Department of Legislative Services

Maryland General Assembly
2017 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 960 (Delegate Frick)
Health and Government Operations

State Designations - State Mineral - Chromite

This bill designates chromite as the State mineral.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Designating a State mineral does not affect State finances.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: The Maryland State Flag was adopted in 1904 followed by the adoption of the Black-eyed Susan as the State flower in 1918. Since then, the State has adopted many additional official symbols, as shown in **Exhibit 1**. The Governor is also authorized to designate a citizen as the State's Poet Laureate.

As the historical agency for Maryland, the State Archives is the central depository for government records of permanent value, as well as certain designated private records. These records are available to the public for research about topics, including State symbols, on an ongoing basis. The State Archivist may, on request or at the State Archivist's discretion, review, evaluate, and make recommendations to the General Assembly regarding State designations under Title 7 of the General Provisions Article.

Exhibit 1
State Symbols of Maryland

Type	Name	Statutory Authority
Bird	Baltimore Oriole	Ch. 54 of 1947
Boat	Skipjack	Ch. 788 of 1985
Cat	Calico Cat	Ch. 194 of 2001
Crustacean	Blue Crab	Ch. 724 of 1989
Dessert	Smith Island Cake	Chs. 164/165 of 2008
Dinosaur	*Astrodon johnstoni*	Chs. 403/404 of 1998
Dog	Chesapeake Bay Retriever	Ch. 156 of 1964
Drink	Milk	Ch. 220 of 1998
Exercise	Walking	Chs. 400/401 of 2008
Fish	Rockfish (Striped Bass)	Ch. 513 of 1965
Flower	Black-eyed Susan	Ch. 458 of 1918
Folk Dance	Square Dance	Ch. 707 of 1994
Fossil Shell	*Ecphora gardnerae gardnerae*	Ch. 688 of 1994
Gem	Patuxent River Stone	Ch. 272 of 2004
Horse	Thoroughbred Horse	Ch. 359 of 2003
Insect	Baltimore Checkerspot Butterfly	Ch. 253 of 1973
Reptile	Diamondback Terrapin	Ch. 476 of 1994
Song	"Maryland, My Maryland"	Ch. 451 of 1939
Sport	Jousting	Ch. 134 of 1962
Team Sport	Lacrosse	Ch. 272 of 2004
Theater	Center Stage	Ch. 1003 of 1978
Theater – Summer	Olney Theatre	Ch. 1003 of 1978
Tree	White Oak	Ch. 731 of 1941

Source: Maryland State Archives

Background: According to the preamble, chromite was first discovered in the United States by Isaac Tyson, Jr., in Bare Hills, Baltimore County. Later discoveries of the mineral were found in the serpentine barrens of Harford County, Cecil County, Soldier's Delight of Baltimore County, and southeastern Pennsylvania. Until the 1850s, this region provided most of the world's chromite. Isaac Tyson, Jr., established the Baltimore Chrome Works, the nation's first chromium chemicals plant in the United States, and exported the chromite via Baltimore Clipper ships from Fells Point in Baltimore. The preamble states that chromite is found in Baltimore, Carroll, Cecil, Harford, Howard, and Montgomery counties.

According to an excerpt of a republished Maryland Geological Survey Baltimore County report from 1929, "The commercial source of the element chromium is exclusively in the mineral chromite, which when pure, is an iron chromate of the formula FeO.Cr2O3. It is a heavy, opaque, iron- to brown-black mineral, with a pitchy luster, uneven fracture and hardness nearly that of steel. Geologically it is almost entirely restricted in occurrence to the dark ultrabasic rocks and their serpentinous derivatives. In Maryland chromite is found only in serpentine – a rock which is readily recognized by the barren country it produces. … The principal use of chromium is in the manufacture of ferrochrome, which, in turn, is used in making high-grade steel. The second most important use is as a refractory substance – chiefly as a lining in the basic open-hearth steel process, which produces three-quarters of the steel of the United States. Considerable amounts are used in the chemical industries – in tanning, dyeing cloth, and for pigments."

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: SB 1002 (Senator Zucker) - Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs.

Information Source(s): Maryland Geological Survey; National Mining Hall of Fame and Museum; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 27, 2017
md/lgc

Analysis by: Caroline L. Boice

Direct Inquiries to:
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510