

July 26, 2017

The Honorable Bill Shuster
Chairman
House Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Peter DeFazio
Ranking Member
House Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Shuster and Ranking Member DeFazio:

We write in support of HR 1758, the Brownfields Reauthorization Act of 2017. We applaud the Committee's efforts to reauthorize and strengthen this important program which aims to return blighted land to productive reuse in meeting the varied civic needs of a community. The members of our respective real estate organizations have successfully worked with local government entities through state voluntary cleanup programs across the country to revitalize long-idled and lightly contaminated properties and return that land to productive use in serving the needs of local communities. Our members have remediated and/or developed these properties and enhanced local economic vitality through new retail, housing, and office and industrial space. These properties are often in severely underserved areas in cities and towns across America.

Local governmental organizations have enjoyed long-standing partnerships with commercial and residential real estate in these revitalization projects. Absent the grants authorized, many local communities will not have the resources necessary to pursue the steps needed to return these properties to beneficial reuse in accordance with environmental quality assurances for the people who will live, work and recreate on the restored sites. We are encouraged by the increased level of grants for direct remediation that will be made available under this legislation, and the added flexibility provided to grant recipients.

It is particularly noteworthy that the legislation authorizes multi-purpose grants, enabling local communities to use their discretion in applying grant funds to different sites. Often there are circumstances with a particular site that unexpectedly impede the characterization and remediation of that site. Giving local communities the flexibility to apply grant funds to other sites within their jurisdiction is a common sense and welcome change.

While we are very supportive of this legislation, we hope Congress and the Administration will continue to explore opportunities to expedite transition of sites from the CERCLA

National Priorities List (NPL) and make additional sites eligible for assumption by state voluntary cleanup programs. We are persuaded that numerous sites continue to sit idle on the NPL that pose little or no threat to human health and the environment. Experience has shown since the inception of federal Brownfields legislation that transfer of sites to state voluntary cleanup programs expedite their remediation and return to beneficial reuse.

Respectfully submitted by:

International Council of Shopping Centers
Leading Builders of America
National Apartment Association
National Association of Home Builders
National Association of Realtors
NAIOP, Commercial Real Estate Development Association
National Leased Housing Association
National Multifamily Housing Council