April 16, 2012

The Honorable Jack Reed, Chair
Interior and Environment Subcommittee
United States Senate
728 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
Fax: (202) 224-4680

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski, Ranking Member
Interior and Environment Subcommittee
709 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
Fax: 202-224-5301

Dear Chairman Reed and Ranking Member Murkowski:

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 Daniel K. Inouye, Chairman, Appropriations Committee  
The Honorable Thad Cochran, Ranking Member, Appropriations Committee  
Members of the Interior and Environment Subcommittee  
The Honorable Barbara Boxer  
The Honorable James Inhofe  
The Honorable Max Baucus  
The Honorable John Barrasso