



PROVIDE RESOURCES TO REMEDIATE BROWNFIELDS URGE MEMBERS OF THE SENATE TO CO-SPONSOR THE BUILD ACT

BACKGROUND: U.S. Senators Inhofe (R-OK) and Markey (D-MA) have re-introduced the Brownfields Utilization, Investment, and Local Development (BUILD) Act (S. 1479), which would reauthorize the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Brownfields Program. Since 2002, the program has funded the rehabilitation of abandoned and polluted properties to increase safety and attract new businesses to communities across the country.

In April 2014, the U.S. Senate Environment and Public Works Committee approved the BUILD Act by a voice vote, but it was not considered by the full Senate during the 113th Congress.

The bill contains a NADO-supported provision that, for the first time, will allow EPA Brownfields grant recipients the ability to use up to 8 percent of their grant to cover administrative costs. Currently, administrative costs are specifically excluded as an eligible use of Brownfields funds.

The bill increases the limit for site remediation grants from the current \$200,000 to \$500,000 per site, and gives the EPA Administrator discretion to raise the limit further to \$650,000. In addition, the bill authorizes EPA to prioritize technical assistance to small communities, Indian tribes, rural communities, or low income areas with populations below 15,000 when applying for grants under the Brownfields program.

ACTION NEEDED: Regional development organizations (RDOs) are asked to contact their Senators and urge them to co-sponsor the BUILD Act (S. 1479) sponsored by Senators Inhofe and Markey. A sample letter is provided below.

For more information, please contact Susan Howard, Legislative Director, at 202.624.8590 / showard@nado.org or Ted Stiger, Legislative Associate, at 202.624.8467 / tstiger@nado.org.

SAMPLE LETTER IN SUPPORT OF BUILD ACT (S. 491)

The Honorable [First Name] [Last Name]
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator [Last Name]:

On behalf of the [insert name of organization], I am writing to respectfully request that you co-sponsor the *Brownfields Utilization, Investment, and Local Development (BUILD) Act of 2015* (S. 1479). This legislation will provide valuable resources for the assessment, cleanup, and redevelopment of brownfields properties, including abandoned gas stations, old textile mills, closed smelters, and other industrial and commercial properties no longer in use.

The nation's landscape is dotted with cities and towns that were once vibrant manufacturing and milling industries. But as the country's economy turned away from manufacturing, those plants and mills began to close,

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forcing small communities to grapple with job loss, economic distress and empty, and often contaminated industrial sites. Without the resources to redevelop these sites, communities face increased levels of out-migration and a lack of tools to remediate land or buildings with perceived or real contamination in favor of building on untouched green space. The additional brownfields support provided through this legislation will incentivize communities to clean and redevelop contaminated property, resulting in broader job growth, improved public health, and gains for local economies.

Every \$1 of federal funds invested in brownfields redevelopment leverages \$18 in total investment, and redeveloping one acre of contaminated land creates an average of 10 jobs.

S. 1479 also includes an important provision that will allow EPA Brownfields grant recipients the ability to use up to 8 percent of their grant to cover administrative costs. Currently, administrative costs are specifically excluded as an eligible use of Brownfields funds. This significantly reduces the number of entities, especially in distressed areas, that can afford to operate Brownfields programs and many valuable, much needed cleanup projects remain out of reach for many communities. For example, **[include local examples of indirect cost impacts, if applicable]**.

The practical modification proposed in the bill will make the Brownfields program consistent with all other federal community, economic development and environmental stewardship programs, as well with standard Office of Management and Budget (OMB) administrative guidelines.

It is for these reasons we urge you to co-sponsor the BUILD Act. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,