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## EPA Sued For Approving 'Radioactive Roads'

**Environment and public health advocates are sounding an alarm, saying that the construction of "radioactive roads" has been federally approved, and Floridians could be among the drivers using them the most.**

[The Environmental Protection Agency](#) is being sued for approving the use of radioactive waste to build roads.

For about three decades, it's been the position at the EPA that a product called [phosphogypsum](#) — a radioactive waste that's left over from creating chemicals used for fertilizer — poses an unreasonable risk to public health if it were put into roads.

The substance produces radon gas, a hazardous air pollutant. It also includes lead, arsenic, and other metals that have been found to have negative health consequences for people and the environment.

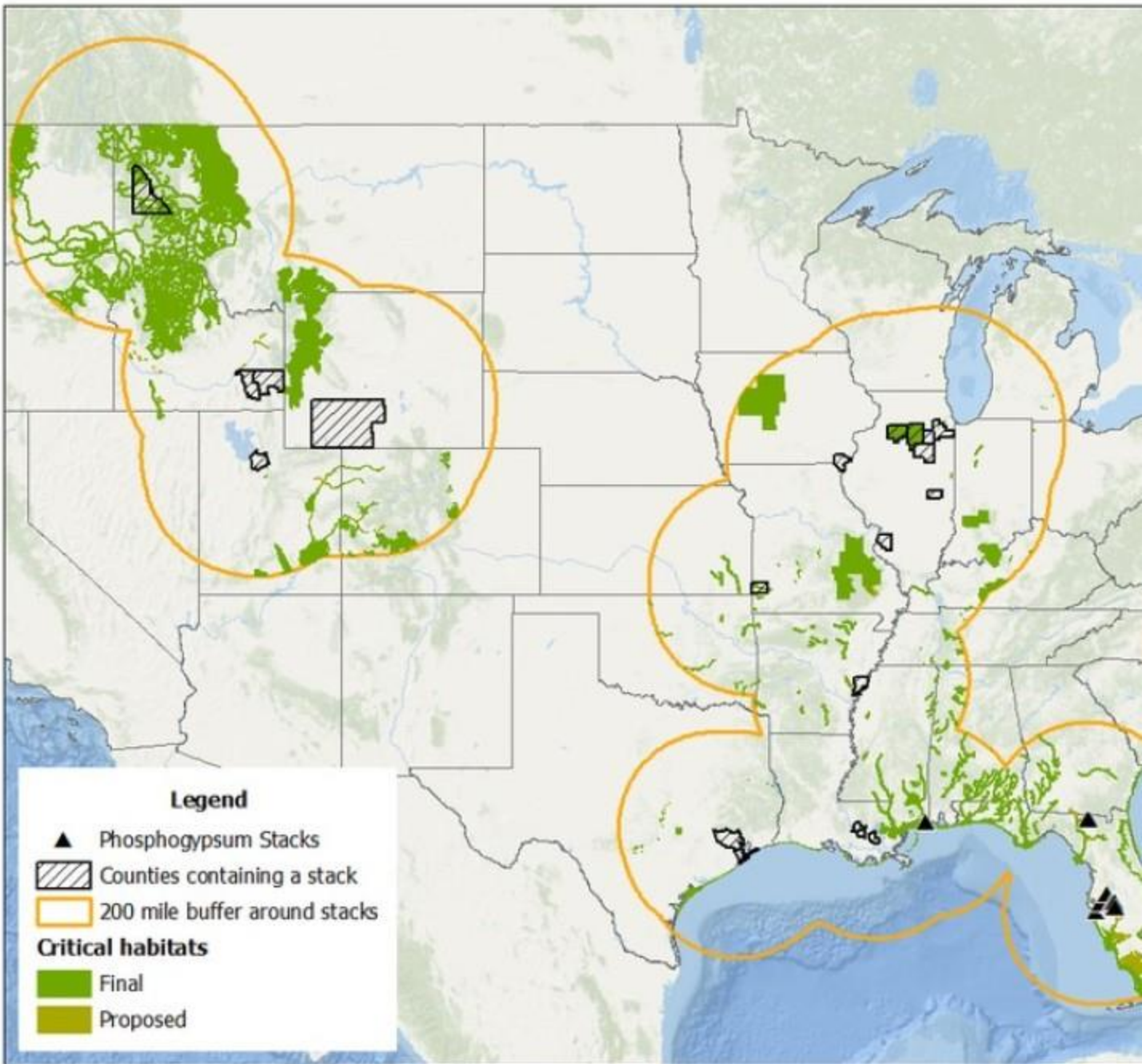
But in October, the EPA switched its position and approved phosphogypsum for use in road creation.

Several groups, including [ManaSota-88](#), [Healthy Gulf](#), and the [Center for Biological Diversity](#), are suing the EPA at the [U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia](#).

[Click here to view the lawsuit.](#)

"What is the fate of this radioactive material that becomes part of a road when a sinkhole happens? Likewise, we already have roads that are eroding as a consequence of sea level rise and increased storm surge and wave activity all along our coastline on both coasts," said Jaclyn Lopez with the Center for Biological Diversity. "What is the fate of that material once it is washed away?"

Usually this waste material gets put aside in what are called gypsum stacks. [The Fertilizer Institute](#) applied to use this by-product in roads, saying it's only economically viable to use phosphogypsum within 200 miles of a stack. That means Florida is at high risk, according to Lopez.



*Center For Biological Diversity*

"Florida has at least 25 phosphogypsum stacks storing about 1 billion tons of radioactive waste of phosphogypsum," she said.

"There are other stacks throughout the United States: there's North Carolina, Mississippi, Louisiana, and a handful out west. But by far, Florida has the densest concentration of these gyp stacks. And where they are located is mostly in west-central

Florida, we have a few up north. If you were to layer on top of that a 200-mile radius buffer, you quickly see that it takes up virtually all of Florida."

In addition to the federal lawsuit, the groups also petitioned the EPA to reconsider its decision.

[Click here to view the petition.](#)

"It's not what Floridians want. They don't want to be living near and driving over radioactive roads. It's as crazy as it sounds," said Lopez.

As of late December, it didn't appear as though phosphogypsum has been used in roads since the EPA approval.

Neither the EPA nor The Fertilizer Institute responded to emails for comment.