

MEMO



JAN 14 2011

Senate of Pennsylvania

January 13, 2011

TO: ALL SENATORS
FROM: Stewart J. Greenleaf *Stewart*
SUBJECT: Cosponsorship -- **State rock: Anthracite**

I am reintroducing **Senate Bill 1123**, selecting, designating and adopting anthracite or “hard coal” as the official state rock of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

As you know, state symbols such as the Hemlock (state tree) and Mountain Laurel (state flower) are important in helping us better understand what makes Pennsylvania unique. Each symbol connected with Pennsylvania has historical significance or recognizes a native species or product of great meaning to the economy of Pennsylvania. The designation of “anthracite” as the official state rock was suggested to me by a constituent. Some of our state symbols were originally suggested by private citizens.

The eastern and northeastern regions of Pennsylvania contain virtually all of the nation’s supply of anthracite or “hard coal.” The anthracite ranges cover four hundred and eighty-four square miles in nine counties: Dauphin, Schuylkill, Northumberland, Columbia, Carbon, Luzerne, Lackawanna, Wayne and Susquehanna. Sullivan County has deposits of what is considered semi-anthracite because its percentage of carbon falls between the limits of bituminous coal and those of true anthracite. It is estimated that 16 billion tons of coal lie within the anthracite seams in Pennsylvania, of which seven to eight billion tons of anthracite coal are capable of being mined. According to the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, anthracite mining occurs in eight Pennsylvania counties: Schuylkill, Carbon, Luzerne, Northumberland, Lackawanna, Columbia, Dauphin and Sullivan.

Anthracite, historically sometimes referenced as “stone coal,” is one of Pennsylvania’s most significant natural resources. The production of anthracite coal has historically been a major industry and source of employment in this Commonwealth. The mining and use of anthracite coal played a major role in the industrialization of Pennsylvania and the United States.

Anthracite coal was known to exist in the area of Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania as early as 1769. According to information from the United States Department of Labor’s Mine Safety and Health Administration, the mining of anthracite began in northeastern Pennsylvania in a mine located near Pittston in 1775. In 1820, the first recorded anthracite coal company, the Lehigh Coal Mining Company, began shipping anthracite out of the coal field region. Also, between 1870 and 1995, there have been 31,113 individuals that have died in anthracite mining accidents.

To help preserve and share the rich history of Pennsylvania anthracite, in 1971 the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission created the Anthracite Museum Complex, three museums (Pennsylvania Anthracite Heritage Museum, Eckley Miners’ Village, and Museum of Anthracite Mining) and one historical site (Scranton Iron Furnaces). For the reasons mentioned above, I firmly believe anthracite is worthy of being designated as the official state rock.

If you would like to cosponsor this legislation, please contact Pat Snively of my office by e-mailing her at psnively@pasen.gov.