



STARTUPS
South Tampa Bay Area Transportation Partnerships
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May 19, 2006

Honorable William Hoeverler
United States District Court
Southern District of Florida
301 North Miami Avenue
Miami, FL 33128

Dear Judge Hoeverler:

On March 22, 2006, you ordered a reassessment of permits opening 5,400 new acres of wetlands to mining in the Miami-Dade "Lake Belt." If the court restricts Lake Belt mining while the federal agencies take 18 months to redo environmental studies used to issue mining permits, much of Florida could face significant and lasting negative impacts.

The South Tampa Bay Area Transportation Partnerships (STARTUPS) is concerned with the scope of any injunction. Before the federal court makes a decision, it should be FULLY aware of the transportation and economic implications of a possible shut down on Lake Belt mining. A halt to mining in the Lake Belt would shut down road construction and/or improvements in most of Florida, dramatically drive up construction costs in those few areas still able to get "aggregate", bring much of the housing construction industry in Florida to a standstill, and quite possibly throw Florida's thriving economy into a recession.

According to the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), a complete termination of Lake Belt mining will require the suspension of construction on every current and imminent FDOT job in Monroe, Miami-Dade, Broward, Palm Beach, Martin, St. Lucie, and Indian River counties (FDOT Districts 4 and 6). At least seventy percent (70%) of the FDOT jobs in the Tampa Bay area (District 7), sixty percent (60%) of the jobs in Southwest Florida (FDOT District 1) and the Turnpike, and twenty-five percent (25%) of the jobs in Central Florida and Northeast Florida (FDOT Districts 5 and 2) will also be adversely affected.

STARTUPS strongly encourages the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Florida, Miami Division, to allow continuation of Lake Belt mining at a level that does not adversely affect Florida's environment or road construction projects.

Respectfully,

David A. Sessions
President