

WRITTEN PUBLIC COMMENT
ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON RECONCILIATION IN PLACE NAMES
MEETING OF NOVEMBER 14, 15 & 16, 2023

- Form letter submitted on behalf of Lakota People's Law Project

[note: this is text taken from identical or near-identical form letters received from several thousand individual email addresses]

Dear Committee Manager Andrea DeKoter, PhD,

Dear Secretary Haaland and Advisory Committee on Reconciliation in Place Names,

I'm deeply appreciative of the steps you took in 2021 through Secretarial Order 3404 to change the names of several places offensive to Native women and form the Derogatory Geographic Names Task Force to address other offensive names. I also appreciate the creation of the Advisory Committee on Reconciliation in Place Names through Secretarial Order 3405. Now, in honor of Black History Month — as we consider the important contributions of Black People throughout history — it's appropriate to revisit and expand upon those efforts. Today I ask you to take further action by replacing several other egregiously offensive names across the U.S.

Specifically, I join the Lakota People's Law Project and a coalition of thousands in urging all relevant governmental bodies to immediately begin the process of changing the following monikers:

1. Big Negro Creek in Missouri
2. Darky Knob in Kentucky
3. Red Skin Run in Kentucky
4. Negro Foot in Virginia
5. Pickaninny Buttes in California
6. Red Skin Knolls in Utah
7. Red Skin Brook in Indiana
8. Wetback Tank in New Mexico
9. Anna in Illinois *
10. Devil's Tower in Wyoming **

It is my hope that the Department of the Interior and the Committee continue the important work of leaving a new legacy of fairness, reconciliation, and healing for the betterment of future generations. Thank you for leading the way toward a society where we show respect to all people in all places by consciously replacing the implicit teaching of hate with a more compassionate model for our children.

* While "Anna" may not seem offensive at first glance, its history reveals something else. After its founding, Anna became a "sundown town," where People of Color weren't safe after dark. And its name became an acronym meaning "Ain't No 'N-words' Allowed."

** Devil's Tower is an important place with deep significance to many Native Nations. It's highly

inappropriate that this sacred site — so meaningful to the cultural histories and spiritual traditions of the first inhabitants of this land — should carry a name alluding to an evil originating from a book of non-Native spirituality. We recommend official adoption of its Lakota name: Bear Lodge.

With gratitude,