

Committee on Natural Resources

Rob Bishop Chairman
Mark-Up Memorandum

March 12, 2018

To: All Natural Resources Committee Members

From: Majority Committee Staff – Brandon Miller
Subcommittee on Federal Lands (x6-7736)

Mark-Up: **S. 35 (Sen. John Thune)**, A bill to transfer administrative jurisdiction over certain Bureau of Land Management land from the Secretary of the Interior to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for inclusion in the Black Hills National Cemetery, and for other purposes.
March 14, 2018, at 10:15 a.m.; 1324 Longworth House Office Building

S. 35, Black Hills National Cemetery Boundary Expansion Act

Summary of the Bill

S. 35, introduced by Senator John Thune (R-SD), would transfer administrative jurisdiction over certain Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land from the Department of the Interior (DOI) to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for inclusion in the Black Hills National Cemetery, located in South Dakota.

Cosponsors

Senator Mike Rounds [R-SD] and Senator Michael B. Enzi [R-WY]

Background

The Black Hills National Cemetery located in Sturgis, South Dakota opened in 1948 and covers approximately 100 acres of land managed by the National Cemetery Administration (NCA). The Cemetery houses a memorial carillon and a memorial to Korean War veterans that was dedicated in 2002. Medal of Honor Recipient, Sergeant Charles Windolph, among many other notable veterans, are buried in the Cemetery.¹

S. 35 permanently transfers jurisdictional authority of approximately 200 acres of undeveloped federal land from the BLM to the VA to expand the Cemetery. Currently, the Cemetery can only accommodate a finite number of additional burials; transferring the BLM land, which is adjacent to the Cemetery, to the VA will provide for burial space for hundreds of additional gravesites for future generations of veterans. Without the transfer, the NCA would be forced to close the Cemetery to further burials in the near future. Furthermore, without legislation to make the transfer permanent, federal law limits an administrative transfer of the land from BLM to the VA to only 20 years.

¹ [Black Hills National Cemetery Information Page](#). National Cemetery Administration.

Cost

A Congressional Budget Office cost estimate has not yet been completed for this bill.

Administration Position

The Administration's position is currently unknown.

Effect on Current Law (Ramseyer)

None.