



February 19, 2021

RESOLUTION FROM THE NEVADA STATE BOARD OF MUSEUMS AND HISTORY
REGARDING S.B. 87, A BILL BEFORE THE STATE OF NEVADA SENATE
GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

WHEREAS, the Nevada State Board of Museums and History established by state law (NRS 381.002), Now THEREFORE, asserts our unanimous and unequivocal opposition to S.B. 87, a bill under consideration by the Senate's Government Affairs Committee that seeks to transfer ownership and operation of the two buildings comprising the State of Nevada's East Ely Depot Museum to the City of Ely and a private non-profit entity, or its successor organization, and without consideration.

The Board of Museums and History, by state law, is responsible for overseeing the earned revenues and expenditures that enable Nevada's seven state museums to carry out their missions to preserve our state's heritage while sharing their remarkable stories with all Nevadans. Its members are appointed by the Governor in recognition of their interest and expertise in museums as well as professional expertise in history, museum practice, historic and prehistoric archaeology, architecture, architectural history, and historic preservation.

S.B. 87, introduced in the 81st General Session of the Nevada legislature on February 3, 2021 seeks to enable the City of Ely and a private organization, or its successor organization to take over invaluable historic assets that have been carefully and successfully stewarded in the public trust, and in accordance with state open meeting laws, and maintains public access for educational and research purposes by the State of Nevada, using taxpayer dollars, for 30 years. In that time, the State of Nevada has invested more than \$3,000,000 to preserve the museum's historic Depot and Freight Barn buildings, and hundreds of thousands more to employ museum professionals to maintain and improve these structures, to preserve the artifacts and documents they contain, and to develop and deliver educational interpretive programs about the vital history of Ely, White



Pine County, copper mining, and the impact of railroads on the development of the state to visitors, students, and the local community.

The state of Nevada has also invested millions of dollars to help with the restoration of the buildings and the marketing of the historic railroad site that is currently operated by the non-profit entity.

We reject any and all claims that the invaluable cultural and historic assets that comprise the Nevada State East Ely Depot Museum would be better stewarded by the City of Ely and a private entity, or its successor organization.

The Board of Museums and History stands with the Division of Museums and History in stating our absolute commitment to continuing the state's responsibility for these buildings and the museum and all the accompanying records and artifacts they comprise, and supporting the work of our dedicated State of Nevada employees who daily commit to sharing this vital history with the public.

We do not support SB 87 and its proposal to transfer the State of Nevada East Ely Depot Museum to the City of Ely and a private entity, or its successor organization, a community and an organization that currently has every opportunity and ability to partner productively with the State of Nevada as we continue to responsibly and professionally maintain, preserve, and interpret this museum's cultural and historic resources.

Passage of this bill would not only place these resources in immediate jeopardy but set a dangerous precedent for future private seizures of State property and historic assets.

- *Passed by unanimous vote of the Nevada State Board of Museums & History on February 19, 2021.*