



AOC SUPPORTS HB 2734 – BROWNSFIELDS LAND BANK AUTHORITY

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There are thousands of polluted and often abandoned sites known as brownfields throughout Oregon. Every county is impacted, from Baker to Clatsop, Josephine to Multnomah. Many times counties end up “holding the bag” after acquiring brownfields as foreclosed properties. Evaluation, cleanup, marketing and redevelopment of these sites can seem insurmountable because of the myriad of issues facing each site.

Business Oregon’s Brownfields programs have been extremely helpful to communities in promoting economic development by turning polluted properties into productive ones. Since 2002, nearly \$18.6 million has been awarded to 102 projects. With thousands of brownfields sites, this aid is just a drop in the bucket toward fully embracing our needs.

Counties (with their local government partners) would appreciate having more tools to deal with the increasing number of brownfields. HB 2734 before you could provide an opportunity to establish an entity called a **land bank**, with proper authorities and processes, but avoiding the public liability for the properties, to help us deal with the properties more effectively.

Early in this session, AOC unanimously supported the work of a coalition of private and public sector entities examining various possible proposals for brownfields redevelopment. Ability to establish public land banks in communities has gained the greatest support both locally and at the legislature. Though later on we may discover that we still need other tools (which other states have used effectively), we believe it is important to move ahead with this enabling proposal today.

Properties sitting idle for years, likely paying little to no taxes, just continue a blight on every community. Being able to establish an authority made up of citizens with expertise and vision, may move some of these properties toward remediation and productive uses again.

We urge your support for HB 2734.

