



**STAND UP
TO JEWISH
HATE**

ROBERT K. KRAFT

June 16, 2023

Albany County Commission
ATTN: Mr. Pete Gosar, Chairman
525 E Grand Ave
Laramie, WY 82070

Dear Albany Lake Commission,

I respectfully write to you on behalf of The Foundation to Combat Antisemitism in support of a name change for Swastika Lake in Albany County, Wyoming.

While we appreciate the history and original meaning of the swastika symbol, it has unfortunately become synonymous with one of the greatest atrocities in human history after being appropriated by the German Nazi Party in 1920. The swastika became the most recognizable symbol of the Nazi party and in their propaganda. It appeared on the Nazi flag, on election posters, arm bands, medallions, and badges.

Following Nazi Germany's defeat in 1945, Nazi symbols, such as the swastika, were removed and outlawed in Europe by the allied forces. Today, many Western countries, including Germany, have criminalized public displays of the swastika and any language that distorts the Holocaust or glorifies the Nazi party. Although the name of Swastika Lake precedes the rise of the Nazi party, today the symbol as well as the word "swastika" serves as a traumatic and painful reminder of the Holocaust for Jewish people and all communities that were victims of the Holocaust including members of the LGBTQ+ community, people with physical disabilities, and the Roma and Sinti.

One of the arguments against changing the name of Swastika Lake is that it promotes education around the good and bad meanings of the word "Swastika." However, we believe there are many more efficient ways to educate the public around the history and origin of the word such as Holocaust education in schools and educational resources, with the help of reputable organizations, that can be made easily accessible to anyone who is interested in learning more.

Changing the name of Swastika Lake would not be the first time such a decision was made. Just two months ago, Mount Halo in Oregon was renamed from Swastika Mountain. This process is also not new to the state of Wyoming, as last year 43 geographical features were renamed to remove an offensive term for Native American women.

Today, antisemitism continues to grow. The number of antisemitic attacks in 2022 increased by 36%, reaching 3,697 incidents — a new high since the Anti-Defamation League began recording this information. The swastika is still being utilized by many white supremacist and antisemitic groups to glorify the Nazis and signal their hate toward the Jewish community. We urge you to stand beside the Jewish people and rename Swastika Lake so as not to contribute to the re-traumatization of many Jewish people and members of other communities across the United States who were victimized by the Nazi regime.

Thank you for your consideration of this very important change.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robert Kraft". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Robert K. Kraft
Chairman