

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3205

December 2, 2009

Dear Attendees of the New Partners for Community Revitalization's Brownfields Forum,

Thank you for your kind invitation to speak at this year's annual forum. I regret that I cannot be in attendance to commend all of the work you are doing to revitalize brownfields across the state to help make our environment cleaner and to provide our communities with new economic development opportunities. I would also like to recognize New York Secretary of State Lorraine Cortes-Vazquez and New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Commissioner Pete Grannis for their leadership on brownfields cleanup and revitalization statewide.

It is far too costly to ignore brownfields, not only because of the environmental contamination of these sites but also because of the lost potential of not reusing these decayed properties. As we continue to take significant steps towards economic recovery, investment in brownfields development can be an effective way for communities to create new jobs and open up new economic opportunities. A recent report found that for every \$1 of public investment in brownfields leverages about \$8 in private investment, and for every \$10,000 to \$13,000 in public investments creates or retains about one job. Brownfields cleanup also decontaminates the land, providing for cleaner air and improved water quality.

Since joining the Senate, I have been committed to providing our communities with the funding and support necessary to redevelop and remediate their brownfields for renewed use. As a member of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, I sit on the Subcommittee for the Superfund, Toxics and Environmental Health, which has jurisdiction over federal brownfields programs. In this role, I plan to work towards reauthorizing the federal brownfields programs and expanding the brownfields tax expensing incentive to ensure that adequate federal funding is available for the redevelopment of these sites.

I was also proud to join my colleagues in passing the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009*, which included \$100 million in federal funds for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Brownfields Projects Grants Program. New York has already benefited from this funding. To name just a few examples, this past May, Glens Falls and Rochester were awarded \$200,000 each to help assess, cleanup and revitalize former industrial and commercial sites, turning them from problem properties to productive community use. In August, the EPA announced that Niagara County had been selected to receive \$900,000 to provide loans and sub-grants to help carry out cleanup activities, redevelopment projects, and create jobs for local residents living near brownfields sites, and STRIVE/East Harlem Employment Services, Inc. in New York City received \$500,000 in grant funding to help train community members for jobs assessing and cleaning up brownfields sites.

I also know that finding the resources that meet your needs in the complex web of federal and state programs can seem daunting. For this reason, I have created a brownfields and superfund cleanup funding opportunities guidebook to serve as a starting point in providing information about

what resources are available to individuals, businesses, community organizations and local governments. You can access this guidebook on my website at http://gillibrand.senate.gov/services/grants_central/.

Again, thank you for your commitment to the cleaning up of brownfields sites and the creation of new development opportunities for our communities. The economic crisis we face and the critical role brownfields remediation plays for economic development highlight the importance of convening this forum. I look forward to continuing to work with you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kirsten E. Gillibrand". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kirsten E. Gillibrand