

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 278 Session of 2017

INTRODUCED BY PICKETT, CORBIN, DONATUCCI, GABLER, HEFFLEY,  
PHILLIPS-HILL AND WHEELAND, JANUARY 31, 2017

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT, JANUARY 31, 2017

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.