

# Greenbrier County Commission

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Tammy Tincher, President  
Lowell Rose, Commissioner  
Blaine Phillips, Commissioner

November 14, 2023

Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
c/o Chairman Bill Johnson  
Subcommittee on Environment, Manufacturing & Critical Materials  
2125 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515-6115

Chair Johnson,

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the subcommittee on Environment, Manufacturing and Critical Materials to testify at the hearing entitled "Revitalizing America through the Reauthorization of the Brownfields Program."

I have included my responses to the additional questions for the record requested by the Honorable Russ Fulcher.

***Because of the heavy presence of federal land in many counties in my district – 80%, 87% federal land – counties are heavily dependent on federal PILT (Payment in Lieu of Taxes) revenues because this land cannot be taxed locally. How have you found the Brownfield Program as a way that counties can generate future revenues from the grants?***

In addition to being an invaluable resource used by counties to identify and remediate contaminated, abandoned or substantially underutilized industrial and commercial land, counties rely on the Brownfields Program as a catalyst for the redevelopment of economically distressed areas, as revealed in a 2017 study published in the Journal of Environmental Assessment Policy and Management, entitled "[Brownfields Remediation: Impact on Local Residential Property Tax Revenue.](https://doi.org/10.1142/s1464333217500132)"<sup>1</sup> The study concluded that "cleaning up brownfield properties led to residential property value increases of 5 - 15.2% within 1.29 miles of the sites." Furthermore, another study found an estimated \$29 to \$97 million in additional tax revenue for local governments in a single year after cleanup - two to seven times more than the \$12.4 million EPA contributed to the cleanup of those 48 studied cleanup sites.

***One point county officials in Idaho highlight is the importance of flexibility in the use of dollars from PILT, SRS (Secure Rural Schools) and other funds. As we go forward, can you tell me how flexibility on the use of the brownfields properties has helped get properties back onto the market and generating revenues?***

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<sup>1</sup> Sullivan, K. A. (2017). Brownfields remediation: Impact on local residential property tax revenue. *Journal of Environmental Assessment Policy and Management*, 19(03), 1750013.  
<https://doi.org/10.1142/s1464333217500132>

Flexibility is a critical component of the Brownfields Program. Assessment, Revolving Loan Fund, Cleanup, Multipurpose and Job Training Grants all provide county governments with the flexibility to spend funds in the manner that best suits their communities' needs. For example, Mineral County, Nevada recently received a \$1.5 million Cleanup Grant to remediate the 324-acre Babbitt Military Housing Site that was transferred to the County in 1998 by the U.S. Army. The site is zoned for commercial and industrial use, but asbestos and other issues have prevented the County from being able to sell the site. The Cleanup Grant will help to address multiple hazards on the site, including the remediation of floor tile, asbestos debris and subsurface sewer piping, and put it back into use.

The Babbitt Site is immediately north of Hawthorne, the County seat, which is entirely built out and, as such, serves as the optimal location for urban growth in the area. Additionally, given that 90 percent of Mineral County is federal land, there is limited private land for the county to spur economic development, job growth and local taxes. Hawthorne is located near transportation and other economic centers, including Walker Lake tourism and the Hawthorne Military Base, and redeveloping the site will serve as a catalyst for reinvestment.

It is estimated the project will result in 1,200 and 1,300 permanent new jobs, help to grow the County's tax base by transferring the land from County ownership to private investors and reduce pressures to develop agricultural areas.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to represent Greenbrier County, West Virginia. If I can be of assistance in the future, please feel free to reach out anytime.

Respectfully,



Tammy Tincher, President  
Greenbrier County Commission