

Drop the rock

Paul S. Zygielbaum, Santa Rosa Press Democrat, 8-6-10

Letter to the editor

Bob Christofferson's letter about legislation to remove serpentine as California's state rock is misguided ("Special-interest bills," Monday). Fiscal crises and mesothelioma attorneys have nothing to do with this.

The bill was conceived and is advocated by the Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization, a nonprofit group founded and operated by victims of asbestos-related diseases and their families. The Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization leads a national, grass-roots campaign to prohibit asbestos-containing products in America.

In 1965, urged by the asbestos industry, California designated serpentine as its state rock. A greenish stone with white inclusions of asbestos, serpentine is deadly when asbestos fibers are released. Serpentine's official status insults the many thousands of Californians who have suffered and died from asbestos-related diseases and the many who will.

The new legislation will emphasize that continued exposure of California families and workers to asbestos poisoning is unacceptable.

There are always crises, always other pressing issues. They don't matter when you or someone you love is struck down by the world's deadliest carcinogen, which kills some 10,000 Americans each year.

It's time to stand with us against the killing. Please call your state Senate and Assembly members and tell them that you support Senate Bill 624 to drop serpentine as our state rock.