

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

A call for papers went out for a thematic issue of *Environmental Practice* dedicated to brownfields redevelopment as defined in the broadest policy and technical sense. The response was extremely positive. The result is that the journal will have a two-part series on the subject of brownfields that includes both this September/October issue as well as the theme for the December issue. Brownfields is a field of interest to environmental professionals both across the United States and abroad. At its foundations, it is a field that requires a team of multidisciplinary experts. It is also a field that has contributions from both practitioners and scholars. This makes it an ideal thematic issue based on the mission and vision of *Environmental Practice*. This year, two national brownfield conferences have helped focus professionals and scholars alike on the topic. These conferences bring a wide range and increasing number of professionals together to deliberate on a wide variety of brownfield-associated issues. The first conference, titled 'The Big Deal', was held in Phoenix in March 2009 by the Chicago-based National Brownfield Associations. The second is sponsored by International City/County Management Association (ICMA) and US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) which will be held in November 2009 in New Orleans. While there are many other state-wide or regional brownfield conferences, it appears that interest in urban revitalization through brownfield redevelopment continues as a vibrant field. As a result, brownfield redevelopment is the focus for the next two issues of the journal. The editorial office invited two guest editors from the USEPA Region 5 Office who have many years of experience working in this area: James Van der Kloot and Joseph Duf-

fic. As a result of their efforts, together with the editor of the journal, Dr. Kelly Tzoumis, the issues reflect the collaboration and the balance between professionals and scholars who study and work in this field.

Funding for Brownfields

From a policy perspective, Congress has not been overwhelmingly supportive towards the national government organizations focused on brownfield redevelopment. The USEPA and the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) are the major recipients of federal brownfield dollars. Overall, brownfield funding has not experienced significant growth. These are the two major federal organizations that assist states and localities with brownfield initiatives. The USEPA receives funding for management, assessments, and assistance to states performing brownfield redevelopment. Likewise, HUD supports brownfield initiatives directly through the Brownfields Economic Development Initiative (BEDI) and by funding section 108 housing revitalization for brownfield redevelopment.

When comparing the enacted funding for brownfield programs over the last seven years for these federal organizations, it appears there has been a trend of less support, except in rare instances (like in the last years from 2008–2009 for some of the programs). These results are reported in 2008 dollars so that an adequate comparison can be made across time, taking the rate of inflation into account. For instance, Table 1 shows the incremental decline of funding for the USEPA's management of the program, as well as in the areas of cleanup/assessment and state assistance.

There have been small increases in the last year of funding, particularly for fiscal years 2008–2009, but the gains never recover to previous funding levels. For fiscal year 2010, the Northeast Midwest Institute (2008) estimates that the Obama Administration's proposal includes an increase for the total brownfields budget for the USEPA by 5.4% with the largest change being an increase of 10% to the brownfield program and management area which has had incremental declines over the last several years.

The most striking decreases in funding during this period from fiscal year 2002–2009 in brownfield initiatives has been experienced by HUD. This government organization emphasizes the use of BEDI and section 108 funding to finance projects and activities that will provide near-term results and demonstrable economic benefits.

Overall, the funding profile at the federal level for brownfield work (based on these enacted appropriations) lends important background to some of the barriers to revitalization of communities from brownfield redevelopment. Put into this funding context, several articles in this issue illuminate the specific successes or challenges of brownfield redevelopment at the regional, state, and local levels. The Wernstedt and Hanson research proposes innovative solutions that do not focus on one parcel but at distressed urban core areas. The authors outline how older, mixed industrial-residential corridors could take advantage of brownfield regeneration by using land trusts and progressive financing. Three other articles in this issue provide insight into case studies on brownfields. Yashchak focuses on gas stations in two cities in New Jersey. This work is important for many of cities that are in-

Table 1. USEPA Fiscal Year (FY) Funding (in Millions) for Brownfields by Program Area (2003–2009)

PROGRAM TYPE	FY 03	FY 04	FY 05	FY 06	FY 07	FY 08	FY 09
Brownfields Assessment/cleanup (projects)	\$105.1	\$105.9	\$ 98.5	\$ 94.8	\$ 92.1	\$ 93.5	\$ 97.7
Assistance to States—Section 128	\$ 58.1	\$ 56.7	\$ 54.7	\$ 52.7	\$ 51.2	\$ 48.7	\$ 49.8
Brownfield Prog & Mgt.	\$ 31.6	\$ 31.1	\$ 26.8	\$ 26.2	\$ 26.0	\$ 23.6	\$ 23.1
BROWNFIELDS TOTAL	\$194.9	\$193.7	\$179.9	\$173.6	\$169.3	\$165.8	\$167.0

(Data from the Northeast Midwest Institute (2008), converted to 2008 dollars. Fiscal years run from October 1 of the previous year to September 30 of the following year in the federal government).

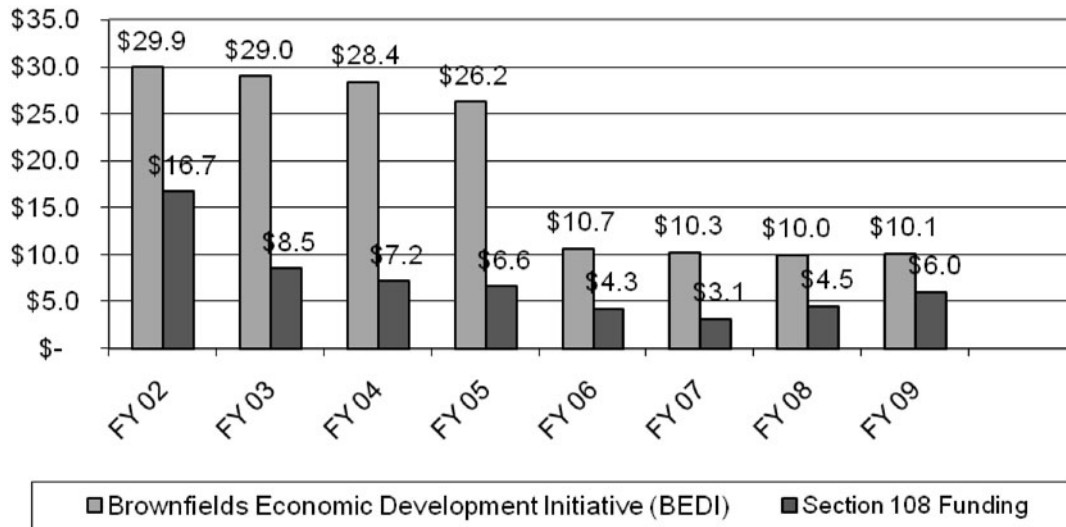


Figure 1. Housing Urban Development (HUD) Brownfield Funding (millions) from Fiscal Year 2002–2009

undated with underground storage tank issues. As the author elaborates, this is often the case in older cities in the United States that have economically disadvantaged communities, which raises questions of environmental justice—an issue also raised in the *Point of View* by Bennett and Tzoumis. Jeffries and Amsden discuss the issue of diversity and leadership within environmental organizations, particularly those working on brownfield projects that impact the fabric of a neigh-

borhood. Haslam gives us some elements for successful brownfield redevelopment projects, and the role of state urban policy. Similarly, Coffin and Barbero report on the findings from a case study in St. Louis, Missouri that examined a regional effort to build brownfield capacity at the local level, where community leaders brought together property owners and developers for a networking opportunity. Results show that direct intervention can help build brownfield capacity. Berman, Orr,

and Forrester examine the role of the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) and health monitoring at brownfield sites.

Collectively, this issue reflects a great deal of important work on the subject of brownfields. The continuation of case studies and important research will occur in additional articles in the second issue of this series on brownfields.