NARRATIVE INFORMATION SHEET
FY 2022 Buckeye Hills Community-Wide Assessment Grant

1. **Applicant Identification:** Buckeye Hills Regional Council (Buckeye Hills)
   1400 Pike Street, Marietta, OH 45750

2. **Federal Funds Requested:**
   a. Assessment Grant type: Community-Wide
   b. Federal Funds Requested: $500,000, including $400,000 for hazardous substances assessments and $100,000 for petroleum assessments
   c. Not requesting a waiver

3. **Location:** Buckeye Hills 8- County region, including: Athens, Hocking, Meigs, Monroe, Morgan, Noble, Perry and Washington Counties, Ohio

4. **Target Area and Priority Site /Property Information.**
   a. Targeted areas/priority sites included in the application are:
      - The West Union Street Innovation Corridor, Census Tract 39009739,Athens, Athens County, Ohio;
      - The Former Amp Ohio Property, CT 391670203, County Lane Rd. 32, Beverly, Washington County, Ohio 45715
      - The Former Vogue Swift Dry Cleaners, CT 391670205, 120 3rd Street, Marietta, Washington County, Ohio.

5. **Contacts:**
   a. **Project Director:**
      Sam Miller, Buckeye Hills Regional Council,
      1400 Pike Street, Marietta, OH 45750,
      Phone: 740-374-9436, email: smiller@buckeyehills.org

   b. **Chief Executive:**
      Mrs. Misty Crosby, Executive Director, Buckeye Hills Regional Council,
      1400 Pike Street, Marietta, OH 45750
      Phone: 740-374-9436, email: mcrosby@buckeyehills.org

6. **Population:**
Buckeye Hills is a regional organization that covers a geographic areas of 8 counties. The 2020 population of the 8-county region is 249,172. Census 2020 populations of the City of Athens in which one of the priority sites is located is 23,849 (Athens County is 62,431). The 2020 population of Marietta in which two of the priority sites are allocated is 13,385 (Washington County is 59,771).

7. **Other Factors Checklist:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other Factors</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community population is 10,000 or less.</td>
<td>n/a</td>
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<tr>
<td>The applicant is, or will assist, a federally recognized Indian tribe or United States territory.</td>
<td>n/a</td>
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<tr>
<td>The priority brownfield site(s) is impacted by mine-scarred land.</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The priority site(s) is adjacent to a body of water (i.e., the border of the priority site(s) is contiguous or partially contiguous to the body of water, or would be contiguous or partially contiguous with a body of water but for a street, road, or other public thoroughfare separating them).</td>
<td>1-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The priority site(s) is in a federally designated flood plain.</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The redevelopment of the priority site(s) will facilitate renewable energy from wind, solar, or geothermal energy; or any energy efficiency improvement projects.</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30% or more of the overall project budget will be spent on eligible reuse planning activities for priority brownfield site(s) within the target area.</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The target area(s) is located within a community in which a coal-fired power plant has recently closed (2011 or later) or is closing.</td>
<td>2</td>
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8. **Letter from State or Tribal Environmental Authority:** Attached are letters from Ohio EPA and BUSTR (Bureau of Underground Storage Tanks) within the Ohio Department of Commerce.

9. **Releasing Copies of Applications**
N/A – application does not have confidential, privileged, or sensitive information.
November 19, 2021

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 5
ATTN: Matt Didier
77 West Jackson Boulevard
Mail Code SB-5J
Chicago, IL 60604-3507

RE: Buckeye Hills Regional Council - Community Wide Assessment Grant Proposal

Dear Mr. Didier:

I am pleased to offer Ohio EPA’s support for the Buckeye Hills Regional Council (BHRC) Community Wide Assessment Grant Proposal. The BHRC is applying for a community wide assessment grant for funding totaling $500,000.

The funding that BHRC is requesting under their community wide assessment grant proposal will be used to conduct Phase I and Phase II Environmental Site Assessments, asbestos and lead based paint surveys, along with risk assessments, environmental planning, and engineering activities to support the redevelopment of brownfield properties within its 8-county region. These counties include Athens, Hocking, Meigs, Monroe, Morgan, Noble, Perry, and Washington. BHRC will focus on sites within key target areas in alignment with recently completed strategic and economic plans, including the Buckeye Hills Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, Athens County Economic Development Strategy, Enrich Marietta, and Ohio Southeast Economic Development (OhioSE) Economic Prosperity Plan (which includes all 8 Buckeye Hills counties). Additionally, a major key to enhancing the grant area’s ecotourism and economic development assets will be connecting these areas with potential greenspace planning activities, such as the Baileys Trail System (Athens County, Ohio), the statewide Buckeye Trail, North Country National Scenic Trail (touching Washington and Athens County) and Muskingum River Water Trail (Washington and Morgan County).

We look forward to working with the BHRC and U.S. EPA on this project. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at 614-644-2295 or via e-mail at Lisa.Shook@epa.ohio.gov.

Sincerely,

Lisa Shook

Lisa Shook, Manager
Ohio Environmental Protection Agency
Voluntary Action Program
November 8, 2021

John Jurevis  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 5  
77 West Jackson Boulevard  
Mail Code SE-7J  
Chicago, IL 60604-3507

RE: Buckeye Hills Regional Council Community-Wide Brownfield Assessment Grant Proposal

Dear Mr. Jurevis:

This letter acknowledges that the Buckeye Hills Regional Council notified the Office of the Fire Marshal, Bureau of Underground Storage Tank Regulations (BUSTR) of its plans to use $500,000 grant proposal for a community-wide brownfield assessment for petroleum and hazardous waste. The targeted areas for this grant include specifically the Athens County Opportunity Zone Corridor, Washington County Industrial River Corridor, and the Downtown Marietta Corridor. Goals of the grant include assessment of blighted areas, improving and protecting the Ohio River, the revitalization of former industrial areas, and to encourage reuse of existing buildings. Another goal is to improve ecotourism by developing propertied to connect a series of local and regional hike and bike trails. The grant will provide assessments needed to leverage other grants to further the assessment and clean up of the targeted areas.

I am pleased to offer BUSTR’s support for the Buckeye Hills Regional Council’s Community Wide-Brownfield Assessment Grant proposal. We look forward to working with the Buckeye Hills Regional Council and the U.S.EPA on this project.

Sincerely,

Steven Krichbaum  
Bureau Chief – BUSTR  
Division of State Fire Marshal  
Ohio Department of Commerce

xc: Site File  
Sam Miller, Buckeye Hills Regional Council
1. PROJECT AREA DESCRIPTION AND PLANS FOR REVITALIZATION

a. Target Area and Brownfields

(i) Background and Description of Target Area: Buckeye Hills Regional Council (BH) is a council of governments established in 1968 to provide technical assistance to an eight-county region in southeastern Ohio (Athens, Hocking, Meigs, Monroe, Morgan, Noble, Perry, and Washington Counties). The 2020 population of the 8-county region is 249,172 and includes prioritized sites in Athens County, (population 62,431) and SEOPA’s Washington County (population of 59,771). The 8-County BH region anchors the 32-County Appalachian Ohio region, (3,600 square mile area) bounded on the east by the Ohio River. The loss of extraction and natural resources and coal economies has severely impacted the region. Shuttered coal, energy and manufacturing plants, mine-scarrred land, and closed potteries dot brownfields in the region like mile-makers of the Ohio River. Closed drycleaners and petroleum service stations blight the corners of downtowns in Athens, Marietta and Nelsonville in key Opportunity Zones. According to a recent study of Federal Economic Redevelopment Support for Coal Communities by Resources for the Future (February 2021), coal mines have been producing in the region since the 1800s, but market forces have contributed to a sharp downturn in Appalachian coal production in recent decades. Compounding the effects of these mine closures, four coal-fired power plants have been retired in the region in recent decades. For decades, our region within Appalachian Ohio has simply tried to survive. The loss the coal economies and inability to address blighted sites in order to focus on brownfield redevelopment and reuse has caused chronically high poverty rates, and opioid and drug addiction issues. Families with children under the age of 18 in the BH region averaged 22%, above the State poverty level of 19.9% and the national level of 18.5% (ACS 2015-2019). Indeed, during the period between 2015 and 2019, Meigs County had the highest poverty rate in Ohio at nearly 20%. According to 2019 ACS data, receipts from Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, income maintenance and SNAP programs and the earned income tax credit, etc. provide income for 32.2% of our regional residents vs. 26.3% for Ohio and 25.2% for the Nation. The Columbus Dispatch article, “How does a former coal-mining town reinvent itself?”, highlighted an example community in the BH region, the Village of Shawnee (in Perry County), described as “a Wild West town that’s been dropped in a forest in the east.” Many cities in the BH region are listed as Little Cities of the Black Diamonds Council, and frame the history/culture of the former Hocking Valley Coal Region (primarily in Athens, Hocking, Morgan and Perry Counties) where the Great Hocking Valley Coal Boom era (1870-1930) brought national attention to upstart mining towns created after the Civil War. Today, these coal communities are valiantly trying to recover using place-making and eco/recreational tourism, such as a recent placemaking effort in downtown Somerset, Ohio in Perry County and others to act as a catalyst to reinvent their economies. The area is in desperate need of assessment money in order to access new state funding from Ohio Department of Development for brownfields cleanup. U.S. EPA funding is critical to assist BH communities to lessen the stigma of environmental contamination and build the prerequisites necessary to prepare market-ready sites for essential redevelopment. These investments would bolster property values, attract new stakeholders and continue the long process of transforming our regional economy outlined in the recently completed BH Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). (See also section 1.b.).

Two Target Areas (TAs) were selected for assessment in alignment with recent planning efforts:

TA1: The Athens County Corridor. TA1 includes Opportunity Zone (OZ) Tract 9739, (approx. 1/3 sq. mi.) comprised of a commercial/industrial area that is a prime redevelopment gateway along an arterial street connecting the campus of Ohio University with Uptown within the City of Athens and includes several underutilized and potential brownfield sites. TA2 includes the Washington County Corridor, including a key industrialized area targeted for cluster redevelopment with existing infrastructure (approx. 3/4 sq. mi.) and includes a central business district in downtown Marietta. The corridor includes a designated OZ (CT 205-Marietta) and vantage point for businesses seeking an optimal location for expansion or relocation. The jobs created are crucially important to the economically distressed residents in the area; however, in order for SEOPA to expand upon its demonstrated redevelopment expertise, assessment funding is needed.

(ii) Description of the Priority Brownfield Sites(s): As noted, the TAs have several potential sites.

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1 American Community Survey (2012-2017)
3 www.lcbdohio.org Little Cities of the Black Diamonds article “Our Future Grows from our Past”
4 https://buckeyehills.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=12e22b842f92469b7a10273250d99
Priority Sites in the Athens County TA include: 1) **West Union Street Innovation Corridor-Township Operations Site** (with access to the Hock Hocking Adana Bikeway) focuses on eligible former sites along this arterial street connecting the campus of Ohio University and uptown for residents of western Athens County (prioritized in the Athens 2040 Comp. Plan). Within this area is the former township service operations site, which is suspect for environmental concerns. Likely environmental impacts include petroleum, asbestos, metals, and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) from materials/vehicle storage and operations. The site is 1.2 acres, including a 7,500 sq. ft. building. The West Union Street Corridor was included in Ohio University’s Land Use Master Plan and provided green visioning for Union Street, with opportunity to transform the area into an “innovation district” that revitalizes historic structures using the Downtown Revitalization District program, capitalizes on planned university investments, connects Downtown Athens with the Athens County Fairgrounds and the highly successful Ohio University Innovation Center. This area was selected because of its opportunity to create office space for University, small business and entrepreneurial efforts through the redevelopment of historic structures. (See priority in plans in 1.b.i./ii).

Potential Priority sites in Washington County TA2 include: Priority Site 1) **former American Municipal Power (AMP-Ohio Plant) area that closed in 2012**

Virginia/ Scenic Byway (Rt 7), including 51-acres of land available for development near legacy industries in the metals, polymers, and fabrication industries.(e.g. Eramet Marietta & Solvay Specialty Polymers), (some circa early 1900s). Site structures have been removed on some parcels except a rail unloader/a metal structure approx. 2,000 sq. ft. "under roof;" (circa 1960). Environmental impacts of past industrial processes operated on the parcels have not yet been assessed and Phase I and II studies are needed. Likely environmental impacts include VOCs, heavy metals, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), petroleum, and asbestos, and are suspect for impacts from off-site industrial sources to the north. This area is connected to over 400 acres of land critical for regional job creation, is served by existing utilities, has a railroad bed and tracks, is accessible to a four-lane divided state highway and has Ohio River access/proximity. Local partners feel that with sufficient sanitary sewer services, new businesses would be interested in clustering in this area in alignment regional plans (see 1. b. ii).

Priority Site 2) **The Vogue Swift Dry Cleaner site** in the Marietta OZ. The site is within their downtown district and in the same block as Marietta College. According to the Washington County Auditor’s website, the <0.25-acre property includes a 10,816 sq. ft. building. Environmental impacts (notably VOCs, chlorinated solvents in particular) are likely from historical dry-cleaning operations circa 1950 which could be affecting neighboring sites through vapor intrusion. Since a redevelopment plan was initiated by Marietta Main Street (The Enrich Marietta Plan) the area has been targeted for new development but has been stalled due to lack of funding for environmental assessment.

b. Revitalization of the Target Area

(i) Reuse Strategy and Alignment with Revitalization Plans: BH recently completed a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) in April 2020. The CEDS found that the region suffers from having a noncompetitive building and site inventory and remains mostly uncompetitive in statewide lead distribution and site searches. Because of the lack of readily available sites, BH counties cannot successfully compete for leads distributed by state agencies. Key CEDS goals are to: 1) increase the number of publicly owned shovel ready sites in the region by five (5) sites; 2) work with economic development partners, including Jobs Ohio and OhioSE to reintroduce speculative site and building site development resources in the region through the Rural Industrial Loan Program (RILP); 3) identify two (2) potential locations for transloading and intermodal cargo transfer on the Ohio River. U.S. EPA funding and assessments will aid and foster this site development effort. BH and local stakeholders were also active in the Ohio Appalachian Partnership for Economic Growth (APEG – now OhioSE) **Economic Prosperity Plan** (June 2019) which included thirty-six (36) work sessions hosted across the region involving 453 stakeholders, and representatives from all BH counties. Action steps for improving the regions competitiveness included identifying and prioritizing development sites. The plan identified, “due diligence studies and engineering plans including Phase I and Phase II that should be completed.” U.S. EPA grant funds will help achieve the measurement goals outlined in the Prosperity plan, which include 7 sites assessed and 2 new shovel-ready sites for development. Once Priority Sites have been assessed using grant funds and, if required, remediated,

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5 https://www.gem.wiki/Richard_H._Gorsuch_Generating_Station
6 https://buckeyehills.org/ceds

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BH will market them aggressively. Similarly, Athens County completed an Economic Development Plan in 2016 which found “the greatest challenge Athens County faces is the lack of available sites for development” and should consider sites for two industrial parks, an office park and other developments with developers.” In 2018, the City of Marietta and Marietta Main Street, completed the Enrich Marietta Downtown Plan which included surveys canvassing over 800 residents identified 1) downtown revitalization and 2) riverfront enhancement as key in future efforts.

(ii) Outcomes and Benefits of Reuse Strategy: BH will focus on plans to attract business to idle sites that will compliment greenspace and trail development occurring throughout the region. This will promote connectivity between the areas to be trail connectors, and hubs in and around eco-tourism and placemaking destinations. This includes the Athens County Baileys Trail System and Ohio’s Winding Road communities which provides authentic experiences in the broader 9-county region. Ohio’s Winding Road is a “collaborative network and an emerging strategy for sustainable economic development and community revitalization. A rejection of the boom and bust economies that this region has seen in the past, the network aims to provide structure to people in the region who have the desire to create or have already started businesses or experiences in the region that are in line with the sustainable growth mission of Ohio’s Winding Road.”

In areas where greenspace and/or sensitive populations are not nearby, site redevelopment will include potential connectivity with the 2019 Economic Prosperity Plan for the entire 26-county Region (including all 8 BH counties). This plan focuses on revitalization of the regional economy through comprehensive plan listing of brownfields grants and loans here: https://epa.ohio.gov/Portals/30/sabr/comm_brownfield_fund/Common%20Brownfield%20Funding%20Sources%20in%20Ohio.pdf. These programs often require that Phase I and II assessments be completed before participation, making support from U.S. EPA as requested in this application critical. Potential funding sources for BH sites include: 1) JobsOhio Revitalization Loan Program and Vibrant Communities Fund provide funding for assessment and cleanup, with a high priority placed on projects that support near term job creation opportunities. BH staff work closely with JobsOhio, and local partner organization OhioSE (the JobsOhio Southeast Ohio network partner) on projects/incentive programs; 2) Ohio Department of Development (ODOD) offers new funding for two programs, Brownfield Cleanup grant funding (beginning in January 2022 with $350M a year with $1M reserved per county) for brownfield cleanup at eligible sites; and 2) Building Demolition and Site Revitalization grants ($150M a year with $500,000 reserved for each county) for sites adjacent to brownfields for demolition and other eligible uses. Athens and Washington Counties have identified sites included in this grant as potential priority sites for these new state funding. 3) Ohio Water Development Authority Brownfield Loan fund, providing up to $3M per project for cleanup/remediation of eligible properties; 4) ODOD’s Abandoned Gas Station Fund is available for cleanup of for key Class C orphaned UST sites (2 identified in the BH region); and 5) Ohio EPA Site Assistance and Brownfield Revitalization (SABR) Targeted Brownfield Assessment (TBA) Program funding and Technical Assistance (TA) for the Voluntary Action Program (VAP). U.S. EPA funds will provide assessment funding to complement tactical cleanup and infrastructure funding available to BH from these sources. The Athens County Port Authority may provide RLF funding for properties within its jurisdiction. The authority invests in sites and assists with financing to encourage the redevelopment of blighted and/or

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9 https://drive.google.com/file/d/1moxtD4oaNuM_ZQwQ5609wiCl0UnViAed/view
10 https://ohioswindingroad.org/creative-communities/
11 https://ohioswindingroad.org/frequently-asked-questions/
12 https://opportunitydb.com/location/ohio/
vacant land or facilities for business or industrial use. There are 3 downtown redevelopment districts (DRDs) (including TA1 priority site Union Street area) which use historic property as an anchor for the district and use TIF-like tax collections to invest in infrastructure, historic preservation, and economic development. ACPA recently received a JobsOhio grant for $2.9 million to build a speculative building on a former U.S. EPA brownfields site which will provide an opportunity for business expansion, job creation and reuse of existing infrastructure. A comprehensive list of additional funding for Athens County projects is identified in ACPA’s 2016 Plan (see 1.b.i).

(ii) Use of Existing Infrastructure: The BH Region has access to every key mode of transportation—maritime, highway, rail, and aviation. There are four major highways serving the area: Interstate 77, U.S. Routes 33 and 50 and Ohio Route 7. US 50, as it passes through the region, follows the Appalachian Highway Corridor. These highways connect the Ohio metropolitan areas of Columbus, Cleveland and Cincinnati and the nation beyond. Today the Mid-Ohio Valley finds itself in the heart of the shale crescent, one of the world’s largest reserves of natural gas. Utilities at the priority AMP Ohio site are: Electric: a 138kV and a 345kV AEP substation are located in the middle of the property; Gas: 36 in at site, 3-36" Enbridge Texas Eastern pipelines are located 1 mile east of the property; Water is provided per 2-in line and 10" main ends 400 yards from the site and is available for extension. Sewer: a 450-person wastewater package plant is on site and may be reactivated; Fiber: Wireless broadband will be available in 2022. Ohio Department of Development offers water and sewer grants from ARPA ($250M program) to add infrastructure to other sites that do not have the needed infrastructure ready to go.

2. COMMUNITY NEED AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
   (i) The Community’s Need for Funding: Between 2001 and 2019 the regional poverty rate in BH counties increased from 15.3% to 18.2%. A high of nearly 21% was experienced in 2015. In 2017 nearly 25% of all minors in the region were living in poverty. According to the ACS, Athens County had the highest poverty rate in the state from 2051 to 2019, approaching nearly 30%. Nelsonville, (Athens Co.) has the second highest overall poverty rate in Ohio at 36.5%. Overall, the Appalachian region of Ohio (32 counties) has a collective poverty rate of approximately 17%, three percent higher than the rest of the state. Based on 2017 data from the 2019 BH CEDS, the labor force rate in BH is 65.1%, with unemployment at 6.4% compared to Ohio and U.S. unemployment rates of 5% and 4% respectively.
   (ii) Threats to Sensitive Populations:
      (1) Health or Welfare of Sensitive Populations: The TAs are environmental justice communities based on high concentrations of impoverished residents (2015-2019 ACS). Residents throughout the TAs have been disproportionately impacted by pollution (air, soil, and groundwater) emanating from...
potential brownfields located in neighborhoods. Poverty rates for families with minor children range from 16.3% to 27.1% in the Counties comprising BH, and, specifically the TAs at 21.1% to 28.8%, compared to 19.9% for the State and 18.5% nationally (2015-2019 ACS). Similarly, the average percentage of households in the area who relied on Food Stamps in 2019 was 18%, higher than the State (13.1%) and National (11.7%) averages (2015-2019 ACS). EJ factors in the Athens target area based on U.S. EPA EJ mapping show environmental indicators for the Selected Area Compared to All People's Block Groups in the State/Region exceeding between 50-75% for Ozone/ NATA Diesel PM, NATA Cancer Risk, NATA Respiratory HI Traffic Proximity, Lead Paint Indicator, Superfund Proximity, RMP Proximity, Hazardous Waste Proximity, and Wastewater Discharge. Assessment funds will facilitate the identification and reduction of threats to the health and welfare of sensitive populations and the threats to Environmental Justice communities within our areas.

(2) **Greater Than Normal Incidence of Disease and Adverse Health Conditions:** Key indicators for greater than normal incidence of disease and adverse health conditions are presented below for Athens County. Data is not available below the County level nor for counties with lower than average populations. Data for Athens County is from the Ohio Department of Health *Ohio Public Health Data Warehouse*[^16], unless otherwise noted.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>BH (8 counties)</th>
<th>Ohio</th>
<th>U.S.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% Low Birth Weight[^a] 2020</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Preterm Births[^a] 2017</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infant Mortality Rate[^a] (avg. 2013-2017)</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Child Food Insecurity Rate[^a]2018</td>
<td>20.4%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>14.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cancer Mortality Rate[^b] 2014-2018</td>
<td>169.7</td>
<td>172.3</td>
<td>155.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lung Cancer Incidence rate[^c] 2014-2018</td>
<td>74.4</td>
<td>67.3</td>
<td>53.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>% Obesity[^d] 2017-2018</td>
<td>35.1%</td>
<td>33.5%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Smokers[^e] 2017-2018</td>
<td>24.2%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Children with asthma[^f] 2014</td>
<td>23.3%</td>
<td>14.2%</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[^a]: as defined by Ohio Public Health Data Warehouse, per 1,000 live births;[^b]: Foundation for Appalachian Ohio;[^c]: cases per 100,000 population (ODH Cancer Profile for Athens Co.2021);[^d]: Athens Co. Community Health Assessment 2020-2023;[^e]: ODH Asthma in Athens County and Ohio leaflets

As shown, the real economic impact on children is seen in the statistics that ~1 in 5 children living in households experience food insecurity[^17], significantly greater than both the State and U.S percentages. This is partly associated with >50% of homeowners and renters in the TAs which are severely cost burdened by housing expenses (greater than 35% of income).[^18] Cancer death rates, specifically lung cancer, in the TAs are higher than the national rate.[^19] Residents in the TAs are chronically impacted from their daily exposure to uncontrolled exposures to contaminated soil, groundwater, and vacant buildings containing hazardous materials in close proximity to their homes, parks, and daily travel to schools and shopping. The assessment grant will help identify brownfield sites that directly contribute to greater than normal incidence of disease and adverse health conditions in the area’s sensitive populations and target those sites for assessment/cleanup/redevelopment which will reduce environmental exposures and health threats.

(3) **Promoting Environmental Justice:** The U.S. EPA’s Environmental Justice Screening and Mapping Tool (EJSSCREEN) rates (averaged) the TAs in the ≥80th percentile for the State and ≥50th percentile for the U.S. with respect to air toxics lifetime (per million) cancer risk. The majority of available housing in the TAs is older, built prior to 1960, outranking the U.S. (≥55th) percentile for likelihood of containing lead-based paint, which could also contribute to the incidence of lung cancer.[^20] Other contributing factors to cancer incidences includes obesity, smoking and inactivity. As noted in the above table, the BH TAs are higher than the U.S. rates for these contributing factors.[^16] Residents within the TAs are in the ≥80th percentile for both the State and Nationally for having sites that discharge toxic wastewater.

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[^15]: https://ejscreen.epa.gov/mapper/
[^16]: http://publicapps.odh.ohio.gov/EDW/DataCatalog
[^17]: https://appalachianohio.org/grow/funds/fund-profiles/athensfoodrescue/#:~:text=Athens%20County%20is%20the%20most,than%20the%20state%20average%20of%2016.5%25.
[^19]: http://publicapps.odh.ohio.gov/EDW/DataBrowser/Browse/StateLayoutLockdownCancers
[^20]: https://ejscreen.epa.gov/mapper/

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to area streams and rivers. According to EJScreen, although the BH area ranks below the 50th percentile for many of the environmental indicators, this is likely due to the lack of industries in the area. According to the CEDS, the top occupations in the region are office and administrative support, management, and sales. The largest increase in employment between 2003 and 2018 was in farming, fishing, and forestry (+51%), while the biggest employment losses were in production operations (-31%), or the industrial sector. In addition, an estimated 25K people commute outside the region for work, indicating the region is not a job center. Poverty rates for families with children under the age of 18 in the BH region averaged 22%, above the State family poverty level of 19.9% and the national level of 18.5% (ACS 2015-2019). Although unemployment rates have reduced since 2014, 5.5% to 3.2% in 2018 (ACS 2014-2018), the jobs available are paying less, resulting in an unchanging poverty rate. In addition, the percentage of people on Food Stamps has remained stagnant, with an average of 18.5% in 2014 and an average of 18.3% in 2019, also greater than the State in 2019 of 13.1% and the U.S. at 11.7%. Three of the counties in the BH region have seen increasing poverty rates since 2014, with Athens and Washington Counties containing several of the TAs. Median household income for the BH region ranges from $41K to $52K, less than the State average of $56K and the U.S. average of $62K.

Regional efforts to address the effects of a steady decrease in employment opportunities, income levels, and tax revenues are thwarted by the ever-increasing number of abandoned sites and brownfields. The presence of brownfields throughout neighborhoods creates areas of blight and decrease property values. As a result, the counties within the BH area are ranked ≥68th percentile for both the State and Nation for the percentage of low-income households (EJScreen). This environmental injustice is made worse because the impoverished residents impacted by brownfields cannot afford to move. Assessment will turn the tide on blight in the TAs. It will allow redevelopment that will add jobs, improve home values and contribute to economic growth.

### b. Community Engagement

**Project Involvement and Project Roles:** The partners listed below represent entities that will engage in eligible grant activities along with their anticipated role(s) in grant activities. This is a representative list, not an exhaustive list. BH will be responsible for outreach coordination with all stakeholders throughout the performance period of the project.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partner Name</th>
<th>Point of contact (name, email &amp; phone)</th>
<th>Specific role in the project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Developers, Real Estate Professionals</td>
<td>Charlotte Keim, Berkshire Hathaway,</td>
<td>Meet regularly with BH via quarterly calls; Provide input on site inventory and sites to be assessed; Assist in redevelopment efforts by marketing priority and other assessed sites to companies and businesses.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>740-706-1245</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Community Foundations and Organizations</strong></td>
<td>Cristie Thomas, Marietta Main Street, <a href="mailto:director@mariettamountstreet.org">director@mariettamountstreet.org</a>; 740-885-8194, Athens Co. HD: email: athenspublichealth.org, Josh Lane, Washington Co HD: <a href="mailto:jlane@wcgov.org">jlane@wcgov.org</a></td>
<td>Meet regularly with BH via quarterly calls; Provide input on site inventory and sites to be assessed; Provide networks to communicate site selection, cleanup and redevelopment activities to minority and low-income neighborhoods. During cleanup/redevelopment activities, identify and leverage other funding programs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chambers of Commerce in the area promote the region’s businesses and encourages business and industrial investment.</td>
<td>Kelsy Eaton, Marietta Area Chamber of Commerce, <a href="mailto:info@mariettachamber.com">info@mariettachamber.com</a>, 740-373-5176</td>
<td>Meet regularly with BH via quarterly calls; Provide input on site inventory and sites to be assessed; Inform businesses about grant funds, and future cleanup/redevelopment potential of assessed sites. Community outreach, public engagement, site marketing support,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Development / Lenders support business growth and attract new, quality investment.</td>
<td>Jesse Roush, Executive Director, SEOPA, <a href="mailto:info@seohioport.com">info@seohioport.com</a>; (740) 760-0158, Mollie Fitzgerald, Director</td>
<td>Meet regularly with BH via quarterly calls; Provide input on site inventory and sites to be assessed; ID sites to be selected for assessment; ID &amp; leverage other funding programs.</td>
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21 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy 2020, Buckeye Hills Regional Council
(iii) Incorporating Community Input: Input into recent plans in the region, including the BH CEDS, APEG Economic Prosperity Plan, and Athens EDS, included significant community involvement. This feedback guided the development of the CEDS and other plans visions and goals. BH will include more community involvement in this grant project. BH will promote the creation of a brownfields “roundtable” including a representative from each BH County to encourage and support community engagement. The main stakeholders will be residents/property owners, community/citizens groups, businesses, and lenders and developers conducting or supporting the actual work. The plan to involve stakeholders will include three primary efforts: 1) BH will announce the Grant award in a press release to the local newspaper and in an ad placed on local radio stations and the local Public Access Television station to reach residents at all education and access levels. The announcement also will be posted on BH website and social media (Facebook and Twitter) pages. Key community partners (Section 2.b.i) will be given information to distribute. 2) BH will host an initial outreach and “kick-off” meeting to acquaint key community organizations, environmental organizations, educational institutions, and the media with the grant project. BH will ask stakeholders to identify additional brownfields they feel are impacting their health and welfare. These sites will be added to BH’s list of potential sites for funding. Meeting outcomes will be distributed through BH’s website and community social media pages and a newsletter. 3) BH will maintain communication with stakeholders throughout the grant period. BH will coordinate additional public meetings as requested by community organizations. At the close of the project, BH will hold a final public meeting to share project outcomes. Presentation materials and minutes will be archived and placed on BH website, as applicable. Social media and other innovative methods will be used to reach out to and solicit, consider and respond to input from the general public. If requested, news releases, web postings, written materials, etc. will be available in other languages for residents whose first language is not English (3.6% of residents, 2013-2017 ACS). All outreach will offer virtual options for meetings including Zoom/Teams links to accommodate for COVID-19 social distancing needs, as applicable.

3. TASK DESCRIPTIONS, COST ESTIMATES, AND MEASURING PROGRESS

a. Description of Tasks/Activities and Outputs: Listed are four tasks that will be implemented to assess priority sites in the TAs and other high-risk and developable sites (i.e., non-priority sites) identified during the 3-year performance period. Note: Cost estimates were developed with guidance from BH staff experience on prior U.S. EPA Grants (Perry County) and other publicly available U.S. EPA grant projects in Ohio.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task 1 – Programmatic and Outreach</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i. Project Implementation</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The Work Plan will be prepared and Cooperative Agreement (CA) will be executed.</td>
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<td>• A Qualified Environmental Professional(s) (QEP) will be retained in compliance with applicable federal procurement regulations.</td>
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<td>• Quarterly reports will be submitted to the U.S. EPA; the Assessment, Cleanup, and Redevelopment Exchange System (ACRES) will be updated; annual MBE/WBE reports will be submitted and final project closeout documentation will be submitted.</td>
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<td>• Staff will attend brownfields training programs.</td>
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<td>• A project “kick-off” meeting will be hosted by BH.</td>
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<td>• Continued community outreach activities and roundtable meetings will continue.</td>
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<td>• Assistance will be requested from local health departments as appropriate throughout the performance period to understand and prioritize health risks at brownfield sites identified for assessment.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• In-kind BH staff time will be contributed for amounts over those accounted for in 3. b.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
ii. **Anticipated Schedule**
- The Work Plan will be prepared within 1 month of receiving notification of the grant award.
- The CA will be executed and a QEP will be retained within 3 months of award.
- Quarterly Reports (QR) will be submitted within 30 days of the end of the QR period and ACRES will be updated as priority and non-priority sites are assessed and as cleanup and/or redevelopment occurs, during/after the performance period. MBE/WBE reports will be submitted annually. Final project closeout documentation will be submitted as required.
- Staff will attend brownfields training programs as available during the grant period.
- “Kick-off” meeting will be held within 1 month of receiving notification of the grant award and Community outreach activities will continue throughout the performance period.

iii. **Task/Activity Lead:** BH will be responsible for day-to-day programmatic oversight and outreach activities throughout the performance period.

iv. **Outputs:** Work Plan, CA, quarterly reports (12); ACRES updates; final project closeout documentation; staff training; public meetings and development of outreach materials.

## Task 2 – Site Inventory

i. **Project Implementation:** BH will complete programmatic and public outreach activities throughout the grant period.

ii. **Anticipated Schedule:** The prioritization system will be developed within 3 months of grant award. Non-priority sites will be added to the inventory throughout the 3-year performance period.

iii. **Task/Activity Lead:** BH will update/maintain an inventory of brownfields sites with assistance from the QEP.

iv. **Outputs:** Updated brownfields inventory and prioritization.

## Task 3 – Site Assessment

i. **Project Implementation**
- BH will act as lead with support by the QEP who will complete all tasks under the oversight of BH.
- Priority sites (identified as non-priority sites) will be evaluated through performance of Phase I and/or Phase II assessments, conducted in accordance with All Appropriate Inquiry (ASTM Standard E1527-13) and other ASTM standards. Health and Safety Plans (HASPs) and Site Sampling and Analysis Plans (SAPs) will be prepared for each site.
- The QEP will prepare and submit a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) for EPA for approval.
- Assessments on both priority and other sites following securing site access will continue.
- BH and QEP will ensure required site access has been secured, individual assessments are progressing, and the overall project schedule is met. In-kind BH staff time will be contributed for site access and assessment scheduling coordination.

ii. **Anticipated Schedule**
- Phase I and/or Phase II assessments will continue throughout the performance period.
- Assessments will begin once the selected QEP receives QAPP approval from U.S. EPA (anticipated within 3 months of QEP selection).
- Assessments on both priority and other sites following securing site access will continue throughout the performance period.
- The BH & QEP will meet monthly to ensure required site access has been secured, individual projects are progressing, and the overall project schedule is met.

iii. **Task/Activity Lead:** The QEP will lead this task.

iv. **Outputs:** 1 QAPP and an anticipated 19 Phase Is, 4 Hazardous Materials Assessments/HASPs and Sampling and Analysis Plans and 10 Phase II ESA reports.

## Task 4 – Cleanup Planning

i. **Project Implementation:** BH will act as lead with support by the QEP who will complete all tasks under the oversight of BH. Cleanup/ redevelopment planning as required by various state of Ohio programs for sites (both priority/additional sites that are assessed using the grant) where redevelopment is imminent. Assessment of brownfields cleanup/redevelopment alternatives, evaluation of needed institutional and engineering controls, and cleanup and reuse plans.

ii. **Anticipated Schedule:** Cleanup planning will be conducted at priority/other sites upon completion of the assessment activities and will continue throughout the performance period.

iii. **Task/Activity Lead:** The QEP will lead this task.
iv. Outputs: Outputs include anticipated 3 Analysis of Brownfield Cleanup Alternative Cleanup Plans and 2 eligible area-wide plans for the TAs.

b. Cost Estimates: 78% of the $500K budget will go directly to site assessment activities.

Task 1 – Programmatic and Outreach: Personnel costs: 300 hours at average rate of $50(hour = $15,000 for updating and maintaining brownfields information, community outreach events and roundtable creation, inventory and prioritization. Travel costs: $4,000 for 3 people’s attendance at one U.S. EPA Brownfields or eligible redevelopment conference ($3,000) and 1 person’s attendance at one other brownfields training program ($1,000). Supplies: $1,000 for paper, printing, etc. to produce project information and outreach materials. Contractual: $10,000 (100 hours @ $100/hour) for consultant assistance on technical summaries for quarterly reports, updating and maintaining ACRES, monthly progress meeting, conducting community involvement and outreach meetings.

Task 2 – Site Inventory and Prioritization: Personnel: 240 hours at average rate of $50/hour = $12,000 for meetings with stakeholders, site prioritization and GIS staff for database/inventory. Eligible sites may prioritized subject to Coalition approval based on: (1) eligibility for assessment based on the requirements of U.S. EPA and the Ohio Voluntary Action Program; (2) property location and cohesion with existing planning efforts; (3) willingness of property owners to partner with the City; (4) marketability of the site; (5) extent and/or perception of contamination; (6) potential positive impact on the surrounding community; and (7) perceived or real environmental justice issues. Contractual: $6,500 (65 hours @ $100/hour) to assist in site selection, eligibility and prioritization

Task 3 – Site Assessment: BH, with the assistance of a QEP, will assess a minimum of five sites. Contractual: 8 Phase I ESAs (Haz Substances) at average cost of $5,500 and 7 Phase I ESAs (petroleum) at average cost of $4,500 = $75,500; 6 Phase II ESAs (HS) at average cost of $30,000 = $180,000; 6 Phase II ESAs (petroleum) at average cost of $20,000 = $120,000; 3 HMAs at average cost of $4,500 = $13,500; and 1 QAPP = $3,500. (Estimates based on prior ACPA US EPA grant/Ohio EPA averages for similar projects. All costs subject to site complexity/size needs). Total: $392,500.

Task 4 – Cleanup Planning: Contractual costs: 3 cleanup (ABCA) and reuse plans (HS & Petro) at average cost of $7,000 = $21,000 and 2 U.S.EPA-eligible Area-Wide Cleanup/Reuse Plans (TAs/Priority Sites) at $19,250 each = $38,500 for a total of $59,500.

c. Measuring Environmental Results
BH will track, measure, and report on the success of the project utilizing ACRES to track the following outputs: no. of Phase I/II ESAs and HMAs completed and no. of cleanup plans. Actual outputs will be compared to the estimated outputs listed in Section 3.b. BH will track, measure, and report the following outcomes in ACRES: acres of land assessed; land remediated/redeveloped; acres of parks and greenspace preserved or created; number of jobs created or retained; tax revenue generated; redevelopment investment value; and other funding leveraged. BH will report outcomes/outputs incompatible with ACRES (i.e., website updates, staff training, community outreach/meetings, and brownfields) in quarterly reports. BH will also evaluate the extent to which site assessments, cleanup planning, and future redevelopment result in the protection of human health and the environment. BH
will evaluate progress semi-annually against the goals in Section 3.b and, will meet with BH stakeholders/QEP to adjust the project approach and schedule, as needed.

4. PROGRAMMATIC CAPABILITY AND PAST PERFORMANCE

a. Programmatic Capability (i) Organizational Capacity: BH, as a council of governments located in Marietta, Ohio comprising an 8-county region, will coordinate all administrative and financial requirements of the project. BH will oversee coordination of subcontracting for the QEP. BH has a staff of 60 FTEs, including 5 full-time finance office staff, 2 full-time communications staff, and an organization-wide Executive Director to supervise grant implementation. BH uses ABILI MIP fund fiscal administration software and manages over $18M in grant funding.

(ii) Organizational Structure: BH will serve as the grantee and administrator with primary responsibility for all tasks under the grant. BH will execute the Cooperative Agreement (CA) and ensure compliance with the CA, as will be responsible for financial tracking, outreach to stakeholders and liability management.

(iii) Description of Key Staff: 1) Ms. Sam Miller, BH Development Director, Project Manager; has experience in economic development for the BH region and currently oversees BH community development staff; will oversee BH team, QEP and facilitate all local outreach/implementation. 2) Misty Crosby, BH Executive Director, Chief Executive; will work closely with Ms. Miller and the grant team to ensure grant compliance. Ms. Miller and Mrs. Crosby will be assisting local communities in addressing ongoing development challenges, essential to develop viable re-use of selected sites 3) Melissa Zoller, BH Development Specialist II, Asst. Project Manager, 21 years of grants management and community development for BH; prior U.S. EPA grant experience for Perry County, Ohio overseeing community grant reporting and compliance, site marketing, eligibility and outreach. Ms. Zoller will support Ms. Miller in day-to-day grant oversight and implementation, draws, payments, and reporting to EPA. 4) Denise Keys, BH Fiscal Director, over 20 years of experience with BH; manages all budgeting/financial grant management for BH, extensive prior state and federal funds management experience. 5) Jason Pyles, BH GIS Coordinator; Certified GISP, 10 years’ experience in BH region; manages data/mapping services for BH and will assist with the U.S.EPA inventory. 6) Drew Tanner, BH Comm. Director will work closely with Ms. Miller and Ms. Zoller to assist in promotion the program to the local communities. Drew has worked in a variety of roles in rural, community-based nonprofit, media, and arts organizations. 7) Ryan Collins, Broadband Coordinator with Buckeye Hills Regional Council. He began his work with Buckeye Hills at the end of August 2021, but the organization has been working to improve and expand broadband access in southeast Ohio for over a decade. Ryan took the years of information made available to him and hit the ground running in his new role. Through advocacy, data collection, community organizing, and outreach, Ryan and Buckeye Hills Regional Council are preparing southeastern Ohio for unprecedented broadband expansion.

(iv) Acquiring Additional Resources: Using a Qualifications-Based Selection Process that complies with federal procurement regulations (40 CFR §31.36 and 2 CFR §200.318), BH will retain a highly competent QEP to conduct the assessments, cleanup planning, and assist with grant compliance and reporting as needed.

B. Past Performance and Accomplishments

1. Has Not Received an EPA Brownfields Grant/ Has Received Other Federal Assistance Purpose and Accomplishments: In 2019, BH facilitated investments of $68.5M in Southeast Ohio including providing project management, financial oversight, sub-recipient oversight and direct grant funded services. Examples of BH recent grants similar in scope and scale to this Assessment grant are: 1) Innovation Gateway Network Project through Appalachian Regional Commission Grant (ARC); $1,820,000 award to supporting Innovation Gateway Network for residents of Perry, Athens and Washington counties to support state-of-the-art makerspaces, tech hubs/learning centers/educational laddering/entrepreneurship development services, and credit-recovery, post-secondary/credential offerings. 2) Broadband-Feasibility-ARC Grant - $78,624 for a broadband feasibility study for Route 33 in the BH Region; 3) EDA Cares - $398,274 for Economic Development Administration for COVID-19 recovery including short term planning assistance tied to the CEDS Plan, technical assistance for local governments, and organizational capacity support.

2. Compliance with Grant Requirements: Each of the projects listed above have been managed in compliance with the grant requirements. BH has developed Work Plans and successfully negotiated CAs with government agencies. BH has and continues to comply with the Work Plans and their associated schedules, terms, and conditions. BH has conducted community engagement programs, complied with financial status reporting requirements, and successfully compiled required data.
THRESHOLD INFORMATION
FY 2022 Buckeye Hills Community-Wide Assessment Grant

Section III. Threshold Criteria for Assessment Grants

1. Applicant Eligibility

Buckeye Hills Regional Council (BH) is a council of governments established in 1968 providing technical assistance services to an eight-county region in southeastern Ohio (Athens, Hocking, Meigs, Monroe, Morgan, Noble, Perry, and Washington Counties).

Information documenting eligibility of Buckeye Hills Regional Council is attached.

2. Community Involvement

Input into recent plans in the region, including the BH CEDS, APEG Economic Prosperity Plan, and Athens EDS, included significant community involvement. This feedback guided the development of the CEDS and other plans visions and goals. BH will include more community involvement in this grant project. BH will promote the creation of a brownfields “roundtable” including a representative from each BH County to encourage and support community engagement. The main stakeholders will be residents/property owners, community/citizens groups, businesses, and lenders and developers conducting or supporting the actual work. All outreach will offer virtual options for meetings including Zoom/Teams links to accommodate for COVID-19 social distancing needs, as applicable. The plan to involve stakeholders will include three primary efforts: 1) BH will announce the Grant award in a press release to the local newspaper and in an ad placed on local radio stations and the local Public Access Television station to reach residents at all education and access levels. The announcement also will be posted on Buckeye Hills website and social media (Facebook and Twitter) pages. Key community partners (included in Section 2.b.i in the grant application) will be given information to distribute. 2) Buckeye Hills will host an initial outreach and “kick-off” meeting to acquaint key community organizations, environmental organizations, educational institutions, and the media with the grant project. Buckeye Hills will ask stakeholders to identify additional brownfields they feel are impacting their health and welfare. These sites will be added to the list of potential sites for funding. Meeting outcomes will be distributed through Buckeye Hills website and community social media pages and a newsletter. 3) Buckeye Hills will maintain communication with stakeholders
and coordinate additional public meetings as requested by community organizations. At the close of the project, Buckeye Hills will hold a final public meeting to share project outcomes. Presentation materials and minutes will be archived and placed on Buckeye Hills website, as applicable. Social media and other innovative methods will be used to reach out to and gather input from the general public. If requested, news releases, web postings, written materials, etc. will be available in other languages for residents whose first language is not English.

3. **Named Contractors and Subrecipients**

   Buckeye Hills affirms it has not procured/named a contractor/subrecipient.

4. **Expenditure of Existing Funds.**

   Buckeye Hills Regional Council affirms it does not have an open or active US EPA Assessment or Multipurpose Grant.