

OREGON BROWNFIELDS COALITION FACT SHEET

ORGANIZATIONAL COALITION MEMBERS (AS OF OCTOBER 2014)

ASSOCIATION OF OREGON
COUNTIES

LEAGUE OF OREGON CITIES

OREGON PUBLIC PORTS
ASSOCIATION

CITY OF BEAVERTON

CITY OF LINCOLN CITY

CITY OF PORTLAND

CITY OF SALEM

MULTNOMAH COUNTY

METRO

PORT OF PORTLAND

BUSINESS OREGON

OREGON DEPT. OF
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

OREGON HEALTH AUTHORITY

US ENVIRONMENTAL
PROTECTION AGENCY

1000 FRIENDS OF OREGON

AUDUBON SOCIETY OF
PORTLAND

BEYOND TOXICS

COMMUNITY HOUSING FUND

GROUNDWORK PORTLAND

OREGON ENVIRONMENTAL
JUSTICE TASK FORCE

OREGON OPPORTUNITY
NETWORK

UPSTREAM PUBLIC HEALTH
VERDE

ASSOCIATED OREGON
INDUSTRIES

COLUMBIA CORRIDOR
ASSOCIATION

NORTHWEST ENVIRONMENTAL
BUSINESS COUNCIL

OREGON BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

OREGON ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

PORTLAND BUSINESS ALLIANCE

PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY

BROWNFIELDS: POLLUTED SITES, NEW HOPE

Oregon is burdened by thousands of polluted sites called brownfields. Ranging in size from large factory sites to small abandoned gas stations and dry cleaners, brownfields are scattered throughout the state.

Nearly every Oregonian has a brownfield in their community. They are the vacant lots we drive by daily, the piles of polluted dirt behind rusting chain link fences, the abandoned storefronts blighting our commercial corridors and main streets.

Whether known or suspected, brownfields often present a big enough risk to stymie development of any kind.

Brownfields must be cleaned up before they can be reused for jobs, housing and other community needs. Cleanup is expensive. Current owners and potential developers are required to pay, even though the original polluters may have gone bankrupt, been acquired by other companies or disappeared. Landowners interested in cleanup often face a time-consuming maze of permits, regulations and inspections. Many landowners and developers steer clear of known or potential brownfields because the costs and risks are too high to justify action.

While many former brownfields have been successfully cleaned up and redeveloped all over Oregon, thousands more across the state await action.

WHY BROWNFIELDS MATTER: HEALTH, JOBS, LAND

Brownfields concern Oregonians for many reasons. Brownfields:

- harm the environment and health in their neighborhoods and statewide
- impede economic development by keeping land vacant or underutilized
- intensify inequities in underserved communities, which are three times as likely to have a brownfield in their vicinity
- reduce return on public investment in roads, sewers and other infrastructure
- increase development pressure on farm and forest lands at cities' edge.

Brownfields are not an urban or rural Oregon problem. They are everywhere. Oregon needs action to clean them up.





OREGON BROWNFIELDS COALITION

FROM LIABILITY TO ASSET

This problem is too big for any city, county or region to tackle alone. Brownfields are liabilities when they could be assets for communities' growth and revitalization.

In the past, DEQ, Business Oregon, the Oregon Health Authority, Metro and the city of Portland have all maintained grants programs to foster brownfield cleanup and redevelopment. These programs have had some significant successes. But Oregon needs a more coordinated strategy to get brownfields cleaned up and redeveloped more quickly.

This is the goal of the Oregon Brownfields Coalition: to find collaborative strategies to help cleanup and revive brownfields quickly and equitably. The members of the Coalition represent many disparate interests, but we share a common goal with this issue. Brownfields are holding our communities and our economy back. It's time to take action to help communities all over Oregon.

WHAT WE CAN DO TOGETHER

Oregon needs a creative and collaborative approach to address its brownfields challenges. Together, we can clean up polluted sites and improve the environment while also stimulating economic development and protecting farms and forests.

Recognizing that this is a problem bigger than any single city or region, the Brownfields Coalition is exploring tools that could involve the Oregon Legislature and state agencies, as well as local governments.

The Brownfields Coalition is currently assessing several strategies, based on what has worked here and around the country. Strategies under discussion for state, regional and local initiatives include:

- expanding Business Oregon's fund providing low-interest loans and grants to jumpstart brownfield cleanup
- offering tax credits or abatements for landowners and developers that clean up and reuse brownfields
- streamlining permitting and monitoring processes at the local, regional and state level
- creating local "land banks" to purchase, clean up and sell vacant properties.

FORGING A SHARED APPROACH

The Brownfields Coalition hopes to introduce mutually supported legislation in the 2015 Oregon legislative session.

Following the session, the Coalition will continue working to find shared strategies for brownfield cleanup throughout Oregon.

WHAT THE NUMBERS SHOW

Economists estimate that cleaning up Oregon's roughly 13,500 brownfields could lead to huge payoffs for the state's economy, environment, and equity.

In the past 24 years, the state has invested just \$81.5 million in cleaning up 250 brownfields. The result:

- \$2.3 billion in direct and indirect economic activity.
- \$600 million in private investment
- nearly 9,000 direct and indirect jobs created
- \$19.4 million in additional state income taxes annually
- \$10.5 million in local property taxes.

These results suggest just how valuable brownfield cleanup and redevelopment can be for Oregon.

Moreover, of the 13,500 estimated brownfields in Oregon, just 35 percent have been assessed or worked on to date.

CONTACT

The Brownfields Coalition is open to new members.

Interested in learning more?
Contact Paulette Copperstone:
paulette.copperstone@oregonmetro.gov
503-797-1562

Follow the Brownfields Coalition's progress, read updates and more at oregonmetro.gov/brownfields.