October 17, 2011

The Honorable Herb Kohl
U.S. Senate

The Honorable Paul Ryan
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Thomas Petri
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Gwen Moore
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Ron Johnson
U.S. Senate

The Honorable James Sensenbrenner
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Sean Duffy
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Ron Kind
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Reid Ribble
U.S. House of Representatives

Dear Wisconsin Representatives to the U.S. House of Representatives:

Re: ENSURING ADEQUATE FUNDING FOR BROWNFIELDS REVITALIZATION IN WISCONSIN

The undersigned organizations and Wisconsin communities are asking for restoration of funding for the U.S. EPA Brownfields Program’s assessment and clean-up grants to the FY 2011 level of $100 million. As you know, the House Appropriations Committee cut $40 million (40%) in brownfield grants, which have proven invaluable to our Wisconsin communities that are struggling to cope with vacant, blighted, and contaminated former industrial and commercial properties.

Funds under this program, which were authorized by the Small Business Liability Relief and Brownfields Revitalization Act of 2001, are used to assess and clean up brownfields such as abandoned or underused warehouses, inactive factories, gas stations, salvage yards, vacant lots, contaminated properties, and other eyesores that plague virtually every community in Wisconsin and beyond. These properties cause blight to neighborhoods, inhibit economic development, pose risks to public health and the environment, and erode the tax base of our communities. By the numbers, EPA investments nationally have produced:

- More than 68,900 new jobs (7.4 jobs per $100,000 invested).
- $17.39 of leveraged investment for every $1 of EPA funds.
- Between 32% and 57% lower vehicle miles traveled relative to alternative growth patterns.
- A 44% to 88% reduction in stormwater runoff by implementing best management practices.
These impressive numbers only tell part of the story because 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. In Madison, an abandoned industrial site and historic landfill has been turned into a vibrant technology park and bustling office and commercial mecca, turning a blighted and contaminated area into a revitalized area creating more than 1,300 new jobs in less than five years.

The City of West Allis has always been strongly tied to the Allis-Chalmers Manufacturing Company, from which the city’s name is derived. The company’s origins in the Milwaukee area date back to the 1840s. During World War II, the company’s sprawling West Allis plant was a city unto itself, employing an estimated 45,000 people. Yet, by 1987, the roar of the manufacturing plant went silent as Allis-Chalmers closed down. The city was left without its foremost employer. Blocks worth of empty buildings likely contained environmental contamination remained, and no other manufacturers were lining up to take over the property. An investigation of the property revealed contaminated soil underneath the buildings and concerns of hazardous vapors leaking into the new office complex.

Crews gutted three former manufacturing shops and restored their brick surfaces and skylights. New interiors were then built on the building’s frame. As another nod to the site’s past, the project architects designed a skybridge between two buildings, using two gigantic old cranes found on the property. Following the lead of several major companies, Summit Place now holds more than 50 tenants with an estimated 3,000 total employees. Demand for space led to expansion of the complex to its current 630,000 square-foot capacity, and the complex is scheduled to be connected to the nearby shopping center. City officials estimate property taxes at $1.2 million per year, nearly $770,000 higher than before construction.

The attached Wisconsin Brownfield Study Group report provides more detail on these and other Wisconsin redevelopment projects made possible by EPA partnering with local governments to overcome key barriers and make way for new uses of unproductive land.

While the EPA Brownfields Program has helped numerous Wisconsin communities such as these two mentioned above, much remains to be done. Literally thousands of brownfield sites in Wisconsin are waiting to be reclaimed. Because manufacturing has continued to decline, particularly in the last four to five years, it is likely that the inventory has grown significantly – that is, new sites are being created faster than communities can address the old sites.

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. The need for enhanced federal funding is underscored by the fact that communities affected by brownfields tend to lack the resources needed to make critical upfront investments.

Again, we request that Wisconsin representatives support funding EPA’s brownfields grants to communities at the FY 2011 level of $100 million for FY 2012. This modest investment will help Wisconsin communities clean up and reuse contaminated properties – turning bighted and abandoned sites into community assets and economic generators.

Thank you for considering this request. If you have any questions, please contact Evans Paull, National Brownfields Coalition, at ev@redevelopmenteconomics.com, 202-329-4282; Ms. Darsi Foss, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (darsi.foss@wisconsin.gov), (608.267.6713); or Scott C. Wilson, Brownfield Study Group Member; (WilsonS@AyresAssociates.com); (608.443.1258).
Sincerely,

| Scott C. Wilson, Member Wisconsin Brownfield Study Group; Vice President of Ayres Associates Inc | Larry Kirch, Member Wisconsin Brownfield Study Group; City of La Crosse |
| Evans Paull, Executive Director National Brownfields Coalition | David Misky; Member Wisconsin Brownfield Study Group; Assistant Executive Director, Redevelopment Authority of the City of Milwaukee |
| Karen Harkness, Member Wisconsin Brownfield Study Group; City of Appleton Community Development Authority | Joy Stieglitz, Member Wisconsin Brownfield Study Group; Vandewalle & Associates |
| Bruce A. Keyes, Member Wisconsin Brownfield Study Group; Attorney - Foley & Lardner, LLP | Dick Maslowski; City Administrator for Glendale |
| Steve Hiniker; Member Wisconsin Brownfield Study Group; Executive Director 1000 Friends of Wisconsin | Tony Day; Mayor of the City of Cudahy |
| Peter McAvoy, Member Wisconsin Brownfield Study Group; Vice President at Sixteenth St. Community Health Center | Arthur Harrington; Member Wisconsin Brownfield Study Group; Attorney - Godfrey & Kahn, S.C. |
| John Antaramian; Member Wisconsin Brownfield Study Group; President at Emerging Communities Corp. | Mark Thimke; Member Wisconsin Brownfield Study Group; Attorney - Foley & Lardner |
| Nancy Frank; Member Wisconsin Brownfield Study Group; School of Architecture and Urban Planning UW - Milwaukee |