March 29, 2012

The Honorable Jack Reed
Chairman
Subcommittee on the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
131 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
125 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Reed and Ranking Member Murkowski:

As our nation continues its economic recovery, communities are struggling to find the resources to cleanup and reinvest in the over 450,000 brownfields that exist throughout our country. Through funding from EPA’s Brownfields Program, the cleanup and redevelopment of brownfields helps to create jobs, spur economic growth, promote sustainable reuse of existing infrastructure, and improve the local environment. Without this funding, brownfields can remain unattractive for investment and reuse and can also prove to be a significant impediment to broader revitalization efforts in the communities in which they are located.

Since its inception in 1995, EPA’s Brownfields Program has made over 33,000 acres of land available for reuse, leveraged $18.3 billion in private and public investment, and created over 75,000 jobs. A study funded by the EPA Brownfields Program concluded that residential property values increased between two and three percent once a nearby brownfield was cleaned up.

For these reasons, we are writing to request funding at a minimum of $168 million, the Fiscal Year 2012 funding level, for EPA’s Brownfields Program. EPA’s documented success with this program needs to be supported with adequate funding. The program is authorized at $250 million, and yet budget requests and appropriations have been much lower than that amount. EPA is only able to fund a third of the qualified applications that are received.

Thank you for your past support of this program, and we ask for your continued support. We recognize that there are many competing priorities facing your subcommittee and we hope that you will support this program, which is a vital part of our nation’s economic recovery.

Sincerely,

Richard Blumenthal

Carl Levin