

Committee on Energy and Commerce

**Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery
of**

Subcommittee on Environment Ranking Member Paul D. Tonko

***Hearing on “Maximizing Opportunities for Redeveloping Brownfields Sites: Assessing the
Potential for New American Innovation”***

March 11, 2025

Thank you, Mr. Chair. EPA’s Brownfields program has enjoyed tremendous bipartisan support for decades, and I hope we can continue to work together to examine and strengthen the program in the 119th Congress. I am certain we all share a love for the places we have the privilege of representing.

And like so many districts across the country, New York’s 20th has an incredible manufacturing history that is foundational to its story. Along the Mohawk and Hudson Rivers, many mill towns once thrived. Factories produced carpets, collars, and leather products, to name just a few.

But sadly, many of these sites have closed, leaving valuable properties— often on the waterfront— abandoned or underutilized. And this too is part of my district’s history.

But the story of these former industrial communities does not need to end here, with blighted properties and years of disinvestment. EPA’s Brownfields program can be the catalyst for these communities’ comebacks by creating new economic opportunities that begin with assessing and remediating former industrial sites.

In my district, Brownfields funding has led to transformational revitalizations. Some sites have become new parks, allowing public access to the waterfront. Others have been prepared for redevelopment, enabling new employers to move in. And simply put, these success stories would not be possible without EPA’s program.

Since 2002, tens of thousands of acres of idle land have been made ready for productive use, increasing property values and local tax revenue, preserving greenfields, and creating jobs. We know EPA’s program has a proven track record of success and provides effective downpayments. Each dollar spent leverages more than \$20. And I am incredibly proud that the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act included an historic investment of \$1.5 billion for the program for Fiscal Years 2022 through 2026.

These funds included \$1.2 billion for the EPA’s program and \$300 million for State programs. IIJA also took important steps to create greater opportunities for disadvantaged communities by waiving the program’s cost share requirements and increasing the maximum award amounts.

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I look forward to hearing from our witnesses whether the IIJA has been effective and how Congress can best build upon those investments. Finally, I want to express my concerns at the Trump Administration's suggestion that 65% of EPA's budget could be cut. The majority of EPA's funding goes to programs that State and local governments rely upon.

Without a doubt, a cut of this magnitude will have devastating consequences for our districts, and I hope Congress will ensure that the value of EPA's programs, including the Brownfields program, are properly reflected in our appropriations process moving forward. Because the Brownfields program is an incredible investment of federal dollars. It enables local governments to support environmental and economic revitalization by turning a liability into an opportunity.

I hope we can work together to make sure this program has the resources and authorities necessary to continue its great work. With that, I would like to yield my remaining time to Congressman Menendez.