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*"Rummaging in the government's attic"*

Description of document: United States Geological Survey (USGS) emails in the accounts of Shellie Zahniser and Chris Hammond containing the words McKinley or Denali or Gulf, January 20-25, 2025

Requested date: 25-January-2025

Release date: 15-July-2025

Posted date: 04-August-2025

Source of document: FOIA Request  
USGS FOIA  
P.O. Box 66783  
Albuquerque, NM 87193  
Email: [foia@usgs.gov](mailto:foia@usgs.gov)  
[FOIA.gov](http://FOIA.gov)

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## United States Department of the Interior

U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY  
12201 Sunrise Valley Drive  
Reston, Virginia 20192-0002

In Reply Refer To:  
U.S. Geological Survey  
Attention: Judy Cearley  
Post Office Box 66783  
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87193

July 15, 2025

Re: U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Tracking #  
DOI-2025-003260 – Final Response

This letter is our final response to your FOIA request dated January 25, 2025, for the following:

Copy of each email in the email account of Shellie Zahniser (USGS) between January 20, 2025 and present that contains the word McKinley OR the word Denali OR the word Gulf. A copy of each email in the email account of Chris Hammond (USGS) between January 20, 2025 and present that contains the word McKinley OR the word Denali OR the word Gulf.

On March 17, 2025, we released 107 pages in our first interim response.

In this response, we are releasing one Portable Document Format (PDF) electronic file, consisting of 141 pages, in part. We reasonably foresee that disclosure would harm an interest protected by one or more of the nine exemptions to the FOIA's general rule of disclosure and disclosure would be prohibited by law; therefore, portions of these materials are being withheld under the following FOIA exemptions. Please note that some pages contain redactions pursuant to more than one exemption.

### Exemption 3

Exemption 3 allows the withholding of information protected by a nondisclosure provision in a federal statute other than the FOIA. Specifically, disclosure of organizational and personnel information: exemption for specified intelligence agencies, 10 U.S. Code § 424b(3), prohibits the release of the number of persons employed by or assigned or detailed to any such organization or the name, official title, occupational series, grade, or salary of any organization or any function

of, and certain information pertaining to employees of the Defense Intelligence Agency, the National Reconnaissance Office, and the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency. Approximately 15 pages contain redactions per Exemption 3.

### Exemption 5

Exemption 5 allows an agency to withhold “inter-agency or intra-agency memorandums or letters which would not be available by law to a party ... in litigation with the agency.” 5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(5). Exemption 5 therefore incorporates the privileges that protect materials from discovery in litigation, including the deliberative process, attorney work-product, attorney-client, and commercial information privileges. Approximately 19 pages contain redactions under Exemption 5 because they qualify to be withheld under the following privileges:

#### *Deliberative Process Privilege*

The deliberative process privilege protects the decision-making process of government agencies and encourages the frank exchange of ideas on legal or policy matters by ensuring agencies are not forced to operate in a fishbowl. A number of policy purposes have been attributed to the deliberative process privilege, such as: (1) assuring that subordinates will feel free to provide the decisionmaker with their uninhibited opinions and recommendations; (2) protecting against premature disclosure of proposed policies; and (3) protecting against confusing the issues and misleading the public.

The deliberative process privilege protects materials that are both predecisional and deliberative. The privilege covers records that reflect the give-and-take of the consultative process and may include recommendations, draft documents, proposals, suggestions, and other subjective documents which reflect the personal opinions of the writer rather than the policy of the agency.

The materials that have been withheld under the deliberative process privilege of Exemption 5 are both predecisional and deliberative. They do not contain or represent formal or informal agency policies or decisions. They are the result of frank and open discussions among employees of the Department of the Interior. Their contents have been held confidential by all parties and public dissemination of this information would expose the agency’s decision-making process in such a way as to discourage candid discussion within the agency, and thereby undermine its ability to perform its mandated functions.

#### *Attorney-Client Privilege*

The attorney-client privilege protects confidential communications between an attorney and his client relating to a legal matter for which the client has sought professional advice and is not limited to the context of litigation. Moreover, although it fundamentally applies to confidential facts divulged by a client to his/her attorney, this privilege also encompasses any opinions given by an attorney to his/her client based upon, and thus reflecting, those facts, as well as communications between attorneys that reflect confidential client-supplied information. The information that has been withheld under the attorney-client privilege of Exemption 5 constitutes confidential communications between federal attorneys and agency clients, related to

legal matters for which the client sought professional legal assistance and services. It also encompasses opinions given by attorneys to their clients based on client-supplied facts about a personnel action. Additionally, the USGS employees who communicated with the attorneys regarding this information were clients of the attorneys at the time the information was generated and the attorneys were acting in their capacities as lawyers at the time they communicated legal advice. The USGS has held this information confidential and has not waived the attorney-client privilege.

#### Exemption 6

Exemption 6 allows an agency to withhold “personnel and medical files and similar files the disclosure of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy.” 5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(6). The phrase “similar files” covers any agency records containing information about a particular individual that can be identified as applying to that individual. To determine whether releasing records containing information about a particular individual would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy, we are required to balance the privacy interest that would be affected by disclosure against any public interest in the information.

Under the FOIA, the only relevant public interest to consider under the exemption is the extent to which the information sought would shed light on agency’s performance of its statutory duties or otherwise let citizens “know what their government is up to.” The burden is on the requester to establish that disclosure would serve the public interest. When the privacy interest at stake and the public interest in disclosure have been determined, the two competing interests must be weighed against one another to determine which is the greater result of disclosure: the harm to personal privacy or the benefit to the public. The purposes for which the request for information is made do not impact this balancing test, as a release of information requested under the FOIA constitutes a release to the general public.

The information that has been withheld under Exemption 6 consists of personal email addresses, home addresses, mobile phone numbers, names and email addresses of military personnel, names and identifying information of State Department personnel, and other personal matters. We have determined that the individuals to whom the information pertains have a substantial privacy interest in withholding it. Additionally, you have not provided information that explains a relevant public interest under the FOIA in the disclosure of this personal information and we have determined that the disclosure of this information would shed little or no light on the performance of the agency’s statutory duties. Because the harm to personal privacy is greater than whatever public interest may be served by disclosure, release of the information would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of the privacy of these individuals and we are withholding the information under Exemption 6. Approximately 55 pages have been redacted under exemption 6.

Judy Cearley, Government Information Specialist, is responsible for this partial denial. Jennifer Heindl, Attorney Advisor with the Department of Interior, Office of the Solicitor, was consulted regarding this response.

### Appeal Rights

You may appeal this response to the Department of the Interior's FOIA/Privacy Act Appeals Officer. If you choose to appeal, the FOIA/Privacy Act Appeals Officer must receive your FOIA appeal **no later than 90 workdays** from the date of this letter. Appeals arriving or delivered after 5 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday, will be deemed received on the next workday.

**Your appeal must be made in writing.** You may submit your appeal and accompanying materials to the FOIA/Privacy Act Appeals Officer by mail, courier service, fax, or email. All communications concerning your appeal should be clearly marked with the words: "FREEDOM OF INFORMATION APPEAL." You must include an explanation of why you believe the USGS's response is in error. You must also include with your appeal copies of all correspondence between you and USGS concerning your FOIA request, including your original FOIA request and USGS's response. Failure to include with your appeal all correspondence between you and USGS will result in the Department's rejection of your appeal, unless the FOIA/Privacy Act Appeals Officer determines (in the FOIA/Privacy Act Appeals Officer's sole discretion) that good cause exists to accept the defective appeal.

Please include your name and daytime telephone number (or the name and telephone number of an appropriate contact), email address and fax number (if available) in case the FOIA/Privacy Act Appeals Officer needs additional information or clarification of your appeal.

#### *DOI FOIA/Privacy Act Appeals Office Contact Information*

Department of the Interior  
Office of the Solicitor  
1849 C Street, Northwest  
MS-6556 MIB  
Washington, DC 20240  
Attn: FOIA/Privacy Act Appeals Office  
Telephone: (202) 208-5339  
Fax: (202) 208-6677  
Email: [FOIA.Appeals@sol.doi.gov](mailto:FOIA.Appeals@sol.doi.gov)

The 2007 FOIA amendments created the Office of Government Information Services (OGIS) to offer mediation services to resolve disputes between FOIA requesters and Federal agencies as a non-exclusive alternative to litigation. Using OGIS services does not affect your right to pursue litigation. You may contact OGIS in any of the following ways:

Office of Government Information Services  
National Archives and Records Administration  
8601 Adelphi Road – OGIS  
College Park, Maryland 20740-6001  
Telephone: (202) 741-5770  
Fax: (202) 741-5769  
Toll-free: 1-877-684-6448

E-mail: [ogis@nara.gov](mailto:ogis@nara.gov)  
Web: <https://www.archives.gov/ogis>

Please note that using OGIS services does not affect the timing of filing an appeal with the Department's FOIA & Privacy Act Appeals Officer. Contact information for the Department's FOIA Public Liaison, who you may also seek dispute resolution services from, is available at <https://www.doi.gov/foia/foiacenters>.

This completes our response to your request. If you have any questions about our response to your request, please contact me by email at [jcearley@usgs.gov](mailto:jcearley@usgs.gov).

Sincerely,

**JUDY  
CEARLEY**

Judy Cearley  
U.S. Geological Survey  
Government Information Specialist

Digitally signed by  
JUDY CEARLEY  
Date: 2025.07.15  
09:12:48 -07'00'

Enclosure:  
Final Combined Records\_Redacted.pdf (141 pages)

**From:** O'Donnell, Matthew J  
**To:** NGP NGTOC TNM Help, GS-N-HQ; BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC; Pawlitz, Rachel J; Tischler, Michael A; Zahniser, Shellie R; St. Onge, Tim; Anderson, Gina R  
**Cc:** Rufe, Philip P; bgnexec@nga.mil  
**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] BBC News - Media Request  
**Date:** Tuesday, January 7, 2025 10:47:44 AM

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Hi all,

I'm ccing the Foreign Names Committee Executive Secretary on here. My initial answer was correct, but given that the United States, Mexico, and Cuba all have shorelines on the Gulf of Mexico, the answer may be more complicated.

(b) (6), (b) (3), (b) (5) can you provide any information on how the President or Congress renaming the Gulf of Mexico might work from an international/Foreign Names Committee perspective?

Mtt

Matt O'Donnell  
BGN research staff  
Phone: 703-648-4553 (work) / 571-562-3504 (cell)  
Email: mjdodonnell@usgs.gov

**From:** O'Donnell, Matthew J <mjdodonnell@usgs.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 7, 2025 1:09 PM  
**To:** NGP NGTOC TNM Help, GS-N-HQ <tnm\_help@usgs.gov>; BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnextec@usgs.gov>; Pawlitz, Rachel J <rpawlitz@usgs.gov>; Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>; Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>; St. Onge, Tim <tong@loc.gov>; Anderson, Gina R <granderson@usgs.gov>  
**Cc:** Rufe, Philip P <prufe@usgs.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] BBC News - Media Request

I've provided some basic talking points to OCAP already. We'd prefer that OCAP handle this.

- The Policy on Names Considered or Established by Congress or the President notes that "Geographic names and their applications specifically established by an act of Congress or Executive order are legally official, and therefore, are not bound by BGN principles, policies, and procedures." This includes name changes.
- For any names established by an act of Congress or Executive order (or proclamation), the name is entered into/changed in GNIS once official. Federal data sources are updated from GNIS on their own data refresh cycles.

The other request had some other details but this is the basic information people should know.

The BGN has nothing to do with any naming by Congress or the President.

Matt

**From:** NGP NGTOC TNM Help, GS-N-HQ <tnm\_help@usgs.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 7, 2025 1:07 PM  
**To:** BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>; Pawlitz, Rachel J <rpawlitz@usgs.gov>; Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>; Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>; St. Onge, Tim <tong@loc.gov>; Anderson, Gina R <granderson@usgs.gov>  
**Cc:** Rufe, Philip P <prufe@usgs.gov>; O'Donnell, Matthew J <mjodonnell@usgs.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] BBC News - Media Request

Uhoh... sounds like this one may eat our lunch this week. If any more similar requests come in, I'll sit on them but keep in touch with Matt on what we get...

Please keep me in the loop with what y'all come up with.

Andy

**From:** BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 7, 2025 12:02 PM  
**To:** Pawlitz, Rachel J <rpawlitz@usgs.gov>; Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>; Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>; St. Onge, Tim <tong@loc.gov>; Anderson, Gina R <granderson@usgs.gov>  
**Cc:** NGP NGTOC TNM Help, GS-N-HQ <tnm\_help@usgs.gov>; Rufe, Philip P <prufe@usgs.gov>; O'Donnell, Matthew J <mjodonnell@usgs.gov>  
**Subject:** Fw: [EXTERNAL] BBC News - Media Request

And another one. Gina, should we coordinate a statement we can share/adapt with every request about this?

Matt

**From:** NGP NGTOC TNM Help, GS-N-HQ <tnm\_help@usgs.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 7, 2025 12:56 PM  
**To:** Anderson, Gina R <granderson@usgs.gov>; BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>  
**Cc:** Rufe, Philip P <prufe@usgs.gov>  
**Subject:** Fw: [EXTERNAL] BBC News - Media Request



Hi Gina & Matt -

See the below request for a press data call. I would like for y'all to draft a statement. Let me know if you want to provide the info directly or if you want me to provide the information.

Andy

**From:** Brandon Drenon <brandon.k.drenon@bbc.co.uk>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 7, 2025 11:51 AM  
**To:** NGP NGTOC TNM Help, GS-N-HQ <tnm\_help@usgs.gov>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] BBC News - Media Request

**This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.**

Good afternoon,

The BBC is reporting on what the process is to change the names of bodies of water after Donald Trump made remarks on Tuesday suggesting he would like to change the Gulf of Mexico to the Gulf of America.

We'd like to understand the process, whether this is possible, and how it might work.

Can someone please contact me at your earliest convenience.

My number is (b) (6)

Cheers,

Brandon Drenon

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**From:** Anderson, Rebecca (Becci)  
**To:** GS-CSS NGP SLT  
**Subject:** Fw: BGN Response to Media Inquiry (Gulf of America)  
**Date:** Tuesday, January 7, 2025 5:02:48 PM

---

Hi NGP SLT,

Sharing for general awareness -

Please note the emails below regarding OCAP's guidance related to media queries related changing the name of the Gulf of Mexico.

I am going to inform UE to send any inquiries to me for awareness but will follow OCAP guidance to hold off on responding.

**Becci Anderson**

Chief, User Engagement Office  
USGS National Geospatial Program  
rdanderson@usgs.gov | 907 201 9124  
NGP User Engagement Office



**From:** NGP NGTOC TNM Help, GS-N-HQ <tnm\_help@usgs.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 7, 2025 12:24 PM  
**To:** Altheide, Phyllis S <paltheide@usgs.gov>; Postolovski, Ray <rpostolovski@usgs.gov>; Nimetz, Joshua D <jnimetz@usgs.gov>; Rufe, Philip P <prufe@usgs.gov>; Boggs, Hannah K <hboggs@usgs.gov>  
**Cc:** Mantey, Kimberly S <kmantey@usgs.gov>; Anderson, Rebecca (Becci) <rdanderson@usgs.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: BGN Response to Media Inquiry (Gulf of America)

FYI - Here is the guidance provided by OCAP:

I appreciate the time you put into this for context. However, Gina and I (Rachel Pawlitz) discussed this and we both feel there's a benefit to avoid commenting at all right now. While this is purely political at this stage, in a few days the Trump administration will come in and we cannot speculate as to whether they will initiate some type of EO. So if this continues to be in the news, this could always be revisited later but for now it's purely hypothetical so don't want to give speculative answers.

Thanks for understanding!

Andy

**From:** NGP NGTOC TNM Help, GS-N-HQ <tnm\_help@usgs.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 7, 2025 12:25 PM  
**To:** Altheide, Phyllis S <paltheide@usgs.gov>; Postolovski, Ray <rpostolovski@usgs.gov>; Nimetz,

Joshua D <jnimetz@usgs.gov>; Rufe, Philip P <prufe@usgs.gov>; Boggs, Hannah K <hboggs@usgs.gov>

**Cc:** Mantey, Kimberly S <kmantey@usgs.gov>; Anderson, Rebecca (Becci) <rdanderson@usgs.gov>

**Subject:** BGN Response to Media Inquiry (Gulf of America)

Hi all,

Looks like the media has picked up on President-Elect Trump's recent statement about renaming the Gulf of Mexico to Gulf of America. NGP Leadership appears to be aware and is working with the Office of Communications and Publishing.

BGN has indicated that a [name established by Congress or the President](#) can sidestep BGN processes. They have requested that communication be coordinated with OCAP.

So far TNM\_HELP has received a single media request.

I wanted to forward for NGTOC Sr Staff awareness.

Andy

**From:** O'Donnell, Matthew J <mjodonnell@usgs.gov>

**Sent:** Tuesday, January 7, 2025 12:09 PM

**To:** NGP NGTOC TNM Help, GS-N-HQ <tnm\_help@usgs.gov>; BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>; Pawlitz, Rachel J <rpawlitz@usgs.gov>; Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>; Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>; St. Onge, Tim <tong@loc.gov>; Anderson, Gina R <granderson@usgs.gov>

**Cc:** Rufe, Philip P <prufe@usgs.gov>

**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] BBC News - Media Request

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**Cc:** Rufe, Philip P <prufe@usgs.gov>  
**Subject:** Fw: [EXTERNAL] BBC News - Media Request

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Andy

**From:** Brandon Drenon <brandon.k.drenon@bbc.co.uk>

**Sent:** Tuesday, January 7, 2025 11:51 AM

**To:** NGP NGTOC TNM Help, GS-N-HQ <tnm\_help@usgs.gov>

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] BBC News - Media Request

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Good afternoon,

The BBC is reporting on what the process is to change the names of bodies of water after Donald Trump made remarks on Tuesday suggesting he would like to change the Gulf of Mexico to the Gulf of America.

We'd like to understand the process, whether this is possible, and how it might work.

Can someone please contact me at your earliest convenience.

My number is (b) (6).

Cheers,

Brandon Drenon

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**From:** Tischler, Michael A  
**To:** (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) NGA-SFGG USA CIV; (b) (6)  
**Cc:** Zahniser, Shellie R; St. Onge, Tim; (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) NGA-SFGGW USA CIV  
**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] Re: [Non-DoD Source] Gulf of Mexico renaming  
**Date:** Tuesday, January 7, 2025 5:09:24 PM

---

Hi (b) (3) (B), (b) (6), (b) (3) (B), (b) (6),

Yes, indeed...lots of churn from Denali to the Gulf of Mexico.

We have received inquiries today from both CBS and the BBC and our communications office has instructed us to not respond. I don't mean "...has no comment at this time...", I mean do not respond at all. Perhaps that will change at a later date, but that's the guidance we have now.

It is speculation at this point, but were legislation to pass that renamed The Gulf, would that put us in a "Sea of Japan" scenario with a disputed name?

Thanks,  
m

**From:** (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) NGA-SFGG USA CIV <(b) (3) (B), (b) (6)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 7, 2025 5:02 PM  
**To:** (b) (6) (b) (6) @state.gov; Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>  
**Cc:** Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>; St. Onge, Tim <tong@loc.gov>; (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) NGA-SFGGW USA CIV <(b) (3) (B), (b) (6)>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Re: [Non-DoD Source] Gulf of Mexico renaming

**This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.**

Where's that "it has begun" meme from Lord of the Rings...?

**From:** "(b) (6)" <(b) (6) @state.gov>  
**Date:** Tuesday, January 7, 2025 at 4:01:48 PM  
**To:** "Tischler, Michael [I-Net]" <mtischler@usgs.gov>  
**Cc:** "(b) (3) (B), (b) (6) NGA-SFGG USA CIV" (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) <(b) (3) (B), (b) (6)>, "Zahniser, Shellie R" <srzahniser@usgs.gov>, "St. Onge, Tim" <tong@loc.gov>, (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) NGA-SFGGW USA CIV" <(b) (3) (B), (b) (6)>  
**Subject:** [Non-DoD Source] Gulf of Mexico renaming

Hi Mike,

I hope you had a relaxing break and a Happy New Year. (b) (5) DPP

(b) (5) DPP

Cheers,

(b) (6)

(b) (6)

(b) (6)

U.S. Department of State

(b) (6)

**From:** [Tischler, Michael A](#)  
**To:** (b) (6)  
**Cc:** [GeoNames](#)  
**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] RE: GOA EO  
**Date:** Tuesday, January 21, 2025 5:02:37 PM

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Hi (b) (6)

Thanks for the follow-up. I have asked for further guidance from DOI regarding implementation, but have yet to receive anything. I will be in touch with you when I hear more, though.

Thanks,  
Mike

---

**From:** (b) (6) <(b) (6)@state.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 21, 2025 4:59 PM  
**To:** Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>  
**Cc:** GeoNames <GeoNames@state.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] RE: GOA EO

Hi Mike,

(b) (5) ACP / DPP

(b) (6)

(b) (6)

U.S. Department of State

(b) (6)

---

**From:** Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 21, 2025 2:33 PM  
**To:** (b) (6) <(b) (6)@state.gov>



**Cc:** GeoNames <GeoNames@state.gov>

**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] RE: GOA EO

Thanks, (b) (6) - appreciate the clarification, and we'll wait to hear more.

thanks,  
mike

**From:** (b) (6) <(b) (6)@state.gov>

**Sent:** Tuesday, January 21, 2025 2:32 PM

**To:** Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>

**Cc:** GeoNames <GeoNames@state.gov>

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] RE: GOA EO

**This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.**

Hi Mike,

(b) (5) DPP

Thanks,

(b) (6)

(b) (6)

U.S. Department of State

(b) (6)

**From:** Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>

**Sent:** Tuesday, January 21, 2025 1:40 PM

**To:** (b) (6) <(b) (6)@state.gov>

**Subject:** GOA EO

Hi (b) (6)

I have a question for you regarding the renaming of Gulf of America. We are awaiting DOI guidance before reflecting the change in GNIS. But, we are wondering how the feature will be reflected in GNS. The EO states that

*"...The Secretary of the Interior shall...rename as the "Gulf of America" the U.S. Continental Shelf area bounded on the northeast, north, and northwest by the States of Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida and extending to the seaward boundary with Mexico and Cuba in the area formerly named as the Gulf of Mexico. "*

Does this definition constitute the entire Gulf? Or are we going to splitting the feature into two - Gulf of Mexico in the southern portion and Gulf of America in the northern portion?

Thanks,  
Mike

\*\*\*\*\*

Mike Tischler, Ph.D  
Director, National Geospatial Program  
U.S. Geological Survey  
Department of Interior  
o: 703-648-4725  
c: 703-344-4348  
[mtischler@usgs.gov](mailto:mtischler@usgs.gov)

**From:** [St Onge, Timothy](#)  
**To:** [Tischler, Michael A](#)  
**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] RE: DOI BGN appointments  
**Date:** Wednesday, January 22, 2025 9:15:36 AM

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Yea I think that seems like the best way to spread the word. No additional thoughts on this at the moment.

Thanks,  
Tim

---

**From:** Tischler, Michael A <[mtischler@usgs.gov](mailto:mtischler@usgs.gov)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2025 9:00 AM  
**To:** St Onge, Timothy <[tong@loc.gov](mailto:tong@loc.gov)>  
**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] RE: DOI BGN appointments

**CAUTION:** This email message has been received from an external source. Please use caution when opening attachments, or clicking on links.

Thanks, Tim. I guess I'll email the principal members this morning...seems like the best way to get the word out? Any additional thoughts?

---

**From:** St Onge, Timothy <[tong@loc.gov](mailto:tong@loc.gov)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2025 8:57 AM  
**To:** Tischler, Michael A <[mtischler@usgs.gov](mailto:mtischler@usgs.gov)>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] RE: DOI BGN appointments

**This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.**

Hi Mike,

Yes this makes sense to me. This seems like a proper way to start meeting Section 2 of the EO. While I'm not sure how other departments will handle the specifics, it seems like we should try to be uniform in how we respond to this across the departments as best we can, especially if this is the course of action deemed appropriate at DOS and DOI.

Thanks,  
Tim

**Tim St. Onge**

**Cartographer**

Geography & Map Division  
LM-B02  
202-707-9044  
[tong@loc.gov](mailto:tong@loc.gov)



---

**From:** Tischler, Michael A <[mtischler@usgs.gov](mailto:mtischler@usgs.gov)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 21, 2025 5:54 PM  
**To:** St Onge, Timothy <[tong@loc.gov](mailto:tong@loc.gov)>  
**Subject:** Fw: DOI BGN appointments

**CAUTION:** This email message has been received from an external source. Please use caution when opening attachments, or clicking on links.

Hi Tim,

I spoke this afternoon with (b) (6) at the DOS. (b) (5) ACP / DPP

A large black rectangular redaction box covering several lines of text in the email body.

What do you think? Would it make sense to email the other members and ask them to submit short information memos to their secretary offices?

Thanks,  
m

---

**From:** Tischler, Michael A  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 21, 2025 5:49 PM  
**To:** Brown, Wendi-Starr <[Wendi-Starr.Brown@bia.gov](mailto:Wendi-Starr.Brown@bia.gov)>; Hammond, Chris W <[chammond@usgs.gov](mailto:chammond@usgs.gov)>; Mahoney, Patrick M <[pmmahone@blm.gov](mailto:pmmahone@blm.gov)>; Shelton, Michael <[Michael\\_Shelton@nps.gov](mailto:Michael_Shelton@nps.gov)>; Smith, Jeremy C <[Jeremy\\_Smith@boem.gov](mailto:Jeremy_Smith@boem.gov)>; Campbell, Jessica L <[jessica\\_campbell@fws.gov](mailto:jessica_campbell@fws.gov)>  
**Subject:** DOI BGN appointments

Good evening!

At this point I am assuming you are all aware of the recent EO "[RESTORING NAMES THAT HONOR AMERICAN GREATNESS](#)" that was signed yesterday. We are

waiting for additional DOI guidance and confirmation for the renaming of both Denali->Mount McKinley and Gulf of Mexico-> Gulf of America.

You will also notice the following section in the EO:

*Sec. 2. Appointments to the U.S. Board on Geographic Names. (a) Within seven days of the date of this order, each agency head with authority to appoint members to the Board on Geographic Names (Board) pursuant to 43 U.S.C. 364a, shall review their respective appointees and consider replacing those appointees in accordance with applicable law.*

I will be pulling together a short informational memo for the Secretary to review to be responsive to this request. As current DOI deputy members, this memo will contain each of your names and biographical information that you provided to the BGN staff during the most recent appointment letter request in June 2023.

Please let me know if you have any concerns or questions. We'll be moving quickly to meet the deadline.

Thanks,  
mike

\*\*\*\*\*

Mike Tischler, Ph.D  
Director, National Geospatial Program  
U.S. Geological Survey  
Department of Interior  
o: 703-648-4725  
c: 703-344-4348  
[mtischler@usgs.gov](mailto:mtischler@usgs.gov)

**From:** Tischler, Michael A  
**To:** Zahniser, Shellie R  
**Subject:** Fw: DOI BGN appointments  
**Date:** Tuesday, January 21, 2025 6:20:33 PM

---

fyi

**From:** Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 21, 2025 5:53 PM  
**To:** Tim St. Onge <tong@loc.gov>  
**Subject:** Fw: DOI BGN appointments

Hi Tim,

I spoke this afternoon with (b) (6) at the DOS. (b) (5) ACP / DPP

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

What do you think? Would it make sense to email the other members and ask them to submit short information memos to their secretary offices?

Thanks,  
m

**From:** Tischler, Michael A  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 21, 2025 5:49 PM  
**To:** Brown, Wendi-Starr <Wendi-Starr.Brown@bia.gov>; Hammond, Chris W <chammond@usgs.gov>; Mahoney, Patrick M <pmmahone@blm.gov>; Shelton, Michael <Michael\_Shelton@nps.gov>; Smith, Jeremy C <Jeremy.Smith@boem.gov>; Campbell, Jessica L <jessica\_campbell@fws.gov>  
**Subject:** DOI BGN appointments

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mike

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Mike Tischler, Ph.D  
Director, National Geospatial Program  
U.S. Geological Survey  
Department of Interior  
o: 703-648-4725  
c: 703-344-4348  
mtischler@usgs.gov

**From:** Tischler, Michael A  
**To:** O'Donnell, Matthew J  
**Cc:** Zahniser, Shellie R  
**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] BBC News - Media Request  
**Date:** Tuesday, January 7, 2025 10:49:04 AM

---

Yeah, I was wondering if this might put us in a 'Sea of Japan' type of situation...

**From:** O'Donnell, Matthew J <mjodonnell@usgs.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 7, 2025 1:44 PM  
**To:** Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>  
**Cc:** Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] BBC News - Media Request

I also appreciate your support for my diligence on this kind of issue. I do take it seriously and want to help as I can and is appropriate for my expertise and job level as a GS-11.

That's a shame about Rachel. I think Gina has learned a lot and has been helping with most of the recent BGN inquiries.

(b) (6) who works in communications, said just that—we can never prevent a reporter from emailing us or TNM directly.

One thing that Shellie and I will work on in the post-Jenny era is more delineation of duties around the BGN mission and communication. Jenny and I would just jump on anything to get it moving the fastest and I think that has a lot to do with a lack of Executive Secretary for some of the time between 2019 and 2024. Shellie and I plan to hash out who is responsible for what and when.

Part of my stress around this job is not having any confidence or familiarity with best practices for dealing with media requests, especially how to best work with OCAP on tight deadlines. I have been learning and practicing (honest!) on providing shorter more relevant answers rather than providing too many details.

Of course, I'm just now realizing that because the Gulf of Mexico is a trans-boundary name, the answer that "the President and Congress can act on the name however they choose" isn't quite correct. I'll loop in (b) (3) (E), (b) (6) to see FNC's take. The gulf borders Mexico and Cuba.

Matt

Matt O'Donnell  
BGN research staff



Phone: 703-648-4553 (work) / 571-562-3504 (cell)  
Email: mjdodonnell@usgs.gov

**From:** Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 7, 2025 1:29 PM  
**To:** O'Donnell, Matthew J <mjdodonnell@usgs.gov>  
**Cc:** Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] BBC News - Media Request

Thanks, Matt - appreciate the follow up.

Unfortunately, it may get worse before it gets better. I learned today that Rachael P will be leaving for a position with the NPS. Rachael was very familiar with our work, and had pretty positive relationships with us. Like all other positions, it will take time to backfill.

However, that shouldn't stop us from making sure we have a process in place that is most effective. I can't stop a reporter from emailing bgnexec or tnm\_help...but perhaps we can put notices for media inquiries on the websites, and ensure that the media are directed to ocap correctly.

I'll raise the issue with Gina, to start.

Thanks,  
m

**From:** O'Donnell, Matthew J <mjdodonnell@usgs.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 7, 2025 1:23 PM  
**To:** Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>  
**Cc:** Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] BBC News - Media Request

Apoligies, that came off with the wrong tone.

I understand that this is part of my job, but the inefficient process of media inquiries coming to bgnexec, OCAP, and tnm\_help independently, and then needing to have OCAP review them all and send them out, given unreasonable reporter timelines is stressful. How can we improve this?

I would like to develop a sharepoint resource for UE, OCAP, and tnm\_help where they have the basic answers for high level process questions. Then they can handle most inquiries quickly and accurately without media inquiry crises interrupting my main BGN mission work. For

complicated questions, I would absolutely provide talking points for OCAP to use.

Matt

---

**From:** O'Donnell, Matthew J <mjodonnell@usgs.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 7, 2025 1:12 PM  
**To:** Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>  
**Cc:** Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] BBC News - Media Request

I can't stay on top of this AND do my day job.

---

**From:** Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 7, 2025 1:11 PM  
**To:** O'Donnell, Matthew J <mjodonnell@usgs.gov>  
**Cc:** Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] BBC News - Media Request

Thanks for staying on top of this, Matt - never a dull moment.

---

**From:** O'Donnell, Matthew J <mjodonnell@usgs.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 7, 2025 1:09 PM  
**To:** NGP NGTOC TNM Help, GS-N-HQ <tnm\_help@usgs.gov>; BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>; Pawlitz, Rachel J <rpawlitz@usgs.gov>; Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>; Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>; St. Onge, Tim <tong@loc.gov>; Anderson, Gina R <granderson@usgs.gov>  
**Cc:** Rufe, Philip P <prufe@usgs.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] BBC News - Media Request

I've provided some basic talking points to OCAP already. We'd prefer that OCAP handle this.

- The Policy on Names Considered or Established by Congress or the President notes that "Geographic names and their applications specifically established by an act of Congress or Executive order are legally official, and therefore, are not bound by BGN principles, policies, and procedures." This includes name changes.
- For any names established by an act of Congress or Executive order (or proclamation), the name is entered into/changed in GNIS once official. Federal data sources are updated from GNIS on their own data refresh cycles.

The other request had some other details but this is the basic information people should know.

The BGN has nothing to do with any naming by Congress or the President.

Matt

**From:** NGP NGTOC TNM Help, GS-N-HQ <tnm\_help@usgs.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 7, 2025 1:07 PM  
**To:** BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>; Pawlitz, Rachel J <rpawlitz@usgs.gov>; Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>; Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>; St. Onge, Tim <tong@loc.gov>; Anderson, Gina R <granderson@usgs.gov>  
**Cc:** Rufe, Philip P <prufe@usgs.gov>; O'Donnell, Matthew J <mjodonnell@usgs.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] BBC News - Media Request

Uhoh... sounds like this one may eat our lunch this week. If any more similar requests come in, I'll sit on them but keep in touch with Matt on what we get...

Please keep me in the loop with what y'all come up with.

Andy

**From:** BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 7, 2025 12:02 PM  
**To:** Pawlitz, Rachel J <rpawlitz@usgs.gov>; Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>; Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>; St. Onge, Tim <tong@loc.gov>; Anderson, Gina R <granderson@usgs.gov>  
**Cc:** NGP NGTOC TNM Help, GS-N-HQ <tnm\_help@usgs.gov>; Rufe, Philip P <prufe@usgs.gov>; O'Donnell, Matthew J <mjodonnell@usgs.gov>  
**Subject:** Fw: [EXTERNAL] BBC News - Media Request

And another one. Gina, should we coordinate a statement we can share/adapt with every request about this?

Matt

**From:** NGP NGTOC TNM Help, GS-N-HQ <tnm\_help@usgs.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 7, 2025 12:56 PM  
**To:** Anderson, Gina R <granderson@usgs.gov>; BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>  
**Cc:** Rufe, Philip P <prufe@usgs.gov>  
**Subject:** Fw: [EXTERNAL] BBC News - Media Request

Hi Gina & Matt -

See the below request for a press data call. I would like for y'all to draft a statement. Let me know if you want to provide the info directly or if you want me to provide the

information.

Andy

**From:** Brandon Drenon <brandon.k.drenon@bbc.co.uk>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 7, 2025 11:51 AM  
**To:** NGP NGTOC TNM Help, GS-N-HQ <tnm\_help@usgs.gov>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] BBC News - Media Request

**This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.**

Good afternoon,

The BBC is reporting on what the process is to change the names of bodies of water after Donald Trump made remarks on Tuesday suggesting he would like to change the Gulf of Mexico to the Gulf of America.

We'd like to understand the process, whether this is possible, and how it might work.

Can someone please contact me at your earliest convenience.

My number is (b) (6).

Cheers,

Brandon Drenon

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**From:** [Zahniser, Shellie R](#)  
**To:** [O'Donnell, Matthew J](#); [Runyon, Jennifer E](#)  
**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] Re: Gulf of America?  
**Date:** Wednesday, January 8, 2025 1:40:00 PM

---

I can do it.

Shellie Zahniser, Ph.D.  
BGN Executive Secretary  
Domestic Names Committee  
Honolulu, HI

**From:** O'Donnell, Matthew J <[mjodonnell@usgs.gov](mailto:mjodonnell@usgs.gov)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 8, 2025 9:51 AM  
**To:** Zahniser, Shellie R <[srzahniser@usgs.gov](mailto:srzahniser@usgs.gov)>; Runyon, Jennifer E <[jrunyon@usgs.gov](mailto:jrunyon@usgs.gov)>  
**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] Re: Gulf of America?

Shellie,

Would you like us to email Roger or will you?

Matt

**From:** Zahniser, Shellie R <[srzahniser@usgs.gov](mailto:srzahniser@usgs.gov)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 8, 2025 2:05 PM  
**To:** O'Donnell, Matthew J <[mjodonnell@usgs.gov](mailto:mjodonnell@usgs.gov)>; Runyon, Jennifer E <[jrunyon@usgs.gov](mailto:jrunyon@usgs.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] Re: Gulf of America?

I explained this to Gina. We just need to tell Roger what is up. I sent the email exchange to Gina but she does not intend to respond.

Shellie Zahniser, Ph.D.  
BGN Executive Secretary  
Domestic Names Committee  
Honolulu, HI

**From:** O'Donnell, Matthew J <[mjodonnell@usgs.gov](mailto:mjodonnell@usgs.gov)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 8, 2025 8:17 AM  
**To:** Runyon, Jennifer E <[jrunyon@usgs.gov](mailto:jrunyon@usgs.gov)>; Zahniser, Shellie R <[srzahniser@usgs.gov](mailto:srzahniser@usgs.gov)>  
**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] Re: Gulf of America?

I honestly have no idea what to do with this. Anything "newsletter"-ish should probably be considered media.

But we don't want Roger providing inaccurate information even to such a minor outlet.

Matt

Matt O'Donnell  
BGN research staff

Phone: 703-648-4553 (work) / 571-562-3504 (cell)

Email: [mjodonnell@usgs.gov](mailto:mjodonnell@usgs.gov)

**From:** Runyon, Jennifer E <[jrunyon@usgs.gov](mailto:jrunyon@usgs.gov)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 8, 2025 12:04 PM  
**To:** O'Donnell, Matthew J <[mjodonnell@usgs.gov](mailto:mjodonnell@usgs.gov)>; Zahniser, Shellie R <[szahniser@usgs.gov](mailto:szahniser@usgs.gov)>  
**Subject:** Fw: [EXTERNAL] Re: Gulf of America?

Good grief, I'd prefer not to respond to this, but if you want to provide a short statement to Ralph, feel free.

Then again, I'm not familiar with the FedSmith newsletter (maybe I should be. It looks like it has useful info for retirees!), and perhaps they'd be considered media so we can't comment anyway?

Of course, Roger has misspoken re: the BGN's involvement and what the President can do, but I don't feel like explaining it all. If I'm lucky, Ralph won't follow up for a couple days and he'll get my "I've retired" message. I'm glad Roger's traveling, otherwise, I know he'd have called me already.

Or I could just respond to them both and tell Ralph to contact OCAP? Suggestions?

Jenny

**From:** RRSFLA <(b) (6) Ralph Smith [@gmail.com](mailto:(b) (6) @gmail.com)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 8, 2025 10:55 AM  
**To:** Roger Payne <(b) (6) [@gmail.com](mailto:(b) (6) @gmail.com)>; Runyon, Jennifer E <[jrunyon@usgs.gov](mailto:jrunyon@usgs.gov)>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Re: Gulf of America?

Enjoy the cruises, Roger!

Numerous articles on changing the name of the Gulf of Mexico but this is one of them.

<https://www.cbsnews.com/amp/news/trump-change-gulf-of-mexico-to-gulf-of-america/>

On Wed, Jan 8, 2025 at 9:49 AM Roger Payne <(b) (6)@gmail.com> wrote:

Hello Ralph,

I hope you had a nice holiday.

This is a first for me as I've never heard of that before now. Can you forward that article to me and please copy Jenny Runyon whom I have copied on this response.

I would do more on this but we are presently in Fort Lauderdale and will be doing two back-to-back cruises in the Caribbean for the next three weeks and so I have zero resources and limited email.

Jenny Runyon is the best at almost everything and would deal with this straight away, but unfortunately for the realm of applied toponymy and the world she is retiring as of January 15. Anyway, I am sure she will respond as to whom will be taking over her duties, but as far as I know no one has been chosen nor has it even been advertised. Her assistant is Matt (sorry, don't recall his last name) and might be able to assist.

Of course, there would have to be a formal proposal to the U.S. Board on Geographic Names (Domestic Names Committee) and the Foreign Names Committee would be involved I'm sure. Anyway, this would take quite a long time and probably never happen.

Anyway, it is interesting. We'll stay in touch.

Roger

On Wed, Jan 8, 2025 at 09:19 Ralph Smith <(b) (6)@gmail.com> wrote:

Good morning, Roger

I thought of you reading an article about changing the name of the Gulf of Mexico to the Gulf of America. How does that work? It does not seem that one country can pass a law changing the name of a large body of water by itself.

It might make a good article for the FedSmith newsletter. What is the process for changing the name to the Gulf of America? I assume Geographic Names gets involved in that somehow?

Ralph

**From:** [Zahniser, Shellie R](#)  
**To:** [O'Donnell, Matthew J](#); [Runyon, Jennifer E](#)  
**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] Re: Gulf of America?  
**Date:** Wednesday, January 8, 2025 2:19:00 PM

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Mike T is going to send an email out to EXCOM and then we will each notify our respective groups. I will notify ACAN when that email comes out.

Shellie Zahniser, Ph.D.  
BGN Executive Secretary  
Domestic Names Committee  
Honolulu, HI

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**Sent:** Wednesday, January 8, 2025 9:51 AM  
**To:** Zahniser, Shellie R <[srzahniser@usgs.gov](mailto:srzahniser@usgs.gov)>; Runyon, Jennifer E <[jrunyon@usgs.gov](mailto:jrunyon@usgs.gov)>  
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**Sent:** Wednesday, January 8, 2025 2:05 PM  
**To:** O'Donnell, Matthew J <[mjodonnell@usgs.gov](mailto:mjodonnell@usgs.gov)>; Runyon, Jennifer E <[jrunyon@usgs.gov](mailto:jrunyon@usgs.gov)>  
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Domestic Names Committee  
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**Sent:** Wednesday, January 8, 2025 8:17 AM  
**To:** Runyon, Jennifer E <[jrunyon@usgs.gov](mailto:jrunyon@usgs.gov)>; Zahniser, Shellie R <[srzahniser@usgs.gov](mailto:srzahniser@usgs.gov)>  
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Matt

Matt O'Donnell  
BGN research staff

Phone: 703-648-4553 (work) / 571-562-3504 (cell)

Email: [mjodonnell@usgs.gov](mailto:mjodonnell@usgs.gov)

**From:** Runyon, Jennifer E <[jrunyon@usgs.gov](mailto:jrunyon@usgs.gov)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 8, 2025 12:04 PM  
**To:** O'Donnell, Matthew J <[mjodonnell@usgs.gov](mailto:mjodonnell@usgs.gov)>; Zahniser, Shellie R <[szahniser@usgs.gov](mailto:szahniser@usgs.gov)>  
**Subject:** Fw: [EXTERNAL] Re: Gulf of America?

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Jenny

**From:** RRSFLA <(b) (6) Ralph Smith [\(b\) \(6\)@gmail.com](mailto:(b) (6)@gmail.com)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 8, 2025 10:55 AM  
**To:** Roger Payne <(b) (6) [\(b\) \(6\)@gmail.com](mailto:(b) (6)@gmail.com)>; Runyon, Jennifer E <[jrunyon@usgs.gov](mailto:jrunyon@usgs.gov)>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Re: Gulf of America?

Enjoy the cruises, Roger!

Numerous articles on changing the name of the Gulf of Mexico but this is one of them.

<https://www.cbsnews.com/amp/news/trump-change-gulf-of-mexico-to-gulf-of-america/>

On Wed, Jan 8, 2025 at 9:49 AM Roger Payne <(b) (6)@gmail.com> wrote:

Hello Ralph,

I hope you had a nice holiday.

This is a first for me as I've never heard of that before now. Can you forward that article to me and please copy Jenny Runyon whom I have copied on this response.

I would do more on this but we are presently in Fort Lauderdale and will be doing two back-to-back cruises in the Caribbean for the next three weeks and so I have zero resources and limited email.

Jenny Runyon is the best at almost everything and would deal with this straight away, but unfortunately for the realm of applied toponymy and the world she is retiring as of January 15. Anyway, I am sure she will respond as to whom will be taking over her duties, but as far as I know no one has been chosen nor has it even been advertised. Her assistant is Matt (sorry, don't recall his last name) and might be able to assist.

Of course, there would have to be a formal proposal to the U.S. Board on Geographic Names (Domestic Names Committee) and the Foreign Names Committee would be involved I'm sure. Anyway, this would take quite a long time and probably never happen.

Anyway, it is interesting. We'll stay in touch.

Roger

On Wed, Jan 8, 2025 at 09:19 Ralph Smith <(b) (6)@gmail.com> wrote:

Good morning, Roger

I thought of you reading an article about changing the name of the Gulf of Mexico to the Gulf of America. How does that work? It does not seem that one country can pass a law changing the name of a large body of water by itself.

It might make a good article for the FedSmith newsletter. What is the process for changing the name to the Gulf of America? I assume Geographic Names gets involved in that somehow?

Ralph

**From:** Zahniser, Shellie R  
**To:** Anderson, Gina R  
**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] Re: Gulf of America?  
**Date:** Wednesday, January 8, 2025 9:37:00 AM

---

Gina,

Please see email chain below. I can also follow up with Roger and inform him of the guidance you and Rachel laid out for us.

Shellie Zahniser, Ph.D.  
BGN Executive Secretary  
Domestic Names Committee  
Honolulu, HI

**From:** RRSFLA <(b) (6) Ralph Smith@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 8, 2025 10:55 AM  
**To:** Roger Payne <(b) (6)@gmail.com>; Runyon, Jennifer E <jrunyon@usgs.gov>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Re: Gulf of America?

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It might make a good article for the FedSmith newsletter. What is the process for changing the name to the Gulf of America? I assume Geographic Names gets involved in that somehow?

Ralph

**From:** [Anderson, Gina R](#)  
**To:** [Elms, Thomas \(Tommy\)](#); [Pawlitz, Rachel J](#); [Tischler, Michael A](#)  
**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] Washington Post question for Board of Geographic Names re Gulf of Mexico  
**Date:** Friday, January 10, 2025 11:47:48 AM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)

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All,

I am about to be out for the day at 11 AM CST but can check my emails for any guidance that is decided. (b) (6)

Thanks,

**Gina Anderson**

Public Affairs Specialist | Core Science Systems Mission Area  
U.S. Geological Survey  
Office of Communications and Publishing  
405-509-3524 | [granderson@usgs.gov](mailto:granderson@usgs.gov)

**From:** Elms, Thomas (Tommy) <[telms@usgs.gov](mailto:telms@usgs.gov)>  
**Sent:** Friday, January 10, 2025 10:45 AM  
**To:** Pawlitz, Rachel J <[rpawlitz@usgs.gov](mailto:rpawlitz@usgs.gov)>; Tischler, Michael A <[mtischler@usgs.gov](mailto:mtischler@usgs.gov)>  
**Cc:** Anderson, Gina R <[granderson@usgs.gov](mailto:granderson@usgs.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] Washington Post question for Board of Geographic Names re Gulf of Mexico

Hi team,

I have limited availability today and will be on a work trip to Denver next week. I could potentially meet around 4pm?

**Tommy Elms (he/him)**  
**Congressional Liaison**  
**Office of Communications and Publishing**  
**U.S. Geological Survey**  
**Reston, VA**  
**mobile: 571-334-7969**  
[telms@usgs.gov](mailto:telms@usgs.gov)

**From:** Pawlitz, Rachel J <[rpawlitz@usgs.gov](mailto:rpawlitz@usgs.gov)>  
**Sent:** Friday, January 10, 2025 10:45 AM  
**To:** Tischler, Michael A <[mtischler@usgs.gov](mailto:mtischler@usgs.gov)>  
**Cc:** Anderson, Gina R <[granderson@usgs.gov](mailto:granderson@usgs.gov)>; Elms, Thomas (Tommy) <[telms@usgs.gov](mailto:telms@usgs.gov)>

**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] Washington Post question for Board of Geographic Names re Gulf of Mexico

Hi Mike,

I'm bringing in Tommy – it doesn't change my general advice to avoid commenting... but having no comment whatsoever (not even a holding statement) is probably not a great long-term strategy, so perhaps we at least need a simple holding statement to use for the press. Do all of you want to try and meet quickly today?

Adding to the challenge, (b) (6)

So I will quickly be switching gears next week – I don't want to leave you without any suggestions on how to handle this.

-Rachel

---

**From:** Tischler, Michael A <[mtischler@usgs.gov](mailto:mtischler@usgs.gov)>

**Sent:** Friday, January 10, 2025 8:21 AM

**To:** Pawlitz, Rachel J <[rpawlitz@usgs.gov](mailto:rpawlitz@usgs.gov)>

**Cc:** Anderson, Gina R <[granderson@usgs.gov](mailto:granderson@usgs.gov)>

**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] Washington Post question for Board of Geographic Names re Gulf of Mexico

Gina, Rachael,

Rep. Taylor-Greene introduced HR 256 yesterday, and released the attached text (I think on social media). This specifies DOI and my position (Chair of the BGN) as the implementing officials, and sets a deadline of 180 days to update **all** federal mapping products.

I don't know if this changes your stance on responding to media, and/or if we need to develop prepared statements.

The U.N. Group of Experts on Geographic Names has also been receiving questions from media and asked my perspective. I've let them know we are not responding to media and provided my technical input. I do not know if they intend to release any comment or not.

Thanks,  
m

---

**From:** Pawlitz, Rachel J <[rpawlitz@usgs.gov](mailto:rpawlitz@usgs.gov)>

**Sent:** Tuesday, January 7, 2025 3:30 PM

**To:** Tischler, Michael A <[mtischler@usgs.gov](mailto:mtischler@usgs.gov)>

**Cc:** Anderson, Gina R <[granderson@usgs.gov](mailto:granderson@usgs.gov)>

**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] Washington Post question for Board of Geographic Names re Gulf of

Mexico

Hi Mike, I know this is not a typical recommendation, but this is not a circumstance where I would even respond at all. If the situation evolves, we may later want to say something but there's nothing good that would even come out of a "no comment" email response at this point. -Rachel

---

**From:** Tischler, Michael A <[mtischler@usgs.gov](mailto:mtischler@usgs.gov)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 7, 2025 3:15 PM  
**To:** Pawlitz, Rachel J <[rpawlitz@usgs.gov](mailto:rpawlitz@usgs.gov)>  
**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] Washington Post question for Board of Geographic Names re Gulf of Mexico

Hi Rachael,

Does that mean we should just not respond? Or is there a canned 'we have no comment on this topic' statement?

thanks,  
m

**From:** Pawlitz, Rachel J <[rpawlitz@usgs.gov](mailto:rpawlitz@usgs.gov)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 7, 2025 3:07 PM  
**To:** BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <[bgnexec@usgs.gov](mailto:bgnexec@usgs.gov)>; Anderson, Gina R <[granderson@usgs.gov](mailto:granderson@usgs.gov)>; Tischler, Michael A <[mtischler@usgs.gov](mailto:mtischler@usgs.gov)>; St. Onge, Tim <[tong@loc.gov](mailto:tong@loc.gov)>; Zahniser, Shellie R <[srzahniser@usgs.gov](mailto:srzahniser@usgs.gov)>; [bgnexec@nga.mil](mailto:bgnexec@nga.mil) <[bgnexec@nga.mil](mailto:bgnexec@nga.mil)>  
**Cc:** O'Donnell, Matthew J <[mjodonnell@usgs.gov](mailto:mjodonnell@usgs.gov)>; NGP NGTOC TNM Help, GS-N-HQ <[tnm\\_help@usgs.gov](mailto:tnm_help@usgs.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] Washington Post question for Board of Geographic Names re Gulf of Mexico

Hi everyone,

I appreciate the time you put into this for context. However, Gina and I discussed this and we both feel there's a benefit to avoid commenting at all right now. While this is purely political at this stage, in a few days the Trump administration will come in and we cannot speculate as to whether they will initiate some type of EO. So if this continues to be in the news, this could always be revisited later but for now it's purely hypothetical so don't want to give speculative answers.

Thanks for understanding!

---

Rachel Pawlitz (she/her)  
Chief Public Affairs Officer & Lead Spokesperson  
U.S. Geological Survey  
Phone: 571-455-6586



---

**From:** BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <[bgnexec@usgs.gov](mailto:bgnexec@usgs.gov)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 7, 2025 2:43 PM  
**To:** Anderson, Gina R <[granderson@usgs.gov](mailto:granderson@usgs.gov)>; Pawlitz, Rachel J <[rpawlitz@usgs.gov](mailto:rpawlitz@usgs.gov)>; Tischler, Michael A <[mtischler@usgs.gov](mailto:mtischler@usgs.gov)>; St. Onge, Tim <[tong@loc.gov](mailto:tong@loc.gov)>; Zahniser, Shellie R <[srzahniser@usgs.gov](mailto:srzahniser@usgs.gov)>; [bgnexec@nga.mil](mailto:bgnexec@nga.mil)  
**Cc:** O'Donnell, Matthew J <[mjodonnell@usgs.gov](mailto:mjodonnell@usgs.gov)>; NGP NGTOC TNM Help, GS-N-HQ <[tnm\\_help@usgs.gov](mailto:tnm_help@usgs.gov)>  
**Subject:** Fw: [EXTERNAL] Washington Post question for Board of Geographic Names re Gulf of Mexico

See below.

Additional answers for these kinds of questions:

What's the process for renaming a foreign name or international name like the Gulf of Mexico? Is it solely under the jurisdiction of the BGN and/or can a name change be made through an act of Congress or an executive action?

The [Principles, Policies, and Procedures](#) says that "A name proposal for a feature that crosses the international boundary with Canada or Mexico is likely to require additional processing time because the BGN must coordinate such proposals with the appropriate foreign names authority." But this is not a proposal to the BGN, but a statement by the President-Elect that he would change the name.

Once a name change is made by the BGN how is it applied? What changes?

BGN would not make the change if done by Executive action or Congress. GNIS would be updated and other federal data sources that use GNIS would be updated on their own refresh cycles.

Are BGN appointees serving at the discretion of the head of each agency/the president? Are they appointed by the head of each agency/the president?

The [BGN bylaws](#) Article II Section 2 states "The Board is comprised of principal members and deputy members. The head of each department and agency represented on the Board shall appoint one principal member and also may designate one or more deputy members."

Matt

---

**From:** Vazquez, Maegan <[Maegan.Vazquez@washpost.com](mailto:Maegan.Vazquez@washpost.com)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 7, 2025 2:14 PM  
**To:** BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <[bgnexec@usgs.gov](mailto:bgnexec@usgs.gov)>; Pawlitz, Rachel J <[rpawlitz@usgs.gov](mailto:rpawlitz@usgs.gov)>



**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Washington Post question for Board of Geographic Names re Gulf of Mexico

**This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.**

Hi USGS –

I'm working on a story for The Washington Post today regarding president-elect Donald Trump's recent comments saying he wants to change the name of the Gulf of Mexico to the Gulf of America.

Is there someone within the USGS/U.S. Board on Geographic Names who would be able to answer these questions for me? It would really go a long way in helping our readers understand how/if the president-elect could do this.

- What's the process for renaming a foreign name or international name like the Gulf of Mexico? Is it solely under the jurisdiction of the BGN and/or can a name change be made through an act of Congress or an executive action?
- Once a name change is made by the BGN how is it applied? What changes?
- Are BGN appointees serving at the discretion of the head of each agency/the president? Are they appointed by the head of each agency/the president?

I know it's a little bit late, but I'm hoping to wrap this up by the end of the day today. Written answers are totally okay. I apologize for the short notice.

Thank you --

--

**Maegan Vazquez**, Reporter at The Washington Post  
+1 (956) 740-8844  
[maegan.vazquez@washpost.com](mailto:maegan.vazquez@washpost.com)

**From:** Anderson, Gina R  
**To:** Zahniser, Shellie R; BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC  
**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] Gulf of Mexico  
**Date:** Friday, January 10, 2025 7:50:58 AM

---

Hi Matt and Shellie,

Yes, let's continue not responding until we receive other guidance.

Thanks,

**Gina Anderson**

Public Affairs Specialist | Core Science Systems Mission Area  
U.S. Geological Survey  
Office of Communications and Publishing  
405-509-3524 | granderson@usgs.gov

---

**From:** Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 8, 2025 6:40 PM  
**To:** BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>; Anderson, Gina R <granderson@usgs.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] Gulf of Mexico

Gina,

WILCO  
Thanks

Shellie Zahniser, Ph.D.  
BGN Executive Secretary  
Domestic Names Committee  
Honolulu, HI

---

**From:** BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 8, 2025 2:36 PM  
**To:** Anderson, Gina R <granderson@usgs.gov>  
**Cc:** Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>  
**Subject:** Fw: [EXTERNAL] Gulf of Mexico

FYI. If we get a lot of emails from the public either for or against changing the name, we will not respond unless instructed otherwise.

Matt

---

**From:** Susan Gordon <(b) (6)>

**Sent:** Wednesday, January 8, 2025 4:48 PM  
**To:** BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <[bgnexec@usgs.gov](mailto:bgnexec@usgs.gov)>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Gulf of Mexico

This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.

Good afternoon.

Please do not tamper with the historical name Gulf of Mexico.

Thanks,

Susan Gordon

(b) (6)

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** Zahniser, Shellie R  
**To:** (b) (6); Tischler, Michael A; (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) NGA-SF USA CIV; (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) NGA-SFGGW USA CIV; Tim St. Onge  
**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] Re: Washington Times reporter inquiry: Gulf of Mexico renaming  
**Date:** Friday, January 10, 2025 10:11:00 AM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[image002.png](#)  
[image003.png](#)  
[image004.png](#)  
[image005.png](#)  
[image006.png](#)  
[image007.png](#)  
[image008.png](#)  
[image009.png](#)  
[image010.png](#)  
[image011.png](#)  
[image012.png](#)  
[image013.png](#)

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Mike,

I also notice that you have HR 256 in your text, but Congress.gov is listing it as HR 276. Concur with distinguishing the 2 databases in a concise manner, and also agree that we shouldn't get too far ahead of ourselves. We don't know if the bill is going to pass so I would caution against any speculations in the text.

Shellie Zahniser, Ph.D.  
BGN Executive Secretary  
Domestic Names Committee  
Honolulu, HI

---

**From:** (b) (6) <(b) (6)@state.gov>  
**Sent:** Friday, January 10, 2025 5:13 AM  
**To:** Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>; (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) NGA-SF USA CIV <(b) (3) (B), (b) (6)>; (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) NGA-SFGGW USA CIV <(b) (3) (B), (b) (6)>; Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>; Tim St. Onge <tong@loc.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] Re: Washington Times reporter inquiry: Gulf of Mexico renaming

It would be updated in the GNS. I'm not certain what the feature in the GNIS is – perhaps this referring to the area of U.S. claimed waters within the larger gulf? I suspect it would be updated there as well. As a shared international feature, it falls under FNC purview. Changing the name of the feature was proposed once before (2011 maybe?), which the FNC did not approve. An executive proclamation or congressional action would, of course, supersede FNC procedure. I caution we not get ahead of ourselves.

---

**From:** Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>  
**Sent:** Friday, January 10, 2025 9:40 AM  
**To:** (b) (6) <(b) (6)@state.gov>; (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) NGA-SF USA CIV <(b) (3) (B), (b) (6)>; (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) NGA-SFGGW USA CIV <(b) (3) (B), (b) (6)>; Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>; Tim St. Onge

<[tong@loc.gov](mailto:tong@loc.gov)>

**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] Re: Washington Times reporter inquiry: Gulf of Mexico renaming

Hi (b) (6)

Thanks for the clarification. Should this occur by exec or congressional action, the renamed feature would just be updated as official in GNS as well as GNIS, then?

Thanks,  
m

**From:** (b) (6) <(b) (6)@state.gov>

**Sent:** Friday, January 10, 2025 9:04 AM

**To:** Tischler, Michael A <[mtischler@usgs.gov](mailto:mtischler@usgs.gov)>; (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) NGA-SF USA CIV

(b) (3) (B), (b) (6) >; (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) NGA-SFGGW USA CIV

(b) (3) (B), (b) (6) >; Zahniser, Shellie R <[srzahniser@usgs.gov](mailto:srzahniser@usgs.gov)>; Tim St. Onge <[tong@loc.gov](mailto:tong@loc.gov)>

**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] Re: Washington Times reporter inquiry: Gulf of Mexico renaming

Hi Mike,

Happy to discuss further at the EXCOM. I don't think it's too in-the-weeds. It's an important distinction. Going forward, the response could just add "...databases (GNIS and GNS)". Additionally, and I don't think that it changes anything in the end, but the Policy I is only in the DNC PPP (not FNC).

(b) (6)

**From:** Tischler, Michael A <[mtischler@usgs.gov](mailto:mtischler@usgs.gov)>

**Sent:** Friday, January 10, 2025 8:46 AM

**To:** (b) (6) <(b) (6)@state.gov>; (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) NGA-SF USA CIV

(b) (3) (B), (b) (6) >; (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) NGA-SFGGW USA CIV

(b) (3) (B), (b) (6) >; Zahniser, Shellie R <[srzahniser@usgs.gov](mailto:srzahniser@usgs.gov)>; Tim St. Onge <[tong@loc.gov](mailto:tong@loc.gov)>

**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] Re: Washington Times reporter inquiry: Gulf of Mexico renaming

Hi (b) (6),

Perhaps this might be good discussion for the upcoming excom? The media question(s) were more about the process and global recognition by other countries...would your comments be a little too in-the-weeds for UNGEGN?

Should I continue to receive more questions I'll do my best to better coordinate. I was already a day behind since we were closed yesterday for the day of mourning, and wanted to get a response to UNGEGN quickly.

I'll take comments as you have them, though.

Thanks,  
m

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**From:** (b) (6) <(b) (6)@state.gov>  
**Sent:** Friday, January 10, 2025 8:40 AM  
**To:** Tischler, Michael A <[mtischler@usgs.gov](mailto:mtischler@usgs.gov)>; (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) NGA-SF USA CIV <(b) (3) (B), (b) (6)>; (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) NGA-SFSGGW USA CIV <(b) (3) (B), (b) (6)>; Zahniser, Shellie R <[srzahniser@usgs.gov](mailto:srzahniser@usgs.gov)>; Tim St. Onge <[tong@loc.gov](mailto:tong@loc.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] Re: Washington Times reporter inquiry: Gulf of Mexico renaming

Hi Mike,

Thank you for looping us in and providing us an opportunity to review. When do you need comments by?

Not sure how others feel, but I'm of the mind we need to distinguish between/identify both the GNS and GNIS. Gulf of Mexico is in both databases, but in the GNIS it's contained to Louisiana whereas in the GNS, it's an international body of water.

(b) (6)

---

**From:** Tischler, Michael A <[mtischler@usgs.gov](mailto:mtischler@usgs.gov)>  
**Sent:** Friday, January 10, 2025 8:24 AM  
**To:** (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) NGA-SF USA CIV <(b) (3) (B), (b) (6)>; (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) NGA-SFSGGW USA CIV <(b) (3) (B), (b) (6)>; Zahniser, Shellie R <[srzahniser@usgs.gov](mailto:srzahniser@usgs.gov)>; Tim St. Onge <[tong@loc.gov](mailto:tong@loc.gov)>; (b) (6)

<(b) (6) @state.gov>

**Subject:** Fw: [EXTERNAL] Re: Washington Times reporter inquiry: Gulf of Mexico renaming

EXCOM,

I wanted to share the inquiry received by UNGEGN and my response. Please let me know if any revisions/edits are needed.

Thanks,

m

---

**From:** Tischler, Michael A <[mtischler@usgs.gov](mailto:mtischler@usgs.gov)>

**Sent:** Friday, January 10, 2025 8:13 AM

**To:** Sungjae Choo <[sjchoo@khu.ac.kr](mailto:sjchoo@khu.ac.kr)>; Cecille Blake <[blake1@un.org](mailto:blake1@un.org)>; Wendy Shaw <[wshaw@linz.govt.nz](mailto:wshaw@linz.govt.nz)>; Ana Cristina da Rocha Berenger Resende <[ana.resende@ibge.gov.br](mailto:ana.resende@ibge.gov.br)>; Adam Greenland <[agreenland@linz.govt.nz](mailto:agreenland@linz.govt.nz)>

**Cc:** Pierre Jaillard [JAILLARD] <[pierre@jaillard.net](mailto:pierre@jaillard.net)>; Charlotte Jones <[CJones@linz.govt.nz](mailto:CJones@linz.govt.nz)>; Mark Iliffe <[mark.iliffe@un.org](mailto:mark.iliffe@un.org)>; Stefan Schweinfest <[schweinfest@un.org](mailto:schweinfest@un.org)>

**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] Re: Washington Times reporter inquiry: Gulf of Mexico renaming

Good morning,

My apologies for the delay - Federal offices in the US were closed yesterday as a day of mourning for former President Carter.

There are a few things I'd like to mention from the perspective of the US BGN.

1 - My home agency (USGS) has provided guidance that BGN staff (including me) are not to respond at this time to media inquiries. As you might guess, we have received a few questions from high-profile media outlets. But, we are currently not providing a response of any kind.

2 - The process by which the name would be changed in the US depends on the type of action taken to make the renaming official. Of course, by far the most common method to name or rename a geographic feature is a proposal to the BGN, and allow the deliberative process to run its course. However, The BGN [Policy on Names Considered or Established by Congress or the President](#) notes that "Geographic names and their applications specifically established by an act of Congress or Executive order are legally official, and therefore, are not bound by BGN principles, policies, and procedures." This includes name changes. For any names established by an act of Congress or Executive order (or proclamation), the name is entered into/changed in GNIS once official. Federal data sources are updated from GNIS on their own data refresh cycles.

3 - As of this morning, there is draft legislation to rename the Gulf of Mexico offered in the US House of Representatives ([HR 256](#)). I have attached the text which has been released (I believe on social media) by the sponsor, Rep. Taylor-Greene. If this were to pass into law the name would become official. The BGN would not be involved in the decision-making process and our authoritative database (GNIS) would be updated to reflect the new official name. The draft bill also dictates a schedule for update of Federal mapping products.

4 - As others have stated, I am also unable to offer any additional information on how other national naming authorities would recognize this name change.

Thank you,

Mike

\*\*\*\*\*

Mike Tischler, Ph.D

Director, National Geospatial Program

Chair, U.S. Board on Geographic Names

U.S. Geological Survey

Department of Interior

o: 703-648-4725

c: 703-344-4348

[mtischler@usgs.gov](mailto:mtischler@usgs.gov)



**From:** Sungjae Choo <[sjchoo@khu.ac.kr](mailto:sjchoo@khu.ac.kr)>

**Sent:** Thursday, January 9, 2025 7:12 PM

**To:** Cecille Blake <[blake1@un.org](mailto:blake1@un.org)>; Wendy Shaw <[wshaw@linz.govt.nz](mailto:wshaw@linz.govt.nz)>; Ana Cristina da Rocha Berenger Resende <[ana.resende@ibge.gov.br](mailto:ana.resende@ibge.gov.br)>; Adam Greenland <[agreenland@linz.govt.nz](mailto:agreenland@linz.govt.nz)>

**Cc:** Pierre Jaillard [JAILLARD] <[pierre@jaillard.net](mailto:pierre@jaillard.net)>; Tischler, Michael A <[mtischler@usgs.gov](mailto:mtischler@usgs.gov)>; Charlotte Jones <[CJones@linz.govt.nz](mailto:CJones@linz.govt.nz)>; Mark Iliffe <[mark.iliffe@un.org](mailto:mark.iliffe@un.org)>; Stefan Schweinfest <[schweinfest@un.org](mailto:schweinfest@un.org)>

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Re: Washington Times reporter inquiry: Gulf of Mexico renaming

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Dear all,

I agree with Ana that UNGEGN has to reply and do it as simply as possible. This is especially so, considering the political inclination of this media house, the Washington Times.

I am suggesting the following points be included:

- UNGEGN does not deal with individual geographical names.
- Naming authorities of each Member State have their own principles and procedures of geographical naming.
- Naming of water bodies outside of territorial waters is a subject of the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO), which has liaison with UNGEGN.

With best regards,

Sungjae

2025년 1월 10일 (금) 오전 7:55, Adam Greenland <[agreenland@linz.govt.nz](mailto:agreenland@linz.govt.nz)>님이 작성:

UNCLASSIFIED

Kia ora,

The IHO does not adjudicate on the names of oceans and seas in international waters.

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I agree with Ana email comments. In my opinion, this is a topic that is/has been highly contentious with IHO MS and best to leave well alone.

Ngā mihi

**Adam Greenland**  
**National Hydrographer**

Location Information

[agreenland@linz.govt.nz](mailto:agreenland@linz.govt.nz) | **DDI** 04 460 0136 | **MOB** +64 (0)21 243 1577



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[www.linz.govt.nz](http://www.linz.govt.nz) | [data.linz.govt.nz](http://data.linz.govt.nz)



UNCLASSIFIED

From: Ana Cristina da Rocha Berenger Resende <[ana.resende@ibge.gov.br](mailto:ana.resende@ibge.gov.br)>  
**Sent:** Friday, 10 January 2025 10:58 am  
**To:** Cecille Blake <[blake1@un.org](mailto:blake1@un.org)>; Wendy Shaw <[wshaw@linz.govt.nz](mailto:wshaw@linz.govt.nz)>; Pierre Jaillard [JAILLARD] <[pierre@jaillard.net](mailto:pierre@jaillard.net)>; Sungjae Choo [KHU AC] <[sjchoo@khu.ac.kr](mailto:sjchoo@khu.ac.kr)>; [mtischler@usgs.gov](mailto:mtischler@usgs.gov)  
**Cc:** Charlotte Jones <[C.Jones@linz.govt.nz](mailto:C.Jones@linz.govt.nz)>; Adam Greenland <[agreenland@linz.govt.nz](mailto:agreenland@linz.govt.nz)>; Mark Iliffe <[mark.iliffe@un.org](mailto:mark.iliffe@un.org)>; Stefan Schweinfest <[schweinfest@un.org](mailto:schweinfest@un.org)>  
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Hi, everyone!

I think it would be important to answer right away that this is not UNGEGN's role to deal with such things.

I wouldn't know how to answer what they call their "general question": "What would have to happen for the rest of the world to accept the change?". There are issues that are never solved, such as The East Sea/Sea of Japan, and I really don't think this kind of dispute ever has a "solution". And, sincerely, I think the less we say, the better, to avoid further inquiries. So, I would keep our response to the first part of Wendy's suggested response.

Best regards,

Ana

**Ana Cristina da Rocha Bérenger Resende**

[ana.resende@ibge.gov.br](mailto:ana.resende@ibge.gov.br)

Gerente de Nomes Geográficos

Diretoria de Geociências - IBGE

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+55 21 99614-2453

**De:** Cecille Blake <[blake1@un.org](mailto:blake1@un.org)>

**Enviado:** Thursday, January 9, 2025 6:35:15 PM

**Para:** Wendy Shaw <[wshaw@linz.govt.nz](mailto:wshaw@linz.govt.nz)>; Pierre Jaillard [JAILLARD] <[pierre@jaillard.net](mailto:pierre@jaillard.net)>; Sungjae Choo [KHU AC] <[sjchoo@khu.ac.kr](mailto:sjchoo@khu.ac.kr)>; Ana Cristina da Rocha Berenger Resende <[ana.resende@ibge.gov.br](mailto:ana.resende@ibge.gov.br)>; [mtischler@usgs.gov](mailto:mtischler@usgs.gov) <[mtischler@usgs.gov](mailto:mtischler@usgs.gov)>  
**Cc:** Charlotte Jones <[CJones@linz.govt.nz](mailto:CJones@linz.govt.nz)>; Adam Greenland <[agreenland@linz.govt.nz](mailto:agreenland@linz.govt.nz)>; Mark Iliffe <[mark.iliffe@un.org](mailto:mark.iliffe@un.org)>; Stefan Schweinfest <[schweinfest@un.org](mailto:schweinfest@un.org)>  
**Assunto:** RE: Washington Times reporter inquiry: Gulf of Mexico renaming

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Dear Wendy

Thank you for your prompt response.

Looking forward to receiving the input from other Bureau Members.

Kind regards

Cecille

Cecille Blake (Ms.)

Global Geospatial Information Management

Environment Statistics and Geospatial Information Branch

Statistics Division| Department of Economic and Social Affairs

United Nations | 2 UN Plaza |Room DC2-1634

e-mail: [blake1@un.org](mailto:blake1@un.org)

Web: <http://ggim.un.org> and [UNSD — United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names](#)



UN-GGIM

UNEGN

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**From:** Wendy Shaw <[wshaw@linz.govt.nz](mailto:wshaw@linz.govt.nz)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, 09 January, 2025 4:15 PM  
**To:** Cecille Blake <[blake1@un.org](mailto:blake1@un.org)>; Pierre Jaillard [JAILLARD] <[pierre@jaillard.net](mailto:pierre@jaillard.net)>; Sungjae Choo [KHU AC] <[sjchoo@khu.ac.kr](mailto:sjchoo@khu.ac.kr)>; Ana Cristina da Rocha Berenger Resende <[ana.resende@ibge.gov.br](mailto:ana.resende@ibge.gov.br)>; [mtischler@usgs.gov](mailto:mtischler@usgs.gov)  
**Cc:** Charlotte Jones <[CJones@linz.govt.nz](mailto:CJones@linz.govt.nz)>; Adam Greenland <[agreenland@linz.govt.nz](mailto:agreenland@linz.govt.nz)>  
**Subject:** RE: Washington Times reporter inquiry: Gulf of Mexico renaming

UNCLASSIFIED

Thanks Cecille – UNEG N should not respond. Only the US Board on Geographical Names, Mexico's INEGA and/or IHO should respond.

However, if UNEG N must respond, we could say something like this:

'The role of UNEG N is to provide guidance to Member States on good toponymic practice. UNEG N does not adjudicate on geographical name proposals. Rather, national naming authorities have the responsibility for processing and deciding on geographical name proposals:

- United States Board on Geographical Names. Contact the USBGN member: Michael Tischler [mtischler@usgs.gov](mailto:mtischler@usgs.gov) . [Also maybe Betsy Kanalley [bkanalley@fs.fed.us](mailto:bkanalley@fs.fed.us) who is an UNEG N member, as well as on the USBGN Board.]
- INEGA for Mexico. Contact Mr Francisco Javier Medina Parra, Deputy Director General for Basic Geographic Information, National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI) <https://www.inegi.org.mx/>
- Cuba – not sure. Are they a Member State?

Typically the names of oceans and seas in international waters are managed by the International Hydrographic Organisation (IHO), who have stringent processes and standards that must be followed before names of this scale, which border multiple countries, are agreed to be changed. International maritime navigation relies on authoritative names to eliminate ambiguity and confusion, and ultimately avoid loss of life.

Should the US President proceed without following a proper consultative process through the USBGN, Mexico and/or the IHO, then the international community would likely continue using Gulf of Mexico.

Bit of a tricky one. I have cc'd our Comms person, Charlotte Jones, and our National Hydrographer, Adam Greenland, who may wish to offer some further insights/advice. I know you will have a deadline, so hopefully we can respond in a timely manner.

Kia ora

## Wendy Shaw

Hēkeretari/Secretary

Ngā Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa New Zealand Geographic Board

Office of the Surveyor-General

[wshaw@linz.govt.nz](mailto:wshaw@linz.govt.nz) or [wshaw@toitutewhenua.govt.nz](mailto:wshaw@toitutewhenua.govt.nz) | DDI 04 460 0581 | MOB 027 480 7082

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**From:** Cecille Blake <[blake1@un.org](mailto:blake1@un.org)>  
**Sent:** Friday, 10 January 2025 9:01 a.m.  
**To:** Pierre Jaillard [JAILLARD] <[pierre@jaillard.net](mailto:pierre@jaillard.net)>; Wendy Shaw <[wshaw@linz.govt.nz](mailto:wshaw@linz.govt.nz)>; Sungjae Choo [KHU AC] <[sjchoo@khu.ac.kr](mailto:sjchoo@khu.ac.kr)>; Ana Cristina da Rocha Berenger Resende <[ana.resende@ibge.gov.br](mailto:ana.resende@ibge.gov.br)>; [mtischler@usgs.gov](mailto:mtischler@usgs.gov)  
**Subject:** FW: Washington Times reporter inquiry: Gulf of Mexico renaming

Dear Bureau and Michael

Please see below inquiry from the Washington Times.

I would be grateful for your opinion on possible responses.

Kind regards

Cecille

Cecille Blake (Ms.)

Global Geospatial Information Management

Environment Statistics and Geospatial Information Branch

Statistics Division| Department of Economic and Social Affairs

United Nations | 2 UN Plaza |Room DC2-1634

e-mail: [blake1@un.org](mailto:blake1@un.org)

Web: <http://ggim.un.org> and [UNSD — United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names](#)



UN-GGIM      UNGEGN

---

**From:** UNGEGN <[geoinfo\\_unsd@un.org](mailto:geoinfo_unsd@un.org)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, 09 January, 2025 2:58 PM  
**To:** Cecille Blake <[blake1@un.org](mailto:blake1@un.org)>  
**Subject:** FW: Washington Times reporter inquiry: Gulf of Mexico renaming

Dear Cecille,

Please see the below email.

Thanks.

Vilma

---

**From:** Seth McLaughlin <[smclaughlin@washingtontimes.com](mailto:smclaughlin@washingtontimes.com)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, 09 January, 2025 9:58 AM  
**To:** UNGEGN <[geoinfo\\_unsd@un.org](mailto:geoinfo_unsd@un.org)>  
**Subject:** Washington Times reporter inquiry: Gulf of Mexico renaming

You don't often get email from [smclaughlin@washingtontimes.com](mailto:smclaughlin@washingtontimes.com). [Learn why this is important](#)  
Hello,

Reaching out to get information on what the process would be for the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names if the incoming Trump administration renamed the Gulf of Mexico the Gulf of America- either through federal legislation or federal agencies.

My general question is: What would have to happen for the rest of the world to accept the change?

Please let me know who best to reach out to for a response.



Thanks,

--

Seth McLaughlin

The Washington Times

202 340-4048 (cell)

[smclaughlin@washingtontimes.com](mailto:smclaughlin@washingtontimes.com)

Twitter @sethmclaughlin1

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**From:** Tischler, Michael A  
**To:** Cecille Blake; Sungjae Choo [KHU AC]; Wendy Shaw; Ana Cristina da Rocha Berenger Resende; Adam Greenland  
**Cc:** Pierre Jaillard [JAILLARD]; Charlotte Jones; Mark Iliffe; Stefan Schweinfest  
**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] Re: Washington Times reporter inquiry: Gulf of Mexico renaming  
**Date:** Friday, January 10, 2025 12:29:05 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[image002.png](#)  
[image003.png](#)  
[image004.png](#)  
[image005.png](#)  
[image006.png](#)  
[image007.png](#)  
[image008.png](#)  
[image009.png](#)  
[image010.png](#)  
[image011.png](#)  
[image012.png](#)  
[image013.png](#)

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Hi Cecille,

Thank you!

I should mention for the record that the US BGN has two standing committees...the Domestic Names Committee which maintains official domestic names records in the Geographic Names Information System (GNIS), and the Foreign Names Committee which maintains the Geographic Names Server. The Geographic Names Server (GNS) is the official repository of standard spellings of all foreign geographic names, sanctioned by the United States Board on Geographic Names (BGN).

A name change for a trans-boundary feature would require updating both GNIS and GNS. Of course, that is only the official US name and does not reflect any wider recognition by other countries.

Thanks,  
Mike

**From:** Cecille Blake <blake1@un.org>  
**Sent:** Friday, January 10, 2025 12:21 PM  
**To:** Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>; Sungjae Choo [KHU AC] <sjchoo@khu.ac.kr>; Wendy Shaw <wshaw@linz.govt.nz>; Ana Cristina da Rocha Berenger Resende <ana.resende@ibge.gov.br>; Adam Greenland <agreenland@linz.govt.nz>  
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**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] Re: Washington Times reporter inquiry: Gulf of Mexico renaming

Dear Michael

Thank you for your detailed and timely response.

The UNGEGN Bureau will be meeting later today and am sure will decide on the approach to be adopted to the inquiry and others that we may received.

I will let you know the outcome.

Best regards

Cecille

Cecille Blake (Ms.)

Global Geospatial Information Management

Environment Statistics and Geospatial Information Branch

Statistics Division | Department of Economic and Social Affairs

United Nations | 2 UN Plaza | Room DC2-1634

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UN-GGIM



UNGE GN

**From:** Tischler, Michael A <[mtischler@usgs.gov](mailto:mtischler@usgs.gov)>

**Sent:** Friday, 10 January, 2025 8:14 AM

**To:** Sungjae Choo [KHU AC] <[sjchoo@khu.ac.kr](mailto:sjchoo@khu.ac.kr)>; Cecille Blake <[blake1@un.org](mailto:blake1@un.org)>; Wendy Shaw <[wshaw@linz.govt.nz](mailto:wshaw@linz.govt.nz)>; Ana Cristina da Rocha Berenger Resende <[ana.resende@ibge.gov.br](mailto:ana.resende@ibge.gov.br)>; Adam Greenland <[agreenland@linz.govt.nz](mailto:agreenland@linz.govt.nz)>

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**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] Re: Washington Times reporter inquiry: Gulf of Mexico renaming

Good morning,

My apologies for the delay - Federal offices in the US were closed yesterday as a day of mourning for former President Carter.

There are a few things I'd like to mention from the perspective of the US BGN.

1 - My home agency (USGS) has provided guidance that BGN staff (including me) are not to respond at this time to media inquiries. As you might guess, we have received a few questions from high-profile media outlets. But, we are currently not providing a response of any kind.

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Thank you,

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Mike Tischler, Ph.D  
Director, National Geospatial Program  
Chair, U.S. Board on Geographic Names  
U.S. Geological Survey  
Department of Interior  
o: 703-648-4725  
c: 703-344-4348  
[mtischler@usgs.gov](mailto:mtischler@usgs.gov)

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**Sent:** Thursday, January 9, 2025 7:12 PM

**To:** Cecille Blake <[blake1@un.org](mailto:blake1@un.org)>; Wendy Shaw <[wshaw@linz.govt.nz](mailto:wshaw@linz.govt.nz)>; Ana Cristina da Rocha Berenger Resende <[ana.resende@ibge.gov.br](mailto:ana.resende@ibge.gov.br)>; Adam Greenland <[agreenland@linz.govt.nz](mailto:agreenland@linz.govt.nz)>

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**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Re: Washington Times reporter inquiry: Gulf of Mexico renaming

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Dear all,

I agree with Ana that UNGEGN has to reply and do it as simply as possible. This is especially so, considering the political inclination of this media house, the Washington Times.

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- UNGEGN does not deal with individual geographical names.
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With best regards,  
Sungjae

2025년 1월 10일 (금) 오전 7:55, Adam Greenland <[agreenland@linz.govt.nz](mailto:agreenland@linz.govt.nz)>님이 작성:

UNCLASSIFIED

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I agree with Ana email comments. In my opinion, this is a topic that is/has been highly contentious with IHO MS and best to leave well alone.

Ngā mihi

**Adam Greenland**  
**National Hydrographer**

Location Information

[agreenland@linz.govt.nz](mailto:agreenland@linz.govt.nz) | **DDI** 04 460 0136 | **MOB** +64 (0)21 243 1577



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**From:** Ana Cristina da Rocha Berenger Resende <[ana.resende@ibge.gov.br](mailto:ana.resende@ibge.gov.br)>  
**Sent:** Friday, 10 January 2025 10:58 am  
**To:** Cecille Blake <[blake1@un.org](mailto:blake1@un.org)>; Wendy Shaw <[wshaw@linz.govt.nz](mailto:wshaw@linz.govt.nz)>; Pierre Jaillard [JAILLARD] <[pierre@jaillard.net](mailto:pierre@jaillard.net)>; Sungjae Choo [KHU AC] <[sjchoo@khu.ac.kr](mailto:sjchoo@khu.ac.kr)>; [mtischler@usgs.gov](mailto:mtischler@usgs.gov)  
**Cc:** Charlotte Jones <[CJones@linz.govt.nz](mailto:CJones@linz.govt.nz)>; Adam Greenland <[agreenland@linz.govt.nz](mailto:agreenland@linz.govt.nz)>; Mark Iliffe <[mark.iliffe@un.org](mailto:mark.iliffe@un.org)>; Stefan Schweinfest <[schweinfest@un.org](mailto:schweinfest@un.org)>  
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Best regards,

Ana

**Ana Cristina da Rocha Bérenger Resende**

[ana.resende@ibge.gov.br](mailto:ana.resende@ibge.gov.br)

Gerente de Nomes Geográficos

Diretoria de Geociências - IBGE

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+55 21 99614-2453

---

**De:** Cecille Blake <[blake1@un.org](mailto:blake1@un.org)>

**Enviado:** Thursday, January 9, 2025 6:35:15 PM

**Para:** Wendy Shaw <[wshaw@linz.govt.nz](mailto:wshaw@linz.govt.nz)>; Pierre Jaillard [JAILLARD] <[pierre@jaillard.net](mailto:pierre@jaillard.net)>; Sungjae Choo [KHU AC] <[sjchoo@khu.ac.kr](mailto:sjchoo@khu.ac.kr)>; Ana Cristina da Rocha Berenger Resende <[ana.resende@ibge.gov.br](mailto:ana.resende@ibge.gov.br)>; [mtischler@usgs.gov](mailto:mtischler@usgs.gov) <[mtischler@usgs.gov](mailto:mtischler@usgs.gov)>

**Cc:** Charlotte Jones <[CJones@linz.govt.nz](mailto:CJones@linz.govt.nz)>; Adam Greenland <[agreenland@linz.govt.nz](mailto:agreenland@linz.govt.nz)>; Mark Iliffe <[mark.iliffe@un.org](mailto:mark.iliffe@un.org)>; Stefan Schweinfest <[schweinfest@un.org](mailto:schweinfest@un.org)>

**Assunto:** RE: Washington Times reporter inquiry: Gulf of Mexico renaming

**[CUIDADO]** Este e-mail foi recebido de fora da organização. Por favor, verifique cuidadosamente o

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Dear Wendy

Thank you for your prompt response.  
Looking forward to receiving the input from other Bureau Members.

Kind regards

Cecille

Cecille Blake (Ms.)  
Global Geospatial Information Management  
Environment Statistics and Geospatial Information Branch  
Statistics Division | Department of Economic and Social Affairs  
United Nations | 2 UN Plaza | Room DC2-1634  
e-mail: [blake1@un.org](mailto:blake1@un.org)  
Web: <http://ggim.un.org> and [UNSD — United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names](http://un.org/geonames)



UN-GGIM



UNEGN

---

**From:** Wendy Shaw <[wshaw@linz.govt.nz](mailto:wshaw@linz.govt.nz)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, 09 January, 2025 4:15 PM  
**To:** Cecille Blake <[blake1@un.org](mailto:blake1@un.org)>; Pierre Jaillard [JAILLARD] <[pierre@jaillard.net](mailto:pierre@jaillard.net)>; Sungjae Choo [KHU AC] <[sjchoo@khu.ac.kr](mailto:sjchoo@khu.ac.kr)>; Ana Cristina da Rocha Berenger Resende <[ana.resende@ibge.gov.br](mailto:ana.resende@ibge.gov.br)>; [mtischler@usgs.gov](mailto:mtischler@usgs.gov)  
**Cc:** Charlotte Jones <[CJones@linz.govt.nz](mailto:CJones@linz.govt.nz)>; Adam Greenland <[agreenland@linz.govt.nz](mailto:agreenland@linz.govt.nz)>  
**Subject:** RE: Washington Times reporter inquiry: Gulf of Mexico renaming

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Thanks Cecille – UNEG should not respond. Only the US Board on Geographical Names, Mexico's INEGA and/or IHO should respond.

However, if UNEG must respond, we could say something like this:

'The role of UNEG is to provide guidance to Member States on good toponymic practice. UNEG does not adjudicate on geographical name proposals. Rather, national naming authorities have the responsibility for processing and deciding on geographical name proposals:

- United States Board on Geographical Names. Contact the USBGN member:

Michael Tischler [mtischler@usgs.gov](mailto:mtischler@usgs.gov). [Also maybe Betsy Kanalley [bkanalley@fs.fed.us](mailto:bkanalley@fs.fed.us) who is an UNGEGN member, as well as on the USBGN Board.]

- INEGA for Mexico. Contact Mr Francisco Javier Medina Parra, Deputy Director General for Basic Geographic Information, National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI) <https://www.inegi.org.mx/>
- Cuba – not sure. Are they a Member State?

Typically the names of oceans and seas in international waters are managed by the International Hydrographic Organisation (IHO), who have stringent processes and standards that must be followed before names of this scale, which border multiple countries, are agreed to be changed. International maritime navigation relies on authoritative names to eliminate ambiguity and confusion, and ultimately avoid loss of life.

Should the US President proceed without following a proper consultative process through the USBGN, Mexico and/or the IHO, then the international community would likely continue using Gulf of Mexico.

Bit of a tricky one. I have cc'd our Comms person, Charlotte Jones, and our National Hydrographer, Adam Greenland, who may wish to offer some further insights/advice. I know you will have a deadline, so hopefully we can respond in a timely manner.

Kia ora

## Wendy Shaw

Hēkeretari/Secretary

Ngā Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa New Zealand Geographic Board

Office of the Surveyor-General

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**From:** Cecille Blake <[blake1@un.org](mailto:blake1@un.org)>

**Sent:** Friday, 10 January 2025 9:01 a.m.

**To:** Pierre Jaillard [JAILLARD] <[pierre@jaillard.net](mailto:pierre@jaillard.net)>; Wendy Shaw <[wshaw@linz.govt.nz](mailto:wshaw@linz.govt.nz)>; Sungjae



Choo [KHU AC] <[sjchoo@khu.ac.kr](mailto:sjchoo@khu.ac.kr)>; Ana Cristina da Rocha Berenger Resende  
<[ana.resende@ibge.gov.br](mailto:ana.resende@ibge.gov.br)>; [mtischler@usgs.gov](mailto:mtischler@usgs.gov)

**Subject:** FW: Washington Times reporter inquiry: Gulf of Mexico renaming

Dear Bureau and Michael

Please see below inquiry from the Washington Times.  
I would be grateful for your opinion on possible responses.

Kind regards

Cecille

Cecille Blake (Ms.)

Global Geospatial Information Management

Environment Statistics and Geospatial Information Branch

Statistics Division | Department of Economic and Social Affairs

United Nations | 2 UN Plaza | Room DC2-1634

e-mail: [blake1@un.org](mailto:blake1@un.org)

Web: <http://ggim.un.org> and [UNSD — United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names](#)



UN-GGIM



UNEGN

---

**From:** UNEG N <[geoinfo\\_unsd@un.org](mailto:geoinfo_unsd@un.org)>

**Sent:** Thursday, 09 January, 2025 2:58 PM

**To:** Cecille Blake <[blake1@un.org](mailto:blake1@un.org)>

**Subject:** FW: Washington Times reporter inquiry: Gulf of Mexico renaming

Dear Cecille,

Please see the below email.

Thanks.

Vilma

---

**From:** Seth McLaughlin <[smclaughlin@washingtontimes.com](mailto:smclaughlin@washingtontimes.com)>

**Sent:** Thursday, 09 January, 2025 9:58 AM

**To:** UNEG N <[geoinfo\\_unsd@un.org](mailto:geoinfo_unsd@un.org)>

**Subject:** Washington Times reporter inquiry: Gulf of Mexico renaming

You don't often get email from [smclaughlin@washingtontimes.com](mailto:smclaughlin@washingtontimes.com). [Learn why this is important](#)

Hello,

Reaching out to get information on what the process would be for the United Nations Group

of Experts on Geographical Names if the incoming Trump administration renamed the Gulf of Mexico the Gulf of America- either through federal legislation or federal agencies.

My general question is: What would have to happen for the rest of the world to accept the change?

Please let me know who best to reach out to for a response.

Thanks,

--

Seth McLaughlin  
The Washington Times  
202 340-4048 (cell)  
[smclaughlin@washingtontimes.com](mailto:smclaughlin@washingtontimes.com)  
Twitter @sethmclaughlin1

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**From:** (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) NGA-SFGGW USA CIV  
**To:** (b) (6) Tischler, Michael A; (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) NGA-SFGG USA CIV; Zahniser, Shellie R; Tim St. Onge  
**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] Re: Washington Times reporter inquiry: Gulf of Mexico renaming  
**Date:** Friday, January 10, 2025 8:48:02 AM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[image002.png](#)  
[image003.png](#)  
[image004.png](#)  
[image005.png](#)  
[image006.png](#)  
[image007.png](#)  
[image008.png](#)  
[image009.png](#)  
[image010.png](#)  
[image011.png](#)  
[image012.png](#)  
[image013.png](#)

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Classification: UNCLASSIFIED

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Good morning Mike (+ team) ,

Thank you for the opportunity to review. I will do so shortly and respond quickly should I have any suggestions. I do agree with (b) (6); we need to clearly distinguish between the GNS and GNIS. While both databases include the Gulf of Mexico, it is limited to Louisiana in the GNIS, whereas the GNS categorizes it as an international body of water. This distinction does/could delineate a different course of action for the way the name(s) are reflected in the GNS, specifically if this gets into 'disputed territory' issues. Clarifying this distinction in advance may help prevent future issues or questions.

Just my initial – very under caffeinated – thoughts.

V/r,

(b) (3) (B), (b) (6)

(b) (6)

National Geospatial Intelligence Agency

(U) (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) Office  
(U) (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) Telework

---

**From:** (b) (6) <(b) (6) @state.gov>  
**Sent:** Friday, January 10, 2025 7:40 AM  
**To:** Tischler, Michael [I-Net] <mtischler@usgs.gov>; (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) NGA-SFGG USA CIV  
<(b) (3) (B), (b) (6) >; (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) NGA-SFGGW USA CIV  
<(b) (3) (B), (b) (6) >; Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>; Tim St. Onge  
<tong@loc.gov>  
**Subject:** [Non-DoD Source] RE: [EXTERNAL] Re: Washington Times reporter inquiry: Gulf of Mexico

renaming

Hi Mike,

Thank you for looping us in and providing us an opportunity to review. When do you need comments by?

Not sure how others feel, but I'm of the mind we need to distinguish between/identify both the GNS and GNIS. Gulf of Mexico is in both databases, but in the GNIS it's contained to Louisiana whereas in the GNS, it's an international body of water.

(b) (6)

---

**From:** Tischler, Michael A <[mtischler@usgs.gov](mailto:mtischler@usgs.gov)>

**Sent:** Friday, January 10, 2025 8:24 AM

**To:** (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) NGA-SF USA CIV <(b) (3) (B), (b) (6)>; (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) NGA-SFGGW USA CIV <(b) (3) (B), (b) (6)>; Zahniser, Shellie R <[srzahniser@usgs.gov](mailto:srzahniser@usgs.gov)>; Tim St. Onge <[tong@loc.gov](mailto:tong@loc.gov)>; (b) (6) <(b) (6)@state.gov>

**Subject:** Fw: [EXTERNAL] Re: Washington Times reporter inquiry: Gulf of Mexico renaming

EXCOM,

I wanted to share the inquiry received by UNGEGN and my response. Please let me know if any revisions/edits are needed.

Thanks,  
m

---

**From:** Tischler, Michael A <[mtischler@usgs.gov](mailto:mtischler@usgs.gov)>

**Sent:** Friday, January 10, 2025 8:13 AM

**To:** Sungjae Choo <[sjchoo@khu.ac.kr](mailto:sjchoo@khu.ac.kr)>; Cecille Blake <[blake1@un.org](mailto:blake1@un.org)>; Wendy Shaw <[wshaw@linz.govt.nz](mailto:wshaw@linz.govt.nz)>; Ana Cristina da Rocha Berenger Resende <[ana.resende@ibge.gov.br](mailto:ana.resende@ibge.gov.br)>; Adam Greenland <[agreenland@linz.govt.nz](mailto:agreenland@linz.govt.nz)>

**Cc:** Pierre Jaillard [JAILLARD] <[pierre@jaillard.net](mailto:pierre@jaillard.net)>; Charlotte Jones <[CJones@linz.govt.nz](mailto:CJones@linz.govt.nz)>; Mark Illiffe <[mark.illiffe@un.org](mailto:mark.illiffe@un.org)>; Stefan Schweinfest <[schweinfest@un.org](mailto:schweinfest@un.org)>

**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] Re: Washington Times reporter inquiry: Gulf of Mexico renaming

Good morning,

My apologies for the delay - Federal offices in the US were closed yesterday as a day of mourning for former President Carter.

There are a few things I'd like to mention from the perspective of the US BGN.

1 - My home agency (USGS) has provided guidance that BGN staff (including me) are not to respond at this time to media inquiries. As you might guess, we have



received a few questions from high-profile media outlets. But, we are currently not providing a response of any kind.

2 - The process by which the name would be changed in the US depends on the type of action taken to make the renaming official. Of course, by far the most common method to name or rename a geographic feature is a proposal to the BGN, and allow the deliberative process to run its course. However, The BGN [Policy on Names Considered or Established by Congress or the President](#) notes that "Geographic names and their applications specifically established by an act of Congress or Executive order are legally official, and therefore, are not bound by BGN principles, policies, and procedures." This includes name changes. For any names established by an act of Congress or Executive order (or proclamation), the name is entered into/changed in GNIS once official. Federal data sources are updated from GNIS on their own data refresh cycles.

3 - As of this morning, there is draft legislation to rename the Gulf of Mexico offered in the US House of Representatives ([HR 256](#)). I have attached the text which has been released (I believe on social media) by the sponsor, Rep. Taylor-Greene. If this were to pass into law the name would become official. The BGN would not be involved in the decision-making process and our authoritative database (GNIS) would be updated to reflect the new official name. The draft bill also dictates a schedule for update of Federal mapping products.

4 - As others have stated, I am also unable to offer any additional information on how other national naming authorities would recognize this name change.

Thank you,

Mike

\*\*\*\*\*

Mike Tischler, Ph.D  
Director, National Geospatial Program  
Chair, U.S. Board on Geographic Names  
U.S. Geological Survey  
Department of Interior  
o: 703-648-4725  
c: 703-344-4348  
[mtischler@usgs.gov](mailto:mtischler@usgs.gov)

---

**From:** Sungjae Choo <[sjchoo@khu.ac.kr](mailto:sjchoo@khu.ac.kr)>

**Sent:** Thursday, January 9, 2025 7:12 PM

**To:** Cecille Blake <[blake1@un.org](mailto:blake1@un.org)>; Wendy Shaw <[wshaw@linz.govt.nz](mailto:wshaw@linz.govt.nz)>; Ana Cristina da Rocha Berenger Resende <[ana.resende@ibge.gov.br](mailto:ana.resende@ibge.gov.br)>; Adam Greenland <[agreenland@linz.govt.nz](mailto:agreenland@linz.govt.nz)>

**Cc:** Pierre Jaillard [JAILLARD] <[pierre@jaillard.net](mailto:pierre@jaillard.net)>; Tischler, Michael A <[mtischler@usgs.gov](mailto:mtischler@usgs.gov)>; Charlotte Jones <[CJones@linz.govt.nz](mailto:CJones@linz.govt.nz)>; Mark Iliffe <[mark.iliffe@un.org](mailto:mark.iliffe@un.org)>; Stefan Schweinfest

<[schweinfest@un.org](mailto:schweinfest@un.org)>

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Re: Washington Times reporter inquiry: Gulf of Mexico renaming

**This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.**

Dear all,

I agree with Ana that UNGEGN has to reply and do it as simply as possible. This is especially so, considering the political inclination of this media house, the Washington Times.

I am suggesting the following points be included:

- UNGEGN does not deal with individual geographical names.
- Naming authorities of each Member State have their own principles and procedures of geographical naming.
- Naming of water bodies outside of territorial waters is a subject of the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO), which has liaison with UNGEGN.

With best regards,  
Sungjae

2025년 1월 10일 (금) 오전 7:55, Adam Greenland <[agreenland@linz.govt.nz](mailto:agreenland@linz.govt.nz)>님이 작성:

UNCLASSIFIED

Kia ora,

The IHO does not adjudicate on the names of oceans and seas in international waters.

What is managed by the IHO on behalf of Member States (MS) is the Naming Standard and the Publication of the names of oceans and seas in international waters.

I agree with Ana email comments. In my opinion, this is a topic that is/has been highly contentious with IHO MS and best to leave well alone.

Ngā mihi

**Adam Greenland**  
**National Hydrographer**

Location Information

[agreenland@linz.govt.nz](mailto:agreenland@linz.govt.nz) | **DDI** 04 460 0136 | **MOB** +64 (0)21 243 1577

Wellington Office, Level 7, Radio New Zealand House, 155 The Terrace

PO Box 5501, Wellington 6145, New Zealand

[www.linz.govt.nz](http://www.linz.govt.nz) | [data.linz.govt.nz](http://data.linz.govt.nz)



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**From:** Ana Cristina da Rocha Berenger Resende <[ana.resende@ibge.gov.br](mailto:ana.resende@ibge.gov.br)>

**Sent:** Friday, 10 January 2025 10:58 am

**To:** Cecille Blake <[blake1@un.org](mailto:blake1@un.org)>; Wendy Shaw <[wshaw@linz.govt.nz](mailto:wshaw@linz.govt.nz)>; Pierre Jaillard [JAILLARD] <[pierre@jaillard.net](mailto:pierre@jaillard.net)>; Sungjae Choo [KHU AC] <[sjchoo@khu.ac.kr](mailto:sjchoo@khu.ac.kr)>; [mtischler@usgs.gov](mailto:mtischler@usgs.gov)

**Cc:** Charlotte Jones <[CJones@linz.govt.nz](mailto:CJones@linz.govt.nz)>; Adam Greenland <[agreenland@linz.govt.nz](mailto:agreenland@linz.govt.nz)>; Mark Illiffe <[mark.illiffe@un.org](mailto:mark.illiffe@un.org)>; Stefan Schweinfest <[schweinfest@un.org](mailto:schweinfest@un.org)>

**Subject:** Re: Washington Times reporter inquiry: Gulf of Mexico renaming

Hi, everyone!

I think it would be important to answer right away that this is not UNGEGN's role to deal with such things.

I wouldn't know how to answer what they call their "general question": "What would have to happen for the rest of the world to accept the change?". There are issues that are never solved, such as The East Sea/Sea of Japan, and I really don't think this kind of dispute ever has a "solution". And, sincerely, I think the less we say, the better, to avoid further inquiries. So, I would keep our response to the first part of Wendy's suggested response.

Best regards,

Ana

**Ana Cristina da Rocha Bérenger Resende**

[ana.resende@ibge.gov.br](mailto:ana.resende@ibge.gov.br)

Gerente de Nomes Geográficos

Diretoria de Geociências - IBGE

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+55 21 99614-2453

---

**De:** Cecille Blake <[bjake1@un.org](mailto:bjake1@un.org)>

**Enviado:** Thursday, January 9, 2025 6:35:15 PM

**Para:** Wendy Shaw <[wshaw@linz.govt.nz](mailto:wshaw@linz.govt.nz)>; Pierre Jaillard [JAILLARD] <[pierre@jaillard.net](mailto:pierre@jaillard.net)>; Sungjae Choo [KHU AC] <[sjchoo@khu.ac.kr](mailto:sjchoo@khu.ac.kr)>; Ana Cristina da Rocha Berenger Resende <[ana.resende@ibge.gov.br](mailto:ana.resende@ibge.gov.br)>; [mtischler@usgs.gov](mailto:mtischler@usgs.gov) <[mtischler@usgs.gov](mailto:mtischler@usgs.gov)>

**Cc:** Charlotte Jones <[CJones@linz.govt.nz](mailto:CJones@linz.govt.nz)>; Adam Greenland <[agreenland@linz.govt.nz](mailto:agreenland@linz.govt.nz)>; Mark Iliffe <[mark.iliffe@un.org](mailto:mark.iliffe@un.org)>; Stefan Schweinfest <[schweinfest@un.org](mailto:schweinfest@un.org)>

**Assunto:** RE: Washington Times reporter inquiry: Gulf of Mexico renaming

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Dear Wendy

Thank you for your prompt response.

Looking forward to receiving the input from other Bureau Members.

Kind regards

Cecille

Cecille Blake (Ms.)

Global Geospatial Information Management

Environment Statistics and Geospatial Information Branch

Statistics Division | Department of Economic and Social Affairs

United Nations | 2 UN Plaza | Room DC2-1634

e-mail: [blake1@un.org](mailto:blake1@un.org)

Web: <http://ggim.un.org> and [UNSD — United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names](#).



UN-GGIM

UNGEGN

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**Sent:** Thursday, 09 January, 2025 4:15 PM

**To:** Cecille Blake <[blake1@un.org](mailto:blake1@un.org)>; Pierre Jaillard [JAILLARD] <[pierre@jaillard.net](mailto:pierre@jaillard.net)>; Sungjae Choo

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<[ana.resende@ibge.gov.br](mailto:ana.resende@ibge.gov.br)>; [mtischler@usgs.gov](mailto:mtischler@usgs.gov)

**Cc:** Charlotte Jones <[CJones@linz.govt.nz](mailto:CJones@linz.govt.nz)>; Adam Greenland <[agreenland@linz.govt.nz](mailto:agreenland@linz.govt.nz)>

**Subject:** RE: Washington Times reporter inquiry: Gulf of Mexico renaming

## UNCLASSIFIED

Thanks Cecille – UNGEGN should not respond. Only the US Board on Geographical Names, Mexico's INEGA and/or IHO should respond.

However, if UNGEGN must respond, we could say something like this:

'The role of UNGEGN is to provide guidance to Member States on good toponymic practice. UNGEGN does not adjudicate on geographical name proposals. Rather, national naming authorities have the responsibility for processing and deciding on geographical name proposals:

- United States Board on Geographical Names. Contact the USBGN member: Michael Tischler [mtischler@usgs.gov](mailto:mtischler@usgs.gov). [Also maybe Betsy Kanalley [bkanalley@fs.fed.us](mailto:bkanalley@fs.fed.us) who is an UNGEGN member, as well as on the USBGN Board.]
- INEGA for Mexico. Contact Mr Francisco Javier Medina Parra, Deputy Director General for Basic Geographic Information, National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI) <https://www.inegi.org.mx/>
- Cuba – not sure. Are they a Member State?

Typically the names of oceans and seas in international waters are managed by the International Hydrographic Organisation (IHO), who have stringent processes and standards that must be followed before names of this scale, which border multiple countries, are agreed to be changed. International maritime navigation relies on authoritative names to eliminate ambiguity and confusion, and ultimately avoid loss of life.

Should the US President proceed without following a proper consultative process through the USBGN, Mexico and/or the IHO, then the international community would likely continue using Gulf of Mexico.

Bit of a tricky one. I have cc'd our Comms person, Charlotte Jones, and our National Hydrographer, Adam Greenland, who may wish to offer some further insights/advice. I know you will have a deadline, so hopefully we can respond in a timely manner.

Kia ora

## Wendy Shaw

Hēkeretari/Secretary

Ngā Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa New Zealand Geographic Board

Office of the Surveyor-General

[wshaw@linz.govt.nz](mailto:wshaw@linz.govt.nz) or [wshaw@tūtūwhenua.govt.nz](mailto:wshaw@tūtūwhenua.govt.nz) | DDI 04 460 0581 | MOB 027 480 7082

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UNCLASSIFIED

**From:** Cecille Blake <[blake1@un.org](mailto:blake1@un.org)>

**Sent:** Friday, 10 January 2025 9:01 a.m.

**To:** Pierre Jaillard [JAILLARD] <[pierre@jaillard.net](mailto:pierre@jaillard.net)>; Wendy Shaw <[wshaw@linz.govt.nz](mailto:wshaw@linz.govt.nz)>; Sungjae Choo [KHU AC] <[sjchoo@khu.ac.kr](mailto:sjchoo@khu.ac.kr)>; Ana Cristina da Rocha Berenger Resende <[ana.resende@ibge.gov.br](mailto:ana.resende@ibge.gov.br)>; [mtischler@usgs.gov](mailto:mtischler@usgs.gov)

**Subject:** FW: Washington Times reporter inquiry: Gulf of Mexico renaming

Dear Bureau and Michael

Please see below inquiry from the Washington Times.

I would be grateful for your opinion on possible responses.

Kind regards

Cecille

Cecille Blake (Ms.)

Global Geospatial Information Management

Environment Statistics and Geospatial Information Branch

Statistics Division | Department of Economic and Social Affairs

United Nations | 2 UN Plaza | Room DC2-1634

e-mail: [blake1@un.org](mailto:blake1@un.org)

Web: <http://ggim.un.org> and [UNSD — United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names](http://un.org/unsgn/)



UN-GGIM      UNGEGN

**From:** UNGEGN <[geoinfo\\_unsd@un.org](mailto:geoinfo_unsd@un.org)>

**Sent:** Thursday, 09 January, 2025 2:58 PM

**To:** Cecille Blake <[blake1@un.org](mailto:blake1@un.org)>

**Subject:** FW: Washington Times reporter inquiry: Gulf of Mexico renaming

Dear Cecille,

Please see the below email.

Thanks.

Vilma

**From:** Seth McLaughlin <[smclaughlin@washingtontimes.com](mailto:smclaughlin@washingtontimes.com)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, 09 January, 2025 9:58 AM  
**To:** UNGEGN <[geoinfo\\_unsd@un.org](mailto:geoinfo_unsd@un.org)>  
**Subject:** Washington Times reporter inquiry: Gulf of Mexico renaming

 You don't often get email from [smclaughlin@washingtontimes.com](mailto:smclaughlin@washingtontimes.com). [Learn why this is important](#)

Hello,

Reaching out to get information on what the process would be for the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names if the incoming Trump administration renamed the Gulf of Mexico the Gulf of America- either through federal legislation or federal agencies.

My general question is: What would have to happen for the rest of the world to accept the change?

Please let me know who best to reach out to for a response.

Thanks,

--

Seth McLaughlin

The Washington Times

202 340-4048 (cell)

[smclaughlin@washingtontimes.com](mailto:smclaughlin@washingtontimes.com)

Twitter @sethmclaughlin1

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=====  
Classification: UNCLASSIFIED

**From:** Anderson, Gina R  
**To:** BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC  
**Cc:** Zahniser, Shellie R; Tischler, Michael A; St. Onge, Tim  
**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] Gulf of AMERICA  
**Date:** Tuesday, January 14, 2025 6:56:14 AM

---

Thanks, Matt.

**Gina Anderson**

Public Affairs Specialist | Core Science Systems Mission Area  
U.S. Geological Survey  
Office of Communications and Publishing  
405-509-3524 | granderson@usgs.gov

**From:** BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 14, 2025 8:45 AM  
**To:** Anderson, Gina R <granderson@usgs.gov>  
**Cc:** Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>; Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>; St. Onge, Tim <tong@loc.gov>  
**Subject:** Fw: [EXTERNAL] Gulf of AMERICA

Hi Gina,

FYI, another public comment on the Gulf of Mexico name.

As before, we will not respond.

Matt

**From:** Harith <(b) (6)@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, January 13, 2025 7:17 PM  
**To:** BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Gulf of AMERICA

**This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.**

I think you should call the Gulf of “Mexico” to Gulf of America because unlike “Mexico” America can apply both to the US and Mexico making it much more fair.

**From:** (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) [NGA-SFGGW USA CIV](#)  
**To:** [Tischler, Michael A](#); [Zahniser, Shellie R](#); (b) (6) [@state.gov](#); (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) [NGA-SFGG USA CIV](#); ["tong@loc.gov"](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] January EXCOM [ Minutes Enclosed]  
**Date:** Wednesday, January 15, 2025 12:02:30 PM  
**Attachments:** [EXTERNAL January EXCOM Minutes Enclosed.msg](#)

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**U.S. Board on Geographic Names**  
Executive Committee Meeting  
Virtual Meeting  
Tuesday, January 14, 2025, 10:30 a.m. EST

**Attendees**

(b) (6), Department of State  
Timothy ST. ONGE, Library of Congress  
Michael TISCHLER, Department of the Interior/U.S. Geological Survey (BGN Chair)  
(b) (3) (B), (b) (6), Department of Defense (Chair)  
Shellie ZAHNISER, Executive Secretary, U.S. Board on Geographic Names for Domestic Names

**1. Opening**

(b) (3) (B), (b) (6) opened EXCOM Meeting of the U.S. Board on Geographic Names (BGN) at 10:30 a.m. EST.

**2. Communications**

**2.1 BGN Chairman's Report (TISCHLER)**

TISCHLER expressed his gratitude for the prompt response and understanding regarding H.R. 276, which involves the renaming of the Gulf of Mexico.

TISCHLER inquired about the status of the BGN Communications Chair and the response received. The Executive Committee discussed the status of nominating a new member for the position of BGN Communications Chair. (b) (5) DPP

(b) (5) DPP

The Executive Committee discussed RUNYON's departure and the resulting significant gap in the workforce. (b) (5) DPP

**2.2 BGN Vice-Chair's Report (b) (3) (B), (b) (6))**

(b) (5) DPP

(b) (3) (B), (b) (6) gave an update to the current FNC staffing situation following changes that occurred prior to the BGN/PCGN Conference in November. (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) has been selected to fulfill

the role of FNC Assistant. TBD on the final date and tempo/capability assessment as things transition.

### 3. Executive Discussions

#### Domestic Names Committee (ZAHNISER)

#### BGN Annual Report

ZAHNISER provided a status update on the BGN Annual Reports, which have not been produced since FY2021. She emphasized the need for (b) (3) (B), (b) (5) to contribute input on the UNGEGN US/CAN Division. ZAHNISER also mentioned that the 24 wrap-up will serve as the US country report for UNGEGN.

(b) (3) (B), (b) (6) offered to notify (b) (3) (B), (b) (6).

#### Solicitor Guidance Discussion

(b) (5) ACP

#### Agency Appointment Letters

(b) (5) DPP

(b) (5) DPP

#### Congressional Bill H.R. 276 Status

The Executive Committee discussed the status of Congressional Bill H.R. 276, noting that Representative Greene officially submitted the document. ZAHNISER reiterated previous guidance to refrain from responding to any inquiries. TISCHLER raised concerns about the need for consistency and awareness among agencies, emphasizing the importance of collaborating on a unified response message should the need arise. He noted documentation stating the BGN Chair would be held responsible, with a 180-day deadline for completion.

#### 4. Other Business

##### 4.1 Advisory Committees

##### 4.1.i. Advisory Committee on Extra- Terrestrial Features

(b) (5) DPP

#### 5. Other Business

(b) (6) noted a potential conflict for the January quarterly full board meeting of the US Board on Geographic Names, as it follows the US Presidential inauguration. The Executive Committee agreed to postpone the meeting due to the anticipated impacts.

TISCHLER offered to update the status of Advisory Committee 3405.

ZAHNISER raised the issue of scheduling a planning meeting for the upcoming review sessions of the DNC Principles, Policies, and Procedures working group. The Executive Committee agreed to set the meeting for February 4, 2025, at 1:00 p.m. EST.

#### 6. Closing

(b) (3), (b) (5), (b) (6) adjourned the meeting at 12:32 a.m. EST.

#### 7. Next Meeting

The next Executive Committee Meeting is expected to take place 2-3 weeks prior to the next Full Board quarterly meeting, scheduled for April 2025.

**From:** [Zahniser, Shellie R](#)  
**To:** [Tischler, Michael A](#)  
**Subject:** RE: BGN issue paper needed for transition  
**Date:** Friday, January 17, 2025 2:04:00 PM  
**Attachments:** [Guidance Issue Paper BGN.docx](#)

---

Mike,

Attached is the first of 2 issue papers. This one is a general BGN paper. My intent is to get a second paper to you that lays out Presidential and Congressional name designations.

Shellie Zahniser, Ph.D.  
BGN Executive Secretary  
Domestic Names Committee  
Honolulu, HI

---

**From:** Tischler, Michael A <[mtischler@usgs.gov](mailto:mtischler@usgs.gov)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 8, 2025 9:18 AM  
**To:** Zahniser, Shellie R <[srzahniser@usgs.gov](mailto:srzahniser@usgs.gov)>  
**Subject:** Fw: BGN issue paper needed for transition

Hi Shellie,

Can you please take the first shot at a draft? This should be pretty straightforward I would think...just borrowing language from our PPP.

Thanks,  
m

---

**From:** Jones, Leslie W <[ljones@usgs.gov](mailto:ljones@usgs.gov)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 8, 2025 2:13 PM  
**To:** Tischler, Michael A <[mtischler@usgs.gov](mailto:mtischler@usgs.gov)>  
**Cc:** Lacey, Jennifer A <[jlacey@usgs.gov](mailto:jlacey@usgs.gov)>  
**Subject:** BGN issue paper needed for transition

Hi Mike,

Given the Gulf of Mexico and the Mt. Denali name changes being proposed by the new administration, we think it would be helpful to have an issue paper for our transition library that describes the BGN, its role, what is covered and what is not, and the process for renaming geographic features. I believe that if these proposed changes are done via an EO, SO, or legislation, that the BGN is not likely to be involved.

I've attached the template, and I am assuming you have materials that can be copy/pasted into this format.

Thanks very much,

Leslie

**Leslie W. Jones** (she/her)

Chief of Staff

U.S. Geological Survey

12201 Sunrise Valley Drive, MS101

Reston, VA 20192

703-969-4158 (cell) [ljones@usgs.gov](mailto:ljones@usgs.gov)

## **ISSUE: [U.S. BOARD ON GEOGRAPHIC NAMES]**

### **I. KEY POINTS**

The BGN, conjointly with the Secretary of the Interior, is directed to establish and maintain uniform geographic name usage throughout the Federal Government, including solving name discrepancies, approving new names, validating and recording existing names, and promulgating all official names.

The BGN comprises representatives of Federal agencies concerned with geographic information, population, ecology, and management of public lands.

The U.S. Board on Geographic Names follows a set of principles, policies, and procedures approved by the Secretary of the Interior with reference to both domestic and foreign geographic names; and to decide the standard names, orthographies, applications, and their promulgation for official use.

The Geographic Names Information System (GNIS) was established and is maintained by the U.S. Geological Survey in cooperation with the U.S. Board on Geographic Names. It represents the Federal Government's only official repository for identifying official placenames. Its purpose is to have a single efficient source of official placenames for use by all federal agencies so they don't need to maintain their own data sources.

### **II. OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES**

The BGN is integral in strengthening and maintaining Tribal relations and developing collaborative opportunities that preserve the history and diverse cultures of Tribes. These activities include Tribal consultation, pronunciation of Tribal geographic names for the public, engaging and requesting input on geographic naming proposals, and attending Tribal Historic Preservation Officer meetings.

The BGN offers the public a way to participate in the Federal geographic naming process. With respect to the Domestic Naming Committee, there are currently no limitations on who can participate in proposing new names, and name changes in the U.S.; something that can be both an opportunity, and a challenge and will require additional considerations as policies and procedures are updated. However, the Foreign Names Committee follows much stricter guidelines.

With the accessibility to the BGN via the internet comes greater visibility to a larger audience. Recently, the BGN has been involved with many high-profile cases that has increased the number of media inquiries, Congressional requests, and Freedom of Information Act requests, and inquiries from the public. With minimal staff and greater visibility, the ability to maintain operational tempo has been degraded.

The current design of GNIS does not meet the needs of agencies for a single efficient source of official placenames, requiring agencies to maintain their own data sources.

In addition to GNIS, the Geographic Names Server (GNS) is the central database for foreign geographic names approved for use on Federal products.

The BGN DNC mission is funded through Congressional appropriations allocated to the USGS, which is primarily used maintain GNIS. The annual appropriation is roughly \$900K; this funding supports the Executive Secretary of the Domestic Names Committee, 2 Federal staff, 1 contracted staff, and multiple technical personnel who maintain the GNIS database. Board members are not funded for their service to the BGN.

### **III. BACKGROUND**

The U.S. Board on Geographic Names (BGN) is a Federal body created in 1890 and established in its present form by Public Law in 1947 to maintain uniform geographic name usage throughout the Federal Government.

By law, the BGN is responsible for promulgating all geographic names except those applying to offices or establishments of Federal agencies (Pub. L. 80–242, sec. 1 and 7; 43 U.S.C. 364 and 364f).

Geographic names and their applications specifically established by an act of Congress, Executive order, Treaty, or Federal proclamation are official by law. This does not apply to geographic names used incidentally in the language of documents intended for other purposes.

If not named by an act of Congress or Executive order, federal land units are named by the administering agency under the authority of an act of Congress.

All proposals are evaluated in cooperation with State geographic names authorities and advisors; Federal, State, and Tribal agencies; local governments; other authoritative bodies; and the public. BGN policies, published usage, and State, Tribal, and local governmental needs, will also be taken into consideration.

Policies include: Policy I. Names Considered or Established by Congress or the President Policy II. Name Changes Policy III. Commemorative Names Policy IV. Wilderness Area Geographic Names Policy V. Derogatory and Offensive Names Policy VI. Diacritics Policy VII. Duplicate and Similar Names Policy VIII. Variant Names Policy IX. Long Names Policy X. Tribal Geographic Names Policy XI. Commercial Names Policy XII. Animal Names

**IV. PREPARED BY:** Shellie Zahniser, United States Geological Survey, BGN Executive Secretary, 808-260-6150

### **DATE**

10 January, 2025



**From:** BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC  
**To:** Tischler, Michael A; Zahniser, Shellie R  
**Subject:** Fw: [EXTERNAL] ST\_GeographicName  
**Date:** Tuesday, January 21, 2025 12:57:13 PM  
**Attachments:** S tate GeographicNameProposed 1.pdf  
S tate GeographicNameProposed.pdf

---

Our question about BGN purview over Executive or Congressional naming is a reality.

Two proposals, only one of which is relevant to the question:

change [Denali](#) to "Denali McKinley"

change [Flattop](#) (no feature in GNIS and FID in proposal is for [Chugach Mountains](#) , perhaps [Flattop Mountain](#), which is in the Chugach Mountains?) to "Mount McKinley"

Matt

---

**From:** Shane Carlson (b) (6) @myyahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 21, 2025 3:42 PM  
**To:** BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] ST\_GeographicName

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Petition to change the name of two mountains in Alaska.



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# THE BOARD ON GEOGRAPHIC NAMES DOMESTIC NAMES COMMITTEE PROPOSAL FORM

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This document is for those interested in proposing:

1. **A new name for a currently unnamed geographic feature, or**
2. **A change to an existing name, spelling, or where a name is applied.**

By submitting this form, the proponent acknowledges the BGN Policies and agrees to work with BGN staff regarding their proposal.



# Domestic Geographic Name Proposal Form

The U.S. Board on Geographic Names (BGN) is responsible for standardizing the names of geographic features within the 50 States and in other areas under the sovereignty of the United States. The BGN retains the legal authority to promulgate all official names and locations of natural features (e.g. mountains, rivers, valleys), as well as canals, channels, reservoirs, and other select feature types.

This form is to propose a new name or name, spelling, or application change for a geographic feature for Federal use. A proponent should carefully review the proposal prior to submission to ensure that it is consistent with the [BGN policies](#). Please note all fields with a red outline are required prior to submitting this form.

The proponent should also be aware that the entire proposal—including personal identifying information and any associated correspondence—is in the public domain and may be made publicly available at any time.

Submit  
Proposal:

1. Download and email this form and supporting documentation to:

[BGNEXEC@usgs.gov](mailto:BGNEXEC@usgs.gov)

OR 2. Send by mail to:

U.S. BGN Executive Secretary, Domestic Names  
12201 Sunrise Valley Drive, MS-523  
Reston, VA 20192

Contact Us:

[BGNEXEC@usgs.gov](mailto:BGNEXEC@usgs.gov)

i. Save PDF using this format:

'State\_GeographicNameProposed'

ii. Email Subject: *ST\_GeographicName*

*Please note that anything submitted by mail will be delayed.*

## Naming Basics

Proposed Name:

Mount McKinley

Is this to change an existing name? ☒ Y ☐ N

*If yes, please provide the official name and Feature ID as it appears in [the Geographic Names Information System \(GNIS\)](#).*

Is this name in current local use? ☒ Y ☐ N

What is the Feature Type?

Please Select One

GNIS Name: Flattop

GNIS ID: 1412401

## Location Basics



Where is the feature?

Latitude: 61.0895166 (38.94741)

Longitude: -149.6680014 (-77.36839)



For Linear Features (e.g. stream or valley):

Mouth/Confluence

Latitude: (38.94741)

Longitude: (-77.36839)



Source/Headwater

Latitude: (38.94741)

Longitude: (-77.36839)

General Location:

State: Alaska

County:

City/Town/

Township/

Borough:

Public Land Survey System:

Section(s), Township, Range, Meridian

Anchorage Alaska and Chugach State Park

## Feature Description

*Physical shape, length, width, etc. (Maps can be submitted separately by email)*

It is flat on the top but still looks like a mountain. Offers great views of the city and of surrounding areas.

## Name Details

### Name information:

*Please provide relevant information about the proposed name, such as origin, meaning, how long it has been in current use, as well as current or historical significance. Also include why you believe the feature requires a name or name change and why the proposed name is appropriate. Describe any documents that you will be submitting (separately by email) to support your proposal.*

Mount McKinley honors former President William McKinley who was our 25th President and honors his legacy. The nearby Mount Daneli was renamed to Daneli in 2015 to reflect the Alaska natives and culture. FlatTop Mountain has no meaning and does not appeal to our younger Generation. Renaming FlatTop to Mount McKinley would most certainly represent our 25th President William McKinley and allow the younger generation to stand on Mount McKinley.

Please provide a list of supporting documentation, including any web links:

*Examples: Published sources showing the proposed name or letters of support (local government, historical society, etc.).*

As of writing I have none at this time.



Is the name commemorative? Does the name honor or refer to a person or persons? ☒ Y ☐ N

*Please note that the BGN will only accept proposals for names that are intended to honor a person or persons deceased at least five years. The BGN will disapprove names that could be construed to honor living persons. The person being honored should have had either (1) some direct or long-term association with the feature, or (2) have made a significant contribution to the area, community, or State in which it is located; or (3) have outstanding national or international recognition. The BGN discourages the use of an individual's full name except to avoid ambiguity.*

*If yes, please provide the following:*

Honoree's Date of Birth: 1/29/1843      Honoree's Date of Death: 9/18/1901

Short biography and significance or association with the geographic feature: *(list any additional honorees here)*

President William McKinley may have at one point visited Anchorage and had the oppertunity to step foot on flattop but President William McKinley never did step foot on Mount Denali. Not many but few presidents have had the oppertunity to step onto flattop. Thus the reason Flattop should be renamed to Mount McKinley.

Is the feature in a Wilderness Area or Wilderness Study Area? ☒ Y ☐ N ☐ Unknown

*If yes, please provide your justification for making an exception to the Wilderness Policy:*

*Please note that the BGN will not approve new names for unnamed features within wilderness areas or wilderness study areas, unless an overriding need can be demonstrated by the proponent.*

The Proposed mountain is located in Anchorage Alaska and Chugach State Park.

Is the name you are proposing intended to honor Native Americans, their language, or culture? ☒ Y ☐ N

*If yes, to ensure that the proposed name is appropriate, the BGN strongly advises proponents to work with Tribal Leaders, Tribal Historic Preservation Officers, and/or Native American linguists or other expert(s) associated with the Tribe to determine the acceptability of the proposed name and application. Please review [the BGN's Cultural Sensitivity for Native American Names guidance](#).*

*Proponents should also seek letters of endorsement from the governments (e.g., Tribal Councils) of any affected Tribes. Please indicate below, or in documentation submitted separately (with this proposal or any time after the proposal is submitted), any efforts to solicit Tribal input.*

## Additional Information +

Is there any local opposition or conflict with the proposed name? ☐ Y ☒ N


*If yes, please explain and describe any opposition:*

Additional notes, including any Tribal input details


All parties are currently in agreement and wish to see FlatTop Renamed to Mount McKinley as soon as possibal.


## Proponent Information


*Please provide one form of contact (email preferred):*


 Proponent's Name: Shane Carlson

Agency or Organization, if applicable:

 Email: (b) (6) @myyahoo.com

 Mailing Address:

 Phone:

 Are you completing this form for someone else? ☐ Y ☒ N

*If yes, please fill out the following:*

Completed by:

Full Name:

Email:

Mailing Address:

Phone:



---

# THE BOARD ON GEOGRAPHIC NAMES DOMESTIC NAMES COMMITTEE PROPOSAL FORM

---

This document is for those interested in proposing:

1. **A new name for a currently unnamed geographic feature, or**
2. **A change to an existing name, spelling, or where a name is applied.**

By submitting this form, the proponent acknowledges the BGN Policies and agrees to work with BGN staff regarding their proposal.





# Domestic Geographic Name Proposal Form

The U.S. Board on Geographic Names (BGN) is responsible for standardizing the names of geographic features within the 50 States and in other areas under the sovereignty of the United States. The BGN retains the legal authority to promulgate all official names and locations of natural features (e.g. mountains, rivers, valleys), as well as canals, channels, reservoirs, and other select feature types.

This form is to propose a new name or name, spelling, or application change for a geographic feature for Federal use. A proponent should carefully review the proposal prior to submission to ensure that it is consistent with the [BGN policies](#). Please note all fields with a red outline are required prior to submitting this form.

The proponent should also be aware that the entire proposal—including personal identifying information and any associated correspondence—is in the public domain and may be made publicly available at any time.

Submit Proposal:   
Contact Us: [BGNEXEC@usgs.gov](mailto:BGNEXEC@usgs.gov)

1. Download and email this form and supporting documentation to: [BGNEXEC@usgs.gov](mailto:BGNEXEC@usgs.gov)

OR 2. Send by mail to:   
U.S. BGN Executive Secretary, Domestic Names   
12201 Sunrise Valley Drive, MS-523   
Reston, VA 20192

i. Save PDF using this format:   
'State\_GeographicNameProposed'

ii. Email Subject: *ST\_GeographicName*

Please note that anything submitted by mail will be delayed.

## Naming Basics

Proposed Name:

Denali McKinley

Is this to change an existing name? ☒ Y ☐ N

If yes, please provide the official name and Feature ID as it appears in [the Geographic Names Information System \(GNIS\)](#).

Is this name in current local use? ☒ Y ☐ N

What is the Feature Type?

Please Select One

GNIS Name: Denali

GNIS ID: 1414314

## Location Basics

Where is the feature?

Latitude: 63.0691018, 63.084 (38.94741)

Longitude: -151.0062617, -150.984 (-77.36839)



General Location:

State: Alaska

County:

City/Town/

Township/

Borough:

Denali Borough

For Linear Features (e.g. stream or valley):

Mouth/Confluence

Latitude: (38.94741)

Longitude: (-77.36839)



Source/Headwater

Latitude: (38.94741)

Longitude: (-77.36839)

Public Land Survey System:

Section(s), Township, Range, Meridian

Denali Borough



## Feature Description

*Physical shape, length, width, etc. (Maps can be submitted separately by email)*

Has an Elevation 20,310 ft. and is the highest point in North America.

## Name Details

Name information:

*Please provide relevant information about the proposed name, such as origin, meaning, how long it has been in current use, as well as current or historical significance. Also include why you believe the feature requires a name or name change and why the proposed name is appropriate. Describe any documents that you will be submitting (separately by email) to support your proposal.*

The name Denali McKinley would honor both the Koyukon people and William McKinley. Denali McKinley has been called and known as Mount McKinley by many and by the many Alaskans, Alaska Natives and The Alaska Board of Geographic Names it has been know as Mount Denali. The Koyukon people who inhabit the area around the mountain have referred to the peak as "Denali" for centuries. In 1896, a gold prospector named it "Mount McKinley" in support of then-presidential candidate William McKinley.

Please provide a list of supporting documentation, including any web links:

*Examples: Published sources showing the proposed name or letters of support (local government, historical society, etc.).*

<https://www.murkowski.senate.gov/press/release/senator-murkowski-opposes-denali-name-change>

Is the name commemorative? Does the name honor or refer to a person or persons? ☒ Y ☐ N

*Please note that the BGN will only accept proposals for names that are intended to honor a person or persons deceased at least five years. The BGN will disapprove names that could be construed to honor living persons. The person being honored should have had either (1) some direct or long-term association with the feature, or (2) have made a significant contribution to the area, community, or State in which it is located; or (3) have outstanding national or international recognition. The BGN discourages the use of an individual's full name except to avoid ambiguity.*

*If yes, please provide the following:*

Honoree's Date of Birth: 1/29/1842 Honoree's Date of Death: 9/14/1901

Short biography and significance or association with the geographic feature: *(list any additional honorees here)*

The Koyukon people who inhabit the area around the mountain have referred to the peak as "Denali" for centuries. In 1896, a gold prospector named it "Mount McKinley" in support of then-presidential candidate William McKinley. Named in 1896 by William A. Dickey, prospector, "after William McKinley of Ohio, who had been nominated for the Presidency and that was the first news we received on our way out of that wonderful wilderness." McKinley, 1854-1901, was the 25th President of the United States. The first mention of the massif was by Captain George Vancouver, who when seeing it from Cook Inlet in 1794, referred to the "stupendous snow mountains." The Russians descriptively called it "Bolshaya (Bulshaia) Gora" or "big mountain." Alfred Mayo and Arthur Harper, pioneer Alaska traders, after a trip up the Tanana River in 1878, reported, "a great ice mountain to the south," but did not name it. A prospector, Frank Densmore, spoke so enthusiastically after seeing the mountain from Lake Minchumina in 1889, that it was known for years among prospectors as "Densmores Peak." The north summit was first reached on April 3, 1913, by Archdeacon Hudson Stuck, Walter Harper, Robert Tatum, and Harry Karstens (later park superintendent). On August 28, 2015, the name Mount McKinley was changed by Secretarial Order No. 3337 to Denali, the name that had been official in the State of Alaska since 1976.

Is the feature in a Wilderness Area or Wilderness Study Area? ☒ Y ☐ N ☐ Unknown

*If yes, please provide your justification for making an exception to [the Wilderness Policy](#):*

*Please note that the BGN will not approve new names for unnamed features within wilderness areas or wilderness study areas, unless an overriding need can be demonstrated by the proponent.*

Denali Borough

Is the name you are proposing intended to honor Native Americans, their language, or culture? ☒ Y ☐ N

*If yes, to ensure that the proposed name is appropriate, the BGN strongly advises proponents to work with Tribal Leaders, Tribal Historic Preservation Officers, and/or Native American linguists or other expert(s) associated with the Tribe to determine the acceptability of the proposed name and application. Please review [the BGN's Cultural Sensitivity for Native American Names guidance](#).*

*Proponents should also seek letters of endorsement from the governments (e.g., Tribal Councils) of any affected Tribes. Please indicate below, or in documentation submitted separately (with this proposal or any time after the proposal is submitted), any efforts to solicit Tribal input.*

## Additional Information +

Is there any local opposition or conflict with the proposed name? ☐ Y ☒ N


*If yes, please explain and describe any opposition:*

Additional notes, including any Tribal input details

As noted above the Koyukon people who inhabit the area around the mountain have referred to the peak as "Denali" for centuries. A gold prospector named it "Mount McKinley" in support of then-presidential candidate William McKinley. The name Denali McKinley would honor both the Koyukon people and William McKinley.


## Proponent Information


*Please provide one form of contact (email preferred):*


 Proponent's Name: Shane Carlson

Agency or Organization, if applicable:

 Email: (b) (6) @myyahoo.com

 Mailing Address:

 Phone:

 Are you completing this form for someone else? ☐ Y ☒ N

*If yes, please fill out the following:*

Completed by:

Full Name:

Email:

Mailing Address:

Phone:

**From:** BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC  
**To:** Anderson, Gina R  
**Subject:** Fw: [EXTERNAL] geographic place name changes  
**Date:** Tuesday, January 21, 2025 9:33:19 AM

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I don't think this is a media request, but sharing anyway. We won't respond to general non-media inquiries unless instructed.

Matt

**From:** Lisa Norby(b) (6) @gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 21, 2025 12:29 PM  
**To:** BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] geographic place name changes

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Hello,

I am writing to inquire whether place names can be changed by Presidential Executive Order and whether the public can weigh in on these changes. As examples, can Mt Denali be changed back to Mt McKinley and can the Gulf of Mexico be changed to the Gulf of America just because the U.S. President wants to do it?

Thank you in advance for your reply,

Lisa Norby

**From:** BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC  
**To:** Anderson, Gina R  
**Subject:** Fw: [EXTERNAL] Gulf of Mexico name  
**Date:** Tuesday, January 21, 2025 6:13:47 AM

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Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

**From:** Sheryl Bowles <(b) (6)@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, January 20, 2025 11:45:26 AM  
**To:** BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Gulf of Mexico name

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PLEASE do not change the name of the Gulf of Mexico just because Felon34 Trump wants it changed. He is a toddler with the most stupid ideas. It is embarrassing for the United States.

Sincerely,  
Sheryl Miller  
Concerned Citizen  
Sent from my iPhone

**From:** BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC  
**To:** Anderson, Gina R  
**Subject:** Fw: [EXTERNAL] Gulf of Mexico or Americas  
**Date:** Tuesday, January 21, 2025 6:41:23 AM

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**From:** Trevor Pettiford <(b) (6)@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 21, 2025 9:40 AM  
**To:** BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Gulf of Mexico or Americas

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What is your organization's response to Pres. Trump's renaming the Gulf?

Is it necessary?  
Thanks!

Trevor D. Pettiford, reporter (retired) Spectrum News.  
Member, Tampa Bay Association of Black Journalists

(b) (6) (mobile)



**From:** BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC  
**To:** Anderson, Gina R  
**Subject:** Fw: [EXTERNAL] Names of the Gulf of Mexico and of Mount Denali  
**Date:** Tuesday, January 21, 2025 6:41:05 AM

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**From:** Gregory Elmes <(b) (6)@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 21, 2025 4:03 AM  
**To:** BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>  
**Cc:** Gregory Elmes (b) (6)@gmail.com  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Names of the Gulf of Mexico and of Mount Denali

**This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.**

Dear Members of the Board

I write about the proposal of President Donald J. Trump to rename the Gulf of Mexico to the American Sea and to return the name of Mount Denali to Mount McKinley. I urge the members of the Board of Geographic Names to respect their decisions in naming these geographic features.

On August 30, 2015, Sally Jewell announced that the mountain would be renamed Denali, under authority of federal law which permits her as Secretary of the Interior to name geographic features if the Board on Geographic Names does not act within a "reasonable" period of time.

The International Hydrographic Organization — of which both the United States and Mexico are members — works to ensure all the world's seas, oceans and navigable waters are surveyed and charted uniformly, and also names some of them. There are some instances where countries refer to the same body of water or landmark by different names in their own documentation.

Clearly the incoming Secretary of the Interior has the power to direct the Board of Geographic Names to rename Mount Denali. It does not have the power to instruct the Board to rename the Gulf of Mexico which is in preview of an international organization.

Please respect the decisions the currently accepted names and resist the attempts of the current administration to change them. The rest of the world will continue to use them. Hundreds of thousands of Atlases, digital and physical, will retain them. The acceptance of the changes will only cause confusion and result in the isolation of the United States of America which is perhaps what the President wants.

Yours sincerely  
Gregory A Elmes, Ph D  
Professor Emeritus of Geography

Sent from my iPad

Sent from my iPad



**From:** BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC  
**To:** Anderson, Gina R  
**Subject:** Fw: [EXTERNAL]  
**Date:** Tuesday, January 21, 2025 6:39:05 AM

---

**From:** Hassan R.Elzelayf <(b) (6)@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 21, 2025 6:10 AM  
**To:** BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL]

**This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.**

Good morning, sir. My name is Hassan Ramadan. I work as a journalist for the Egyptian newspaper Al-Watan. I wanted to talk for a few minutes about President trump order to change the name Gulf of Mexico as the Gulf of America.

I am sending you some questions and I hope you can answer them as soon as possible?

Is there a formal international agreement or protocol for naming marine areas?

Are there steps that will be taken to change the name of the Gulf of Mexico to US Gulf?

Can Mexico resort to international justice to object to Trump's decision?

**From:** Tom Parris  
**To:** BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Opposition to renaming the "Gulf of Mexico."  
**Date:** Tuesday, January 21, 2025 6:19:02 PM

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**This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.**

Dear Members of the U.S. Board on Geographic Names:

I am writing to express my opposition to the presidential directive to rename the "Gulf of Mexico" to the "Gulf of America" on several grounds:

1. Cost. The cost of reprinting operational mapping products that include place names (e.g. operational navigation charts) will be prohibitive and will come out of budgets that would otherwise be used for more pressing matters.
2. Conflicting mapping standards. There is little likelihood that countries bordering the Gulf of Mexico will change its name as well. This will create unnecessary differences and confusion between maps produced by different countries. This could cause miscommunication urgent situations such as search and rescue and extreme weather warnings.
3. Contentious Symbolism. The new name creates an enduring public symbol of cultural and policy differences between the U.S. and the other countries bordering the Gulf, much like the difference between the "Persian Gulf" and the "Arabian Gulf." In a time of greatly increasing international tensions we do not need additional artifacts that can be used to mobilize conflict.

With best regards,

Thomas M. Parris

(b) (6)

[tom@toonkitchen.com](mailto:tom@toonkitchen.com)

**From:** [Friar, Linda](#)  
**To:** [Interior Press](#)  
**Cc:** [Huggler, Matthew](#); [Eustis, Christine E](#); [Anderson, Gina R](#)  
**Subject:** USGS media queries on name changes  
**Date:** Wednesday, January 22, 2025 3:48:01 PM  
**Attachments:** [USGS media queries.docx](#)  
[Outlook-ggdaa3.png](#)

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Good Afternoon

Following up on the guidance you shared in the OCO weekly meeting today and sharing a list of the queries we've received on this topic.

As of last week USGS has been receiving media inquiries related to the Executive Order that came out on Monday. Several of these queries came in before the EO was issued. We've not provided any comment to these queries, just logged them until received more specific guidance. Let us know if you'd like any of the original emails - we can forward those. Didn't want to send so many to interior press at once.

If you'd like additional information on the Board on Geographic Names - here is a link.  
[U.S. Board on Geographic Names | U.S. Geological Survey](#)

Regards  
Linda

**Linda Friar, AICP**  
**Chief External Affairs**  
***U.S. Geological Survey - Science for a Changing World***

*Office of Communications and Publishing*  
*12201 Sunrise Valley Dr., Reston, Virginia*  
*Phone 703-648-4447 Cell 786-385-0067*  
*E-mail [lfriar@usgs.gov](mailto:lfriar@usgs.gov)*

 [Book time to meet with me](#)

### Pre-Executive Order Media queries about Gulf of Mexico

Date	Outlet	Reporter/Producer	
01/07/2025	CBS Evening News	Kimberly Ammiano	Kimberly.Ammiano@cbsnews.com
01/07/2025	CBS Tampa	Parisa Akbarpour	PAkbarpour@10tampabay.com
01/07/2025	BBC	Brandon Drenon	brandon.k.drenon@bbc.co.uk
01/07/2025	The Washington Post	Maegan Vazquez	maegan.vazquez@washpost.com
01/07/2025	USA TODAY	Trevor Hughes	thughes21@usatoday.com
01/07/2025	NBC Ft. Meyers, FL	Madison Adams	Madison.Adams@hearst.com
01/08/2025	FedSmith newsletter	Ralph?	(b) (6) @gmail.com
01/08/2025	NZZ-Switzerland	Carole Koch	carole.koch@nzz.ch
01/08/2025	E&E News	Robin Bravender	rbravender@eenews.net
01/08/2025	WPTV News-West Palm Beach	Todd Wilson	todd.wilson@wptv.com
01/08/2025	Fresh Take Florida-University of Florida	Libby Clifton Aidan Bush	libby.clifton@ufl.edu aidanbush@ufl.edu
01/08/2025	San Antonio Express-News	Annasofia Scheve	Annasofia.Scheve@express-news.net
01/08/2025	The Wall Street Journal	Vivian Salama	vivian.salama@wsj.com
01/10/2025	The Well News	Dan McCue	dan@thewellnews.com

### Media queries from Restoring Names That Honor American Greatness Executive Order.

Date	Outlet	Reporter/Producer	Topic of Questions
01/20/2025	The New York Times	Tim Balk tim.balk@nytimes.com	Gulf of Mexico
01/20/2025	TV 2 Norway	Silje Vassdal silje.vassdal@tv2.no	Gulf of Mexico
01/20/2025	CBS News Boston	Seth Szilagyi sszilagyi@cbs.com	Gulf of Mexico and Mount Denali
01/20/2025	KOLD 13 Tuscon	Brooke Wagner Brooke.Wagner@kold.com	Mount Denali
01/20/2025	CBS News	Alisa Wiersema Lucaci Alisa.Wiersema@cbsnews.com	Gulf of Mexico

01/20/2025	High Country News	Shaun Griswold shaun.griswold@hcn.org	Mount Denali /filling BGN Positions
01/20/2025	Egyptian newspaper Al-Watan.	Hassan Ramadan (b) (6) @gmail.com	Gulf of Mexico
01/20/2025	US Border News	Jack Beavers jackbeavers@usbordernews.com	Gulf of Mexico
01/20/2025	Ringier Axel Springer Polska (Poland)	Paulina Ermel Paulina.Ermel@redakcjaonet.pl	Gulf of Mexico/ Mount Denali
01/20/2025	NPR	Lisa Thomson LThomson@npr.org	Mount Denali
01/20/2025	CNN	Jon Passantino jon.passantino@cnn.com	Gulf of Mexico/ Mount Denali
01/21/2025	The Hollywood Reporter	Ben Svetkey (b) (6)	Gulf of Mexico
01/22/2025	Oil & Gas Journal	E. Mikaila Adams madams@endeavorb2b.com	Gulf of Mexico
01/22/2025	Slate Magazine	Henry Grabar henry.grabar@slate.com	Gulf of Mexico/ Mount Denali

**From:** Tischler, Michael A  
**To:** [Anderson, Gina B](#)  
**Subject:** Fw: [EXTERNAL] Denali or Mt. McKinley? Alaska Lawmakers Weigh In on Trump's Renaming Plan. - The New York Times  
**Date:** Wednesday, January 22, 2025 6:19:38 PM  
**Attachments:** [Denali or Mt. McKinley Alaska Lawmakers Weigh In on Trump's Renaming Plan. - The New York Times.pdf](#)

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Hi Gina,

Wanted to pass along

Thanks,

m

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**From:** Vanessa Baez <(b) (6) @gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2025 6:13 PM  
**To:** Baez, Vanessa <vbaez@usgs.gov>  
**Cc:** Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Denali or Mt. McKinley? Alaska Lawmakers Weigh In on Trump's Renaming Plan. - The New York Times

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Hi Mike,

Hope you are well. Your name is referenced in this article  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2025/01/22/climate/denali-mckinley-alaska-trump.html>

Vanessa Baez  
{via mobile}

**From:** Forrest, Brenda-Anne (Judiciary-Rep)  
**To:** Tischler, Michael A; St Onge, Timothy; elizabeth.kanalley@usda.gov; melanie.riley@usda.gov; alexander.stum@usda.gov; tara.wallace@noaa.gov; kenja.allen@noaa.gov; thaddeus.ellerbe@noaa.gov; Rikki J. Wortham (CENSUS/GEO FED); (b) (6) Susan Lyon; (b) (6) Andrew Griffin; (b) (3) (B), (b) (6); Meghan.Barrett@hq.dhs.gov; Hammond, Chris W; Brown, Wendi-Starr; Mahoney, Patrick M; Konzek, Daniel S; Shelton, Michael; Black, Marielle L; Smith, Jeremy C; Hasier, Paulette; Ranieri, Veronica; alesha.t.perdomo@usgs.gov; liz.flake@usgs.gov  
**Cc:** Zahniser, Shellie R  
**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] RE: BGN-DNC: Comms Guidance - Renaming via Executive/Congressional Action  
**Date:** Wednesday, January 22, 2025 11:00:51 AM  
**Attachments:** image001.jpg

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Correction:

Please note that my email correspondence yesterday used a previous distribution list with an incorrect email address for Deputy Member Rikki Wortham, Bureau of the Census.

The correct address is [Rikki.J.Wortham@census.gov](mailto:Rikki.J.Wortham@census.gov), if you could please update your records on her behalf. Apologies, Rikki, and thank you for the clarification.

B.C. Forrest

U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary | 164 Dirksen Senate Office Building | Washington, DC 20510-6275 | [Brenda-Anne\\_Forrest@judiciary-rep.senate.gov](mailto:Brenda-Anne_Forrest@judiciary-rep.senate.gov)

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**From:** Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2025 10:40 AM  
**To:** Forrest, Brenda-Anne (Judiciary-Rep) <Brenda-Anne\_Forrest@judiciary-rep.senate.gov>; St Onge, Timothy <tong@loc.gov>; elizabeth.kanalley@usda.gov; melanie.riley@usda.gov; alexander.stum@usda.gov; tara.wallace@noaa.gov; kenja.allen@noaa.gov; thaddeus.ellerbe@noaa.gov; Rikki.wortham@census.gov; (b) (6) - Susan Lyon; (b) (6) Andrew Griffin; (b) (3) (B), (b) (6); Meghan.Barrett@hq.dhs.gov; Hammond, Chris W <chammond@usgs.gov>; Brown, Wendi-Starr <Wendi-Starr.Brown@bia.gov>; Mahoney, Patrick M <pmmahone@blm.gov>; Konzek, Daniel S <daniel\_konzek@fws.gov>; Shelton, Michael <Michael\_Shelton@nps.gov>; Black, Marielle L <mblack@usbr.gov>; Smith, Jeremy C <Jeremy.Smith@boem.gov>; Hasier, Paulette <phasier@loc.gov>; Ranieri, Veronica <vera@loc.gov>; alesha.t.perdomo@usps.gov; liz.flake@usps.gov  
**Cc:** Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] RE: BGN-DNC: Comms Guidance - Renaming via Executive/Congressional Action

Hi B.C.,

I will defer to Tim as it's his meeting, but I would be reluctant to discuss the implementation of this action during a meeting open to the public. I would suggest instead that we hold the discussion as part of the full board meeting next week. If you feel we need to discuss the issue prior to next week's full board meeting, we can certainly try to accommodate.

In general, I am awaiting official implementation instruction from the Secretary of the Interior before performing any renaming action.

Thanks,  
m



**From:** Forrest, Brenda-Anne (Judiciary-Rep) <[Brenda-Anne\\_Forrest@judiciary-rep.senate.gov](mailto:Brenda-Anne_Forrest@judiciary-rep.senate.gov)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 21, 2025 6:34 PM  
**To:** St Onge, Timothy <[tong@loc.gov](mailto:tong@loc.gov)>; [elizabeth.kanalley@usda.gov](mailto:elizabeth.kanalley@usda.gov) <[elizabeth.kanalley@usda.gov](mailto:elizabeth.kanalley@usda.gov)>; [melanie.riley@usda.gov](mailto:melanie.riley@usda.gov) <[melanie.riley@usda.gov](mailto:melanie.riley@usda.gov)>; [alexander.stum@usda.gov](mailto:alexander.stum@usda.gov) <[alexander.stum@usda.gov](mailto:alexander.stum@usda.gov)>; [tara.wallace@noaa.gov](mailto:tara.wallace@noaa.gov) <[tara.wallace@noaa.gov](mailto:tara.wallace@noaa.gov)>; [kenia.allen@noaa.gov](mailto:kenia.allen@noaa.gov) <[kenia.allen@noaa.gov](mailto:kenia.allen@noaa.gov)>; [thaddeus.ellerbe@noaa.gov](mailto:thaddeus.ellerbe@noaa.gov) <[thaddeus.ellerbe@noaa.gov](mailto:thaddeus.ellerbe@noaa.gov)>; [Rikki.wortham@census.gov](mailto:Rikki.wortham@census.gov) <[Rikki.wortham@census.gov](mailto:Rikki.wortham@census.gov)>; (b) (6) - Susan Lyon >; (b) (6) Andrew Griffin >; (b) (6) Andrew Griffin >; (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) <(b) (3) (B), (b) (6) >; [Meghan.Barrett@hq.dhs.gov](mailto:Meghan.Barrett@hq.dhs.gov) <[Meghan.Barrett@hq.dhs.gov](mailto:Meghan.Barrett@hq.dhs.gov)>; Hammond, Chris W <[chammond@usgs.gov](mailto:chammond@usgs.gov)>; Brown, Wendi-Starr <[Wendi-Starr.Brown@bia.gov](mailto:Wendi-Starr.Brown@bia.gov)>; Mahoney, Patrick M <[pmmahone@blm.gov](mailto:pmmahone@blm.gov)>; Konzek, Daniel S <[daniel\\_konzek@fws.gov](mailto:daniel_konzek@fws.gov)>; Shelton, Michael <[Michael\\_Shelton@nps.gov](mailto:Michael_Shelton@nps.gov)>; Black, Marielle L <[mblack@usbr.gov](mailto:mblack@usbr.gov)>; Smith, Jeremy C <[Jeremy.Smith@boem.gov](mailto:Jeremy.Smith@boem.gov)>; Hasier, Paulette <[phasier@loc.gov](mailto:phasier@loc.gov)>; Ranieri, Veronica <[vera@loc.gov](mailto:vera@loc.gov)>; [alesha.t.perdomo@usps.gov](mailto:alesha.t.perdomo@usps.gov) <[alesha.t.perdomo@usps.gov](mailto:alesha.t.perdomo@usps.gov)>; [liz.flake@usps.gov](mailto:liz.flake@usps.gov) <[liz.flake@usps.gov](mailto:liz.flake@usps.gov)>  
**Cc:** Zahniser, Shellie R <[srzahniser@usgs.gov](mailto:srzahniser@usgs.gov)>; Tischler, Michael A <[mtischler@usgs.gov](mailto:mtischler@usgs.gov)>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] RE: BGN-DNC: Comms Guidance - Renaming via Executive/Congressional Action

**This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.**

Good evening, Chair St. Onge.:

Re: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/01/restoring-names-that-honor-american-greatness/>

Permission to discuss Section 2(a) of yesterday's Presidential EO at next Tuesday's BGN FB 295 meeting? Or advance the request to appropriate leadership? OFR assigned 14170 as the number for this signed EO.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
B.C. Forrest

U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary | 164 Dirksen Senate Office Building | Washington, DC 20510-6275 | [Brenda-Anne\\_Forrest@judiciary-rep.senate.gov](mailto:Brenda-Anne_Forrest@judiciary-rep.senate.gov)

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**From:** St Onge, Timothy <[tong@loc.gov](mailto:tong@loc.gov)>  
**Sent:** Friday, January 10, 2025 9:39 AM  
**To:** [elizabeth.kanalley@usda.gov](mailto:elizabeth.kanalley@usda.gov); [melanie.riley@usda.gov](mailto:melanie.riley@usda.gov); [alexander.stum@usda.gov](mailto:alexander.stum@usda.gov); [tara.wallace@noaa.gov](mailto:tara.wallace@noaa.gov); [kenia.allen@noaa.gov](mailto:kenia.allen@noaa.gov); [thaddeus.ellerbe@noaa.gov](mailto:thaddeus.ellerbe@noaa.gov); [Rikki.wortham@census.gov](mailto:Rikki.wortham@census.gov); (b) (6) - Susan Lyon >; (b) (6) Andrew Griffin >; (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) >; Forrest, Brenda-Anne (Judiciary-Rep) <[Brenda-Anne\\_Forrest@judiciary-rep.senate.gov](mailto:Brenda-Anne_Forrest@judiciary-rep.senate.gov)>



rep.senate.gov>; Meghan.Barrett@hq.dhs.gov; chammond@usgs.gov; Wendi-Starr.Brown@bia.gov; pmmahone@blm.gov; daniel\_konzek@fws.gov; Michael\_Shelton@nps.gov; mblack@usbr.gov; Jeremy.Smith@boem.gov; Hasier, Paulette <phasier@loc.gov>; Ranieri, Veronica <vera@loc.gov>; St Onge, Timothy <tong@loc.gov>; alesha.t.perdomo@usps.gov; liz.flake@usps.gov

**Cc:** Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>; Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>

**Subject:** BGN-DNC: Comms Guidance - Renaming via Executive/Congressional Action

Good morning DNC members and deputy members,

I'm passing along the following guidance (below) from our BGN Chair Mike Tischler, regarding media inquiries relating to renaming a geographic feature via executive or congressional action. Please read and let Mike or I know if you have any questions.

Thank you,  
Tim

**Tim St. Onge**  
**Cartographer**  
Geography & Map Division  
LM-B02  
202-707-9044  
tong@loc.gov

LOC\_Logo\_EmailSignature



**From:** Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>

**Sent:** Wednesday, January 8, 2025 5:30 PM

**To:** (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) NGA-SF USA CIV <(b) (3) (B), (b) (6) >; (b) (6) <(b) (6) @state.gov>; Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>; St Onge, Timothy <tong@loc.gov>; (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) NGA-SFGW USA CIV <(b) (3) (B), (b) (6) >

**Subject:** Comms - renaming via executive action

**CAUTION:** This email message has been received from an external source. Please use caution when opening attachments, or clicking on links.

Good afternoon BGN Excom,

I'd like to share the communications guidance that the BGN staff has been given by USGS and ask that you please share this with your standing committees and advisory committees (DNC, FNC, ACAN, ACUF).

USGS has received multiple media inquiries regarding the process associated with renaming a feature via executive or congressional action (e.g., executive order, act of congress). We have been instructed not to respond - at all - to media inquiries about this topic at this time. That guidance may change in the future, but that is our current direction.

Should any members of the BGN committees receive media inquiries, I would encourage them to follow the same guidance if they are able.

For internal reference, I am sure you are all aware that the [Policy on Names Considered or Established by Congress or the President](#) notes that "Geographic names and their applications specifically established by an act of Congress or Executive order are legally official, and therefore, are not bound by BGN principles, policies, and procedures." This includes name changes. For any names established by an act of Congress or Executive order (or proclamation), the name is entered into/changed in GNIS once official. Federal data sources are updated from GNIS on their own data refresh cycles.

Thank you!

Mike

\*\*\*\*\*

Mike Tischler, Ph.D

Director, National Geospatial Program

U.S. Geological Survey

Department of Interior

o: 703-648-4725

c: 703-344-4348

[mtischler@usgs.gov](mailto:mtischler@usgs.gov)

**From:** [Jordan Shenefield](#)  
**To:** [BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Opposition to changing the name of Denali  
**Date:** Wednesday, January 22, 2025 4:28:02 PM

---

**This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.**

Good morning. I'm writing to oppose the proposed name change of Denali (The High One in the native Athabascan language). I have worked in Denali for several years as a Tour Guide Bus Driver and Shuttle Driver, so I have experienced first-hand the confusion about the name of both the national park and the highest point in North America. I share with my guests that a gold prospector in the Kantishna mining area of what is now Denali National Park wanted to show his support for presidential candidate William McKinley in the 1896 election. In his own self-interest (since he was a gold prospector), he wrote Mt. McKinley on a map of the High One, thus wiping out 10,000 years of Athabascan culture. No hearings; no public comments; no input. The Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act created changed the name to Denali National Park and Preserve, while Mt. McKinley remained...until action by the Secretary of the Interior to BGN to finally correct the name of The High One to the original name of Denali.

I hope BGN will accept public comments about this outrageous and unnecessary abuse of executive power and follow the correct path of what history proscribes and what our country stands for - indigenous names for indigenous places. Please leave Denali Denali.

***Jordan Shenefield***

(b) (6)

**From:** BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC  
**To:** (b) (6) Jack Butler@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] RE: Decision on new name for reservoir in the Town of Pittsford  
**Date:** Wednesday, January 22, 2025 9:26:19 AM

---

Hi Jack,

Jenny retired on January 11. I've been working with her since 2013.

Unfortunately, we can't send any maps showing the name. You can make your own map through the USGS [topoBuilder](#), though the hydrology layer names are not being updated at this time and there is no estimate of when that will occur. BGN staff has no role in how or when the names are applied on maps. That is handled by the broader [National Geospatial Program](#). The name Lake Fairchild is official, however, due to the GNIS record: <https://edits.nationalmap.gov/apps/gaz-domestic/public/gaz-record/2832415>.

Cheers,

Matt O'Donnell

---

**From:** (b) (6) Jack Butler@gmail.com <(b) (6) Jack Butler@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 21, 2025 8:46 AM  
**To:** BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] RE: Decision on new name for reservoir in the Town of Pittsford

Good morning, Jennifer,

Looks like your department is going to have some new tasks!

- Changing the Gulf of Mexico to the Gulf of America
- Changing Denali back to Mount McKinley. I guess Native American input will have to be turned off!

Good luck! BTW, we had a very nice dedication ceremony here in Pittsford in November regarding the naming of Lake Fairchild. It was held on a piece of private property overlooking the Lake. The owner did not want the event opened to the public. Attending were various key supporters from the Town of Pittsford, Pittsford's Historical Society, the Town Historian, various members of the Monroe County Parks Department, and yours truly in the long black coat. Wish you were there!

Does the USGS have a local map you could send me showing the Lake Fairchild name?  
Happy New Year!!

Jack

---

**From:** BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 15, 2024 9:05 AM  
**To:** (b) (6) Jack Butler@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] RE: Decision on new name for reservoir in the Town of Pittsford

Field trip!!!

---

**From:** (b) (6) Jack Butler@gmail.com (b) (6) Jack Butler@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 15, 2024 8:51 AM  
**To:** BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] RE: Decision on new name for reservoir in the Town of Pittsford

No problem!! Thanks Jennifer. You'll have to come up to Pittsford for the dedication and some champagne!

---

**From:** BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 15, 2024 8:50 AM  
**To:** (b) (6) Jack Butler@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] RE: Decision on new name for reservoir in the Town of Pittsford

I wanted to get a head start on the week and sent out many of the notification emails last night (even though it was a Federal holiday). No particular reason, but yours was one of the batch I set up to go out this morning. I doubt any of the local officials were checking email at 7:30 p.m.

~ Jennifer

---

**From:** (b) (6) Jack Butler@gmail.com <(b) (6) Jack Butler@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 15, 2024 8:23 AM  
**To:** BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] RE: Decision on new name for reservoir in the Town of Pittsford

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It is rather interesting that USGS notified them before informing me as the applicant!!  
Oh well. All's good. Must just have been a timing 'thing'.  
Thanks Jennier  
Jack

---

**From:** (b) (6) Jack Butler@gmail.com (b) (6) Jack Butler@gmail.com>



**Sent:** Tuesday, October 15, 2024 8:13 AM

**To:** 'BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC' <[bgnexec@usgs.gov](mailto:bgnexec@usgs.gov)>

**Subject:** RE: Decision on new name for reservoir in the Town of Pittsford

OK. Thanks. I'm going to set up a meeting with some of these Town of Pittsford officials.

Jack

---

**From:** BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <[bgnexec@usgs.gov](mailto:bgnexec@usgs.gov)>

**Sent:** Tuesday, October 15, 2024 8:02 AM

**To:** Jack Butler <(b) (6) [\[REDACTED\]@gmail.com](mailto:[REDACTED]@gmail.com)>

**Subject:** Fw: Decision on new name for reservoir in the Town of Pittsford

And one last email from me. This is just for your records, so you're aware that local authorities were also notified. We also informed the New York State Names Committee.

Jenny

---

**From:** BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC

**Sent:** Monday, October 14, 2024 8:25 PM

**To:** [Rkoegel@townofpittsford.org](mailto:Rkoegel@townofpittsford.org) <[Rkoegel@townofpittsford.org](mailto:Rkoegel@townofpittsford.org)>;

[countyexecutive@monroecounty.gov](mailto:countyexecutive@monroecounty.gov) <[countyexecutive@monroecounty.gov](mailto:countyexecutive@monroecounty.gov)>;

[presidenttroman@monroecounty.gov](mailto:presidenttroman@monroecounty.gov) <[presidenttroman@monroecounty.gov](mailto:presidenttroman@monroecounty.gov)>;

[VProfitt@townofpittsford.org](mailto:VProfitt@townofpittsford.org) <[VProfitt@townofpittsford.org](mailto:VProfitt@townofpittsford.org)>;

(b) (6) Margaret Brizee [\[REDACTED\]@gmail.com](mailto:[REDACTED]@gmail.com) <(b) (6) Margaret Brizee [\[REDACTED\]@gmail.com](mailto:[REDACTED]@gmail.com)>

**Subject:** Decision on new name for reservoir in the Town of Pittsford

Mr. Robert Koegel  
Pittsford Town Attorney

Yversha Román, President  
Monroe County Legislature

Mr. Michael Yudelson, Majority Leader  
Mr. Adam Bello, County Executive

Ms. Vicki Profitt, Town of Pittsford Historian  
Town Historical Society

Ms. Margaret Caraberis Brizee, President  
Historic Pittsford

Good morning:

This is to inform you that the U.S. Board on Geographic Names, at its October 10, 2024 meeting, approved the proposal to apply the new name **Lake Fairchild** to a previously unnamed reservoir in Monroe County.

The name has been added to the Geographic Names Information System, the nation's official geographic names repository, available at <https://edits.nationalmap.gov/apps/gaz-domestic/public/search/names>. Federal maps will be updated during the normal revision cycle. The decision reads as follows:

**Lake Fairchild**; reservoir, approx. 11 acres, in the Town of Pittsford, 1 mi. N of Hundred Acre Pond, 10 mi. S of Rochester; the name commemorates Professor Herman LeRoy Fairchild (1850-1943), head of Geology at the University of Rochester (1888-1920) and a founder of the Geological Society of America; Monroe County, New York; USGS Map – Pittsford 1:24,000.

Regards,  
Jennifer Runyon, research staff  
Office of the Executive Secretary  
U.S. Board on Geographic Names  
U.S. Geological Survey  
Reston, VA 20192  
(703) 648-4550  
Domestic Names | U.S. Geological Survey ([usgs.gov](https://usgs.gov))

**From:** Tara Wallace - NOAA Federal  
**To:** Tischler, Michael A  
**Cc:** Amanda Phelps - NOAA Federal  
**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] RE: BGN review of appointments  
**Date:** Wednesday, January 22, 2025 1:38:06 PM

---

Thanks Mike for clarifying.

On Wed, Jan 22, 2025 at 1:36 PM Tischler, Michael A <[mtischler@usgs.gov](mailto:mtischler@usgs.gov)> wrote:

Hi Tara,

Correct, but this action is for each agency head to review their *own* appointees. Not for the Sec. of the Interior to review the entire board.

Thanks,  
m

**From:** Tara Wallace - NOAA Federal <[tara.wallace@noaa.gov](mailto:tara.wallace@noaa.gov)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2025 1:34 PM  
**To:** Tischler, Michael A <[mtischler@usgs.gov](mailto:mtischler@usgs.gov)>; Amanda Phelps - NOAA Federal <[amanda.phelps@noaa.gov](mailto:amanda.phelps@noaa.gov)>  
**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] RE: BGN review of appointments

Hey Mike -

Last appointment letter, NOAA addressed to the Secretary of Interior and was signed by our NOAA Administrator.

Thanks

On Wed, Jan 22, 2025 at 12:35 PM Tischler, Michael A <[mtischler@usgs.gov](mailto:mtischler@usgs.gov)> wrote:

Hi Meghan,

Apologies for the confusion.

The EO asks that " *each agency head with authority to appoint members to the Board on Geographic Names (Board) pursuant to 43 U.S.C. 364a, shall review their respective appointees* ".

I am recommending that the principal members of each agency author memos to their respective agency heads with details on the membership (principal and any deputy members) from the agency. For DHS, I would recommend that you submit a memo to the Secretary of Homeland Security (or whomever is acting in that role at the moment). Tara would send to the (acting) Secretary of Commerce, Betsy to the acting Sec. of Agriculture, (b) (6) to the Secretary of State, me to the Secretary of the Interior, etc.



Hope that makes sense - let me know if/how I can help.

Thanks,  
Mike

---

**From:** Barrett, Meghan <[Meghan.Barrett@hq.dhs.gov](mailto: Meghan.Barrett@hq.dhs.gov)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2025 12:27 PM  
**To:** Tischler, Michael A <[mtischler@usgs.gov](mailto: mtischler@usgs.gov)>; [elizabeth.kanalley@usda.gov](mailto: elizabeth.kanalley@usda.gov) <[elizabeth.kanalley@usda.gov](mailto: elizabeth.kanalley@usda.gov)>; [christmg@ucia.gov](mailto: christmg@ucia.gov) <[christmg@ucia.gov](mailto: christmg@ucia.gov)>; Tara Wallace - NOAA Federal <[tara.wallace@noaa.gov](mailto: tara.wallace@noaa.gov)>; Lyon, Susan <(b) (6)>; [Brenda-Anne\\_Forrest@judiciary-rep.senate.gov](mailto: Brenda-Anne_Forrest@judiciary-rep.senate.gov) <[Brenda-Anne\\_Forrest@judiciary-rep.senate.gov](mailto: Brenda-Anne_Forrest@judiciary-rep.senate.gov)>; Paulette Hasier <[phasier@loc.gov](mailto: phasier@loc.gov)>; Perdomo, Alesha T - Memphis, TN <[alesha.t.perdomo@usps.gov](mailto: alesha.t.perdomo@usps.gov)>; (b) (6) <(b) (6)@state.gov>  
**Cc:** Tim St. Onge <[tong@loc.gov](mailto: tong@loc.gov)>; (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) NGA-SF USA CIV <(b) (3) (B), (b) (6)>; (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) NGA-SFGGW USA CIV <(b) (3) (B), (b) (6)>; Zahniser, Shellie R <[srzahniser@usgs.gov](mailto: srzahniser@usgs.gov)>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] RE: BGN review of appointments

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Mike – The memos that we are preparing for the agency heads, to whom are those memos being sent? Would this be a memo from the DHS Secretary to the DOI secretary?

v/r,  
Meghan

---

**From:** Tischler, Michael A <[mtischler@usgs.gov](mailto: mtischler@usgs.gov)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2025 10:22 AM  
**To:** [elizabeth.kanalley@usda.gov](mailto: elizabeth.kanalley@usda.gov); [christmg@ucia.gov](mailto: christmg@ucia.gov); Tara Wallace - NOAA Federal <[tara.wallace@noaa.gov](mailto: tara.wallace@noaa.gov)>; Lyon, Susan <(b) (6)>; [Brenda-Anne\\_Forrest@judiciary-rep.senate.gov](mailto: Brenda-Anne_Forrest@judiciary-rep.senate.gov); Barrett, Meghan <[Meghan.Barrett@hq.dhs.gov](mailto: Meghan.Barrett@hq.dhs.gov)>; Paulette Hasier <[phasier@loc.gov](mailto: phasier@loc.gov)>; Perdomo, Alesha T - Memphis, TN <[alesha.t.perdomo@usps.gov](mailto: alesha.t.perdomo@usps.gov)>; (b) (6) <(b) (6)@state.gov>  
**Cc:** Tim St. Onge <[tong@loc.gov](mailto: tong@loc.gov)>; (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) NGA-SF USA CIV <(b) (3) (B), (b) (6)>; (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) NGA-SFGGW USA CIV <(b) (3) (B), (b) (6)>; Zahniser, Shellie R <[srzahniser@usgs.gov](mailto: srzahniser@usgs.gov)>  
**Subject:** BGN review of appointments

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of DHS. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you recognize and/or trust the sender. Contact your component SOC with questions or concerns.

BGN principal members,

At this point I am assuming you are all aware of the recent EO "[RESTORING NAMES THAT HONOR AMERICAN GREATNESS](#)" that was signed Monday. We are waiting for additional DOI guidance and confirmation for the renaming of both Denali->Mount McKinley and Gulf of Mexico-> Gulf of America. I will be in touch when I have that information.

You will also notice the following section in the EO:

*Sec. 2. Appointments to the U.S. Board on Geographic Names. (a) Within seven days of the date of this order, each agency head with authority to appoint members to the Board on Geographic Names (Board) pursuant to 43 U.S.C. 364a, shall review their respective appointees and consider replacing those appointees in accordance with applicable law.*

After talking with colleagues and legal council, I am recommending that each of you prepare a short memo for your department heads to review to be responsive to this request. I will be providing a letter for DOI, and I understand (b) (6) will be providing a memo for the Dept. of State. The memo does not need to be lengthy, but should include the names and biographical information of the members of each department. I have cc'd the bios that were provided to the BGN exec sec in 2023 for appointment - please note this file is FOUO.

Please let me know if you have any concerns or questions. We'll be moving quickly to meet the deadline.

Thanks,

mike

\*\*\*\*\*

Mike Tischler, Ph.D

Director, National Geospatial Program  
U.S. Geological Survey  
Department of Interior  
o: 703-648-4725  
c: 703-344-4348  
[mtischler@usgs.gov](mailto:mtischler@usgs.gov)

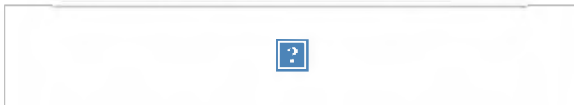
--

Tara Wallace, Branch Chief  
Production Branch B, Marine Chart Division  
Member, U.S. Board on Geographic Names  
Office of Coast Survey, National Ocean Service  
Telephone number: 304-506-4046  
Telework hours: 6:30 am - 3:00 pm est



--

Tara Wallace, Branch Chief  
Production Branch B, Marine Chart Division  
Member, U.S. Board on Geographic Names  
Office of Coast Survey, National Ocean Service  
Telephone number: 304-506-4046  
Telework hours: 6:30 am - 3:00 pm est



**From:** Tara Wallace - NOAA Federal  
**To:** Tischler, Michael A  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Re: BGN review of appointments  
**Date:** Wednesday, January 22, 2025 10:27:27 AM

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Thanks Mike - will send it over today.

On Wed, Jan 22, 2025 at 10:24 AM Tischler, Michael A <[mtischler@usgs.gov](mailto:mtischler@usgs.gov)> wrote:

BGN principal members,

At this point I am assuming you are all aware of the recent EO "[RESTORING NAMES THAT HONOR AMERICAN GREATNESS](#)" that was signed Monday. We are waiting for additional DOI guidance and confirmation for the renaming of both Denali->Mount McKinley and Gulf of Mexico-> Gulf of America. I will be in touch when I have that information.

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*Sec. 2. Appointments to the U.S. Board on Geographic Names. (a) Within seven days of the date of this order, each agency head with authority to appoint members to the Board on Geographic Names (Board) pursuant to 43 U.S.C. 364a, shall review their respective appointees and consider replacing those appointees in accordance with applicable law.*

After talking with colleagues and legal council, I am recommending that each of you prepare a short memo for your department heads to review to be responsive to this request. I will be providing a letter for DOI, and I understand (b) (6) will be providing a memo for the Dept. of State. The memo does not need to be lengthy, but should include the names and biographical information of the members of each department. I have cc'd the bios that were provided to the BGN exec sec in 2023 for appointment - please note this file is FOUO.

Please let me know if you have any concerns or questions. We'll be moving quickly to meet the deadline.

Thanks,  
mike

\*\*\*\*\*

Mike Tischler, Ph.D  
Director, National Geospatial Program  
U.S. Geological Survey  
Department of Interior  
o: 703-648-4725  
c: 703-344-4348  
[mtischler@usgs.gov](mailto:mtischler@usgs.gov)

--

Tara Wallace, Branch Chief  
Production Branch B, Marine Chart Division  
Member, U.S. Board on Geographic Names  
Office of Coast Survey, National Ocean Service  
Telephone number: 304-506-4046  
Telework hours: 6:30 am - 3:00 pm est



**From:** Friar, Linda  
**To:** Webb, Kyle W; Anderson, Gina R  
**Cc:** Nobles, Gary A; Lopez, Sabra A; Huggler, Matthew  
**Subject:** Re: Renaming the Gulf of Mexico emails 1/28/25  
**Date:** Tuesday, January 28, 2025 10:23:58 AM

---

Good morning

Please be sure that SIS all is aware that they should not respond to these queries.

Linda

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**From:** Webb, Kyle W <kwebb@usgs.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 28, 2025 8:12:38 AM  
**To:** Anderson, Gina R <granderson@usgs.gov>  
**Cc:** Friar, Linda <lfriar@usgs.gov>  
**Subject:** Renaming the Gulf of Mexico emails 1/28/25

Good morning,

We had three open tickets this morning with comments about renaming the Gulf of Mexico. Two of the messages had genuine questions while one was expressing frustration at the lack of a change on our websites. I've copied their messages along with their email addresses below:

There is so much talk now about changing names of places. Does any president have the authority to change a name unilaterally? Will this action, if taken, change all U.S. maps, or only those published by the government? Will it affect maps from other countries? I realize this is a general topic of concern, and you may not be able to publish an answer, but I'd appreciate an honest and transparent response.

- larksongster@**(b) (6)**.com

Hey, the Gulf of America has not been updated on your website. We've got a new President, he's not messing around and it's time for you monkeys to dance! This is a simple change in any well designed website. Do it or he'll fire your asses!

- contact@weforum.org

Are you changing the map like Google did? From Gulf of Mexico to Gulf of America? In the earthquake maps etc.

- live66@**(b) (6)**.com

**Best,**  
**Kyle**

--- --

Kyle W. Webb  
Technical Information Specialist  
United States Geological Survey  
12201 Sunrise Valley Drive  
National Center, Mail Stop 119  
Reston, VA 20192-0002  
(703) 648-5927



**From:** [Huggler, Matthew](#)  
**To:** [Magirl, Christopher S](#)  
**Subject:** FW: EO/SO on renaming, FW: BGN follow-up  
**Date:** Wednesday, January 29, 2025 11:35:00 AM

---

FYI only, but wanted you to be aware of the latest on this topic.

Matt

---  
Matthew Huggler  
Deputy Associate Director  
Office of Communications and Publishing  
U.S. Geological Survey  
Reston, VA  
mobile: 202-460-8402  
[mhuggler@usgs.gov](mailto:mhuggler@usgs.gov)

---

**From:** Eustis, Christine E <[ceustis@usgs.gov](mailto:ceustis@usgs.gov)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 29, 2025 11:21 AM  
**To:** Tischler, Michael A <[mtischler@usgs.gov](mailto:mtischler@usgs.gov)>; Ryker, Sarah J <[sryker@usgs.gov](mailto:sryker@usgs.gov)>; Lacey, Jennifer A <[jlacey@usgs.gov](mailto:jlacey@usgs.gov)>; Killpack, Darcee <[dkillpack@usgs.gov](mailto:dkillpack@usgs.gov)>; Woods, Tim <[twoods@usgs.gov](mailto:twoods@usgs.gov)>  
**Cc:** Jones, Leslie W <[ljones@usgs.gov](mailto:ljones@usgs.gov)>; Lukas, William A <[wlukas@usgs.gov](mailto:wlukas@usgs.gov)>; Doumbouya, Ariel T <[atdoumbouya@usgs.gov](mailto:atdoumbouya@usgs.gov)>; Mantey, Kimberly S <[kmantey@usgs.gov](mailto:kmantey@usgs.gov)>; Davis, Larry R <[lrdavis@usgs.gov](mailto:lrdavis@usgs.gov)>; Huggler, Matthew <[mhuggler@usgs.gov](mailto:mhuggler@usgs.gov)>  
**Subject:** Re: EO/SO on renaming, FW: BGN follow-up

Mike - Tim Woods on our Digital Team may be able to offer some web-based options - so just looping him in if that is helpful. We're not the map experts but are standing by to provide support!

---

**From:** Tischler, Michael A <[mtischler@usgs.gov](mailto:mtischler@usgs.gov)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 29, 2025 11:14 AM  
**To:** Ryker, Sarah J <[sryker@usgs.gov](mailto:sryker@usgs.gov)>; Lacey, Jennifer A <[jlacey@usgs.gov](mailto:jlacey@usgs.gov)>; Killpack, Darcee <[dkillpack@usgs.gov](mailto:dkillpack@usgs.gov)>  
**Cc:** Jones, Leslie W <[ljones@usgs.gov](mailto:ljones@usgs.gov)>; Lukas, William A <[wlukas@usgs.gov](mailto:wlukas@usgs.gov)>; Eustis, Christine E <[ceustis@usgs.gov](mailto:ceustis@usgs.gov)>; Doumbouya, Ariel T <[atdoumbouya@usgs.gov](mailto:atdoumbouya@usgs.gov)>; Mantey, Kimberly S <[kmantey@usgs.gov](mailto:kmantey@usgs.gov)>; Davis, Larry R <[lrdavis@usgs.gov](mailto:lrdavis@usgs.gov)>  
**Subject:** Re: EO/SO on renaming, FW: BGN follow-up

Including a few others from NGP and NGTOC...

While we can show an update to the GNIS record (nearly) immediately, I do not think a newly labeled map (or basemap) would be available immediately.



For reference/example, attached is the current GNIS record for "Gulf of Mexico" - this is what I believe would be immediately updated, in addition to the web-based GNIS system. I do not think the web-based basemap that is shown in GNIS will be updated immediately, but will confirm what users will see.

Let us also consider what we can do in the short term to demonstrate an updated map product (one-off, publicly accessible, or both) and we will get back to you.

thanks,  
m

**From:** Ryker, Sarah J <[sryker@usgs.gov](mailto:sryker@usgs.gov)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 29, 2025 11:01 AM  
**To:** Lacey, Jennifer A <[jlacey@usgs.gov](mailto:jlacey@usgs.gov)>; Killpack, Darcee <[dkillpack@usgs.gov](mailto:dkillpack@usgs.gov)>; Tischler, Michael A <[mtischler@usgs.gov](mailto:mtischler@usgs.gov)>  
**Cc:** Jones, Leslie W <[ljones@usgs.gov](mailto:ljones@usgs.gov)>; Lukas, William A <[wlukas@usgs.gov](mailto:wlukas@usgs.gov)>; Eustis, Christine E <[ceustis@usgs.gov](mailto:ceustis@usgs.gov)>  
**Subject:** FW: EO/SO on renaming, FW: BGN follow-up

All,

Scott raises a good point: we'll no doubt receive a request for some sort of visual (not from Google Maps!) of the new names. Your folks produce beautiful maps – but this sounds like it might be not for a wall hanging but for press opportunities. CCing Christine for any additional guidance on what might be useful.

Sarah J Ryker, PhD  
Acting Director, U.S. Geological Survey  
[sryker@usgs.gov](mailto:sryker@usgs.gov)

**From:** Cameron, Scott J <[scott\\_cameron@ios.doj.gov](mailto:scott_cameron@ios.doj.gov)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 29, 2025 10:27 AM  
**To:** Ryker, Sarah J <[sryker@usgs.gov](mailto:sryker@usgs.gov)>  
**Cc:** Farmer, Isis U <[isis\\_farmer@ios.doj.gov](mailto:isis_farmer@ios.doj.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: EO/SO on renaming, FW: BGN follow-up

Hi Sarah,

I am guessing that once the new Secretary signs the SO on the Gulf of America he would shortly thereafter like to see some sort of map, or maybe more realistically a screen shot of a webpage, that shows the new name. Might as well do one for Mt. McKinley, too, while we are at it. Can you start the process to figuring out how mechanically we could

make that happen, please?

Thanks,  
Scott

Scott J. Cameron

Senior Advisor to the Secretary, exercising the delegated authority of the Assistant Secretary – Water and Science and exercising the delegated authority of the Assistant Secretary – Insular and International Affairs

202.330.1398

---

**From:** Ryker, Sarah J <[sryker@usgs.gov](mailto:sryker@usgs.gov)>  
**Sent:** Monday, January 27, 2025 8:21 PM  
**To:** Myrick, Brett H <[brett.myrick@sol.doi.gov](mailto:brett.myrick@sol.doi.gov)>; Cameron, Scott J <[scott\\_cameron@ios.doi.gov](mailto:scott_cameron@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Cc:** Farmer, Isis U <[isis\\_farmer@ios.doi.gov](mailto:isis_farmer@ios.doi.gov)>; Lukas, William A <[wluke@usgs.gov](mailto:wluke@usgs.gov)>; Jones, Leslie W <[ljones@usgs.gov](mailto:ljones@usgs.gov)>; Lacey, Jennifer A <[jlacey@usgs.gov](mailto:jlacey@usgs.gov)>; Killpack, Darcee <[dkillpack@usgs.gov](mailto:dkillpack@usgs.gov)>; Tischler, Michael A <[mtischler@usgs.gov](mailto:mtischler@usgs.gov)>; Irish, Tony C <[Tony.Irish@sol.doi.gov](mailto:Tony.Irish@sol.doi.gov)>; Patnaik, Bivan R <[bivan\\_patnaik@ios.doi.gov](mailto:bivan_patnaik@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: EO/SO on renaming, FW: BGN follow-up

(b) (5) ACP

If the Department wanted to conduct some outreach to affected states before starting that sequence of actions, USGS could help support DOI on that.

Sarah J Ryker, PhD  
Acting Director, U.S. Geological Survey  
[sryker@usgs.gov](mailto:sryker@usgs.gov)

---

**From:** Myrick, Brett H <[brett.myrick@sol.doi.gov](mailto:brett.myrick@sol.doi.gov)>  
**Sent:** Monday, January 27, 2025 6:43 PM  
**To:** Cameron, Scott J <[scott\\_cameron@ios.doi.gov](mailto:scott_cameron@ios.doi.gov)>; Ryker, Sarah J <[sryker@usgs.gov](mailto:sryker@usgs.gov)>  
**Cc:** Farmer, Isis U <[isis\\_farmer@ios.doi.gov](mailto:isis_farmer@ios.doi.gov)>; Lukas, William A <[wluke@usgs.gov](mailto:wluke@usgs.gov)>; Jones, Leslie W <[ljones@usgs.gov](mailto:ljones@usgs.gov)>; Lacey, Jennifer A <[jlacey@usgs.gov](mailto:jlacey@usgs.gov)>; Killpack, Darcee <[dkillpack@usgs.gov](mailto:dkillpack@usgs.gov)>; Tischler, Michael A <[mtischler@usgs.gov](mailto:mtischler@usgs.gov)>; Irish, Tony C <[Tony.Irish@sol.doi.gov](mailto:Tony.Irish@sol.doi.gov)>; Patnaik, Bivan R <[bivan\\_patnaik@ios.doi.gov](mailto:bivan_patnaik@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Subject:** Re: EO/SO on renaming, FW: BGN follow-up

Scott-

(b) (5) ACP

Thanks,  
Brett

Brett H. Myrick  
Attorney-Adviser  
Department of the Interior  
Division of General Law - General Legal Services  
[brett.myrick@sol.doi.gov](mailto:brett.myrick@sol.doi.gov)  
202-208-3820 (work)  
312-576-4798 (personal cell)

**From:** Cameron, Scott J <[scott\\_cameron@ios.doi.gov](mailto:scott_cameron@ios.doi.gov)>

**Sent:** Monday, January 27, 2025 6:05 PM

**To:** Myrick, Brett H <[brett.myrick@sol.doi.gov](mailto:brett.myrick@sol.doi.gov)>; Ryker, Sarah J <[sryker@usgs.gov](mailto:sryker@usgs.gov)>

**Cc:** Farmer, Isis U <[isis\\_farmer@ios.doi.gov](mailto:isis_farmer@ios.doi.gov)>; Lukas, William A <[wluke@usgs.gov](mailto:wluke@usgs.gov)>; Jones, Leslie W <[ljones@usgs.gov](mailto:ljones@usgs.gov)>; Lacey, Jennifer A <[jlacey@usgs.gov](mailto:jlacey@usgs.gov)>; Killpack, Darcee <[dkillpack@usgs.gov](mailto:dkillpack@usgs.gov)>; Tischler, Michael A <[mtischler@usgs.gov](mailto:mtischler@usgs.gov)>; Irish, Tony C <[Tony.Irish@sol.doi.gov](mailto:Tony.Irish@sol.doi.gov)>; Patnaik, Bivan R <[bivan\\_patnaik@ios.doi.gov](mailto:bivan_patnaik@ios.doi.gov)>

**Subject:** RE: EO/SO on renaming, FW: BGN follow-up

Brett,

(b) (5) ACP

Thanks,  
Scott

Scott J. Cameron

Senior Advisor to the Secretary, exercising the delegated authority of the Assistant Secretary – Water and Science and exercising the delegated authority of the Assistant Secretary – Insular and International Affairs

202.330.1398

---

**From:** Myrick, Brett H <[brett.myrick@sol.doi.gov](mailto:brett.myrick@sol.doi.gov)>

**Sent:** Monday, January 27, 2025 6:02 PM

**To:** Cameron, Scott J <[scott\\_cameron@ios.doi.gov](mailto:scott_cameron@ios.doi.gov)>; Ryker, Sarah J <[sryker@usgs.gov](mailto:sryker@usgs.gov)>  
**Cc:** Farmer, Isis U <[isis\\_farmer@ios.doi.gov](mailto:isis_farmer@ios.doi.gov)>; Lukas, William A <[wluke@usgs.gov](mailto:wluke@usgs.gov)>; Jones, Leslie W <[ljones@usgs.gov](mailto:ljones@usgs.gov)>; Lacey, Jennifer A <[jlacey@usgs.gov](mailto:jlacey@usgs.gov)>; Killpack, Darcee <[dkillpack@usgs.gov](mailto:dkillpack@usgs.gov)>; Tischler, Michael A <[mtischler@usgs.gov](mailto:mtischler@usgs.gov)>; Irish, Tony C <[Tony.Irish@sol.doi.gov](mailto:Tony.Irish@sol.doi.gov)>; Patnaik, Bivan R <[bivan\\_patnaik@ios.doi.gov](mailto:bivan_patnaik@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Subject:** Re: EO/SO on renaming, FW: BGN follow-up

Scott-

(b) (5) ACP

Thank you,  
Brett

Brett H. Myrick  
Attorney-Adviser  
Department of the Interior  
Division of General Law - General Legal Services  
[brett.myrick@sol.doi.gov](mailto:brett.myrick@sol.doi.gov)  
202-208-3820 (work)  
312-576-4798 (personal cell)

**From:** Cameron, Scott J <[scott\\_cameron@ios.doi.gov](mailto:scott_cameron@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Sent:** Monday, January 27, 2025 5:46 PM  
**To:** Ryker, Sarah J <[sryker@usgs.gov](mailto:sryker@usgs.gov)>  
**Cc:** Farmer, Isis U <[isis\\_farmer@ios.doi.gov](mailto:isis_farmer@ios.doi.gov)>; Lukas, William A <[wluke@usgs.gov](mailto:wluke@usgs.gov)>; Jones, Leslie W <[ljones@usgs.gov](mailto:ljones@usgs.gov)>; Lacey, Jennifer A <[jlacey@usgs.gov](mailto:jlacey@usgs.gov)>; Killpack, Darcee <[dkillpack@usgs.gov](mailto:dkillpack@usgs.gov)>; Tischler, Michael A <[mtischler@usgs.gov](mailto:mtischler@usgs.gov)>; Irish, Tony C <[Tony.Irish@sol.doi.gov](mailto:Tony.Irish@sol.doi.gov)>; Myrick, Brett H <[brett.myrick@sol.doi.gov](mailto:brett.myrick@sol.doi.gov)>; Patnaik, Bivan R <[bivan\\_patnaik@ios.doi.gov](mailto:bivan_patnaik@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: EO/SO on renaming, FW: BGN follow-up

All,

(b) (5) ACP

Thanks,  
Scott

Scott J. Cameron

Senior Advisor to the Secretary, exercising the delegated authority of the Assistant Secretary – Water and Science and exercising the delegated authority of the Assistant Secretary – Insular and International Affairs

202.330.1398

---

**From:** Ryker, Sarah J <[sryker@usgs.gov](mailto:sryker@usgs.gov)>  
**Sent:** Monday, January 27, 2025 4:12 PM  
**To:** Cameron, Scott J <[scott\\_cameron@ios.doi.gov](mailto:scott_cameron@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Cc:** Farmer, Isis U <[isis\\_farmer@ios.doi.gov](mailto:isis_farmer@ios.doi.gov)>; Lukas, William A <[wlukas@usgs.gov](mailto:wlukas@usgs.gov)>; Jones, Leslie W <[ljones@usgs.gov](mailto:ljones@usgs.gov)>; Lacey, Jennifer A <[jlacey@usgs.gov](mailto:jlacey@usgs.gov)>; Killpack, Darcee <[dkillpack@usgs.gov](mailto:dkillpack@usgs.gov)>; Tischler, Michael A <[mtischler@usgs.gov](mailto:mtischler@usgs.gov)>; Irish, Tony C <[Tony.Irish@sol.doi.gov](mailto:Tony.Irish@sol.doi.gov)>; Myrick, Brett H <[brett.myrick@sol.doi.gov](mailto:brett.myrick@sol.doi.gov)>; Patnaik, Bivan R <[bivan\\_patnaik@ios.doi.gov](mailto:bivan_patnaik@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Subject:** EO/SO on renaming, FW: BGN follow-up

Scott,

Attached is a draft Secretary's Order to implement the Executive Order "Restoring Names That Honor American Greatness". This draft was developed collaboratively by the USGS and the Solicitor's office, with input from key BGN officials including the BGN State Dept. representative. A few notes:

1. Sec. 2 of the EO calls for agency review of all agency BGN appointees. The USGS has sent forward through DTS a memo to the Secretary's office in support of the DOI membership review. Therefore, this draft does not include any additional guidance for implementation of that request. However, additional instruction can be added if the department feels it appropriate.
2. Sec. 4c of the draft corresponds to EO sec. 2d, but this is a situation that we don't anticipate will arise.
3. Sec. 4d of the draft corresponds to EO sec. 5. This section of the draft is less detailed because it is not a BGN or USGS function and will need some additional DOI decision-making over who should implement and in what timeframe. (E.g. I'll posit that it might be a responsibility for DOI's Office of Intergovernmental and External Affairs, and note that the need to prepare announcements in time for July 4, 2026, will be time-constraining on that process.)

This draft aims to help DOI address all relevant sections of the EO, but we can edit/adjust based on



your feedback.

I'm CCing our leads at USGS and SOL, as well as Bivan – thank you, all!

Sarah J Ryker, PhD  
Acting Director, U.S. Geological Survey  
[sryker@usgs.gov](mailto:sryker@usgs.gov)

---

**From:** Cameron, Scott J <[scott\\_cameron@ios.doi.gov](mailto:scott_cameron@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Sent:** Friday, January 24, 2025 5:24 PM  
**To:** Ryker, Sarah J <[sryker@usgs.gov](mailto:sryker@usgs.gov)>; Caminiti, Mariagrazia <[Marigrace.Caminiti@sol.doi.gov](mailto:Marigrace.Caminiti@sol.doi.gov)>  
**Cc:** Farmer, Isis U <[isis\\_farmer@ios.doi.gov](mailto:isis_farmer@ios.doi.gov)>; Jones, Leslie W <[ljones@usgs.gov](mailto:ljones@usgs.gov)>; Lukas, William A <[wlukas@usgs.gov](mailto:wlukas@usgs.gov)>; Lacey, Jennifer A <[jlacey@usgs.gov](mailto:jlacey@usgs.gov)>; Irish, Tony C <[Tony.Irish@sol.doi.gov](mailto:Tony.Irish@sol.doi.gov)>; Patnaik, Bivan R <[bivan\\_patnaik@ios.doi.gov](mailto:bivan_patnaik@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Subject:** Re: BGN follow-up

Hi Sarah,

Please have USGS draft a secretarial order telling USGS to execute the EO. Talk with Tony Irish in Sol so we get it in the right format to hand off to Bivan in Exec Sec.

It would be much appreciated if you could get a draft to Tony on Monday.

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

**From:** Ryker, Sarah J <[sryker@usgs.gov](mailto:sryker@usgs.gov)>  
**Sent:** Friday, January 24, 2025 5:02:29 PM  
**To:** Cameron, Scott J <[scott\\_cameron@ios.doi.gov](mailto:scott_cameron@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Cc:** Farmer, Isis U <[isis\\_farmer@ios.doi.gov](mailto:isis_farmer@ios.doi.gov)>; Jones, Leslie W <[ljones@usgs.gov](mailto:ljones@usgs.gov)>; Lukas, William A <[wlukas@usgs.gov](mailto:wlukas@usgs.gov)>; Lacey, Jennifer A <[jlacey@usgs.gov](mailto:jlacey@usgs.gov)>  
**Subject:** BGN follow-up

Scott,

I just asked the USGS folks who support the Board on Geographic Names to confirm that we don't need a fully populated and sitting BGN to implement name changes initiated by EO/SO. I just got this confirmation back:

The BGN plays essentially no part when the name change is the result of an EO or SO. The BGN does not need to approve the name, because it has already been

approved by someone with the authority.

As a side note, our folks are anxious to get the BGN populated as the Board fields a lot of changes requested by the public. But that process can continue in parallel with the EO-directed changes.

In case you could use more detail on this, I'm CCing Jenn Lacey, our Associate Director for Core Science Systems – she oversees the BGN processes.

Sarah J Ryker, PhD

Acting Director, U.S. Geological Survey

[sryker@usgs.gov](mailto:sryker@usgs.gov)

**From:** Zahniser, Shellie R  
**To:** O'Donnell, Matthew J; Tischler, Michael A  
**Subject:** RE: Geographic Names EO  
**Date:** Tuesday, January 21, 2025 10:48:31 AM

---

(b) (5) DPP

Shellie Zahniser, Ph.D.  
BGN Executive Secretary  
Domestic Names Committee  
Honolulu, HI

**From:** O'Donnell, Matthew J <mjodonnell@usgs.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 21, 2025 5:00 AM  
**To:** Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>; Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: Geographic Names EO

(b) (5) DPP

Matt

**From:** Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 21, 2025 9:57 AM  
**To:** O'Donnell, Matthew J <mjodonnell@usgs.gov>; Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: Geographic Names EO

Hi Matt,

(b) (5) DPP



(b) (5) DPP

Thanks,  
m

**From:** O'Donnell, Matthew J <[mjodonnell@usgs.gov](mailto:mjodonnell@usgs.gov)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 21, 2025 9:48 AM  
**To:** Tischler, Michael A <[mtischler@usgs.gov](mailto:mtischler@usgs.gov)>; Zahniser, Shellie R <[srzahniser@usgs.gov](mailto:srzahniser@usgs.gov)>  
**Subject:** Re: Geographic Names EO

Shellie and I talked last night. I noted that too.

(b) (5) ACP/DPP

Matt

Matt O'Donnell  
BGN research staff

Email: [mjodonnell@usgs.gov](mailto:mjodonnell@usgs.gov)

**From:** Tischler, Michael A <[mtischler@usgs.gov](mailto:mtischler@usgs.gov)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 21, 2025 9:41 AM  
**To:** O'Donnell, Matthew J <[mjodonnell@usgs.gov](mailto:mjodonnell@usgs.gov)>; Zahniser, Shellie R <[srzahniser@usgs.gov](mailto:srzahniser@usgs.gov)>  
**Subject:** Fw: Geographic Names EO

Hi Matt, Shellie,

I wanted to check with the solicitor (b) (5) ACP

(b) (5) ACP

Thanks,  
m

**From:** Tischler, Michael A <[mtischler@usgs.gov](mailto:mtischler@usgs.gov)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 21, 2025 9:38 AM  
**To:** Myrick, Brett H <[brett.myrick@sol.doi.gov](mailto:brett.myrick@sol.doi.gov)>  
**Subject:** Re: Geographic Names EO

Hi Brett,

(b) (5) ACP

Thanks,  
m

**From:** Myrick, Brett H <[brett.myrick@sol.doi.gov](mailto:brett.myrick@sol.doi.gov)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 21, 2025 9:32 AM  
**To:** Tischler, Michael A <[mtischler@usgs.gov](mailto:mtischler@usgs.gov)>  
**Subject:** Re: Geographic Names EO

Mike-

(b) (5) ACP

Thanks,  
Brett

Brett H. Myrick

Attorney-Adviser  
Department of the Interior  
Division of General Law - General Legal Services  
[brett.myrick@sol.doi.gov](mailto:brett.myrick@sol.doi.gov)  
202-208-3820 (work)  
312-576-4798 (personal cell)

**From:** Tischler, Michael A <[mtischler@usgs.gov](mailto:mtischler@usgs.gov)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 21, 2025 9:28 AM  
**To:** Myrick, Brett H <[brett.myrick@sol.doi.gov](mailto:brett.myrick@sol.doi.gov)>  
**Subject:** Geographic Names EO

Hi Brett,

(b) (5) ACP

Thanks,  
m

\*\*\*\*\*

Mike Tischler, Ph.D  
Director, National Geospatial Program  
U.S. Geological Survey  
Department of Interior  
o: 703-648-4725  
c: 703-344-4348  
[mtischler@usgs.gov](mailto:mtischler@usgs.gov)

**From:** Myrick, Brett H  
**To:** Tischler, Michael A  
**Subject:** Re: Geographic Names EO  
**Date:** Tuesday, January 21, 2025 12:56:35 PM

---

(b) (5) ACP

Brett H. Myrick  
Attorney-Adviser  
Department of the Interior  
Division of General Law - General Legal Services  
brett.myrick@sol.doi.gov  
202-208-3820 (work)  
312-576-4798 (personal cell)

**From:** Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 21, 2025 10:06 AM  
**To:** Myrick, Brett H <brett.myrick@sol.doi.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: Geographic Names EO

Hi Brett,

(b) (5) ACP

Thanks,  
m

**From:** Myrick, Brett H <brett.myrick@sol.doi.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 21, 2025 9:32 AM  
**To:** Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: Geographic Names EO

Mike-

(b) (5) ACP

Thanks,  
Brett

Brett H. Myrick  
Attorney-Adviser  
Department of the Interior  
Division of General Law - General Legal Services  
brett.myrick@sol.doi.gov  
202-208-3820 (work)  
312-576-4798 (personal cell)

**From:** Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 21, 2025 9:28 AM  
**To:** Myrick, Brett H <brett.myrick@sol.doi.gov>  
**Subject:** Geographic Names EO

Hi Brett,

(b) (5) ACP

**(b) (5) ACP**

Thanks,  
m

\*\*\*\*\*

Mike Tischler, Ph.D  
Director, National Geospatial Program  
U.S. Geological Survey  
Department of Interior  
o: 703-648-4725  
c: 703-344-4348  
mtischler@usgs.gov

**From:** Tischler, Michael A  
**To:** BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC; Zahniser, Shellie R  
**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] ST\_GeographicName  
**Date:** Wednesday, January 22, 2025 11:47:41 AM

---

Unless you feel there is a need to respond soon, I'd say that we could wait a little longer. I know DOI is working on a media statement.

**From:** BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2025 2:46 PM  
**To:** Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>; Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] ST\_GeographicName

Hi Mike and Shellie, I haven't responded to the proponent. What is your advice? Respond now or wait until OCAP provides guidance about responding to anything about the EO in general?

Matt

**From:** BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2025 11:59 AM  
**To:** St Onge, Timothy <tong@loc.gov>; Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>  
**Cc:** Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] ST\_GeographicName

Thanks Mike and Tim, I will let the proponent know.

Matt

**From:** St Onge, Timothy <tong@loc.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 21, 2025 5:12 PM  
**To:** Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>  
**Cc:** Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>; BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] ST\_GeographicName

Hi everyone,

I'm in concurrence that the Flattop proposal be rejected, given that the EO establishes Mount McKinley as official and therefore makes the Flattop name change a duplicative name issue, citing Policy VII, Sec. 1. Name duplication may not have been in the original logic of the proposal, but that is the scenario following the EO.

Thank you,  
Tim

**Tim St. Onge**  
**Cartographer**



Geography & Map Division  
LM-B02  
202-707-9044  
[tong@loc.gov](mailto:tong@loc.gov)



---

**From:** Zahniser, Shellie R <[srzahniser@usgs.gov](mailto:srzahniser@usgs.gov)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 21, 2025 4:57 PM  
**To:** St Onge, Timothy <[tong@loc.gov](mailto:tong@loc.gov)>  
**Cc:** Tischler, Michael A <[mtischler@usgs.gov](mailto:mtischler@usgs.gov)>; BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <[bgnexec@usgs.gov](mailto:bgnexec@usgs.gov)>  
**Subject:** FW: [EXTERNAL] ST\_GeographicName

**CAUTION:** This email message has been received from an external source. Please use caution when opening attachments, or clicking on links.

Tim,

Seeking your input on this matter.

BLUF: Proposal to change [Flattop](#) (no feature in GNIS and FID in proposal is for [Chugach Mountains](#), perhaps [Flattop Mountain](#), which is in the Chugach Mountains?) to "Mount McKinley"

Now that the EO has been signed to re-instate the name Mount McKinley, should we outright reject the Flattop proposal?

Shellie Zahniser, Ph.D.  
BGN Executive Secretary  
Domestic Names Committee  
Honolulu, HI

---

**From:** Tischler, Michael A <[mtischler@usgs.gov](mailto:mtischler@usgs.gov)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 21, 2025 11:51 AM  
**To:** Zahniser, Shellie R <[srzahniser@usgs.gov](mailto:srzahniser@usgs.gov)>; BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <[bgnexec@usgs.gov](mailto:bgnexec@usgs.gov)>  
**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] ST\_GeographicName

If we received a proposal for a living relative, we would outright dismiss the proposal because it violates a standing policy, right?

I would like to have concurrence from Tim, but I would say we could dismiss the proposal as being in violation of Policy VII, Sec. 1:

*The BGN will normally disapprove a name proposed for a geographic feature that is already applied to another nearby feature.*

Given the extraordinary prominence of Mount McKinley, it would be confusing to have any other feature in the State share the same name.

**From:** Zahniser, Shellie R <[srzahniser@usgs.gov](mailto:srzahniser@usgs.gov)>

**Sent:** Tuesday, January 21, 2025 4:34 PM

**To:** Tischler, Michael A <[mtischler@usgs.gov](mailto:mtischler@usgs.gov)>; BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <[bgnexec@usgs.gov](mailto:bgnexec@usgs.gov)>

**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] ST\_GeographicName

Should we even process it? If there is already a Mount McKinley via EO, then I would think that any proposal for that name, in AK should be outright denied without processing.

Shellie Zahniser, Ph.D.  
BGN Executive Secretary  
Domestic Names Committee  
Honolulu, HI

**From:** Tischler, Michael A <[mtischler@usgs.gov](mailto:mtischler@usgs.gov)>

**Sent:** Tuesday, January 21, 2025 11:21 AM

**To:** Zahniser, Shellie R <[srzahniser@usgs.gov](mailto:srzahniser@usgs.gov)>; BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <[bgnexec@usgs.gov](mailto:bgnexec@usgs.gov)>

**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] ST\_GeographicName

I didn't ask about that...

What would I be seeking resolution or clarification on? The feature that's being renamed (Flattop) was not named by EO, nor is there any pending legislation, right?

I could see that proposal (Flattop -> McKinley) as not being approved, though, as it would be confusing.

**From:** Zahniser, Shellie R <[srzahniser@usgs.gov](mailto:srzahniser@usgs.gov)>

**Sent:** Tuesday, January 21, 2025 4:12 PM

**To:** Tischler, Michael A <[mtischler@usgs.gov](mailto:mtischler@usgs.gov)>; BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <[bgnexec@usgs.gov](mailto:bgnexec@usgs.gov)>

**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] ST\_GeographicName

Are you seeking resolution to that second question as well?

Shellie Zahniser, Ph.D.  
BGN Executive Secretary

Domestic Names Committee  
Honolulu, HI

---

**From:** Tischler, Michael A <[mtischler@usgs.gov](mailto:mtischler@usgs.gov)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 21, 2025 11:11 AM  
**To:** BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <[bgnexec@usgs.gov](mailto:bgnexec@usgs.gov)>; Zahniser, Shellie R <[srzahniser@usgs.gov](mailto:srzahniser@usgs.gov)>  
**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] ST\_GeographicName

I asked the DOI Solicitor about (b) (5) - ACP

(b) (5) - ACP

However, it's a different question as to whether we want to name another feature to Mount McKinley.

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**From:** BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <[bgnexec@usgs.gov](mailto:bgnexec@usgs.gov)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 21, 2025 3:57 PM  
**To:** Tischler, Michael A <[mtischler@usgs.gov](mailto:mtischler@usgs.gov)>; Zahniser, Shellie R <[srzahniser@usgs.gov](mailto:srzahniser@usgs.gov)>  
**Subject:** Fw: [EXTERNAL] ST\_GeographicName

Our question about BGN purview over Executive or Congressional naming is a reality.

Two proposals, only one of which is relevant to the question:  
change [Denali](#) to "Denali McKinley"  
change [Flattop](#) (no feature in GNIS and FID in proposal is for [Chugach Mountains](#), perhaps [Flattop Mountain](#), which is in the Chugach Mountains?) to "Mount McKinley"

Matt

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**From:** Shane Carlson <(b) (6) @myyahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 21, 2025 3:42 PM  
**To:** BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <[bgnexec@usgs.gov](mailto:bgnexec@usgs.gov)>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] ST\_GeographicName

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**opening attachments, or responding.**

Petition to change the name of two mountains in Alaska.