

The Serpentine War

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For now, the battle over the California State Rock, Serpentine, is over. The bill, SB 624, to remove Serpentine as The State Rock of California has died in committee. The original bill was introduced in February of 2009, voted on in the senate with 36 for and 0 against. It was amended in April of 2009 and again in May of 2010. The original bill was not about Serpentine, but was an act to amend Section 49120 of the Public Resources Code, relating to solid waste (Garbage Collection and Disposal) and would remove the requirement that the city represented in this provision be incorporated. Then how did this bill get to be “The removal of Serpentine as our State Rock? Well, after the bill was introduced, voted on and passed in the senate, the bill was amended again in June of 2010 or should be correctly stated, completely re-written to change the content from garbage collection to Removal of Serpentine as the California State Rock. (The original vote of 36-0 did not change through all of the amendments) So in the dark of night and behind closed doors the entire text and purpose of the bill changed and the vote remained the same. That brings the bill to the War of The Rock. The bill as amended declares the rock “Serpentine” is asbestos and can cause cancer and should not be the state rock and must removed. There is one last amendment to the bill which removes the reference to asbestos and cancer, all that remains in the bill is to remove Serpentine as the State Rock of California from Section 425.2 of the Government Code. There is no reason given in the bill as to why the repeal of Serpentine as the California State rock needed. It is the fifth revision of SB 642 that has died in committee and saved our State Rock. Part of the reason that this bill failed is because of the contacts made to State Officials by the Rockhound community. The voicing of outrage and concern over SB 642 helped to kill this bill. All of those who contacted their representatives and spoke out over this piece of bad and unnecessary legislation deserve congratulations and a very big Thank You for their support. Without the letters, emails and phone calls that were placed, we may not have a State Rock today. Even though it died in committee, comments that were received from State Senators and Assembly Members stated they were not going to support or vote for the bill if and when it came to the floor for final approval. Again, for all of those who helped in this noble campaign to save Serpentine, another big Thank You. Your support effort does show that the system can and does work. For more information on the bill and its amendments go to the ALAA Website www.amlands.org/6652/67112.html and see all the history on SB 642.