

**Ready for Reuse: Legislative Proposals to Unleash the Potential of
America's Brownfields Sites**

Subcommittee on Environment, House Committee on Energy and
Commerce

Chairman Gary Palmer

Opening Statement

March 4, 2026

Thank you all for joining us for today's very important hearing.

Our country is facing a novel set of challenges, and the global economic and security landscape is shifting. Having to rely on adversaries such as China for critical materials jeopardizes our national security and economy. In order to address these challenges, strengthen our economy, and deliver jobs to communities back home, we need to increase our domestic capacity to manufacture crucial products, produce a reliable supply of energy, and secure our position in the global artificial infrastructure race.

As we heard at a Subcommittee hearing a year ago, our country is home to thousands of sites known as brownfields, which are underutilized, idled, or abandoned property where redevelopment is complicated by real or perceived environmental contamination. These

sites can be environmental hazards and a nuisance to local communities, but they can also be opportunities.

While not ALL brownfields sites are appropriate for ALL uses, we should be looking for opportunities to accomplish the compatible goals of siting crucial infrastructure that is a good fit for a particular location, and encouraging remediation and reuse of idle or underutilized properties.

To that end, we plan to discuss four bills.

The Brownfields Revitalization for a Better Tomorrow Act reauthorizes both the EPA Brownfields Grants Program and the state response program through Fiscal Year 2031. It also builds on a previous discussion draft of reauthorization legislation considered at a hearing last Congress. This draft again includes expanding eligibility for brownfields grants to certain private entities, as well as a program to assist rural communities with developing competitive grant applications. It incorporates requests from brownfields stakeholders, such as increased award amount limits and expanded eligible uses for funding. It also

updates the criteria EPA shall consider when ranking applications to support reuse for nationally significant infrastructure projects, such as critical mineral and semiconductor facilities, artificial intelligence infrastructure, and energy generation from all power resources. The existing criteria only supports renewable energy and energy efficiency projects.

The second bill, the Brownfields Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act, creates a new loan program, similar to the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act “WIFIA” and Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act “TIFIA” programs used to finance water and transportation infrastructure projects.

The third bill is the Brownfields Inventory and Permitting Efficiency Act, which directs the EPA and states to work together to compile a list of sites suitable for nationally significant infrastructure projects. It also streamlines permitting for projects on certain brownfields sites, and requires EPA to provide guidance to other federal agencies on how to conduct more efficient reviews of these previously

disturbed and often previously studied sites. Finally, it directs the Government Accountability Office to conduct a review of impediments to timely and efficient removal of Superfund sites from the National Priorities List.

Lastly, we have the Brownfields Reauthorization for an Affordable and Revitalized America Act offered by the minority. While this bill increases some grant award limits and directs the EPA to waive cost share requirements in certain circumstances, it also significantly increases the authorization of appropriations for both the Brownfields Grant Program and the state response programs.

We have four witnesses here today to help us analyze these proposals.

First, we have Mr. Chris Wells, Executive Director of the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality, and the current President of the Environmental Council of the States to provide the state perspective.

We also welcome Mr. Gerald Pouncey, Jr., Senior Counsel at Taft Stettinius & Hollister. Mr. Pouncey has led numerous efforts to permit and finance redevelopment of industrial sites, ports, and former military facilities.

Also joining us is the Honorable Alan Tomson, Mayor of Davis, West Virginia, and representing the National Brownfields Coalition, who will speak to the impact of the Brownfields Program in local communities.

Finally, we have Mr. David Robinson, Executive Vice President of Strategic Development, for Aligned Data Centers, whose testimony will address his company's work on brownfields sites.

I'd like to reiterate that these bills are all discussion drafts, so I look forward to hearing robust discussion on these proposals, both today and on future occasions.

Thank you.