



## Region 9 News Release San Francisco, CA

- **For Immediate Release: April 11, 2000**
- ***EPA AWARDS \$200,000 GRANT FOR STOCKTON WATERFRONT RENEWAL PROJECT; SECTION OF STOCKTON CHANNEL HIDDEN FOR 50 YEARS WILL SOON EMERGE***

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(San Francisco) -- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) today awarded the city of Stockton a \$200,000 Brownfields grant to continue the city's work of revitalizing the waterfront area through the successful cleanup and reuse of vacant inner city properties. The grant will help Stockton assess 56 Brownfields properties for potential contamination, thus filling the gaps in the city's existing waterfront redevelopment project, which received an initial boost from a \$200,000 Brownfields grant from EPA in 1996.

"At Brownfields sites across the nation, the business community, the development community, and local residents are finding that protecting the environment makes good business sense," said Keith Takata, director of EPA's regional hazardous waste division. "This project is a shining example of what local governments can accomplish with Brownfields grants. But the job's not done yet, so we're here to help start the next phase."

"The award of this Brownfields grant could not be better timed," said Stockton Mayor Gary Podesto. "The city is actively pursuing three projects on Brownfields properties, and this additional money will enable us to maintain the momentum in the redevelopment of our downtown waterfront."

Stockton's original Brownfields grant cleared the way for \$80 million in new investment in the downtown/waterfront area. This includes the next phase of the Weber Block project, which will involve "daylighting" a section of the Stockton Channel that has been hidden under an asphalt parking lot for the last half century; the Cineplex/Hotel Stockton Renovation project; and the planned minor league baseball stadium.

Recently, EPA's Brownfields Initiative was expanded to include a Revolving Loan Fund from which cities can make low-interest loans available for cleanup. Businesses in Stockton will also be come eligible for the Brownfields Tax Incentive, which makes cleanup costs deductible in the year the money is spent. EPA also facilitates assistance from other federal agencies. Stockton has already received a \$500,000 Community Development Block Grant and a \$3 million loan from the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Brownfields are abandoned or under-used industrial or commercial areas where redevelopment is complicated by real or perceived environmental contamination. Property owners, lenders, investors and developers often fear that involvement with these sites will make them liable for contamination they did not create. Brownfields grants can remove this roadblock to reuse by determining actual cleanup needs, assessing costs, and identifying financing.

EPA is involved with over 300 brownfields projects nationwide, including 10 in Northern California (one is in Sacramento). In addition to Stockton, three other California cities will soon be receiving new Brownfields grants: East Palo Alto and Emeryville in the San Francisco Bay Area, and Long Beach in Southern California.

EPA's Brownfields Initiative is designed to empower states, local governments, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together to assess, clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields properties. The Initiative addresses the concerns of prospective developers and lenders concerned about inheriting cleanup liability for property that is contaminated or perceived to be contaminated. In addition, the Brownfields Initiative helps curb urban sprawl by attracting business and jobs back to existing industrial sites, thereby helping preserve farmland and open space.

Further information on the Brownfields grant awards can be obtained from EPA's Brownfields Home Page at:

<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields>

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