May 28, 2011

The Honorable Michael K. Simpson, Chair
House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
2312 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

James P. Moran (VA), Ranking Member
House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
Room B-2239 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Simpson and Ranking Member Moran:

Re: Ensuring Adequate Funding for Brownfields Revitalization
As your Subcommittee prepares the Fiscal Year 2012 Interior and Environment Appropriations bill, we urge you to include the full $250 million for the U.S. EPA brownfields program, which was authorized by the Small Business Liability Relief and Brownfields Revitalization Act of 2001 (the “Brownfields Revitalization Act”).

Funds under this program are used to assess and clean up brownfields such as abandoned or under-utilized warehouses, inactive factories, gas stations, salvage yards, vacant lots, contaminated properties, and other eyesores that plague virtually every community. These properties cause blight to neighborhoods, inhibit economic development, pose risks to public health and the environment, and erode the tax base of communities.

The undersigned coalition of organizations represents thousands of communities and tens of millions of Americans who have been working during the past decade to promote the reuse of contaminated properties. Our coalition, together with federal and state government agencies, has demonstrated that a strategic combination of public and private investment can return brownfield properties to productive use.

By any measure, the EPA Brownfields program has been tremendously successful. On average $1.00 of EPA funds leverage $17.39 of funding from other sources. The brownfields program has also functioned as an efficient job producer, helping create more than 68,900 new jobs nationwide at a ratio of 7.45 jobs per $100,000 in EPA funding. These impressive numbers only tell part of the story, as communities across the country report that brownfields projects are often lynchpins to spurring larger revitalization efforts, increasing local tax revenue, and bringing new vitality to struggling neighborhoods and communities.

While the EPA Brownfields Program has helped numerous communities, much remains to be done. Experts estimate there remain as many as 1 million brownfield properties nationwide. These sites continue to blight neighborhoods, discourage new investment, and undermine economic progress in many communities. Historically, EPA has been able to fund only about one third of the qualified applicants for Federal brownfields grants.

Consequently, we request that the Subcommittee fully fund EPA’s brownfields program at the authorized level of $250 million for FY 2012. This modest investment will help hundreds of additional communities clean up and reuse thousands of contaminated properties, thereby bringing new hope and vitality to millions of Americans nationwide.

Thank you for considering our request to enhance EPA’s brownfields program, which is making a critical difference to communities across the country. Fully funding this program would enable more communities to return blighted property to productive use.

If you have questions or want additional information, please contact Evans Paull at National Brownfields Coalition at 202-329-4282, ev@redevelopmenteconomics.com.

Sincerely,

Evans Paull
National Brownfields Coalition:

National, Regional and State Organizations:
- The US Conference of Mayors
- Smart Growth America
- National Association of Development Organizations
- National Association of Local Government Environmental Professionals
- Local Initiatives Support Corp
- Groundwork USA
- National Brownfields Association
- LOCUS, Responsible Real Estate developers and Investors
- National Brownfield Nonprofit Network Initiative
- Center for Creative Land Recycling
- Florida Brownfields Association
- Brownfields Coalition of the Northeast
- Louisiana Brownfields Association
- Colorado Brownfields Foundation
- Goldstein Brownfields Foundation
- Minnesota Brownfields

Local – Cities and Public Agencies
- City of Rochester
- City of Trenton
- City of Milwaukee
- City of New York Office of Environmental Remediation
- Baltimore Development Corp
- Land of the Sky Regional Council
- Fond Du Lac County, WI
- City of La Crosse, WI
- City of Appleton, WI

Members of the Brownfields Leadership Circle
- Terracon
- Vita Nuova
- EWMA
- O'Neil Properties
- Cardno TBE

Other Private Sector Partners:
- Brightfields, Inc.
- Knauf-Shaw, LLP
- Future Energy Development, LLC
- Brownfields Redevelopment Solutions
- Ayres Associates

cc: The Honorable Harold "Hal" Rogers, Chair, House Appropriations Committee
    The Honorable Norman D. Dicks, Ranking Member, House Appropriations Committee
    Members of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior and Environment
    The Honorable Fred Upton, Chair, House Energy and Commerce Committee
    The Honorable Henry Waxman, Ranking Member, House Energy and Commerce Committee
    The Honorable John Shimkus, Chair, House Subcommittee on the Environment and the Economy
    The Honorable Gene Green, Ranking Member, House Subcommittee on Energy and Environment
    The Honorable John Mica, Chairman, House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee
The Honorable Nick J. Rahall, II, Ranking Member, House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee

The Honorable Bob Gibbs, Chair, House Water Resources and Environment Subcommittee

The Honorable Timothy Bishop, Ranking Member, House Water Resources and Environment Subcommittee