO YOUR OWN BANK ACCOUNT. You also can wait for the I.R.S. to	229
mail you a check. If you do not have a bank account, you may wish	230
to consider getting one."	231
(2) For a refund anticipation loan, the application shall	232

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disclose both of the following:	233
(a) In fourteen-point type, the refund anticipation loan	234
<pre>interest rate;</pre>	235
(b) In eighteen-point type, the following notice:	236
"NOTICE	237
This is a loan. This loan is borrowing money against your tax	238
refund or tax credits. If the amount of your tax refund or tax	239
credits is less than expected, you must still repay the entire	240
amount of the loan. If the receipt of your tax refund or tax	241
credits is delayed, you may have to pay additional costs. YOU CAN	242
GET YOUR TAX REFUND OR TAX CREDITS IN ABOUT 10 DAYS WITHOUT	243
GETTING THIS LOAN. You can have your tax return filed	244
electronically and the amount deposited directly into your own	245
bank account without obtaining a loan or other paid product."	246
(D) Each disclosure required by this section shall be	247
initialed by the consumer applicant.	248
(E) No registrant shall fail to comply with this section.	249
Sec. 1315.67. (A) On or before the first day of July of each	250
year, each registrant shall file an annual report with the	251
superintendent of financial institutions that includes all of the	252
following information for the period beginning on the sixteenth	253
day of April of the prior year and ending on the fifteenth day of	254
April of the current year:	255
(1) The total number and dollar amount of refund anticipation	256
loans processed by the registrant;	257
(2) The total number and dollar amount of refund anticipation	258
checks processed by the registrant;	259
(3) The average and median number of days for which refund	260
anticipation loans processed by the registrant were outstanding	261
hefore heing renaid:	262

(4) The name and address of any person that takes assignment	263
of refund anticipation loans or refund anticipation check	264
transactions for the registrant;	265
(5) Any other information required by the superintendent.	266
(B) Each year, the superintendent shall consolidate the	267
information included in the annual reports submitted under	268
division (A) of this section and make that consolidated	269
information available to the public no later than the first day of	270
September of that year.	271
(C) No registrant shall fail to comply with division (A) of	272
this section.	273
Sec. 1315.68. No registrant, including any officer, agent,	274
employee, or representative of the registrant, shall do any of the	275
<pre>following:</pre>	276
(A) Commit an unfair or deceptive act or practice in	277
connection with the business of soliciting, processing, receiving,	278
or accepting an application or agreement for a refund anticipation	279
loan or refund anticipation check transaction, or making,	280
facilitating, or in any manner assisting in making a refund	281
anticipation loan or refund anticipation check transaction,	282
including misrepresenting a factor or condition of the loan or	283
check transaction or making any oral statement contradicting any	284
of the information required to be disclosed under section 1315.64	285
or 1315.66 of the Revised Code;	286
(B) Violate or fail to comply with any provision of sections	287
1315.62 to 1315.68 of the Revised Code;	288
(C) Threaten to take any action that is prohibited by	289
sections 1315.62 to 1315.68 of the Revised Code or by any other	290
law, or that the person actually does not intend to take;	291
(D) Solicit, process, receive, or accept an application or	292

agreement for a refund anticipation loan, or make, facilitate, or	293
in any manner assist in making a refund anticipation loan, that	294
has a refund anticipation loan interest rate greater than	295
twenty-eight per cent. Any refund anticipation loan for which the	296
refund anticipation loan interest rate exceeds that amount is	297
void.	298
(E) Directly or indirectly charge, or arrange for the	299
charging of, any interest, fee, or charge related to a refund	300
anticipation loan or refund anticipation check transaction that is	301
not specifically authorized by sections 1315.61 to 1315.72 of the	302
Revised Code, including charges for insurance, attorney's fees, or	303
other collection costs or charges for check cashing;	304
(F) Charge a fee for a refund anticipation loan or refund	305
anticipation check transaction that is different than the fee	306
displayed on the fee schedule required under section 1315.64 of	307
the Revised Code;	308
(G) Include any of the following in any document provided or	309
signed in connection with a refund anticipation loan or refund	310
anticipation check transaction, including the loan application or	311
agreement:	312
(1) A hold harmless clause;	313
(2) A confession of judgment clause;	314
(3) A waiver of the right to a jury trial, if applicable, in	315
any action brought by or against the consumer;	316
(4) Any assignment of or order for payment of wages or other	317
compensation for services;	318
(5) A provision in which the consumer agrees not to assert	319
any claim or defense arising out of the contract or not to seek	320
any remedies available under section 1315.71 of the Revised Code;	321
(6) A waiver of any provision of sections 1315 61 to 1315 72	322

of the Revised Code. Any such waiver is deemed null, void, and of	323
no effect.	324
(7) A waiver of the right to injunctive, declaratory, or	325
other equitable relief or relief on a classwide basis;	326
(9) A provision requiring that any agreet of a regulation of	327
(8) A provision requiring that any aspect of a resolution of	02.
a dispute between the parties to the agreement be kept	328 329
confidential. Division (G)(8) of this section does not affect the	
right of the parties to agree that certain specified information	330
is a trade secret or otherwise confidential, or to agree after the	331
dispute arises to keep a resolution confidential.	332
(H) Take or arrange for a creditor to take a security	333
interest in any property of the consumer other than the proceeds	334
of the consumer's income tax refund or tax credits to secure	335
payment of a refund anticipation loan;	336
(I) Directly or indirectly, individually or in conjunction or	337
cooperation with another person, engage in the collection of an	338
outstanding or delinquent refund anticipation loan for any	339
creditor or assignee, including soliciting, processing, receiving,	340
or accepting an application or agreement for a refund anticipation	341
loan or refund anticipation check transaction that contains a	342
provision permitting the creditor to repay from the proceeds of	343
the consumer's income tax refund or tax credits, by offset or	344
other means, an outstanding or delinquent refund anticipation loan	345
for that creditor or any creditor;	346
(J) Facilitate, refer, or solicit consumers on behalf of a	347
third party engaged in check cashing for a fee, or permit	348
third-party check cashing for a fee in any place of business	349
identified in the application for a certificate of registration	350
pursuant to section 1315.63 of the Revised Code;	351
(K) Facilitate any loan that is secured by or arranged to be	352
repaid directly from the proceeds of the consumer's state income	353

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<pre>tax refund;</pre>	354
(L) Make a misrepresentation of fact in obtaining or	355
attempting to obtain a certificate of registration under section	356
1315.63 of the Revised Code;	357
(M) Engage in any other action prohibited by rules adopted by	358
the superintendent of financial institutions under section 1315.72	359
of the Revised Code.	360
Sec. 1315.69. (A) If the superintendent of financial	361
institutions determines, after notice and opportunity for a	362
hearing conducted in accordance with Chapter 119. of the Revised	363
Code, that a registrant has violated any provision of sections	364
1315.62 to 1315.68 of the Revised Code, or any rule adopted under	365
section 1315.72 of the Revised Code, the superintendent may do any	366
of the following:	367
(1) Suspend, revoke, or refuse to renew the certificate of	368
registration;	369
(2) Impose a fine of one thousand dollars for each violation;	370
(3) Issue a cease and desist order.	371
(B) The superintendent has the same authority as described in	372
section 1315.24 of the Revised Code to do any of the following:	373
(1) Make an investigation or conduct any hearing to determine	374
whether a violation of any provision of sections 1315.62 to	375
1315.68 of the Revised Code, or any rule adopted under section	376
1315.72 of the Revised Code, has occurred;	377
(2) Determine whether a registrant has failed to comply with	378
a cease and desist order issued under division (A) of this	379
section.	380
(C) If a registrant violates a cease and desist order issued	381
pursuant to division (A) of this section, the superintendent,	382

after notice and opportunity for a hearing conducted in accordance	383
with Chapter 119. of the Revised Code, may impose a fine of one	384
thousand dollars for each violation.	385
(D) If a person violates section 1315.62 of the Revised Code,	386
the superintendent, after notice and opportunity for a hearing	387
conducted in accordance with Chapter 119. of the Revised Code, may	388
impose a fine of one thousand dollars for each refund anticipation	389
loan or refund anticipation check transaction application or	390
agreement solicited, processed, received, or accepted, or each	391
refund anticipation loan or refund anticipation check transaction	392
made, facilitated, or in any manner assisted by the person.	393
(E) On January 31, 2009, the amount specified in division	394
(A)(2), (C), and (D) of this section and, on the thirty-first day	395
of January of each year thereafter, any amount computed by	396
adjustments made under this division, shall be adjusted by the	397
average percentage change in the consumer price index for the	398
immediately preceding calendar year, with fractional amounts	399
rounded to the nearest dollar. The superintendent shall make this	400
determination and adjust the amount accordingly. For purposes of	401
this section, "consumer price index" means the consumer price	402
index for all consumers, all items, prepared by the United States	403
department of labor, bureau of labor statistics, or, if that index	404
is no longer published, a generally available comparable index.	405
Sec. 1315.70. (A) The superintendent of financial	406
institutions shall establish and maintain a complaint process	407
whereby an aggrieved consumer may file a complaint alleging a	408
violation of any provision of sections 1315.62 to 1315.68 of the	409
Revised Code. Complaints filed in accordance with this section are	410
public records for purposes of section 149.43 of the Revised Code,	411
with exception of the complainant's name, address, or other	412
personal identifying information.	413
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(B) The superintendent shall maintain, and make available	414
upon request, a current list of registrants and shall establish	415
and maintain a toll-free telephone number that consumers may call	416
to obtain information about registrants and complaint forms.	417
Sec. 1315.71. (A)(1) A consumer injured by a violation of any	418
provision of sections 1315.62 to 1315.68 of the Revised Code has a	419
cause of action and is entitled to recover all of the following:	420
	421
(a) The consumer's actual and consequential damages;	422
(b) Statutory damages in the amount of two thousand dollars,	423
or three times the amount of the refund anticipation loan fee or	424
other unauthorized charge, whichever is greater;	425
(c) Reasonable attorney's fees and court costs.	426
(2) On January 31, 2009, the dollar amount specified in	427
division (A)(1)(b) of this section and, on the thirty-first day of	428
January of each year thereafter, any dollar amount computed by	429
adjustments made under division (A)(2) of this section, shall be	430
adjusted by the average percentage change in the consumer price	431
index for the immediately preceding calendar year, with fractional	432
amounts rounded to the nearest dollar. The superintendent shall	433
make this determination and adjust the amount accordingly. For	434
purposes of this section, "consumer price index" means the	435
consumer price index for all consumers, all items, prepared by the	436
United States department of labor, bureau of labor statistics, or,	437
if that index is no longer published, a generally available	438
<pre>comparable index.</pre>	439
(B) Any consumer may seek an injunction or other appropriate	440
equitable relief against a violation.	441
(C) The remedies provided in this section are in addition to	442
any other remedies allowed by law.	443

Sec. 1315.72. (A) The superintendent of financial	444
institutions may adopt rules as necessary to effectuate the	445
purpose of sections 1315.61 to 1315.71 of the Revised Code, to	446
provide for the protection of the borrowing public, and to assist	447
registrants in interpreting sections 1315.61 to 1315.71 of the	448
Revised Code.	449
(B) The superintendent may modify the disclosure required by	450
division (C)(1) and (2)(b) of section 1315.66 of the Revised Code	451
and the fee schedule required to be displayed by division	452
(B)(2)(b) of section 1315.64 of the Revised Code to the extent	453
that a revision of the ten-day estimate for receiving a refund	454
from the internal revenue service is appropriate.	455
Sec. 1321.21. All fees, charges, penalties, and forfeitures	456
collected under Chapters 1321., 1322., 4712., 4727., and 4728.,	457
sections 1315.21 to 1315.30, sections 1315.35 to 1315.44, <u>sections</u>	458
<u>1315.61 to 1315.72</u> , and sections 1349.25 to 1349.37 of the Revised	459
Code shall be paid to the superintendent of financial institutions	460
and shall be deposited by the superintendent into the state	461
treasury to the credit of the consumer finance fund, which is	462
hereby created. The fund may be expended or obligated by the	463
superintendent for the defrayment of the costs of administration	464
of Chapters 1321., 1322., 4712., 4727., and 4728., sections	465
1315.21 to 1315.30, sections 1315.35 to 1315.44, <u>sections 1315.61</u>	466
to 1315.72, and sections 1349.25 to 1349.37 of the Revised Code by	467
the division of financial institutions. All actual and necessary	468
expenses incurred by the superintendent, including any services	469
rendered by the department of commerce for the division's	470
administration of Chapters 1321., 1322., 4712., 4727., and 4728.,	471
sections 1315.21 to 1315.30, sections 1315.35 to 1315.44, <u>sections</u>	472
<u>1315.61 to 1315.72</u> , and sections 1349.25 to 1349.37 of the Revised	473
Code, shall be paid from the fund. The fund shall be assessed a	474

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proportionate share of the administrative costs of the department	475
and the division. The proportionate share of the administrative	476
costs of the division of financial institutions shall be	477
determined in accordance with procedures prescribed by the	478
superintendent and approved by the director of budget and	479
management. Such assessment shall be paid from the consumer	480
finance fund to the division of administration fund or the	481
financial institutions fund.	482
Section 2. That existing section 1321.21 of the Revised Code	483
is hereby repealed.	484