



## PRESS RELEASE

### For Immediate Release

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### **SECOG receives \$1.2 million for regional brownfield assessment, community engagement, and redevelopment planning**

The Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments (SECOG), in partnership with the Eastern Connecticut Land Bank (ECLB) and the Connecticut Resource Conservation and Development Area (CT RC&D), has been awarded \$1.2 million through the EPA's Brownfield Assessment Coalition Grant program. This funding will be used to conduct Environmental Site Assessments (ESAs) at five properties in three different SECOG municipalities: 16 Halls Mill Rd, Preston; 11 Machine Shop Hill Rd, Windham; 322B Main St, Windham; 130 Inland Rd, Sprague; and 29 Bushnell Hollow Rd, Sprague. The grant will also fund the identification and assessment of additional potentially contaminated properties in the SECOG region.

SECOG and project partners will hire environmental consultants to conduct Environmental Site Assessments for each property, a critical first step in bringing vacant or underused brownfield properties back into productive use. Identifying potential contamination and clarifying the existing environmental conditions at these five priority sites will allow for a clear and structured pathway for municipal leaders, community members, and property owners to plan for cleanup and strategic reuse.

"As we take the necessary steps to set these sites up for successful redevelopment, we're also focusing on the tangible outcomes of brownfield cleanups-- public health improvements, enhanced environmental stewardship, economic growth, and neighborhood revitalization," said Amanda Kennedy, Executive Director of SECOG.

Grant funds will also enable SECOG and project partners to work closely with community members regarding the future redevelopment of these properties. Three community liaisons will be hired during the grant period to help the project team develop local community engagement opportunities that will reach target audiences and execute engagement activities focused on small group conversations. Multiple public engagement events will also be held as opportunities for community members to explore potential options for the reuse of sites after clean-up.

This effort comes in response to ongoing challenges of the redevelopment of former textile mills and other factories that remain blighted, contaminated, and vacant in historic mill towns across the region.

"This funding is not just an investment in environmental assessment at brownfield properties – it's an investment in the region's economy, giving local communities a voice in shaping the future of these sites," said Amanda Kennedy. "We're proud to partner with ECLB and CT RC&D as we work collaboratively with SECOG communities to turn these underutilized properties into assets for their communities."