

Teaming Up for Brownfields Cleanup

New York State Agencies Work Together

The Interagency Work Group on Brownfields (Work Group), a partnership of 16 entities, was created in March 2004 to serve as a forum to exchange information on brownfield related activities and to develop a coordinated approach for addressing brownfields across New York State. The Work Group was created on the heels of the October 2003 Superfund/Brownfields law. This landmark law set the stage to accelerate the pace of brownfield cleanup and redevelopment in New York by the creation of the Brownfield Cleanup Program (BCP), the Brownfield Opportunity Area Program and by enhancing other existing programs. The Work Group meets quarterly and allows a venue by which public and private interests can work together to address brownfield related cleanup and redevelopment issues. Combining diverse backgrounds, expertise and experience, each entity ensures the continued success of brownfield redevelopment efforts across New York.

Transforming brownfields into productive community assets involves many factors: planning, financing, community involvement, liability issues, remedy selection, regulatory requirements and the coordination of stakeholders. The link between all of these factors is significant and agency partnerships are crucial. New York has many varied and diverse programs that provide resources for brownfields cleanup and redevelopment. These resources are often what is needed for the maintenance of quality communities and for improving economic development in the state. Ensuring that communities have access to these tools will help them become healthier and more inviting places in which to live and work.

Empire State Development

One agency, which works to create a one-stop-shopping destination for developers and municipalities interested in brownfields redevelopment, is Empire State Development (ESD). ESD encompasses the NYS Department of Economic Development and the ESD Corporation. ESD provides numerous programs and institutional resources to assist in selecting marketable brownfield sites for redevelopment. Among its offerings are financial incentives, tax credits and matching grants through programs such as the Empire Zones Program, Wired Buildings Program, Environmental Investment Program, and the Build Now-NY Program. ESD also has the ability to provide funding for workforce training for private employers, and has at its disposal a wealth of useful economic and demographic information to share.

Funding for Water Improvements

The Environmental Facilities Corporation (EFC) provides low-cost capital and expert technical assistance to municipalities, businesses and state agencies for environmental projects in New York. It administers several programs designed to give low-interest financing to municipalities for capital costs of water pollution control facilities and land acquisition for water quality protection. Low-interest loans and state assistance payments are available for public and private water system infrastructure improvements.

Under its Industrial Finance Program, the capital cost of brownfield remediation and other environmental compliance projects can be financed with tax-exempt or taxable bonds. The Clean Water State Revolving Fund is also available to eligible applicants to provide interest-free short-term, or low-interest long-term, financing for facilities that reduce or prevent water pollution. Generally, water quality protection portions of brownfield projects are eligible for CWSRF financing.

Resource Guide

To facilitate a better understanding of each group's role in brownfields, the Work Group developed a directory which provides a fact sheet on each of the 16 entities. These fact sheets include mission statements, applicable programs, roles in brownfield cleanup and redevelopment and appropriate contacts for additional information.

The directory is available on this DEC web page:

www.dec.state.ny.us/website/der/bfield/bfdirectory.pdf

There are additional state and federal agencies not part of the Work Group that manage and offer technical help or financial assistance regarding brownfields. For more information, readers should consult the NYSDEC's publication, "Brownfields Financial Resources Manual," which also is available online at www.dec.state.ny.us/der/bfield/brownmanual.html



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