# Staff Report

Meeting Date: April 15, 2025

To: Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors

Subject: Take the following actions regarding Assembly Bill (AB) 2022: (1) Conduct a public hearing; and (2) adopt resolutions which select proposed replacement names, approved by the California Advisory Committee on Geographic Names (CACGN) pursuant to the requirements of AB 2022 for the following county maintained public roads: (a) Squaw Valley Road; and (b) Squaw Valley Loop Road.

Department: Public Works

Supervisorial District: District 2

Department Contact: Sarah Evans, Staff Services Analyst, (530) 842-8277

## Background

On September 23, 2022, State Assembly Bill (AB) No. 2022 (Ramos) was signed into law, adding Chapter 17 (commencing with Section 8899.90) Division 1 of Title 2 of the Government Code. The bill found the term “squaw” (“Sq\_”) to be a “racist and derogatory term that has historically been used as an offensive ethnic, racial, and sexist slur, particularly for indigenous women.

The following is a timeline of actions taken by the Siskiyou County Department of Public Works to comply with the requirements of AB 2022;

On June 21, 2023, the Siskiyou County Clerk’s office receives first email regarding AB 2022 from California Advisory Committee on Geographic Names.

July 1, 2023, all Public Agencies are required to identify and submit to the California Advisory Committee of Geographic Names (CACGN) all geographic features and places names within its jurisdiction containing the “Sq\_” term.

On June 22, 2023, Siskiyou County Director of Public Works, Tom Deany submitted the AB 2022 Survey to the California Advisory Committee on Geographic Name and California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA). This included the Siskiyou County maintained roads with the “Sq\_” term.

January 24, 2024, Director of Public Works Tom Deany, is listed as point of contact for Siskiyou County implementing AB 2022 to replace “Sq\_” names to California Advisory Committee on Geographic Names (CACGN) and California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA).

February 16, 2024, Director of Public Works Tom Deany, makes first attempt to reach out to California Native American tribes who’s ancestorial ground was in the area where the “Sq\_” features are located.

May 28, 2024, Siskiyou County’s project lead for AB 2022, started consultation with the Northern California Wintu tribe, asking for thoughtful and respectful name recommendations that showed representation of their native ancestors for the renaming of the County maintained “Sq\_” roads.

July 8, 2024, Siskiyou County submitted to the California Advisory Committee on Geographic Names the AB 2022 Name Proposal Checklist with the received name recommendations from local Native American tribes.

August 8, 2024, all Public Agencies must submit the replacement names for all “Sq\_” named places and features within their jurisdiction to cacgn@resources.ca.gov.

November 14, 2024, Siskiyou County’s project lead attends California Advisory Committee on Geographic Names meeting for Public Agency Name Proposals for AB 2022 implementation.

November 14, 2024 and December 6, 2024, California Advisory Committee on Geographic Names completed its approval of replacement.

Siskiyou County worked closely with members of the Wintu tribe for name recommendations for the two county maintained “Sq\_” features. The ancestors of the Wintu tribe would summer along Yet Atwam Creek (formerly “Sq\_” Valley Creek), where there was an abundance of water and fish that contributed to their livelihood. The name recommendations that the Wintu tribe submitted to Siskiyou County show honor to their ancestors and symbolize their time summering in the McCloud Valley.

## Discussion

Through the State of California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) and its California Advisory Committee on Geographic Names (CACGN), the bill requires Siskiyou County to no longer replace signs, interpretive markers, or any other marker or printed material with the discontinued name containing the work “Sq\_” and to ensure that map updates and sign replacements use the new name.

Road names are geographic features subject to the requirements of AB 2022. A review of Siskiyou County road names identified four features that use the word “Sq\_”, including one private road named “Sq\_” Gulch Road, one Fuel Break owned by Cal Fire named “Sq\_” Valley Fuel Break, and two county maintained roads named “Sq\_” Valley Road and “Sq\_” Valley Loop Road.

AB 2022 directs local agencies to solicit proposals to rename “Sq\_” place names from California Native American tribes, other public agencies as appropriate, and the public. It requires the County to transmit proposed replacement names to CACGN for consideration and approval.

Based on the requirements of AB 2022 and guidance from CACGN, the project lead for the Department of Public Works invited and engaged in formal consultation with local Native American tribes and notified the appropriate public agencies. Proposals received in response to the consultation with local Native American tribes were researched and evaluated according to county road naming policies and within the context of AB 2022. AB 2022 states, “In selecting replacement names, the public agency shall prioritize names that honor and recognize the tribes, cultures, and indigenous languages specific to the geographic region in question. Including place names that were previously used by Native American tribes or place names proposed by California Native American tribes through the appropriate enactment or resolution.”

The Department of Public Works request the Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors set a date for a public hearing and approve the Legal Notice of Public Hearing and posting of the roads in advance of the Public Hearing where we will invite additional public participation.

Siskiyou County is responsible for submitting a resolution indicating that a CACGN-approved replacement name has been formally adopted. At that time, the department will implement a name change in our digital databases as well as on-the-ground (e.g., signage), notify the Siskiyou County Planning Department, California Department of Transportation (CALTRANS), California Highway Patrol at GIS@chp.ca.gov as well as provide digital updates during the US Census Bureau’s annual Boundary and Annexation Surveys. This will ensure the most efficient and timely emergency responses.

**“Sq\_” Valley Road:** “Sq\_” Valley Road, #1N01, is located south off the intersection of State Highway 89 in McCloud, extending for 5.255 miles to the Shasta County line. The subject road directly serves one-hundred-thirteen properties and may indirectly serve others in the vicinity. Sixty-one properties have a “Sq\_” Valley Road situs address. November 9, 1981, RESOLUTION No. 8044 CHANGING THE NAME OF SOUTHERN AVENUE TO SQUAW VALLEY ROAD was signed by Vernon Zink, Chairman, Board of Supervisors of Siskiyou County.

Three suggested replacement names for “Sq\_” Valley Road were received from the Wintu Trible of Northern California after formal consultation with Siskiyou County project lead and Wintu Tribal Council. Chali Mem, Chali Memton, and Boychalimemton were CACGN-approved Assembly Bill 2022 replacement names. Chali Mem, Chali Memton, and Boychalimemton are all written using the English alphabet. They are phonetically pronounced (chah-lee-mem), (Chah-lee-mem-tahn), and (boy-chah-lee-mem-tahn). The three replacement name recommendations are in the Wintu language. Wintu is a Wintu language spoken by the Wintu people of Northern California. It was the northernmost member of the Wintun family of languages. The Wintun family of languages was spoken in the Shasta County and Trinity County. “Chali” translated in the English language means “Good”. “Mem” translated in the English language means “Water”. “Memton” translated in the English language means “Water ‘place’”. Boy in the English language means “lots”. Chali Mem translates to “Good Water.” Chali Memton translates to “Good Water Place”. Boychalimemton translates to Lots of Good Water Place.

**“Sq\_” Valley Loop Road:** “Sq\_” Valley Loop Road, #1N031, is 0.25 miles long. It begins at the intersection of “Sq\_” Valley Road, at Mile Post, approximately 5.2 miles south of Highway 89 and ties back in approximately 5 miles south of Highway 89. The subject road directly serves four properties and may indirectly serve others in the vicinity. Zero properties have a “Sq\_” Valley Loop Road situs address.

Three suggested replacement names for “Sq\_” Valley Loop Road were received from the Wintu Trible of Northern California after formal consultation with Siskiyou County project lead and Wintu Tribal Council. Chali Mem Paniik, Chali Memton Paniik, and Boychalimemton Paniik were CACGN-approved Assembly Bill 2022 replacement names. Chali Mem Paniik, Chali Memton Paniik, and Boychalimemton Paniik are all written using the English alphabet. They are phonetically pronounced (chah-lee-mem-pah-neek), (Chah-lee-mem-than- pah-neek), and (boy-chah-lee-mem-than- pah-neek). The three replacement name recommendations are in the Wintu language. Wintu is a Wintu language spoken by the Wintu people of Northern California. It was the northernmost member of the Wintun family of languages. The Wintun family of languages was spoken in the Shasta County and Trinity County. “Chali” translated in the English language means “Good”. “Mem” translated in the English language means “Water”. “Memton” translated in the English language means “Water ‘place’”. Boy in the English language means “lots”. “Paniik” in the English language means “encircle”. Chali Mem Paniik translates to “Good Water Circle.” Chali Memton Paniik translates to “Good Water Place Circle.” Boychalimemton Paniik translates to “Lots of Good Water Place Circle.”

## Recommended Action

Assembly Bill No. 2022 was signed into Law by Governor Gavin Newsome. However one may feel about the law, we can all agree that the term “squaw” is a racist and derogatory term. Historically, it is used as a racist and sexist slur, that has been primarily directed to indigenous women. As a County, it is our turn to make right and do better by renaming the two “Sq\_” feature roads.

The Wintu Tribal Counsel of Northern California were touched and honored that we went to them, seeking their name recommendations. By working together collectively, Siskiyou County along with the Northern California Wintu tribe, we can begin the healing process by renaming the features that hold much historic pain.

We request the Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors approve a Legal Notice of Public Hearing and posting of the roads in advance of the Public Hearing where we will invite additional public participation and set a date for Public Hearing.

We request approval of “A RESOLUTION OF THE SISKIYOU COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS EXPRESSING INTENT TO CHANGE THE NAMES OF CERTAIN COUNTY ROADS CONTAINING THE TERM “SQUAW” PERSUANT TO ASSEMBLY BILL 2022 AND APPLICABLE LAW”.

## Financial Impact

Actions necessary to meet the requirements of AB 2022 impose a state-mandated local program. As such, costs may be reimbursable from the State of California Commission on State Mandates. To date, costs have consisted primarily of staff time and minimal supplies and equipment in Fiscal Years 2023/2024 and 2024/2025 for which there are sufficient appropriations to such costs. Implementation costs will include replacement signage, supply cost for Public Notices as well as costs for labor. Siskiyou County Department of Public Works will cover the financial costs associated with the renaming of the “Sq\_” features so the General Fund will not be affected.

## Attachments

1. Draft Resolution- “Sq\_” Valley Road and “Sq\_” Valley Loop Road
2. Draft NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
3. Location Map