

Brownfields Reauthorization Act of 2025: U.S. Senate Environment and Public Works Committee Passes Bill

02/17/2025

Brownfields Reauthorization Act of 2025: U.S. Senate Environment and Public Works Committee Passes Bill

The United States Senate Environment and Public Works Committee (“Committee”) unanimously passed the Brownfields Reauthorization Act of 2025 on February 5th.

The legislation reauthorizes the United States Environmental Protection Agency’s (“EPA”) Brownfields program.

The federal government in many states (including Arkansas) has statutes, regulations, and policies that are intended to address “Brownfields”. Brownfields are often referred to as property (improved and unimproved), the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of hazardous substances, pollutants, or contaminants.

Incentive provisions, funding programs, liability exemptions, 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 and investment in such properties to increase the local tax base, facilitate job growth, utilize existing infrastructure, encourage infield use, and take pressure off greenspace

The Committee describes this legislation as streamlining the EPA Brownfields application process which it states:

...has historically limited small and underserved communities from accessing cleanup resources.

The legislation is stated to address what the Committee describes as cost-prohibitive barriers impacting small and underserved communities by:

- Helping smaller communities compete more effectively with larger entities that have more resources to absorb overhead costs.
- Reducing the cost-share requirement from 20 percent to 10 percent.
- Providing cost-share waivers for small and underserved communities.
- Streamlining the application process to make it more accessible for smaller communities.

Cleanup resources and development funding are expanded by:

- Doubling maximum site cleanup grants from \$500,000 to \$1,000,000.

- Increasing state program funding to \$75 million annually by 2030.
- Improving competitive grant criteria to better align with local redevelopment needs.

A link to the Committee announcement and a one-pager describing the Bill can be found below.

<https://www.epw.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/press-releases-republican?ID=FC694363-C254-43E6-ADF6-FEAA9F932AE0>

https://www.epw.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/1/7/171cd4b5-1172-41ef-ad6f-415451f35a91/164922C693D6D96E5D2082BFB9744B2B937CBDE968881EC7ADED01E6417C5C52.final-the-brownfields-reauthorization-act-of-2025-one-pager-abt.pdf