



**COUNTY OF LAKE
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

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February 4, 2025

SENT VIA EMAIL (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: Request for Changes to BGN Principles, Policies, and Procedures in Response to President Donald J. Trump's Executive Order "Restoring Names that Honor American Greatness"

Honorable Secretary [[Cruickshank/Burgum, Burgum Confirmation Expected to be Voted on Thursday, January 30](#)], Executive Secretary Zahniser, and Members of the Board on Geographic Names' Domestic Names Committee,

The purpose of this correspondence is to supplement the Lake County Board of Supervisors' December 10, 2024, Letter (attached, for your reference) sent to the United States Board on Geographic Names' (BGN's) Domestic Names Committee (DNC).

As you will be aware, on January 20, 2025, President Donald J. Trump issued an Executive Order, "Restoring Names that Honor American Greatness" (attached). Section 2(c) of the Executive Order expressly permits the BGN Board to update its principles, policies, and procedures with respect to all applications proposing a name change within the BGN's authority.

In light of the foregoing, the County of Lake hereby requests the BGN develop, update, and expand its procedures and policies to address specific issues concerning proposals to rename unincorporated "Populated Places." Populated Places are communities where people live, work, and own businesses, and the current policies and procedures lack clarity, contain conflicting information, and have generally frustrated the residents of Lake County.

Consideration should be given to developing robust policies and procedures that support the local government and promote community consensus-building and transparency. Said policies and procedures should incorporate the following:

- Upon BGN's acceptance of an application, BGN should initiate interagency and governmental consultation and coordination to delineate the process, assign roles and responsibilities, and design a process to effectively interface with the public.
- Define a process for Public Comment in a manner that would encourage public participation and allow for appropriate transparency surrounding BGN decision-making.
- Address multiple or competing applications involving the same area.
- Develop a process for "alternate names" upon the submission of an application to BGN.
- Provide definitions of "populated areas" and "towns and townships" and clarify the naming authorities when unincorporated "towns" in California are under the governing authority of the County.

- Coordinate with state and local naming committees to support public engagement in the form of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), informational webinars, and community listening sessions.

Name Change Proposals profoundly affect populated communities. Lake County residents have been deeply frustrated by difficulty obtaining clear and consistent information from both Federal and State naming authorities; changes to policies and procedures are needed, and this work needs to be appropriately resourced. The Lake County Board of Supervisors appreciates your earnest consideration of these comments.

Respectfully,

Chair
Lake County Board of Supervisors
COUNTY OF LAKE

Cc: Congressman Mike Thompson; Senator Alex Padilla; Senator 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