

STUDENT SENATE BILL 2023-1124

TITLE: Resolution Addressing the Environmental Risks Associated with Phosphate Mining and Phosphogypsum Storage in the State of Florida

AUTHOR(S): Senator Zoe Richter

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WHEREAS, phosphate mining and the production and storage of the byproduct phosphogypsum, is proven to create significant environmental and human health risks in the state of Florida [1]; and,

WHEREAS, phosphogypsum storage has been the cause of several environmental disasters including the ongoing Piney Point disaster causing algal blooms and widespread fish and manatee kills in the Tampa Bay [2]; and,

WHEREAS, Piney Point experienced another major leak in March of 2021, causing over 200 gallons of polluted water to be pumped in the bay, 300 homes and businesses in the county to be evacuated, and governor Ron DeSantis declaring a state of emergency [2]; and,

WHEREAS, phosphogypsum storage regulation is insufficient and storage facilities can be damaged by heavy rains, sinkholes, and hurricanes [3]; and,

WHEREAS, phosphogypsum poses human health risks as it is often above safe radioactive levels for use as fertilizer or soil amendments [4]; and,

WHEREAS, the state of Florida has spent over eighty-five million dollars (\$85,000,000) on environmental cleanup since the March 2021 leak at Piney Point [5]; and,

WHEREAS, officials estimate that a potential cost of one-hundred million dollars (\$100,000,000) will be needed in environmental cleanup by December of 2024 [6]; and,

WHEREAS, twenty-seven (27) Phosphogypsum storage stacks exist in Florida with nine (9) still actively being used for current and future waste storage throughout central Florida [7]; and,

WHEREAS, phosphogypsum storage stacks are located near bodies of water and are proven to have a disastrous effect on marine ecosystems and human health [4]; then,

THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate recognizes that the economic, environmental, and human health risks posed by phosphogypsum stacks demonstrate a dire need for stricter storage regulation in the state of Florida.

THEREFORE, LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate recognizes a need for Florida Governor Ron DeSantis and the Florida Department of Environmental Protections to strengthen regulations regarding phosphogypsum storage.

THEREFORE, LET IT FINALLY BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate recognizes the importance of environmental protections for the health and wellbeing of all business, people, and wildlife in the state of Florida.

Proviso: A copy of this resolution shall be sent to Florida Governor Ron DeSantis, Sawgrass Progressives, Florida Department of Environmental Protections Secretary Shawn Hamilton.

[1] Beck, M. W., Altieri, A., Angelini, C., Burke, M. C., Chen, J., Chin, D. W., Gardiner, J., Hu, C., Hubbard, K. A., Liu, Y., Lopez, C., Medina, M., Morrison, E., Philips, E. J., Raulerson, G. E., Sclaro, S., Sherwood, E. T., Tomasko, D., Weisberg, R. H., & Whalen, J. (2022, May). Initial estuarine response to inorganic nutrient inputs from a legacy mining facility adjacent to Tampa Bay, Florida. *Marine Pollution Bulletin*, 178. ScienceDirect.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpolbul.2022.113598>

[2] Newborn, S. (2021, June 24). Environmental Groups Sue State Over Piney Point Spill. WUSF News. <https://wusfnews.wusf.usf.edu/environment/2021-06-24/environmental-groups-sue-state-over-piney-point-spill>

[3] Gibbens, S. (2021, April 7). Tampa Bay spill highlights environmental threat decades in the making. *National Geographic*. Retrieved July, 2023, from

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/article/hazardous-spill-in-florida-highlights-environmental-threat-decades-in-the-making>

[4] Silva, L. F.O., Oliveira, M. L.S., Crissien, T. J., Santosh, M., Bolivar, J., Shao, L., Dotto, G. L., Gasparotto, J., & Schindler, M. (2022, January). A review on the environmental impact of phosphogypsum and potential health impacts through the release of nanoparticles. Chemosphere, 286. ScienceDirect. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chemosphere.2021.131513>

[5] Bausback, E. (2022, April 22). A Timeline of the Piney Point Wastewater Disaster. Florida Museum. Retrieved July, 2023, from <https://www.floridamuseum.ufl.edu/earth-systems/blog/a-timeline-of-the-piney-point-wastewater-disaster/>

[6] Sampson, Z. T. (2022, March 31). Florida approves plan to clean up, shutter Piney Point. Tampa Bay Times. <https://www.tampabay.com/news/environment/2022/03/31/florida-approves-plan-to-clean-up-shutter-piney-point/>

[7] Florida's Phosphate Mines. (2023, January 26). Florida Department of Environmental Protection. Retrieved July, 2023, from <https://floridadep.gov/water/mining-mitigation/content/phosphate>

 8/4/23
Oscar Santiago Perez Date
Senate President