

United States Senate

July 29, 2025

The Honorable Samuel B. Brown
Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs
National Cemetery Administration
810 Vermont Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Under Secretary Brown,

Congratulations on your confirmation as Under Secretary of Veterans Affairs for Memorial Affairs. I supported your nomination because of the vital role you now hold, and I remain committed to working together to ensure the Department meets its obligations to Nevada's veterans and their families.

I am writing to request an update on the status of the Elko National Cemetery. As you know, veterans in the Elko region currently face long travel times to access burial and memorial services, with no national or state veterans' cemeteries in the region. The Elko cemetery project is a crucial step toward closing that gap, and I appreciate the VA's continued partnership in bringing it to completion.

After hearing directly from Elko veterans, I introduced the Elko National Cemetery Act in March 2020 and again in 2021, with Senator Rosen's support, to authorize the necessary land transfer from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). I also submitted this legislation as an amendment to the FY21 NDAA. To support the effort, I sent a letter to BLM and the National Cemetery Administration (NCA), urging them to support the creation of the National Veterans Cemetery in Elko. In September 2020, I helped secure an agreement from the VA to acquire 15 acres for the cemetery from the city of Elko, with the finalized sale completed in August 2021.

This cemetery represents more than just a construction project. It is a lasting commitment to honor the lives and service of veterans in Elko and rural Nevada. I believe that transparency, coordination, and continued communication with the local community are essential as the project enters its next phase.

According to the most recent public update in October 2024, foundational site work has been underway, including grading, utility installation, and initial structural preparation¹. The VA previously indicated that first interments were expected to begin in late 2024, but no updated timeline has been shared publicly. Given this, I respectfully request updates on the following:

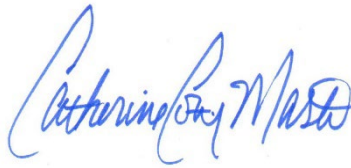
- What is the current timeline for completion and public access?

¹ Nevada Department of Veterans Services October 2024 report: veterans.nv.gov/october-2024-progress-continues-at-elko-national-cemetery.

- Have any delays, funding gaps, or permitting issues emerged since the last update?
- What is the current status of major construction elements, including the ornamental fencing piers, committal shelter, flag assembly area, columbarium, and memorial wall?
- What efforts are being made to engage with local and tribal stakeholders during this phase of development?
- What resources or federal support might be needed to ensure the project remains on schedule?

I look forward to your response and to working with your office to ensure this long-awaited site meets the needs of Nevada's veterans and their families. I also look forward to visiting the completed site and engaging with the veterans who helped make Nevada's first national cemetery possible.

Sincerely,



Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator