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Michael Turnbell

Group's plea: Keep on mining

Florida needs to keep rockin' if it wants to keep rollin', according to Floridians for Better Transportation.

The lobbying group, created by the Florida Chamber of Commerce and the Florida Council of 100, a pro-business organization, is trying to draw attention to the ramifications of a federal judge's decision to halt mining in northwest Miami-Dade County.

The mining area provides more than 45 percent of the state's limestone used for road and building projects.

Every road project from Miami to Vero Beach would be affected by a shutdown, said Douglas Callaway, president of Floridians for Better Transportation.

Projects already are feeling the pinch due to asphalt shortages. And we all remember what happened with Dixie Highway in West Palm Beach.

In March, U.S. District Judge William Hoeveler ruled that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service improperly granted permits to 10 companies that wanted to mine limestone in 5,000 acres of northwest Miami-Dade.

The Army Corps and the wildlife service now must re-evaluate those permits. A hearing is set for June 13.