



Riverview, Florida phosphogypsum stack

## PHOSPHOGYPSUM FACTSHEET

Conservation groups [petitioned](#) the Environmental Protection Agency to better regulate phosphogypsum and process wastewater under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act and the Toxic Substances Control Act because they pose a substantial hazard and unreasonable risk of injury to human health and the environment.

### WHAT IS PHOSPHOGYPSUM?

Phosphogypsum is the radioactive waste from [processing phosphate ore](#) into phosphoric acid which is predominantly used in fertilizer. In addition to radioactive materials, phosphogypsum and process wastewater can also contain carcinogens and toxic heavy metals like antimony, arsenic, barium, cadmium, chromium, copper, fluoride, lead, mercury, nickel, silver, sulfur, thallium, and zinc.

Phosphogypsum is stored in piles stacked hundreds of acres wide and hundreds of feet tall. More than 1 billion tons are already stored in 25 stacks in Florida. Phosphogypsum also threatens low-wealth communities in Arkansas, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, Texas, Utah, and Wyoming.

### IS PHOSPHOGYPSUM SAFE?

EPA has determined that phosphogypsum poses a cancer risk from its radon emissions. Major sinkholes in phosphogypsum stacks have released millions of gallons of process wastewater and an undetermined amount of phosphogypsum into the Floridan aquifer. EPA has declared a Mississippi fertilizer plant and phosphogypsum stack system a Superfund site, and a phosphogypsum stack in Louisiana has been moving laterally since January 2019, putting surrounding communities and farms at risk.

### WHAT DOES THE PETITION ASK THE EPA TO DO?

1. Reverse an earlier determination to exclude phosphogypsum from regulation;
2. Regulate the safe treatment, storage and disposal of phosphogypsum as hazardous waste;
3. Designate phosphogypsum a high-priority substance for risk evaluation;
4. Require manufacturers to conduct testing on phosphogypsum and process wastewater; and
5. Determine that the use of [phosphogypsum in road construction](#) is a significant new use that requires a determination on whether it is safe.

### WHAT CAN I DO?

[Sign the petition](#) urging the EPA to step up and protect public health and the environment from phosphogypsum. [Contact your elected officials](#) to ask them to ensure that the EPA takes action on the petition to protect human health and the environment.