



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

April 23, 2020

Jason Lichtstein
President
Akerman LLP

Task Force to Re-Open Florida Executive Committee
The Capitol
400 S. Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Melissa Schick
President-Elect
PPM Consultants

Re: Brownfield Cleanup & Redevelopment as an Economic Revival Tool

Beth Norman
Secretary
Cardno

Dear Executive Committee Members:

Michael Sznajstajler
Treasurer
Cobb Cole

On behalf of the Florida Brownfields Association (“FBA”), we thank and commend you for your work on the Task Force to Re-Open Florida Executive Committee (“Task Force”). We write to highlight the role that Brownfield environmental cleanup and redevelopment through Florida’s Brownfield program can play in spurring Florida’s economy and encouraging real estate investment, site development, and job creation. In the early stages of reopening Florida’s economy, Brownfield redevelopment efforts can help keep environmental professionals working, environmental cleanup progressing, advance real estate development and transactions, and create new, much-needed jobs.

Jacob Cremer
*Stearns Weaver Miller
Weissler Alhadeff &
Sitterson, P.A.*

As part of Florida’s response and recovery, we encourage the Task Force to evaluate ways to utilize and strengthen Florida’s Brownfield program in order to benefit and grow Florida’s economy and further promote and drive Brownfield cleanup and redevelopment, including through Florida’s Voluntary Cleanup Tax Credit program (which is the primary financial incentive under Florida’s Brownfield program for voluntary cleanup).

Frank L. Hearne
*Mechanik Nuccio Hearne &
Wester, P.A.*

Sue Ellyn Idelson
Clocktower Tax Credits

Kristina Nelson
Finger Nelson

Since 1997, when the State of Florida’s Brownfield program was established and Florida’s Brownfield Redevelopment Act enacted, over approximately \$2.86 billion in projected capital investment has occurred in designated Brownfield areas, approximately 66,000 jobs created, and Florida’s Brownfield program has leveraged millions in voluntary environmental cleanup work performed.¹ In its evaluation of incentive programs, Florida’s Office of Economic and Demographic Research (“EDR”) consistently reports Florida’s Brownfield Redevelopment Job Bonus Refund program as having a positive return on investment for the State. In the most recent January 2020 report, the EDR cites a return on investment of 1.51.²

Samia Singleton
City of Kissimmee CRA

¹ Data as reported in Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Annual Report (Florida Brownfields Redevelopment Program) (August 2019).

² EDR Report on Return on Investment for Select State Economic Development Incentive Programs (January 2020).

Florida has a suite of innovative state Brownfield programs designed to facilitate the voluntary cleanup and restoration of Brownfields and contaminated sites, playing a key role in activating many of Florida's urban areas and formerly distressed sites through successful Brownfield cleanup and redevelopment projects. In every corner of Florida, from communities small to large, rural and urban, Florida's Brownfield programs help the private and public sector work in cooperation to remove stigma and concerns associated with legacy contamination and historical disinvestment -- to achieve site cleanup, redevelopment, new jobs, and an infusion of tax dollars.³

For over 20 years, Florida's Brownfield program has been an engine of combined economic generation and environmental restoration. We believe that as the Task Force evaluates potential next steps for Florida in responding to and recovering from coronavirus and its effects, Florida's Brownfield program can serve as a cost-effective, well-established policy tool in these efforts.

In addition, Brownfield and environmental professionals and staff can presently and safely continue to perform many site assessment, investigation, cleanup, and restoration activities (applying social distancing and other protective steps), keeping environmental staff and teams employed and working, while also preparing sites for planned and future redevelopment. This also helps to keep real estate transactions and development projects moving forward and putting shovels in the ground.

We appreciate the opportunity to address the Re-Open Florida Task Force. We are available to further discuss details and ways that Florida's Brownfield program can benefit Florida's economic recovery, advance environmental cleanup and redevelopment, and maintain and create jobs.

Background on FBA. The FBA is a non-profit organization dedicated to advancing the cleanup and redevelopment of Brownfields in Florida. Brownfields are sites affected by actual or perceived environmental contamination that impairs or complicates site expansion, redevelopment, or reuse. Working in cooperation with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the FBA is a group of environmental stakeholders and professionals who provide Brownfield information, assistance, and redevelopment strategies to communities and the public.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss this letter, please do not hesitate to let us know. Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

/s/ Jason S. Lichtstein

Jason S. Lichtstein
FBA President

cc: Shane Strum, Chief of Staff
Florida Brownfields Association, Board of Directors

³ Florida's Brownfield program also has unique features to encourage the voluntary cleanup of Brownfield sites as health care facilities, such as doctor's offices, health clinics, and hospitals.