April 16, 2012

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 2013 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 $18.29 of funding from other sources. The brownfields program has also functioned as an efficient job producer, helping create more than 75,290 new jobs nationwide at a ratio of 7.3 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 2013. 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
Executive Director
National Brownfields Coalition

National Brownfields Coalition:

National, Regional and State Organizations:
US Conference of Mayors
Smart Growth America
NAIOP, the Commercial Real Estate Development Association
National Association of Local Government Environmental Professionals
Environmental Bankers Association
Groundwork USA
National Brownfields Association
LOCUS, Responsible Real Estate developers and Investors
Brownfields Coalition of the Northeast
Wisconsin Brownfields Study Group
Center for Creative Land Recycling
Florida Brownfields Association
Colorado Brownfields Foundation
Minnesota Brownfields
Louisiana Brownfields Association

Local Government:
City of Rochester
City of Trenton
City of Milwaukee
Land of the Sky Regional Council

Members of the Brownfields Leadership Circle:
Goldstein Brownfields Foundation
Terracon
O’Neill Properties Group
Sustainable Strategies 2050
Cardno TBE
Environmental Financial Advisor LLC

Other Private Sector Partners:
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

3
The Honorable Michael K. Simpson
The Honorable James P. Moran
RE: Appropriations for Brownfields
4/16/2012

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

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