



State of Brownfields: A Pan-Canadian Perspective on Policy, Practice, and the Path Forward

Brownfield redevelopment is one of Canada's most powerful tools for supporting sustainable growth, climate resilience, housing supply, and economic revitalization. While provinces and territories share common objectives, the regulatory frameworks, remediation approaches, incentive programs, and risk-management tools used to advance brownfield redevelopment vary significantly across the country, often influencing project feasibility and timelines.

This presentation provides a "State of Brownfields" overview, comparing how different regulatory and remediation approaches shape redevelopment outcomes across Canada. Drawing on pan-Canadian engagement, including a Canadian Brownfields Network (CBN) workshop held in November, the session highlights the policies, practices, and institutional conditions that most effectively enable brownfield redevelopment, particularly for complex and lower-value sites.

Key themes include the importance of clear, consistent, and predictable regulatory timelines; risk-based frameworks that allow redevelopment without complete remediation; self-directed pathways for qualified professionals on low-risk sites; and mechanisms to address off-site impacts while allowing redevelopment to proceed. The presentation also explores the critical role of incentives such as grants, tax increment financing, expedited permitting, and soil-reuse supports in leveling the playing field between brownfields and greenfield development (while drawing upon examples of international incentives and research initiatives).

Additional focus is placed on regulatory engagement and responsiveness, including early and ongoing regulator involvement, adequate resourcing, reliance on qualified practitioner expertise, and the use of digital tools to improve transparency and predictability. Emerging policy directions and international approaches that emphasize regulatory clarity, harmonized science, liability certainty, and circular-economy outcomes will also be discussed.

A brief case study will illustrate how alignment between policy, regulation, incentives, and technical decision-making can accelerate redevelopment while maintaining environmental protection. By comparing approaches across jurisdictions and identifying shared foundational principles, this presentation aims to shift the conversation from "what's different" to "what works," offering practical insights for regulators, municipalities, consultants, and developers seeking to advance brownfield redevelopment more efficiently and confidently.

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Meggen Janes, P.Eng., M.Sc. is the Executive Director of the Canadian Brownfields Network, an organization that seeks to encourage the revitalization of brownfield lands. Meggen specializes in environmental consulting, Phase One/Two environmental site assessment (ESA), risk assessment (RA), risk management engineering and remediation projects. Her consulting experience includes working on behalf of municipalities to develop contaminated land policy, brownfield grant program renewal, evaluate city-wide background soil concentrations and for Ontario regulators she reviews risk management plans. As a Professional Engineer in Ontario since 1996, Meggen is a QPESA and QPRA. Meggen is a Director on the Board of the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers.