



STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
DEPARTMENT of NATURAL and CULTURAL RESOURCES
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

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May 30, 2023

Ken Gallager
Office of Planning and Development
Department of Business and Economic Affairs
100 North Main Street, Suite 100
Concord, NH 03301

RE: Proposed name changes to Mount Washington and the Baker River as presented to the Council on Resources and Development on May 11, 2023

Dear Mr. Gallager,

I am writing to express my opposition to the proposed name changes to Mt. Washington and the Baker River. As Commissioner of the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (DNCR) I oversee five Divisions including the Division of Parks and Recreation, the Division of Forests and Lands, the Division of Historical Resources, the State Library, and the State Council on the Arts.

The DNCR's mission is to protect, promote and manage the State's natural and cultural resources, supporting New Hampshire's high quality of life and strengthening the experiences of our residents and guests. A top priority of the work we do is safety and to achieve this we collaborate with other state and local, agencies every day. In consulting with our sister agencies, it is clear that a name change for these popular outdoor destinations would cause significant challenges in search and rescue efforts.

Changing names of internationally known landmarks, such as Mt. Washington will lead to many unintended consequences beyond safety. For example, there are economic impacts to consider as many New Hampshire businesses are associated with these well-known places. There is also a legacy of art that stems from the White Mountains region of New Hampshire that is cherished and celebrated worldwide. Paintings of New Hampshire's White Mountains from the early to mid-1800s sparked interest and ultimately promoted the region as a beautiful, rugged, place to escape and explore. At the DNCR we work to protect and provide access to these timeless outdoor places that have captured the imagination of all who have visited.

Changing the name of these sites does not seem necessary. Interpreting the full history of these sites, however, is a goal of ours and is an effort that we welcome input and support for.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sarah L. Stewart".

Sarah L. Stewart
Commissioner