

SENATE STATE GOVERNMENT, WAGERING, TOURISM &  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 1727

**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

DATED: MARCH 3, 2022

The Senate State Government, Wagering, Tourism and Historic Preservation Committee reports favorably Senate Bill No. 1727.

This bill designates franklinite as the official mineral of the State of New Jersey.

The mineral franklinite was first described in 1819 by Pierre Berthier and was named in honor of Benjamin Franklin. With a striking black color, submetallic luster, and sharp octahedral crystals, franklinite is aesthetically pleasing and makes for handsome mineral specimens, creating the potential for strong interest from mineral collectors around the world.

New Jersey has a long history of mineral mining, including two world-famous zinc mines in Sussex County, at Franklin and at Ogdensburg. These mines operated for more than 250 years, producing more than 33 million tons of high-grade zinc ore and contributing significantly to the economic vitality and cultural history of the State of New Jersey and the nation. Three hundred fifty-nine different confirmed minerals have been found in these two mines, 19 of which are not found anywhere else on Earth. Though millions of tons of franklinite, willemite, and zincite are found in these mines, they are found elsewhere only in small amounts.

The Franklin Mine closed in 1954, and the Ogdensburg (Sterling Hill) Mine closed in 1986, but both are memorialized by the Franklin Mineral Museum, the Sterling Hill Mining Museum, and the Franklin-Ogdensburg Mineralogical Society.

In 1968, New Jersey passed a resolution declaring the Borough of Franklin the “Fluorescent Mineral Capital of the World.” In a poll conducted by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection with several thousand national participants, 96 percent voted in support of franklinite as the New Jersey State mineral. In order to pay recognition to the scientific, economic, and historic importance of franklinite, it is fitting and appropriate to designate franklinite as the official mineral of the State of New Jersey.