

# FAQs for the proposal to change the name of Kelseyville to Konocti



Domestic Names Committee  
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# FAQs for the proposal to change the name of Kelseyville to Konocti

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## Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide answers to the most frequently asked questions from Lake County, CA residents that have arisen from a proposal submitted to the U.S. Board on Geographic Names (BGN) to change the name of Kelseyville, CA to Konocti, CA. The citizens of Lake County, CA require accurate and timely information for their own decision making regarding the non-binding Measure U on the November, 2024 ballot. As such, the BGN has developed this document in an effort to acknowledge and address the public's concerns, and remediate misinformation ahead of the vote.

This document is organized in a manner that lays out the BGN authorities and procedures, relationship to the proposed change, and the effects of the potential change to the local community. Readers are encouraged to also review the BGN's [Principles, Policies and Procedures](#) document for additional information.

## Authorities and Procedures of the U.S. Board on Geographic Names (BGN)

Why does the BGN have purview/authority to name and/or rename unincorporated communities?

- U.S. Code, Title 43, Ch. 11A: BOARD ON GEOGRAPHIC NAMES (Public Law 80-242) established the authority of the BGN:
  - “The Secretary of the Interior, hereinafter called the Secretary, conjointly with the Board on Geographic Names, as hereinafter provided, shall provide for uniformity in geographic nomenclature and orthography throughout the Federal Government... The Board, subject to the approval of the Secretary, shall formulate principles, policies, and procedures to be followed with reference to both domestic and foreign geographic names; and shall decide the standard names and their orthography for official use... With respect to geographic names the pertinent decisions and principles issued by the Secretary shall be standard for all material published by the Federal Government.”

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Does the BGN have the authority to rename all “geographic features?”

- The BGN considers “geographic names” to include any name on a Federal map.
- The BGN makes decisions on the names of geographic features that are not formally or legally established by any other authority.
- The BGN makes decisions on the names of geographic features that will be represented on Federal products, maps, publications, etc.
- The BGN decisions do not govern the state and local use of names. Therefore, **if** the BGN votes to approve the name change from Kelseyville to Konocti, the local residents may still refer to the unincorporated populated place as Kelseyville, though the BGN prefers to make decisions that reflect local preference and encourages adoption at the local and state level. However, all Federal maps and publications will only use the name Konocti, thereafter.

What is the typical BGN review procedure?

- The BGN is responsible for standardizing geographic names for Federal use. The BGN responds only when proposals are submitted by any member of the public; local, State, or Tribal governments and land management agencies; or any other interested party, and does not seek to rename features on its own accord. The BGN staff conducts an initial review of each new proposal and provided it does not violate a BGN principle or policy, prepares a case brief to be added to the next Quarterly Review List.
- Local input is an important part of the BGN’s deliberations. Requests are sent by BGN staff to the appropriate local government(s), State Geographic Names Authority, Federal land management agency/ies (if relevant), and all federally recognized Tribes, seeking their recommendations. Once these parties have had an opportunity to comment, the proposal is added to the BGN’s monthly docket for discussion and a decision.

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## What is the typical BGN review timeline?

- Each proposal is unique, and the BGN asks for formal recommendations from county governments, State Geographic Names Authorities, Federal land management agencies (if the feature is located on federally managed land), and federally recognized Tribes. There is no set timeline for BGN review, and the length of the process is driven by the time it takes to receive all relevant feedback rather than internal deadlines. Some proposals may take a long time to research, and groups that are asked for formal recommendations may not be able to respond quickly. The BGN does not vote until these parties have had an opportunity to provide input. The fastest a proposal might be voted on is about 3 months because BGN policy requires that federally recognized Tribes have at least 60 days to comment on any proposal they have an interest in. This only occurs when all other recommendations have been submitted with the proposal.

## How will the California Advisory Committee on Geographic Names (CACGN)/BGN research this application and incorporate public input?

- The BGN staff researches the history of the existing name and the proposed replacement, relying on available sources, both online and in the BGN's library of place name books, Federal maps and publications, and from information provided by interested parties. The BGN relies on the county government, the State Geographic Names Authority, Federal land management agencies (if the feature is located on federally managed land), and federally recognized Tribes to provide input. The BGN trusts that these parties will conduct their own additional research and conduct any additional public outreach as needed.
- Once all parties have provided input, it is consolidated by the BGN staff into a case summary for the docket. The BGN's voting members review the docket just prior to the monthly meeting and during their deliberations at that meeting, not any time before. The voting members take all information, recommendations, and other details into account when voting on a proposal.

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Will work products of CACGN/BGN's own analysis be made publicly available?

- The publicly available work products include: 1) the Quarterly Review List (prepared shortly after receipt of the proposal) and 2) the monthly BGN meeting docket (see [question above](#)). A thorough case summary is included in the docket. Meeting minutes include the vote count and any salient comments or reasoning for the decision. These minutes are posted on the [BGN webpage](#) after they are approved at the subsequent BGN meeting.

Will comments be formally invited from members of the public during a prescribed period (*in addition to ongoing informal submittal of comments*)?

- The BGN has no process for formally inviting the public to comment. However, the introduction to each Quarterly Review List notes that any interested party is welcome to comment, and that input can be submitted to the BGN by mail or email.
- The BGN does not have the resources to handle large volumes of emails directly from individuals. The BGN makes decisions based on formal recommendations from parties (county government, State Geographic Names Authority, Tribal governments). Emails from individuals for or against a proposal, online petitions or mailing campaigns are acknowledged, but do not significantly influence the decision. The public is encouraged to engage directly with their local government(s) to comment on proposals.

Will submitted comments be published on CACGN/BGN webpages? Will they be vetted for accuracy?

- The BGN understands and appreciates how consequential a name change may be, and all impacted persons should have accurate information. Because there is no local government for Kelseyville, the BGN relies heavily on the input of the County and State officials to represent their constituents on these matters. These officials can request as much additional time as is needed to collect and vet input from the community in a manner that works best for them.

(Answers continue on next page...)



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- The BGN does not have the ability to vet each comment and must ensure that any Personally Identifiable Information (PII) provided by the public is protected.
  - The Federal government defines PII as: Any representation of information that permits the identity of an individual to whom the information applies to be reasonably inferred by either direct or indirect means. Further, PII is defined as information: (i) that directly identifies an individual (e.g., name, address, social security number or other identifying number or code, telephone number, email address, etc.) or (ii) by which an agency intends to identify specific individuals in conjunction with other data elements, i.e., indirect identification. (These data elements may include a combination of gender, race, birth date, geographic indicator, and other descriptors). Additionally, information permitting the physical or online contacting of a specific individual is the same as personally identifiable information. This information can be maintained in either paper, electronic or other media.
- The BGN and its staff will NOT debate facts or opinions included in submitted comments. The BGN staff's case summary is presented to the BGN members before they vote. It provides the most accurate and verifiable facts as possible and summarizes the submitted statements, comments, and recommendations.

## The BGN's Relationship to Community Names/Kelseyville

Why does the BGN consider communities to be "geographic features" and their names to be "geographic names"?

- The BGN considers any name that is shown on a map to be a "geographic name," including the names of communities. "Geographic names" include more than just natural land or water features, for example.

What is an unincorporated community?

- Kelseyville is an example of an unincorporated community, and therefore falls under the purview of the BGN.
- The BGN considers unincorporated communities to be communities that lack a formal defined boundary, and which have no elected local government other than the county government.

(Answers continue on next page...)

# FAQs for the proposal to change the name of Kelseyville to Konocti

- The BGN does NOT have purview to name or rename incorporated cities, towns, villages, boroughs, etc.
- Unincorporated community names, especially those that date back many decades, arise organically without any formal designation other than common use or consensus by local residents.
- The names of Post Offices, Census Designated Places, and County Divisions are separate and distinct from those of unincorporated communities. Other Federal agencies have purview over the names of these entities, although they are frequently derived from and agree with the already locally established community name.

## How does the BGN describe a Populated Place?

- A “Populated Place” represents a named community with a permanent human population. Most populated places are not incorporated and have no legal boundaries. Populated places include unincorporated rural clustered buildings, unincorporated places with large populations, major metropolitan cities, and every size in between.
- The extent of an unincorporated community is subjective and is not determined by the BGN. The extent does not necessarily coincide with a ZIP Code or Census Designated Place with the same name.

## Effects of a Name Change to the Local Community

### What specific feature would the proposal rename if approved?

- The feature in consideration for renaming is the populated place with the official name of [Kelseyville](#) recorded in the [Geographic Names Information System](#) (official Federal names database).

### What is the geographic area that would be covered by the name change?

- Unincorporated communities, by definition, do not have geographic boundaries. [See above.](#) The name Kelseyville, as recognized by the BGN, refers to the general extent of the community independent of the ZIP Code, Census Designated Place, or County Division.



# FAQs for the proposal to change the name of Kelseyville to Konocti

If the proposed Kelseyville-Konocti Name Change is approved, what exactly would change? What will the process be?

- The name of the unincorporated populated place currently called Kelseyville would be changed in GNIS (official Federal names database). Konocti would become the official name to be used on Federal maps and in Federal publications.
- Any BGN change has no direct effect on the use of the name “Kelseyville” in any State and local maps or publications.
- The BGN does not direct or require any use of official Federal geographic names by private mapping companies (e.g. Google Maps, Apple Maps, Waze, etc.).
- Federal agencies would be required to start using the new name on their maps and in their publications. Such updates are made in accordance with each Federal agency’s normal data revision cycles.
- The names of the ZIP Code and Census Designated Place would not automatically change. The U.S. Postal Service and the Census Bureau have their own procedures for evaluating and processing any potential changes to the names of these features. [Please see question below “Will my mailing or physical address change?”](#)

Would Special Districts with the name “Kelseyville” need to change? (e.g., School, Fire Protection, Water/Sewer and Cemetery Districts)

- Any such changes would be the responsibility of the local school, fire, water authority, etc. The BGN has no authority for local or State requirements.

Will my mailing or physical address change?

- No, there will not be any direct or immediate effects on mailing or physical addresses. The BGN does not have the authority to establish or change mailing addresses or ZIP Code names.
- Any change to the mailing address (“city name”) would be decided by the U.S. Postal Service, independent of the BGN’s decision on the community name.
- The USPS members on the BGN have advised that a request to change the last line mailing address needs to be submitted to the local postmaster to initiate the process. The USPS has its own criteria that it would use to evaluate whether a mailing address change is warranted. If the USPS determines that Kelseyville should be retained as the recommended city name, they would decide whether Konocti should be acceptable for use in mailing addresses, i.e., “Other City Name Recognized For Addresses in this ZIP Code.” (For example, ZIP Code 95461 in Lake County has the recommended city name Middletown but allows use of Loch Lomond for certain addresses.)

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Will my Zip Code be affected? (e.g., Will all addresses with a Kelseyville-named Zip Code be changed to Konocti?)

- See [previous question](#). This would be a question for the U.S. Postal Service.

Would my business licenses or permits need to be changed (to reflect a “Konocti” address)? (Some concerns have surrounded industries regulated by the State of California, such as Alcoholic Beverage Control licensure for wineries and other alcohol service businesses, and Contractors’ licenses)

- This question should be directed to the appropriate State offices.
- Please refer to question [“Will my mailing or physical address change?”](#)

Will financial support be made available to Businesses, Special Districts, and/or other entities to make changes to signage and cover other costs associated with the name change?

- The BGN does not provide financial support to cover such changes. The BGN’s responsibility is to establish a name for use on Federal products. If the County Board of Supervisors determines that the potential financial impacts are too burdensome, the BGN would invite the Board to provide that information in its recommendation to the BGN.
- The BGN does not require that a local business (e.g. “Kelseyville Diner”) must change its name, because the BGN is responsible for standardizing geographic names for Federal use.

Are State/Federal resources typically provided to Counties when a name change is under consideration within their boundaries? If so, do you have information on how Lake County would access these?

- The BGN does not have resources to provide to local jurisdictions.
- For State resources, please consult the relevant State offices.

# FAQs for the proposal to change the name of Kelseyville to Konocti

Will property titles, deeds, estate plans, business licenses, rental agreements and other legal documents need to be updated to reflect a “Konocti” address, if the name change is approved?

- The BGN does not provide guidance on the local or state administrative processes. The public is encouraged to contact their relevant state/county offices.

What about the other “Kelseyville” features in Geographic Names Information System (GNIS; official Federal names database)?

- In addition to Kelseyville (the unincorporated populated place), GNIS includes two other features with “Kelseyville” in their names: Kelseyville Census Designated Place and Kelseyville Division (which is equivalent to what the Census Bureau calls the Kelseyville Census County Division). Any name change for the unincorporated Populated Place of Kelseyville would not affect the names of these two features, which are named by the Census Bureau. GNIS does not record ZIP Code names.