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# Back from the Brink/Restoring Brownfield Sites to Economic Engines: February 15th U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Energy & Commerce Hearing

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The Subcommittee on Environment and Climate of Change (“Subcommittee”) of the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Energy & Commerce held a February 15th hearing titled:

*Back from the Brink: Restoring Brownfield Sites to Economic Engines (“Hearing”)*

The purpose of the Hearing is to address:

- Explanation of the term “Brownfields”
- Evolution of the Brownfields Program
- Economic development role of Brownfields
- Brownfield funding provided by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (“EPA”) has defined a “brownfield” as “abandoned, idled, or under-used industrial or commercial facility where expansion or redevelopment is complicated by real or perceived environmental contamination.”

Many states (including Arkansas) and the federal government have statutes, regulations and policies that are intended to address “brownfields.” Incentive provisions, liability exemptions, funding programs, and action/cleanup standards have been utilized for a number of years to attempt to reduce the barriers for reuse or redevelopment of brownfield properties. The goal of Brownfield Programs is to encourage redevelopment investment in such properties to increase the local tax base, facilitate job growth, utilize existing infrastructure, encourage infill, and take pressure off greenspace.

Testimonies from the following witnesses included:

[Hon. J. Christian Bollwage](#)

Mayor

The City of Elizabeth, NJ

On behalf of U.S. Conference of Mayors and the National League of Cities

[Hon. Michael Largent](#)

Commissioner

Whitman County Board of Commissioners

Whitman County, WA  
On behalf of National Association of Counties

[Lee Ilan](#)

Chief of Planning  
Mayor's Office of Environmental Remediation  
The City of New York, NY  
On behalf of National Brownfields Coalition

[Appendix A](#), [Appendix B](#), [Appendix C](#)

[Jason Seyler](#)

Brownfields Coordinator  
Montana Department of Environmental Quality  
On behalf of Association of State and Territorial Solid Waste Management Officials (ASTSWMO)

[Patrick B. Ford](#)

Business Development Director  
Frontier Group of Companies

A copy of an introductory memorandum from the Committee on Energy Commerce staff to the Subcommittee can be found [here](#).