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SUBJECT: **Third Generation Brownfields**

THIRD GENERATION BROWNFIELDS

Brownfields, defined as real estate with potential contamination that complicates their reuse or redevelopment, present local governments an assortment of problems. They range from public health risks to spillover effects – both environmentally and economically. These spillover effects establish a presumptive public interest in their cleanup and redevelopment.

The traditional approach to contaminated properties has a twofold strategy. Over the years, this strategy unfolded and developed with each passing generation.

- First Generation Brownfields focused on stopping any future contamination. This approach focused on environmental regulations and the enforcement of these regulations (e.g., federal Superfund law and Washington's Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA)).
- Second Generation Brownfields focused on cleaning up specific brownfields sites. This approach resulted in the development of cleanup programs such as the Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund, Voluntary Cleanup Program and Regional Assessment Grants.

While both of these strategies or approaches generate considerable benefit, they do not address the economic impact of brownfields. They do not address the sheer size and overlapping nature of the brownfields problem.

For instance, contaminated parcels often leave property values "upside down," where cleanup costs exceed the value of the land. Areas with multiple brownfields sites or parcels experience a cumulative, negative economic impact. As these areas decline, they bring other areas down with them. These brownfields require a different approach.

Third Generation Brownfields

The emerging "Third Generation Brownfields" approach combines environmental cleanup and economic/community redevelopment. It focuses on revitalizing an important part of the overall community and region. It focuses on the "triple bottom line" which takes into account environmental, economic and community impacts.

Local and regional governments are perhaps best suited to tackle Third Generation Brownfields projects. They inherently possess the ability to develop collaboration and maintain the continuity over the years that cleanup and redevelopment may require.

Third Generation Brownfields projects take a variety of forms and shapes. They sometimes are called "model remedial action plans", "integrated planning", area wide planning or a pilot/demonstration project. They all share a broad approach that includes more than just cleaning up a specific site. Third General Brownfields looks at what happens to the property after it gets cleaned up. It looks at how this redevelopment project will help the community meet its community and economic development goals.

In addition to environmental investigation and cleanup, Third Generation Brownfields projects emphasize collaboration and the redevelopment of the brownfield sites or area. By tackling these two other, key considerations early in the process; they mobilize resources and tailor redevelopment to meet community needs and expectations.

Local and regional governments can take a number of actions to get and keep the redevelopment process going. Here are some actions that they can take to help assure success.

- Make sure land-use plans and policies support the redevelopment of the area to its highest and best use.
- Plan and include provisions for adequate infrastructure in the "capital facilities element" or "capital facilities plan" of all the government agencies affected by the potential development.
- Conduct environmental assessments of the site and maintain an environmental record to lay the groundwork for future cleanup plans.
- In some cases, acquire and cleanup the property with support from federal and state grants and loans. Develop a land bank or community reinvestment area to manage the properties along with their sale or development.
- Partner with private developers and help them fulfill their role in the cleanup and redevelopment of the entire area.

For More Information:

**WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
BROWNFIELDS REVOLVING LOAN FUND**

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