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## **EPA Grants Demonstrate How Environmental and Economic Progress Can Go Hand in Hand**

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*Washington, DC* – The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) today awarded \$4 million to 23 communities as part of its [Brownfields Area-Wide Planning Pilot Program](#). The grants, which focus on remediating potentially contaminated and reusing the sites to strengthen local economic growth, were announced this morning at a press conference in Cleveland, OH.

Transforming brownfields back into productive real estate is a critical part of economic revitalization for many communities. The reclamation process creates jobs, better housing options, and improved education and health facilities, while improving environmental conditions of the area as well.

“Redeveloping brownfields is about providing economic opportunity and jobs as much as it is about the environment,” said Geoff Anderson, President and CEO of Smart Growth America. “African American and Latino populations have been particularly hard hit by this recession. Brownfields are often located in minority and low income communities. These targeted grant investments can bring jobs to some of the communities that need them most, and not just in the short term. Re-using brownfields puts stranded economic assets back to work. These grants often lead to sustained interest and investment from the private sector.”

The grant awards announced today are part of an unprecedented partnership between the EPA, the U.S. Department of Transportation and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development called the Partnership for Sustainable Communities. Through this interagency coordination, states and localities can use taxpayer money more efficiently by coordinating federal investments to meet multiple economic, environmental, and community objectives with each dollar spent.

### **Brownfield Investments Maximize Federal Environmental Funding**

The EPA’s investment in brownfields doubly helps the communities receiving these grants. Remediating these pieces of land has solid environmental benefits, but brownfields are often core lands for economic redevelopment as well. Grants like this give private developers the incentive to plan projects on land that is often subject to complicated regulation, and gives towns and cities the tools needed to build on them once again.

One example of the economic benefits these environmental grants can have is the City of Kalispell, MT, which was selected as an EPA grant recipient. More than 20% of residents in Kalispell's targeted revitalization area live below the poverty level, and the median income there is almost \$20,000 less than the state average. More than 13% of business properties in the area are vacant, and the multiple brownfields nearby have had a negative impact on property values and discouraged area investment. The EPA's investment in Kalispell will allow the town to identify and rank these brownfields, both in terms of health risk and revitalization need, and develop a market study to inform brownfields site reuse planning. Development of the plan is expected to encourage the cleanup and reuse of the area to meet community needs, and encourage park, trail, and private property redevelopment.

### **Reclaiming Vacant Properties Conference Addresses Brownfield Reclamation**

The EPA's announcement in Cleveland today coincides with the Reclaiming Vacant Properties 2010 conference, which has been meeting in Cleveland since Wednesday. Brownfield planning and remediation are among the key issues on the agenda for the conference, which focuses on the economic benefits to renovating and revitalizing vacant and abandoned properties.

Speaking at the conference today, Mathy Stanislaus, Assistant Administrator for EPA's Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response explained, "Sustainability only happens locally. For this to really affect communities around the country, we need to change programs to align EPA, HUD and DOT."

Other cities selected to receive grant funds include Atlanta, GA; Aurora, CO; Cleveland, OH; Huntington Park, CA; Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, WA; Denver, CO; Goshen, IN; Newark, NJ; San Diego, CA; Kalispell, MT; Kansas City, MO; Lowell, MA; Monaca, PA; San Francisco, CA; New Bern, NC; Ogdensburg, NY; Phoenix, AZ; Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (for Chicopee, MA); Ranson, WV; Roanoke, VA; Sanford, ME; Tulsa, OK and Municipalities of Peñuelas and Guayanilla, PR.

Read more about the Brownfields Area-Wide Planning Pilot Program grant recipients on [the EPA's website](#).

**Smart Growth America** is the only national organization dedicated to researching, advocating for and leading coalitions to bring smart growth practices to more communities nationwide. From providing more sidewalks to ensuring more homes are built near public transit or that productive farms remain a part of our communities, smart growth helps make sure people across the nation can live in great neighborhoods. For additional information, please visit [www.smartgrowthamerica.org](http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org).

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