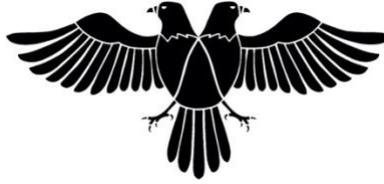


Alaska Historical Society



P.O. Box 100299
Anchorage, Alaska 99510-0299
907.276.1596/alaskahistoricalsociety.org

The Honorable Deb Haaland, Secretary of the Interior
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW, MS 5311
Washington, DC 20240

March 14, 2022

Dear Secretary Haaland:

The Alaska Historical Society, Alaska's largest statewide organization committed to the promotion of our state's history in contemporary life, commends your effort to replace in our state offensive place names, especially those which are derogatory toward Alaska Native women.

As you know, the land now known as Alaska has been home to a broad cultural diversity of indigenous peoples who have thrived on the rich subsistence resources for more than a millennia. Since colonization in the 18th century, Europeans have claimed geographic sites that had long been of spiritual and cultural significance to Alaska's Native people. Many of the names imposed by settlers reflected racist, sexist and derogatory views towards Alaska's first people, especially Native women. The "Reconciliation of Derogatory Geographic Names" process you have initiated has identified at least 27 across our state. This effort to change these names is a significant step toward removing harmful stereotypes and reducing intolerance while acknowledging the vital contributions of Alaska Native peoples to our state and nation.

We believe this renaming process provides an important opportunity for Alaskans and all Americans to think critically about the past, celebrate moments of triumphs and reckon with injustice. In doing so, history promotes understanding and empathy; it expands our vision for change and enriches our public dialogue. We believe history can play a part in creating greater understanding of our diverse population and can lead to appreciation and support for all people. That is why we support your place name efforts.

As you proceed with the renaming process, we encourage you and the U.S. Board on Geographic Names to consider the original Native place names which recognize the historical significance of the locations and celebrate the rich cultural diversity of Alaska's Native peoples.

Thank you for embarking on this vital initiative.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Ramseur". The signature is written in a cursive style.

David Ramseur
President

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ian Hartman". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Ian Hartman
Chair, Advocacy Committee

cc: Reconciliation of Derogatory Geographic Names, U.S. Geological Survey, MS-511, 12201 Sunrise Valley Dr., Reston, VA 20192