



EPA Selects Three Alabama Entities to Receive Share of \$897,000 for Brownfields Cleanup and Assessment

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MONTGOMERY, Ala. (May 6, 2020) – Today, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 4 Administrator Mary S. Walker announced EPA is awarding three entities in Alabama Brownfields grants, totaling \$897,000. The Region 4 Administrator was joined on the call to make this announcement with Congressman Bradley Byrne (AL-01), Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) Director Lance LeFleur, Dothan Mayor Mark Saliba and Mobile Mayor Sandy Stimpson.

“Grants awarded by EPA’s Brownfield Program provide communities and tribes across the country with an opportunity to transform contaminated sites into community assets,” **said EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler**. “Under President Trump’s leadership, EPA has delivered approximately \$287 million in Brownfield grants directly to communities and nonprofits for cleanup and redevelopment, job creation, and economic development through the award of over 948 grants.”

“These grants will provide the city of Bessemer, Dothan and Mobile with resources to clean up contaminated lands and return them to productive use,” **said Region 4 Administrator Mary S. Walker**. “Overall, Brownfields funding provides communities with an opportunity to transform contaminated sites into community assets that will attract jobs, encourage partnerships and achieve economic benefits.”

“Thank you to EPA for providing the Brownfield Redevelopment grants for the very worthy assessment and cleanup projects in Bessemer, Dothan, and Mobile, Alabama. ADEM has been pleased to work with these cities throughout the process of identifying, planning, and applying for the US EPA Brownfield grants,” **said ADEM Director Lance LeFleur**. “These grants and those provided by EPA in the past are a wonderful addition to the State Brownfields Program that has cleaned up and redeveloped more than 400 of the 600 Brownfield sites in Alabama. Brownfield sites are often where industrial activity took place in the past and are prime sites to once again be used for industrial development. Congratulations to Bessemer, Dothan, and Mobile.”

“I’m excited that EPA has awarded three new Brownfields grants in Alabama, particularly in the historic community of Africatown in Alabama’s First District,” **said Congressman Bradley Byrne (AL-01)**. “I’ve been proud to see the continued development in Africatown, and I look forward to continuing to partner with local leaders and the Trump Administration as we pursue additional historic preservation and economic development projects in the Africatown community.”

“Congratulations to the City of Dothan upon receiving the EPA brownfields grant,” **said Congresswoman Martha Roby (AL-2)**. “The grant awarded provides the needed funds to restore a once contaminated site in the community. Cleanup of brownfield sites is vital to our neighborhoods and communities and will only yield positive changes for the City of Dothan.”

Nationwide, the agency is announcing the selection of 155 grants for communities and tribes totaling over \$65.6 million in EPA brownfields funding through the agency’s Assessment, Revolving Loan Fund, and



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Cleanup Grant Programs. These funds will aid under-served and economically disadvantaged communities, including neighborhoods located in Opportunity Zones, in assessing and cleaning up abandoned industrial and commercial properties. An Opportunity Zone is an economically-distressed community where new investment, under certain conditions, may be eligible for preferential tax treatment. Of the communities selected this year, 118 can potentially assess or clean up brownfield sites in census tracts designated in these zones. In addition, nearly 30% of the communities selected today will receive brownfields funding for the first time.

“The City of Dothan is thrilled to receive the EPA Brownfield Cleanup grant in the amount of \$297,000. These funds will be used to reclaim property in an economically disadvantaged area within our city where we plan to invest heavily in rejuvenation and revitalization efforts,” **said Mayor Mark Saliba**. “The parcel of land that we had in mind in writing the Brownfield grant is contiguous to other neighborhood revitalization efforts in the area. Our hope, in obtaining the grant, was to help perpetuate the continued neighborhood improvement and to see our citizens reclaim use of this space in the historic neighborhood in which it is situated. We are excited to be able to use these funds to help the citizens of this area to renew their sense of pride in reclaiming a valuable portion of their neighborhood.”

“On behalf of the City of Mobile, we are pleased and proud to receive this grant from the EPA. These funds will enable us to continue our efforts to revitalize the city’s historic Africatown community, adding momentum for economic development and improving the quality of life for surrounding neighborhoods,” **said Mayor Sandy Stimpson**. “We are grateful to the EPA for supporting this transformative project.”

The grant recipients in Alabama include:

Bessemer, Ala.

Assessment Grant
\$300,000

EPA has the City of Bessemer for a Brownfields Assessment Grant. Community-wide grant funds will be used to conduct 12 Phase I and nine Phase II environmental site assessments, Grant funds also will be used to develop a cleanup plan and support community engagement activities, including hosting six community meetings and distributing outreach materials such as postcards and brochures. Assessment activities will target Bessemer’s downtown, which is mostly located within a Qualified Opportunity Zone. Priority sites include a 1.5-acre abandoned rail site, the former City Hall building and fire station, and a former furniture manufacturing company that has since been demolished.

Dothan, Ala.

Cleanup Grant
\$297,000

EPA has selected the City of Dothan for a Brownfields Cleanup Grant. Grant funds will be used to clean up the former electrical substation located at the corner of Linden and Whiddon Streets. The cleanup site consists of a 0.15-acre vacant parcel that was developed and used as an electrical substation from 1961 until about 1997 and has remained vacant since that time. The site is contaminated with inorganic contaminants, semi-volatile organic compounds, and PCBs. Grant funds also will be used to support community outreach activities.



Mobile, Ala.

Assessment Grant
\$300,000

EPA has selected the City of Mobile for a Brownfields Assessment Grant. Community-wide grant funds will be used to conduct seven Phase I and seven Phase II environmental site assessments and develop six cleanup plans. Grant funds also will be used to conduct eight community meetings and develop and distribute fact sheets and other outreach materials to community members. Assessment activities will focus on the city's historic Africatown community, which contains a Qualified Opportunity Zone. Priority sites include a 40-acre former manufacturing plant and multi-family housing complex, a former paper manufacturer, and a historic sawmill.

Grants awarded by EPA's Brownfields Program provide communities across the country with an opportunity to transform contaminated sites into community assets that attract jobs and achieve broader economic development outcomes, while taking advantage of existing infrastructure. For example, brownfields grants are shown to:

- Increase Local Tax Revenue: A study of 48 brownfields sites found that an estimated \$29 million to \$97 million in additional local tax revenue was generated in a single year after cleanup. This is two to seven times more than the \$12.4 million EPA contributed to the cleanup of these sites.
- Increase Residential Property Values: Another study found that property values of homes near revitalized brownfields sites increased between 5% and 15% following cleanup.

Background

A brownfield is a property for which the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant. There are estimated to be more than 450,000 brownfields in the United States. EPA's Brownfields Program began in 1995 and has provided nearly \$1.6 billion in brownfield grants to assess and clean up contaminated properties and return blighted properties to productive reuse. To date, brownfields investments have leveraged more than \$31 billion in cleanup and redevelopment. Over the years, the relatively small investment of federal funding, from both public and private sources, leveraged more than 160,000 jobs.

The next National Brownfields Training Conference will be held on April 26-30, 2021, in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Offered every two years, this conference is the largest gathering of stakeholders focused on cleaning up and reusing former commercial and industrial properties. EPA co-sponsors this event with the International City/County Management Association.

List of the FY 2020 applicants selected for funding: <https://www.epa.gov/brownfields/applicants-selected-fy-2020-brownfields-assessment-revolving-loan-fund-and-cleanup-0>

For more on the brownfields grants: <https://www.epa.gov/brownfields/types-brownfields-grant-funding>

For more on EPA's Brownfields Program: <https://www.epa.gov/brownfields>

For more information about EPA's role in Opportunity Zones: <https://www.epa.gov/opportunity-zones>

For information on the studies related to the Brownfields Program's environmental and economic benefits: <https://www.epa.gov/brownfields/brownfields-program-environmental-and-economic-benefits>



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