



*A Resolution Submitted by the City of Racine, WI*



## **REAUTHORIZE EPA'S BROWNFIELD PROGRAM**

May 2026

WHEREAS brownfields are blighted or underutilized properties where redevelopment or reuse is complicated by the presence or potential presence of hazardous substances, pollutants or contaminants, often found in urban areas or former industrial sites.

AND WHEREAS the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates there are more than 450,000 brownfield sites in the United States, with nearly 32 percent of all EPA-designated brownfield sites remaining in the Great Lakes states, largely due to the region's industrial history.

AND WHEREAS brownfield revitalization is proven to benefit environmental and public health while also stimulating the local economy through job growth, reduced development pressure on open land and increased local tax base.

AND WHEREAS EPA's Brownfield Program was established in 2002 to help states, Tribes and communities assess, clean up and revitalize brownfield sites through five competitive grant programs.

AND WHEREAS EPA's Brownfield Program was last reauthorized in 2018 through the Better Utilization of Investments Leading to Development (BUILD) Act at an authorized spending level of \$250 million per year.

AND WHEREAS according to EPA, the Brownfield Program has helped assess more than 42,000 properties, leveraging nearly 230,000 jobs and stimulating over \$4.4 billion in economic activity.

AND WHEREAS according to the EPA, every dollar invested in the Brownfields Program results in an average of 20 dollars in economic return.

AND WHEREAS federal authorization for EPA's Brownfield Program formally expired in 2023, but the program has continued operating due to an additional \$1.5 billion congressional appropriation that is set to run out at the end of Fiscal Year (FY) 2026.

AND WHEREAS in September 2025, the Cities Initiative launched its *Economic Transformation Action Plan*, which includes local, state and federal recommendations to help remediate and develop brownfield lands.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

- The Cities Initiative calls on the U.S. Congress to reauthorize the EPA Brownfield Program with a higher authorized spending level before the end of FY26 and fully fund the program in future appropriations.
- The U.S. Congress and EPA should remove barriers for local governments to participate in the Brownfield Program, such as increased administrative cost allowances and flexibility to use multi-purpose grant funds for site assessment and prioritization.
- The Cities Initiative commits to establishing a new program – Vacant to Vibrant – to connect members to technical assistance opportunities for identifying, assessing and prioritizing sites for remediation that advance community economic development goals, consistent with its Action Plan.

AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT copies of this resolution will be distributed to: U.S. EPA Administrator Lee Zeldin and relevant committee leadership in the U.S. Congress.