

COUNTY OF LAKE
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
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December 10, 2024
SENT VIA EMAIL TO BGNEXEC@usgs.gov
Shellie Zahniser, Executive Secretary
U.S. Board on Geographic Names
U.S. Geological Survey
12201 Sunrise Valley Drive, MS 523
Reston, VA 20192-0523

**RE: Response to Citizens for Healing’s Proposed Kelseyville-Konocti Name Change
(Quarterly Review List 454)**

Dear Honorable Executive Secretary Zahniser and Board of Geographic Names Domestic Names Committee Members:

As you are aware, on October 19, 2023, a Lake County-based organization known as Citizens for Healing submitted a proposal to change the name of the unincorporated Lake County community of Kelseyville to Konocti. This Proposal subsequently appeared on your Committee’s Quarterly Review List 454, and on February 26, 2024, research staff to the Board on Geographic Names (BGN) formally requested the Lake County Board of Supervisors submit a Recommendation in response to the Proposal. In that February message, you noted you had already received considerable local input on this matter; in total, hundreds of individuals have submitted comments, and a strong majority of those opposed the proposal.

On Tuesday, July 30, 2024, the Lake County Board of Supervisors held a Special Meeting, and acted to place an Advisory Measure on the November Ballot, seeking non-binding input on the following question: “Shall the Board of Supervisors recommend approval of the proposal to change the name of the town of ‘Kelseyville’ to ‘Konocti?’” Lake County Registered Voters (*Countywide*) opposed the proposal by a margin of 70.58% to 29.42%.

Despite repeated inquiries, the criteria by which the Domestic Names Committee will reach your ultimate decision remain unclear. County staff sent process-focused questions March 1, 2024. Those were most substantively answered in your Committee’s Frequently Asked Questions document of October 3, 2024, published on the County of Lake website October 4, 2024: <https://www.lakecountyca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/12559/BGN---Frequently-Asked-Questions-for-the-proposal-to-change-the-name-of-Kelseyville-to-Konocti?bidId=>

Further, our Board's members are aware a Yes/No determination regarding the proposed Name Change cannot fully speak to the complex history of our diverse communities. Lake County residents living now are descendants of people who escaped violence; what seem remote events to some reverberate quite meaningfully to the present day for their neighbors.

The name, "Kelseyville," carries many different associations for Lake County residents; some have invested significantly in marketing this community as a tourist destination, for example, and, as you will have seen in several of the comments submitted to your Committee, the pride they feel for their hometown (*and its existing name*) are not connected to its namesake.

Option 1 (*Reject the proposed Name Change, adopting the result of the Advisory Measure*): In response to Advisory Measure U, Lake County residents demonstrated their Opposition to the proposed Name Change. Members of this Board remain concerned moral questions raised by this matter are not resolved by either option. However, it is our collective Recommendation your Committee Reject the proposed Name Change.

Option 2 (*Approve the proposed Name Change*): In response to Advisory Measure U, Lake County residents demonstrated their Opposition to the proposed Name Change, and members of our Board have concern changing a longstanding and valued town name is a non-trivial matter. However, our collective awareness of the violent acts committed by Kelsey and Stone demand change. Therefore, it is our collective Recommendation your Committee Approve the proposed Name Change.

Option 3 (*No Formal Recommendation*): In response to Advisory Measure U, Lake County residents demonstrated their Opposition to the proposed Name Change, and members of our Board have concern changing a longstanding and valued town name is a non-trivial matter. However, our Board is also aware of the violent acts committed by Kelsey and Stone, and cannot endorse keeping the name. Therefore, our Board will not be making a formal Recommendation in this federal process.

Sincerely,

Bruno Sabatier, Chair
Lake County Board of Supervisors

Cc: Congressman Mike Thompson; Senator Alex Padilla; Senator LaPhonza Butler; Senator-Elect Adam Schiff; State Senate President pro Tempore, Mike McGuire; Assembly Majority Leader Cecilia Aguiar-Curry; Secretary Wade Crowfoot, California Natural Resources Agency; California Advisory Committee on Geographic Names