

Sandra Williams
State Senator
21st Senate District



Michael Rulli
State Senator
33rd Senate District

Sponsor Testimony
Senate Bill 83
Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee
March 16, 2021

Chairman Schaffer, and members of the Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee thank you for allowing us to provide sponsor testimony on Senate Bill 83 (SB 83).

This legislation appropriates \$150,000 from the General Revenue Fund to be used by the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (OEPA) to conduct, in conjunction with Ohio public universities, a study to determine where brownfield sites are located in Ohio. A brownfield site is an abandoned, idled, or under-used industrial, commercial, or institutional property where expansion or redevelopment is complicated by known or potential releases of hazardous substances or petroleum.

Currently, state and federal inventories of brownfield sites primarily rely on voluntary reporting through programs such as the Voluntary Action Program, the Ohio Site Inventory Program, and the Clean Ohio Fund—which received its last round of grants in 2013. In conducting the study, OEPA must do all of the following:

1. Identify brownfield sites in Ohio and determine how many require cleanup;
2. Estimate the cost of performing the cleanup of the identified brownfield sites;
3. Identify funding sources to support the cleanup of identified brownfield sites;
4. Develop recommendations for changes to state and local laws and policies that would help facilitate the cleanup of the identified brownfield sites;
5. Study and develop recommendations regarding any other issue relevant to the cleanup of brownfield sites in Ohio.

OEPA must complete a report detailing its findings and recommendations by January 1, 2023. OEPA then must submit the report to the General Assembly and make it publicly available on the OEPA website.

This legislation is important because it centralizes a state-sponsored inventory with all of the necessary information that developers and local governments may need when considering repurposing brownfield sites. It doesn't require voluntary participation—this is the state taking initiative to make sure our lands are identified, evaluated, and can be shovel ready when that time comes. It demonstrates that Ohio is serious about economic development and streamlines the information for ease of access. Sb 83 also permits the participation of some of our most valuable assets, Ohio's colleges and universities.

Chairman Schaffer and members of the committee, this concludes our testimony, and with that, thank you for your time. We ask for favorable consideration of Senate Bill 83. We would be happy to answer any questions.