



Please Oppose Senate-Changes to the Brownfield Remediation, Building Demolition & Site Revitalization Programs

June 15, 2023

As Ohio's leading brownfield advocate, Greater Ohio Policy Center **respectfully requests that the House of Representatives reject Senate changes to the Brownfield Remediation and Building Demolition and Site Revitalization Programs and insist upon the inclusion of the House-passed language in the budget.**

In order to ensure that both programs can continue to make significant impact in revitalizing environmentally contaminated and blighted property across the state, we believe that continuity in the existing program is vital. Under the existing program, all funds appropriated by the legislature in 2021 were fully accounted for within the first year of program operation and are currently remediating over 4,000 sites statewide between both programs. Adding an extra layer of bureaucratic red tape will only serve to slow this progress as we work to continue this important progress.

- We **are grateful** that the Legislature agrees that Ohio needs a program that supports the redevelopment of environmentally contaminated sites.
- We **are concerned that changing the eligible applicants** to only Ohio Land Banks or entities designated by boards of county commissioners **will slow brownfield redevelopment.**
 - This administrative structures adds unnecessary layers and can negatively impact the potential of projects being funded because of the first-come, first-served provision. Completing assessments and preparing remediation plans and cost estimates for grant applications can be expensive. Under the Senate version, applicants/project partners would need to rely on the potential of being part of a bundled project amendment without an idea of, or control of, the timing of submittal while funds remain.
 - The likely high demand for projects and lack of control on the amendment/submittal process could be a major deterrent to invest in the upfront work and reduce participation in this program for strong, more complicated projects. In the first Round of awards for the Brownfield Remediation Fund (April 2022), 35 counties received grant awards. Smaller, rural counties were overwhelmingly missing from the grant awards because applications were not submitted. These smaller, rural counties may once again miss out on opportunities to apply for funding because of the proposed change which can slow their efforts to successfully pull partners together and apply.
- We **are concerned that brownfield redevelopment by the private sector will stop**; the private sector has been taking on some of the riskiest brownfields projects in Ohio in the last 3 years.
 - Under the Senate's current language, it appears that a private developer must first enter into an agreement with the governing body of a city or township, or a nonprofit. Then from there, the city/township must forward the application for consideration by the

- county. If the county approves, it enters into an agreement with the nonprofit or local government and then submits the application. This multi-stepped process will result in longer timelines and more risk, making brownfield redevelopment less attractive to any developer, especially private development.
- Under the current Brownfield Remediation Fund, private entities must receive a letter of support from a local government to apply. In some instances, private entities are the appropriate applicant to acquire the brownfield, take on the risk, and complete the necessary remediation and redevelopment to put that site into productive use.

On behalf of the more than 200 local government officials, certified professionals, engineers, construction and demolition experts, environmental professionals, attorneys and others who attended our recent Ohio Brownfield Conference, we respectfully request that the **House-passed language** related to the Brownfield Remediation and Building Demolition and Site Revitalization Programs be restored to H.B. 33.