

March 18, 2025

Joint Committee on Ways and Means on Transportation and Economic Development
Co-Chair Senator Aaron Woods
Co-Chair Representative David Gomberg
Senator Mark Meek
Senator Bruce Starr
Representative Jami Cate
Representative Daniel Nguyen
Representative Alek Skarlatos
Representative Mari Watanabe

Re: Recapitalization of existing Brownfield Funding Programs

Dear Co-Chair Woods, Co-Chair Gomberg and Members of the Committee,

Thousands of properties around Oregon are vacant or underutilized because of known or perceived environmental contamination. More than half of these 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. Analysis has 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. This Coalition continues to meet and work towards better outcomes for Brownfield properties across our State.

Two existing tools that play a key role in brownfield cleanup are the state's Brownfields Redevelopment Fund (BRF) and the Brownfield Properties Revitalization Fund (BPRF), each administered by Business Oregon. The BRF provides both grants and loans to address contaminated sites statewide and has supported projects in 33 Oregon counties. The BRF was last recapitalized with \$10 million by the 2021 Legislature with the support of the Oregon Brownfield Coalition. The Legislature created the BPRF in 2023 and capitalized it with an initial \$5 million. In just two years, the BPRF has made 13 funding awards that have helped facilitate site assessment and cleanup for affordable housing, commercial, food business, and educational use projects.

Due to increasing demand for brownfields financing assistance, Business Oregon anticipates that both the BRF and BPRF will be under high demand in the coming months and years. Continued support for both these programs will be key to unlocking redevelopment opportunities in some of our most vulnerable communities. The Governor included \$15 million in lottery bonds for both programs in her recommended budget. The undersigned here respectfully request that the Legislature allocate \$10 million to BRF (POP 501) and \$5 million to BPRF (POP 502).

Thank you very much for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Bird Alliance of Oregon
Cascade Environmental Solutions
Central Oregon Cities Organization
City of Hillsboro
City of Eugene
City of Medford
City of Portland
City of Tigard
City of Wilsonville
Columbia Corridor Association
David Rabbino – Jordan Ramis PC
League of Oregon Cities
Maul Foster & Alongi, Inc.
Metro
Multnomah County
Oregon Economic Development Association
Oregon Public Ports Association
Oregon Realtors
Port of Portland
Terraphase Engineering, Inc.
Stantec
Washington County