

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 10, 2017

The Honorable Scott Pruitt
Administrator, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Mail Code 1101A
Washington, D.C. 20460

Administrator Pruitt:

We write to convey our strong support for the Brownfields program within the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (“EPA”) and seek assurances that the Trump Administration will continue to support this demonstrably successful program. We support this program and are concerned about a recent press report¹ signaling the Trump Administration’s plans to eliminate Federal funding for the program.

As you are aware, EPA’s Brownfields program has been a catalyst for redevelopment and revitalization in communities across the United States. The bipartisan successes of this program have hinged on the Federal government’s commitment to assist communities in reclaiming these vacant or underutilized properties, so that they may contribute to the environmental health and economic growth of the communities where they are located.

The Brownfields program is highly successful. In fact, the Honorable Mathy Stanislaus, former Assistant Administrator of EPA’s Office of Land and Emergency Management, testified before the Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment last Congress that, “on average, approximately \$18 in private and public funding is leveraged for every grant dollar expended by EPA’s Brownfields program.”² Further, as of 2015, the Brownfields program leveraged approximately 106,000 jobs and \$23.3 billion in cleanup and redevelopment through brownfields project funding since the creation of the program.

We recently read in *The Washington Post* that the White House’s 2018 budget blueprint will eliminate dozens of programs, including “grants to clean up brownfields.”³ This is concerning to us, particularly given that there are estimated to be more than 450,000 brownfields in the U.S., and there are communities around the country that would benefit from your continued support for EPA’s brownfields program.

¹ Eilperin, Juliet and Dennis, Brady, “White House eyes plan to cut EPA staff by one-fifth, eliminating key programs”, *The Washington Post*, March 1, 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/energy-environment/wp/2017/03/01/white-house-proposes-cutting-epa-staff-by-one-fifth-eliminating-key-programs/?hpid=hp_rhp-top-table-main_epa-210pm%3Ahomepage%2Fstory&utm_term=.ae81ec839d7f.

² *Hearing on Helping Revitalize American Communities Through the Brownfields Program* before the Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment, House, 114th Cong. 2 (2015).

³ Eilperin and Dennis, “White House eyes plan to cut EPA staff by one-fifth, eliminating key programs,” March 1, 2017.

The Honorable Scott Pruitt

March 10, 2017

Page 2

In light of this news report, can you confirm the continuing support of this Administration for Federal funding of both the Brownfields categorical and competitive grants program, as has been offered by every Administration since the program's inception? Further, if the Trump Administration intends to eliminate Federal funding for Brownfield grants, please include in your response your justification for doing so, and how this decision is likely to impact the redevelopment of Brownfields in cities and towns across the country.

We respectfully request your reply to these questions no later than Friday, March 17, 2017.

Thank you for your consideration of this request, and for your continued commitment to creating safer and healthier communities across the United States.

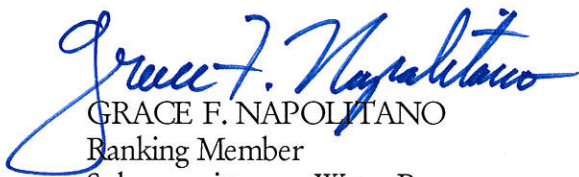
Sincerely,



PETER DeFAZIO
Ranking Member
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure



FRANK PALLONE, JR.
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Commerce



GRACE F. NAPOLITANO
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Water Resources
and Environment



PAUL TONKO
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Environment
and the Economy



ELIZABETH ESTY
Vice Ranking Member
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure