

National Brownfields Coalition

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For Immediate Release

President Obama's FY 2011 Budget Will Help Clean Up Brownfields, Revitalize Communities, and Create Jobs Nationwide

The National Brownfields Coalition commends the Obama Administration for its commitment to reclaiming and revitalizing brownfields, supporting sustainability, creating good jobs, and addressing the needs of underserved communities with the release of the President's FY 2011 Budget.

"In today's economic climate, the President's Budget reflects a necessary focus on creating healthy, economically viable communities, particularly in those distressed neighborhoods that most need assistance," said National Brownfields Coalition Coordinator Evans Paull, Senior Policy Analyst at Northeast-Midwest Institute and Principal of Redevelopment Economics.

President Obama's budget provides \$215 million to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to expand brownfields cleanup and integrated area-wide planning activities. This \$40 million increase is aimed at initiating 20 community-level brownfields projects that will promote area-wide planning in under-served and economically disadvantaged communities.

The President's Budget for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development also creates important new funding sources. The Catalytic Investment Program, aimed at funding strategic projects that will stimulate economic vitality in underserved communities, includes a focus on reclaiming vacant properties. Brownfields projects are also expected to be among the eligible uses for grants made available through HUD's Sustainable Communities Initiative.

Brownfields advocates especially laud the administration's focus on area-wide planning, a process that helps communities living with

multiple brownfields sites address those sites strategically, including exploring the conditions fueling abandonment and deterioration. The process also gives community residents, whose lives have been most impacted by contamination and environmental hazards, a seat at the planning table. By looking at neighborhoods as a whole, area-wide planning helps produce the most productive, innovative, and appropriately scaled end uses for brownfields, all while mitigating historic and future environmental injustices.

"With its focus on area-wide efforts, its request for continued funding for sustainability initiatives, and its new proposals for economic development gap financing, the President's budget lays out a solid strategy for communities to take advantage of the evolving brownfields redevelopment market," said Charlie Bartsch, Senior Fellow at ICF International.

What's more, this funding comes at a critical time.

"Federal brownfields funding is crucial to sustainable redevelopment of neighborhoods distressed by environmental contamination and the compound problems of high unemployment, the credit crisis, and foreclosures. Timing is everything. Communities need this help now," explains Deohn Ferris, Executive Director of the Community Revitalization Alliance.

Indeed, research confirms that the cleanup and redevelopment of vacant and under-utilized brownfields sites can help create the jobs needed to revive these communities, and that public investment in brownfields is a cost-effective jobs generator. A 2008 report by the Northeast-Midwest Institute found that \$10,000 to \$13,000 in public investments in brownfields creates/retains one job. On average, each brownfield site has the potential to create 91 jobs.

In addition, as President and CEO of Smart Growth America Geoff Anderson explains, an economic recession makes brownfields a smart investment. "This is the perfect time to clean up brownfields. Brownfields have a longer lead time before they are development-ready, and investing now will mean that we'll have more sites ready to accommodate growth in a responsible and sustainable fashion when the real estate market is ready to grow again."

The National Brownfields Coalition includes national organizations, as well as local and state government, nonprofit, and private organizations, that represent diverse economic, community, and environmental interests. Members include: U.S. Conference of Mayors, National Association of Counties, Northeast-Midwest Institute, National Association of Local Government Environmental Professionals, International City/County Management Association, Local Initiatives Support Corporation, National Association of Towns and Townships, National Association of Development Organizations, International Council of Shopping Centers, Community Revitalization Alliance, National Brownfields Nonprofit Network Initiative, The National Conference of Black Mayors, The Real Estate Roundtable, National Association of Industrial & Office Properties, Environmental Bankers Association, National Brownfield Association, Cherokee Investment Partners, LLC, Trust for Public Land, Smart Growth America, Scenic America, Groundwork USA, Goldstein Brownfields Foundation, Colorado Brownfields Foundation, and Florida Brownfields Coalition.

The actions taken by the Coalition are posted on the Northeast-Midwest website at:

http://www.nemw.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=88&Itemid=68