

FLORIDIANS FOR BETTER



TRANSPORTATION

## SHUT-DOWN OF MINING WOULD HALT FLORIDA HIGHWAY PROJECTS

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If a Federal Judge in Miami moves to restrict mining while federal agencies redo environmental studies used to issue mining permits, much of Florida could face unimaginable traffic gridlock. These dramatic consequences were documented by the Florida Department of Transportation in a brief submitted to the court yesterday.

Doug Callaway, President of Floridians for Better Transportation (FBT), said "if the Federal Judge wants these agencies to re-do their studies – that's one thing – but he should not consider action that will have such a dramatic and negative impact on the entire state of Florida." FBT believes in "Keeping Florida Moving!" and any action resulting in increased transportation construction costs in Florida would have the exact OPPOSITE effect.

According to the Florida DOT brief:

*"The loss of Lake Belt aggregate materials will compromise the Department's ability to continue to provide the public with safe driving surfaces." – page 5*

*". . . a complete termination of Lake Belt mining will require*

- *the suspension of construction on every current and imminent Department job in Monroe, Miami-Dade, Broward, Palm Beach, Martin, St. Lucie, and Indian River counties (Department Districts 4 and 6),*
- *at least seventy percent (70%) of the Department jobs in the Tampa Bay area (District 7),*
- *sixty percent (60%) of the jobs in Southwest Florida (District 1) and the Turnpike,*
- *and twenty-five percent (25%) of the jobs in Central Florida and Northeast Florida (Districts 5 and 2)."* – DOT Brief, page 6

(continued...)

*“Loss of Lake Belt aggregates will also shut down Department capacity construction projects.” - DOT Brief,page 5*

*“It is safe to say that a shortage of aggregates will have the following effects:*

- 1. Short and long-term disruptions and shortages of aggregates for transportation projects and for commercial and residential construction;*
- 2. Rapid rises in tonnage prices for future aggregate products, perhaps escalating two to four times present prices; and*
- 3. Price spikes for supplies that are available. The ripple effect of these pricing issues will impact other sectors of the Florida economy and are expected to cause rapid escalation of residential and commercial construction costs, more frequent scheduling delays on on-going construction projects, cancellation of projects, layoffs and economic hardships to other supporting trades and suppliers, and a recession in the Florida primary and secondary home markets.”*  
*- DOT Brief,page 9*

The Florida DOT brief was written for consideration by the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Florida, Miami Division, in determining what action should be considered in the wake of the court's March 22, 2006 decision (Case No. 03-23427-CIV- Hoeveler) to remand environmental studies back to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Floridians for Better Transportation (FBT) is a statewide business and transportation association dedicated to making transportation safer and more efficient in Florida. FBT has a diverse membership of over 180 businesses, organizations, and individuals, including the Florida Chamber of Commerce, Publix Super Markets, AAA Auto Club South, SunTrust Bank, the Florida Institute of Consulting Engineers, the Florida Transportation Builders Association, the Florida Public Transportation Association, the Florida Ports Council, the Florida MPO Advisory Council, the Florida Airports Council, and numerous local businesses, Chambers of Commerce, MPOs, and transit providers all across the Sunshine State.

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## **Excerpts from FDOT Brief Regarding Possible Court Shut-Down of Lake Belt Mining**

April 19, 2006

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) has written a brief for consideration by the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Florida, Miami Division, in determining what action should be considered in the wake of the court's March 22, 2006 decision (Case No. 03-23427-CIV- Hoeveler) to remand environmental studies back to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. According to the FDOT brief:

- *“... the Department is concerned with the scope of any injunction because of the significant and lasting negative impacts to the transportation programs of the Department and local governments supported by state and federal funding. Costly delays, stop work situations, and project cancellations throughout the state will result from closing of Lake Belt aggregate mines. In addition, there will be severe disruptions to on-going and planned transportation construction projects for the foreseeable future. These circumstances will have far-reaching impacts.” – DOT Brief, page 3*
- *“The loss of Lake Belt aggregate materials will compromise the Department’s ability to continue to provide the public with safe driving surfaces.” – page 5*
- *“... a complete termination of Lake Belt mining will require the suspension of construction on every current and imminent Department job in Monroe, Miami-Dade, Broward, Palm Beach, Martin, St. Lucie, and Indian River counties (Department Districts 4 and 6), at least seventy percent (70%) of the Department jobs in the Tampa Bay area (District 7), sixty percent (60%) of the jobs in Southwest Florida (District 1) and the Turnpike, and twenty-five percent (25%) of the jobs in Central Florida and Northeast Florida (Districts 5 and 2).” – DOT Brief, page 6*
- *“... the quantity of aggregates required cannot be replaced or supplanted in the foreseeable future from any other permitted and approved sources.” - DOT Brief, page 8*
- *“The primary source of skid-resistant ‘friction course’ aggregates will be eliminated by Lake Belt mine closures.” – DOT Brief, page 5*
- *“highway work zones inevitably create driver distractions and more congestion, leading to temporarily reduced safety for the traveling public. During periods of suspended construction, the maintenance of traffic plans and devices will need to remain in place, prolonging the congested situation and costing the Department funds that could otherwise have been put toward transportation and safety improvements.” – DOT Brief, page 4*

(continued)

- *“Loss of Lake Belt aggregates will also shut down Department capacity construction projects.” - DOT Brief,page 5*
- *“It is safe to say that a shortage of aggregates will have the following effects:*
  - 1. Short and long-term disruptions and shortages of aggregates for transportation projects and for commercial and residential construction;*
  - 2. Rapid rises in tonnage prices for future aggregate products, perhaps escalating two to four times present prices; and*
  - 3. Price spikes for supplies that are available. The ripple effect of these pricing issues will impact other sectors of the Florida economy and are expected to cause rapid escalation of residential and commercial construction costs, more frequent scheduling delays on on-going construction projects, cancellation of projects, layoffs and economic hardships to other supporting trades and suppliers, and a recession in the Florida primary and secondary home markets.” - DOT Brief,page 9*



## Florida Transportation Needs And Lake Belt Mining

Due to a Miami federal judge's ruling, the supply of rock so important to meeting Florida's growing transportation needs is in serious jeopardy. A shut-down of so-called Lake Belt mining would adversely affect the state's ongoing efforts to keep Florida moving. Moreover, it would run the risk of bringing Florida's booming economy to a screeching halt. Consider the following:

A.) Due to rising transportation construction costs, FDOT has deferred some **62 projects** that were in the Five Year Work Program at a cost of about **\$1 billion**,

B.) Florida has a well-documented transportation funding shortfall -- or "pothole" -- over the next ten years and needs additional funding of at least **\$23 billion** just to maintain today's highway conditions,

C.) Florida's population **grows** by a net daily average of **1,060 people** (*according to the latest issue of Florida Trend magazine*) and

- Daily in-migration is: 1,890
- Daily out-migration is: - 945
- Daily births minus deaths is: + 115
- For an average daily population growth of: 1,060

D.) Our state's population is increasing at the phenomenal rate of **2.3%** annually, however, the Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) by cars, trucks, and SUVs on our highways is increasing at **5.4%** -- more than double our population!

Given all these factors, it would seem fundamentally imprudent to drive current transportation construction costs even HIGHER throughout most of Florida by imposing a shut-down on the mining of rock in Miami-Dade. Ironically, in a recent survey of 500 registered Miami-Dade voters, **TRAFFIC** was the **number one worry at 26%** -- nearly triple the **# 2 issue, education at 9%**!

FBT believes in "**Keeping Florida Moving!**" and any action resulting in increased transportation construction costs in Florida would have the exact OPPOSITE effect.



**FBT – Your "Voice" for Transportation!**

*Douglas J. Callaway, President*

*Floridians for Better Transportation (FBT)*

[www.bettertransportation.org](http://www.bettertransportation.org)

