§ 27-1403. Declaration of policy and findings of fact.

The legislature hereby finds that there are thousands of abandoned and likely contaminated properties that threaten the health and vitality of the communities they burden, and that these sites, known as brownfields, are also contributing to sprawl development and loss of open space. It is therefore declared that, to advance the policy of the state of New York to conserve, improve, and protect its natural resources and environment and control water, land, and air pollution in order to enhance the health, safety, and welfare of the people of the state and their overall economic and social well being, it is appropriate to adopt this act to encourage persons to voluntarily remediate brownfield sites for reuse and redevelopment by establishing within the department a statutory program to encourage cleanup and redevelopment of brownfield sites. All remedies shall be fully protective of public health and the environment including, but not limited to, groundwater according to its classification pursuant to section 17-0301 of this chapter. A remedial program that achieves a permanent cleanup of a contaminated site, including the restoration of groundwater to its classified use, is to be preferred over a remedial program that does not do so. It is the intent of the legislature that the provisions of this brownfield cleanup program shall not be construed as limiting or otherwise affecting any authority conferred upon the department by any other provision of law.