

# Oakland County Department of Economic Development & Community Affairs

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1200 N. Telegraph Road, Pontiac, MI 48341

## **MEDIA RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Date:** June 23, 2005  
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## **Oakland Brownfield Initiative Receives \$400,000 In Grants From United States Environmental Protection Agency**

Oakland County has been selected to receive two \$200,000 Brownfield assessment grants over two years from the United States Environmental Protection Agency.

The Hazardous Substance Assessment grant and the Petroleum Assessment grant will be used to help local communities and developers perform environmental assessments to determine if certain property is indeed a contaminated parcel of land. Oakland County is forming a list of potential projects to fund and is working on a redevelopment database so developers can identify parcels of land that might be eligible for Brownfield incentives through the federal, state and local governments. Project selection will take place after receipt of the grant monies in mid-October.

"Redevelopment of Brownfields is key to the economic viability of our mature communities," said L. Brooks Patterson, Oakland County Executive. "Communities will benefit from revitalizing contaminated property so that economic value is regained."

"We welcome the grants as another tool to help Oakland County more effectively protect its natural resources while restoring and increasing built environments and urban vitality," said Thomas A. Law, Manager, Oakland County Waste Resource Management Division.

The area's long manufacturing history has left Oakland County with several abandoned, contaminated commercial and industrial sites, including 70 closed landfills that served the Detroit industrial economy and more than 900 leaking underground storage tanks. Several of the distressed communities impacted by these conditions, especially Pontiac and southwest Oakland County, are affected by the concentrated industrial activity and contamination.

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Oakland County also is at the headwaters of several rivers and 1,400 natural lakes and waterways. Water quality and the reduction of runoff and groundwater contamination are major concerns for the area, especially in light of the number of homes that rely on private water systems. Assessment and cleanup of the Brownfields will allow the county to expand and continue its efforts to assist, encourage, and facilitate the redevelopment of these sites to meet the needs of its residents.

These grants are authorized by the Small Business Liability Relief and Brownfields Revitalization Act of 2002. Communities in 44 states will share more than \$75 million in U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Brownfields grants to help revitalize former industrial and commercial sites, transforming them from problem properties into community assets.

In addition to promoting industrial and commercial redevelopment, Brownfield projects have converted industrial waterfronts to riverfront parks, landfills to golf courses, rail corridors to recreational trails, and gas station sites to housing. EPA's brownfields assistance has led to more than \$7 billion in public and private investment in cleanup and redevelopment, helped create more than 31,000 jobs, and resulted in the assessment of more than 5,100 properties.

Oakland County's Waste Resource Management Division is a service division and commission under the authority of the Oakland County Economic Development & Community Affairs Department. This division facilitates the Oakland County Solid Waste Plan and coordinates programs and activities that support the environment, our local municipalities, and the residents and businesses of Oakland County. Oakland County's Brownfield Redevelopment Authority was established in 2001 to aid local communities and developers in obtaining Brownfield incentives from both Federal and State agencies.

For more information on the Oakland County Brownfield Initiative, see <http://www.oakgov.com/waste/brownfield>.

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