

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL**No. 564** Session of
2015

INTRODUCED BY PICKETT, COHEN, GROVE, MARSICO, MILLARD, TOOHIL
AND GABLER, APRIL 15, 2015

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT, APRIL 15, 2015

AN ACT

1 Selecting, designating and adopting celestine as the official
2 State mineral of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

3 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
4 hereby enacts as follows:

5 Section 1. Findings.

6 The General Assembly finds and declares as follows:

7 (1) Celestine was first discovered in Bellwood, near
8 Frankstown, Blair County, Pennsylvania, in 1791 by Andreas
9 Gotthelf Schutz, a visiting naturalist from Freiberg,
10 Germany. In 1797, Martin Klaproth, the leading chemist in
11 Germany of his time, determined the chemical composition of
12 celestine as strontium sulfate. Abraham Gottlob Werner, a
13 founding father of the sciences of mineralogy and physical
14 geology, offered the name and physical description in 1798.
15 The first crystal structure of celestine was published in
16 1925 by R. W. James and W. A. Wood.

17 (2) Celestine derives its name from Latin *caelestis*,
18 meaning "heavenly," in allusion to the beautiful sky-blue

1 color of the first specimen from this Commonwealth. Celestine
2 grows as large, clear crystals that can be faceted into gems.
3 With the same brilliance as topaz, celestine crystals are
4 lovely gemstones.

5 (3) Celestine has been found in Bellwood, Blair County;
6 East Salem, Juniata County; Lime Bluff, Lycoming County;
7 Meckley's Quarry, Northumberland County; Allenport,
8 Huntingdon County; and Faylors Middle Creek Quarry, Mifflin
9 County.

10 (4) Celestine is a major ore for strontium, whose
11 compounds are responsible for the bright red flames in
12 fireworks and road flares. Strontium salts also were employed
13 for refining beet sugar and, during the long period when
14 cathode-ray tubes dominated television technology, strontium
15 was added to the glass to absorb X-rays for the protection of
16 the viewer.

17 (5) Designating celestine as our State mineral will
18 remind the residents of Pennsylvania that our Commonwealth
19 boasts a rich natural history that is marked by a mineralogy
20 of great beauty and diversity. This act will provide a
21 positive experience to countless school children whose
22 interest in Pennsylvania history and geology will be piqued.

23 Section 2. Official State mineral.

24 Celestine, a mineral appearing as sky-blue or white
25 orthorhombic crystals or in fibrous masses, is hereby selected,
26 designated and adopted as the official State mineral of the
27 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

28 Section 3. Effective date.

29 This act shall take effect immediately.