

From: [BGNEEXEC, GS-N-MAC](#)
To: [Bruno Sabatier](#)
Cc: [Carolyn Purdy](#); [Eddie Crandell](#); [Moke Simon](#); [Michael Green](#); [Jessica Pyska](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Request for Lake County's recommendation on Kelseyville to Konocti name change
Date: Monday, February 26, 2024 8:35:32 AM
Attachments: [CA_KONOCTI_proposal.pdf](#)
[Cover Letter to BGN.docx](#)
[BGN recommendation form.pdf](#)

Mr. Bruno Sabatier, Chairman
Lake County Board of Supervisors

Dear Chairman Sabatier:

We are contacting the Lake County Board of Supervisors in reference to the proposal that has been submitted to the U.S. Board on Geographic Names (BGN) to change the name of the community of [Kelseyville](#) to [Konocti](#). As you know, an organization titled Citizens for Healing has asked that the community be renamed, citing a concern that “The name Kelsey is offensive to the local tribes and to many residents throughout the County.”

As you may also be aware, the BGN is responsible [by law](#) for standardizing geographic names for use by the Federal government and its members must approve any new name or name change before it can appear on Federal maps and products. The BGN's authority includes the names of unincorporated communities, specifically for Federal use.

Local opinion is important to the BGN, so this email serves as a formal request for a recommendation from the Lake County Board of Supervisors.

The BGN’s policies and processes are detailed at https://d9-wret.s3.us-west-2.amazonaws.com/assets/palladium/production/s3fs-public/media/files/DNC_PPP.pdf#page=1; see *Chapter 3, Policy II: Name Changes*, and *Policy V: Derogatory and Offensive Names*, and *Chapter 4. Domestic Geographic Names Procedures and Guidelines*. A series of frequently asked questions regarding the proposal process can also be found at <https://www.usgs.gov/us-board-on-geographic-names/guidance-name-proposals>.

A summary of the proposal to change [Kelseyville](#) to [Konocti](#) is listed on the BGN’s Quarterly Review List 454; see <https://www.usgs.gov/us-board-on-geographic-names/dnc-review-lists>, specifically pgs. 7-11 of the PDF. Also attached here is the application from Citizens for Healing.

We have asked the California Geographic Naming Advisory Board ([CACGN](#)) to provide its opinion, and in accordance with Federal policies regarding Tribal consultation, we have asked all federally recognized Indian Tribes if they wish to comment (Tribes are provided with a link to each new quarterly review list, with an invitation to comment on any proposal in which they have an interest. If no response is received in 60 days, unless more time is requested, we presume the Tribe does not have an opinion). To date, the BGN has received support for the change to Konocti from the Big Valley Band of Pomo Indians of the Big Valley Rancheria; the Habematolel Pomo of Upper Lake Tribe; and the Robinson Rancheria.

We have also to date received approximately 48 emails in support of the change and 125 opposed; you were copied on many of these. A group titled Save the Name of Kelseyville has also expressed strong opposition to the change, and we received a copy of the 282 postcards signed by area residents.

We understand the CACGN has also received opinions both for and against. The CACGN is scheduled to meet next on March 8; although they are not expected to vote on the matter at that meeting, we anticipate the chair will introduce the case and perhaps invite some preliminary discussion.

It has also come to our attention that there seems to be some question as to whether the community was in fact named for Andrew Kelsey (or his immediate family); perhaps more research is needed.

A few individuals have suggested that the existing name could be retained but be redesignated to commemorate a different person(s) named Kelsey. The BGN would need to receive a formal proposal to change the honoree; we have not received one yet, but of course if one is submitted, we will let you know. We can already predict that such a suggestion would not be well received by those who support a name change, and there is no guarantee the BGN would approve it, but the BGN chair has informed us that the option could be considered.

Finally, a number of individuals have expressed concern that the Federal government will render a decision without local input. Please be assured that all opinions will be evaluated by the BGN before it makes its final decision. The BGN is also reluctant to change longstanding names but will consider doing so if there is a compelling reason and evidence of local support. The BGN is also aware that renaming a community is a significant matter and the BGN prefers to be deliberate in considering such requests.

Attached is a copy of the BGN's recommendation form for your use.

Thank you for taking the time to review this request. If you have questions, or if you wish to discuss the role and responsibilities of the BGN, we can be contacted at BGNEEXEC@usgs.gov or at (703) 648-4550.

Regards,

Jennifer Runyon, research staff

U.S. Board on Geographic Names

U.S. Geological Survey

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[Domestic Names | U.S. Geological Survey \(usgs.gov\)](https://www.usgs.gov/centers/geographic-names/)