

Center for Creative Land Recycling * National Association of Local Government Environmental Professionals * National Brownfields Coalition * National Association of Development Organizations * Smart Growth America * Groundwork USA * LOCUS * Minnesota Brownfields * Georgia Brownfields Association * California Association for Local Economic Development

July 26, 2017

The Honorable Bill Shuster, Chairman, House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee
The Honorable Peter DeFazio, Ranking Member, House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee

Dear Chairman Shuster and Ranking Member DeFazio:

The undersigned organizations represent thousands of state and local government officials, private developers, engineering firms, non-profit organizations and community leaders who have been working for more than two decades to promote the reuse of contaminated properties, known as brownfields.

We are writing to thank you and the Members of your Committee for your leadership in moving legislation this week to reauthorize the federal brownfields law. Signed by President George W. Bush in 2002, the bipartisan federal brownfields law provides critical seed funding for site investigation and environmental clean-up that is helping urban and rural communities across the country return old manufacturing sites, abandoned gas stations, vacant buildings and other blighted properties to productive reuse.

The Brownfields Program has been a tremendous success. According to the EPA, the program has leveraged \$23.7 billion in private and public investment in clean-up and redevelopment. Every federal dollar spent leverages nearly \$18 in additional investment in job creating economic development. The program has led to the clean-up and redevelopment of thousands of properties and the creation of more than 120,000 jobs in communities across the country.

Despite this success, the U.S. Government Accountability Office estimates that there remain more 400,000-600,000 brownfields nationwide. Reauthorization of the brownfields law will provide new tools and increased momentum to address these properties, which continue to cause blight to neighborhoods, inhibit economic development, pose risks to public health and the environment, and erode the tax base of local communities.

We are particularly supportive of the following provisions included in your brownfields reauthorization bill, which will enhance the ability of local communities to partner with private sector developers to reuse contaminated properties:

- Increasing the maximum level of cleanup grants to address more seriously contaminated sites;
- Establishing multi-purpose grants to provide greater flexibility for communities to address a wide range of brownfields in a timely manner;
- Clarifying liability for local governments to facilitate their ability to proactively take control of and clean up brownfields in their communities;
- Eliminating eligibility barriers for addressing brownfields contaminated with petroleum;
- Allowing funding to cover reasonable administrative costs for local brownfields programs;
- Expanding eligibility for non-profit organizations to receive federal brownfields funding.

We thank you again for your leadership in moving brownfields reauthorization legislation. Please contact Ken Brown at ken@akbstrategies.com if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

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