

## **Geographic Renaming: Public and Staff Responses**

### **Collection Development Concerns – Response:**

#### **Staff – Private Version:**

We understand that recent Presidential Executive Orders may cause concern and uncertainty among our community members. Some may be great advocates wanting to see the changes immediately, while others may worry about what these changes mean. Both groups will be concerned about the impact and implications of the information, its accuracy, and/or representation of those changes in our libraries' materials and other resources. Please be assured that the \_\_\_\_\_ Libraries are collaborating closely with the Delaware Library Association and the State Librarian to respond appropriately as the situation warrants.

Remember, you may always refer patrons to our Collection Development Policy.

Appendix A provides the "Library Bill Of Rights," "The Freedom To Read Statement," the "Freedom To View Statement," and the "Diversity In Collection Development."

<https://www.newcastlede.gov/DocumentCenter/View/5649/Collection-Development-Policy-PDF>

#### **Public Version - Short:**

General:

We understand that recent Presidential Executive Orders may cause some concern and uncertainty. Please be assured that the \_\_\_\_\_ Libraries are collaborating closely with the Delaware Library Association and State Librarian to respond appropriately as the situation evolves so that we may provide accurate resources and information as it changes.

OR:

Specific:

Each year, publishers release new editions of classic reference resources to reflect changes. The goal of the \_\_\_\_\_ Library System is to provide the most current information possible. To balance annual costs with providing the most up-to-date material, libraries may purchase more expensive resources on a schedule of every 2-3 years and stagger them across the system. Less expensive reference resources may be purchased annually. Suggestions from the public for purchase or retention are welcomed and given serious consideration.

#### **Long Public Version: Print Resources Response**

Thank you for contacting the \_\_\_\_\_ Library. We appreciate you sharing your concerns regarding items in our collection, their currency, and information content.

(Library or system) is committed to providing the people of our community with library materials that meet their informational, educational, cultural, and recreational needs. To

this end, the Department of Community Services has established policies and procedures for developing and maintaining the collections of its libraries.

Suggestions from the public for purchase or retention are always welcomed and given serious consideration. The library may remove some material as demand for items declines; or as they become damaged, worn, or obsolete.

Geographic features and regions occasionally are renamed or changed. Each year, publishers release new editions of classic reference resources to reflect these changes. "The Gulf of Mexico is an international body of water. Some resources from outside the United States are not obliged to comply with executive orders and may still refer to the former name."

To balance the annual cost with providing the most up-to-date material, most libraries in the system purchase the more expensive resources on a schedule of every 2-3 years and stagger them across the system.

For example:

World Book Encyclopedia – 22 Volumes \$1,299

2024 Edition at Brandywine Hundred Library

2023 Edition at Claymont Public Library

Other resources are less expensive, such as The World Almanac or Book of Facts. These may be purchased annually as released by the publishers.

Please note, even new 2025 editions may be out-of-date by the time a book reaches the printing stage of publication. Publishers set their own timeline for releasing products. Online editions of resources may be more current.

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### **Long Version: Delaware Library Catalog: Search results /Subject Headings:**

Thank you for contacting the \_\_\_\_\_ Library. We welcome corrections or feedback on the Delaware Library Catalog and other resources.

While we adhere to professional cataloging standards, we recognize that additional information or a change in information regarding a library item may be warranted.

The Delaware Library Catalog uses the Library of Congress Authorities and Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH) to describe and refer to geographic locations. The Library of Congress subject headings are not locally determined. They are controlled by the Library of Congress. Congress controls the Library of Congress' funding, and the Librarian of Congress serves at the pleasure of the President of the United States.

Proposals to change a LCSH require supporting documentation often including definitions of the term, its variations in reference sources, its relationship to other existing subject headings, and evidence that the term is both historically accurate and the predominant term currently in use. Once approved, the Library of Congress Subject Authorities are updated weekly. As the Delaware Library Catalog updates authority records quarterly, some may temporarily be out of sync.

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**"Reference Resources for Responding to Questions: "what is the correct name," "process for renaming geographic regions/features" or "can a president change a geographic name?"**

The following list of links and resources, while not exhaustive, can be used as a starting point. Staff should be prepared to explore additional resources. The answer to the patron's question may be more complex than initially anticipated.

**Government Resources:**

**<https://www.usgs.gov/us-board-on-geographic-names>**

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

Communications concerning the BGN should be addressed to:

Executive Secretary  
U.S. Board on Geographic Names  
[BGNEXEC@usgs.gov](mailto:BGNEXEC@usgs.gov)

**USGS Summary Report for "Gulf of America"**

<https://edits.nationalmap.gov/apps/gaz-domestic/public/gaz-record/558730>

**Library of Congress Authorities can be searched here:** <https://authorities.loc.gov/cgi-bin/Pwebrecon.cgi?DB=local&PAGE=First>

Library of Congress Subject Headings – tentative Monthly List 12 LCSH 2 (February 13, 2025:

<https://classweb.org/tentative-subjects/2412a.html?loclr=eashal>

### **Articles - Changing Subject Headings:**

Article from Columbia University Libraries: “On Outdated and Harmful Language in Library of Congress Subject Headings”

<https://blogs.library.columbia.edu/rbml/2021/10/19/on-outdated-and-harmful-language-in-library-of-congress-subject-headings/>

Article: “Search Terms up for Debate: The politics and Purpose of Library Subject Headings” by Tina Gross, American Historical Association

<https://www.historians.org/perspectives-article/search-terms-up-for-debate-the-politics-and-purpose-of-library-subject-headings-march-2022/>

### **Articles - Renaming Geographic Features:**

Article: Scientific American, “How Trumps Order to Rename Gulf of Mexico and Denali works

<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/how-trumps-order-to-rename-gulf-of-mexico-and-denali-works/>

Article: AP News, “The White House says it’s a ‘fact’ that the Gulf of Mexico has been renamed. Is that right?”

<https://apnews.com/article/trump-gulf-of-mexico-bc438f4feca1234475a1adef99344da7>

Article: USA Today 2/10/25 “It’s Now Gulf of America.”

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2025/02/10/trump-gulf-of-america-name-change-effective/78128577007/>