



FRIENDS OF
SOLDIERS DELIGHT
SERPENTINE WILDLANDS

Natural Environment Area

March 13, 2025

David Shore, Jr.
MARYLAND GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY
6305 Poe Road
Bethesda, Maryland 20817

Re: House Bill 0411 and Senate Bill 0764 to designate chromite as Maryland's state mineral

Dear Mr. Shore:

On behalf of Soldiers Delight Conservation, Inc. (SDCI), the Friends group for Soldiers Delight Natural Environment Area in Owings Mills, Maryland, I am pleased to inform you that our board of directors voted unanimously on March 22, 2017 to endorse your effort to have chromite designated Maryland's state mineral.

SDCI supports the mission and activities of the Soldiers Delight Natural Environment Area, providing funds, materials and volunteers in an advisory capacity. Its predecessor organization "The Citizens' Committee for Soldiers Delight" dates back over 73 years, when local residents raised money and urged the State to purchase and set aside the special serpentine barrens in northwestern Baltimore County near Owings Mills as a conserve. Today, Soldiers Delight encompasses more than 2,000 acres and is managed by Patapsco Valley State Park under the auspices of the Department of Natural Resources.

The Maryland General Assembly has been supportive of efforts at Soldiers Delight over the years in protecting the land and giving much of the serpentine barrens "Wildlands" status. They provided funds for a Visitor Center with exhibits and displays from which a number of public programs originate. These programs not only highlight the ecology and natural history of Soldiers Delight, but underscore how the underlying geology drives the unique ecosystem which includes so many rare and endangered plant and animal species.

As I am sure you know, the geology of the serpentine area includes historic chromite deposits, mined during the 19th and early 20th centuries. Special "Mining History" and geology hikes educate the public concerning the old chrome mines with hands-on demonstrations of historical artifacts. These events are always well-attended. Activities include "panning" for chromite sands in a sluice-like wooden trough called a "buddle," much like the local Triplett family did for the Tysons for nearly 100 years from the 1820s to the 1920s. Event participants are awed to see the inclined entrance to the old Choate chrome mine, probably the best-preserved historic mine entrance in central Maryland, where they learn of Maryland's mineral heritage and history.

It is for these reasons that we join you in urging Maryland state legislators to vote in favor of House Bill 0411 and Senate Bill 0764. Chromite has a deep heritage in Maryland, much of it centered at Soldiers Delight, as well as other serpentine barrens. We invite you and our state representatives to visit our website at <http://www.soldiersdelight.org> to learn more about Soldiers Delight and the mineral chromite.

Very truly yours,

Lynell Tobler, Vice President
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cc: SDCI secretary Jason Domasky
LMT:hs

