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Brownfields financier aims to lend \$125M

Real estate company has changed name to EnviroFinance Group

Sacramento Business Journal - by [Celia Lamb](#) Staff writer

After just one year in business, a Sacramento real estate finance company has already approved \$100 million in loans, changed its name and made plans to lend 25 percent more this year.

[EnviroFinance Group LLC](#), formerly called [Continental Environmental Redevelopment Financial LLC](#), lends money to owners of environmentally blighted "brownfield" properties that have promising commercial potential. Brownfields have actual or suspected environmental contamination that blunts property values, making it hard for owners to get financing for redevelopment.

EnviroFinance Group plans to lend at least \$125 million this year, said Craig Carbrey, the company's president and chief credit officer.

"There's been a lot of activity lately," he said. "It seems like the first quarter is going to be very good."

Declining residential real estate markets and the subprime credit crunch have hit brownfields property owners especially hard.

"This is actually a great time to be buying brownfields," said Robert Colangelo, executive director of the [National Brownfields Association](#) in Chicago. "There's plenty of financing out there for the right deal, but it's got to be priced right."

Colangelo said EnviroFinance is the only for-profit company he knows of that provides debt financing for brownfields projects without demanding equity in the property. Instead the company has pooled Wall Street investors willing to provide up to \$500 million collectively. The group consists of [Snow Phipps Group LLC](#) of New York City, [Citigroup](#) Global Markets and [Credit Suisse](#).

"We're fully capitalized for five years," Carbrey said.

EnviroFinance employs eight people in Sacramento and will probably add a couple more this year, Carbrey said. It also has an office in Denver, and it opened offices in Los Angeles and New York City last fall. Its market stretches from Hawaii to Maine.