

House Development Committee
Interested Party Testimony, House Bill 96 (Stewart)
Joel Miller, President, Buckeye Elm Contracting, LLC
Wednesday, March 5, 2025

Chair Hoops, Vice Chair Lorenz, Ranking Member Abdullahi and members of the House Development Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present Interested Party Testimony on House Bill 96, the main operating budget for fiscal years 2026 and 2027.

My name is Joel Miller and I am the founder and president of Buckeye Elm Contracting, an environmental remediation company based in Columbus, OH with several other regional offices. I am a Hazmat Chemist and have over 23 years of experience remediating contaminated properties and performing hazardous materials response. I am testifying today to respectfully request the inclusion of continued funding for the Ohio Brownfield Remediation Program (BRP) in House Bill 96, the state's Main Operating Budget.

Buckeye Elm Contracting has remediated dozens of brownfields sites to date. Some of these projects were:

1. Former Brandywine golf course (Peninsula, OH) – removed over 60,000tons of contaminated soils(anti fungal agents containing mercury. Pesticides/herbicides/asbestos). Its my understanding the property is now being utilized as a National Park and the Conservancy for Cuyahoga National Park.
2. Former Mud Run Gun Club (Cuyahoga Falls, OH)– Stabilized thousands of tons of lead contaminated soils. Removed contaminated sediment from river. Capped the site and is now being redeveloped.
3. Former New Boston Coke site (New Boston, OH) – Consolidated and capped tens of thousands of tons of contaminated soil for future redevelopment.
4. Dozens of other brownfields sites around Ohio.

I am sure you have received a lot of testimony as to the financial benefits to the state and local municipalities regarding the brownfields program. I wanted to testify to the other major benefit that resulting from the Brownfields program. One of the main purposes of government is to protect its citizens. Ohio has thousands of brownfields sites that we know about, and these brownfield sites are contaminated properties that pose a health and safety risk to the public. Some are near schools, residential properties, and/or rivers and groundwater supply wells. Without the brownfields fund, these properties will likely remain contaminated and continue to pose a threat to the health and safety of the public.

When I travel around Ohio, I often pass by sites that were cleaned up as a result of the brownfields program. I often point to these properties when I am traveling with my wife and kids and explain that my company cleans up contaminated sites to help prevent people from getting sick. Ohio should be proud of this program and continue to fund it to protect the public from the risks associated with them. Again, thousands of sites still exist and without this program and funding, the sites will likely remain a threat.

Chair Hoops and members of the House Development Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide interested party testimony and for GOPC to share our views on what it will take to create the tools and policy environment Ohio needs to thrive in the years to come.