

## **Council of Governments Awarded \$600,000 EPA Grant for Environmental Site Assessment**

ROCK HILL, SC, April 25, 2018 -- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has awarded \$600,000 to the Catawba Regional Council of Governments (COG) to conduct environmental assessments of potentially contaminated “brownfield” sites in Chester, Lancaster, Union, and York Counties. The grant funds will be deployed over a period of 36 months to assess a variety of sites across the four counties of the region.

As part of Catawba Regional’s EPA assessment grant application, COG personnel, assisted by Cardno--an experienced brownfields consultant, conducted extensive community interviews and public hearings to determine community needs and potential targeted uses of EPA assessment funds. The Council of Governments’ assessment grant application was selected from among a national pool of applicants. This is the second EPA assessment grant that Catawba Regional COG has received.

Former state Representative James Neal, Chairman of Catawba Regional COG Board of Directors, participated in the environmental community outreach event held in the Town of Kershaw. Neal was enthusiastic about the grant award. “I know these funds will be used to assist communities that continue to deal with the aftermath of mill and plant closures. Former industrial and commercial sites that can be assessed, cleaned up, and re-developed will help people and local governments across our entire region.”

Examples of brownfield sites include abandoned textile mills, old factories, closed landfills, and sites with petroleum contamination. With proper assessment and cleanup, these sites have the potential to be put to productive future uses, whether for commercial or industrial redevelopment, new housing, or for public purposes such as active and passive parkland.

Environmentally contaminated sites must first be assessed as an initial step to any remediation and environmental cleanup. Working with local governments, environmental consultants, and the SC Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC), Catawba Regional will assess a variety of sites which may be contaminated by either petroleum products or hazardous materials.

Catawba Regional has a successful track record with environmental assessments and remediation. The COG also is the statewide fund-manager for SC DHEC’s Brownfield Cleanup Revolving Loan Fund (BCRLF). Since assuming management of the BCRLF in 2005, the fund has deployed more than \$9 million to finance the remediation of 15 brownfield sites across the state, including the former Bleachery at Knowledge Park in Rock Hill and the Union Mill site in the City of Union.

To learn more about Catawba Regional, the EPA Assessment Grant, or the Brownfield Cleanup Revolving Loan Fund, go to: <http://catawbacog.org/economic-development-ending/brownfields-program/> or call Catawba Regional COG at (803) 327-9041.