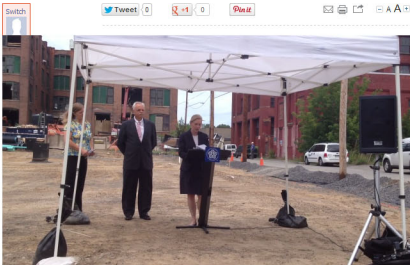


Gillibrand calls for more funding to clean up brownfields

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Gillibrand discusses Brownfield bill: U.S. Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand discusses a bill to help cleanup brownfield sites. Video by Jessica Alaimo

Written by Jessica Alaimo Staff writer

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The old Cunningham Carriage Factory on Litchfield Street has been empty for as long as most residents in the historic Susan B. Anthony neighborhood can remember, but now the building is being renovated into apartments.

People have tried to develop the property before, but ran into trouble because it is an old brownfield site, with potentially hazardous chemicals buried underground.

Gillibrand is promoting a bipartisan bill that would provide more grant [money](#) for old brownfield sites. She said there are between 450,000 and 1 million abandoned brownfield sites across the country.

"Redeveloping brownfield sites has proven to be an effective way to revitalize communities and boost the economy with private [investment](#), business development, job creation and overall quality of life in an area," she said. "Through assessing and cleaning up blighted, contaminated, abandoned sites, communities are able to redevelop them into usable livable areas that can drive economic growth and support jobs."



The former Cunningham Carriage Factory, which is being renovated into apartments. / Jessica Alaimo/Staff photographer

The Carriage Factory has been empty since the 1960s, after it was purchased by Gleason Corp. DePaul, a non-profit organization, bought the site and began rehabilitating it into 71 apartments in March.

The Brownfields Utilization, Investment and Local Development Act, which Gillibrand is backing, increases funding for brownfield cleanup grants and allows these [funds](#) to be used for administrative costs. It allows the Environmental Protection Agency to award multipurpose grants to speed redevelopment, and expands eligibility for nonprofit organizations. It also makes clean energy projects eligible for funding.

"All across New York you can see facilities just like this," she said. "You can see the old footprint of our state's manufacturing tradition that powered us through the 20th century with our large manufacturers leading the way, but as the industrial revolution came and went — taking many jobs with it — contaminated land was left behind where our factories stood."

Dawn Noto, president of the Susan B. Anthony Neighborhood Association, said cost is a barrier and federal grants help repurpose the properties.

"You're contributing to the historic landscape of this neighborhood, our alternatives are what?" Noto said. "We'd be fencing it in and looking at tall grass for the next 60 years."

Mayor Thomas Richards said that [environmental](#) issues often come up with these revitalization projects in the city.

"We can prove to them that we'll put their money to good work. You will see results that you are proud of," Richards said.

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