Dear authors,

As you can see, I have now received two reviews of your manuscript. Both reviews have a positive tone. “The idea behind the set of experiments reported in this paper is good...the approach with high-resolution pictures made during the experiments is of great value...” (Reviewer #1). “I enjoyed reading the paper as it provides interesting new data and associated discussion” (Reviewer #2). However, the reviews also highlight areas in which the manuscript can be improved. For example, both reviewers ask for clarification on the role of confining pressure, whether there are other micromechanisms at play, and whether or not the authors should consider running additional experiments to bolster the discussion topics. If you are willing, please now prepare a point-by-point rebuttal letter and revised manuscript.

Thank you for choosing Solid Earth. We hope that you consider us again for your future manuscripts.

Mike Heap (Topical Editor of Solid Earth)