

September 7, 2018

Governor Kate Brown
Oregon State Capitol
Salem, Oregon

[Via electronic mail]

Re: Recapitalization of Brownfields Redevelopment Fund

Dear Governor Brown:

Thousands of properties around Oregon are vacant or underutilized because of known or perceived environmental contamination. More than half of these so-called brownfields are located in economically distressed communities. These properties, which can be found in virtually every city and county in the state, are failing to contribute to Oregon's economic recovery and are undermining the livability of communities statewide.

Studies conducted by local governments across Oregon – including in the Rogue Valley, Ontario, Lincoln City, The Dalles, Tigard and Portland – have identified the local potential for cleanup and redevelopment of these vacant, blighted, and/or underutilized sites. A 2014 ECONorthwest analysis found that each dollar the state invests in brownfield redevelopment programs leverages an additional \$116 toward redevelopment.

In 2014, a new statewide coalition came together to address this opportunity by supporting both existing and new policy and funding tools that can facilitate brownfield cleanup and redevelopment. Beginning in the 2015 legislative session, the Oregon Brownfield Coalition has been instrumental in the passage of legislation and funding to support this goal.

One existing tool that plays a key role in brownfield cleanup is the state's Brownfields Redevelopment Fund (BRF), administered by Business Oregon. The BRF, which provides both grants and loans to address contaminated sites statewide, has supported brownfield redevelopment projects in communities located in 33 Oregon counties. It was last recapitalized with \$7 million from lottery bonds authorized by the 2015 Legislature with the support of the Oregon Brownfield Coalition.

Due to increasing demand for brownfields financing assistance, Business Oregon anticipates that the BRF will need to be recapitalized again by the end of the 2019-2021 biennium. We understand that the agency has submitted a request for \$10 million in lottery bond proceeds to recapitalize this Fund. The undersigned organizations support this request and ask that you include \$10 million for the recapitalization of the Brownfields Redevelopment Fund in your recommended 2019-2021 budget.

Thank you very much for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

