

REGINA T. BOYCE  
Legislative District 43A  
Baltimore City

—  
Vice Chair  
Environment and  
Transportation Committee

Subcommittees  
Housing and Real Property

Chair  
Natural Resources, Agriculture  
and Open Space



Annapolis Office  
The Maryland House of Delegates  
6 Bladen Street, Room 251  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
410-841-3476 · 301-858-3476  
800-492-7122 Ext. 3476  
Fax 410-841-3295 · 301-858-3295  
Regina.Boyce@house.state.md.us

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

January 23, 2024

**RE: Sponsor Testimony on HB152 Department of the Environment - Study on Deathcare and Funeral Practices.**

Good afternoon Chair Pena-Melnyk, Vice Chair Cullison, and members of the Health and Government Operations Committee.

For the record, I am Delegate Regina T. Boyce, here to present on **HB0152 Department of the Environment - Study on Deathcare and Funeral Practices**. For historical reference, this bill was introduced in 2023 as HB869 and was amended by the committee to better reflect the Department's funding ability and to allow the Department to seek outside consultation. (These changes are reflected in the current version of the bill). In 2023, this bill passed the House and made it to 3rd reader in the Senate.

**HB152** requires the Department of the Environment, in consultation with the Maryland Department of Health, the Maryland Department of Labor, and institutions or organizations with expertise to conduct a study of the environmental and public health impacts of deathcare and funeral practices in the State submitting the study of the results by October 1, 2025.

Examples of deathcare and funeral practices include mausoleum burial, casket-only burial, natural or green burial, cremation, alkaline hydrolysis or water cremation, resomation or natural water cremation, and natural organic reduction. The study will review the health impact of these practices on air, land, and water; and the environmental impact of carrying out these practices such as energy, chemicals, and materials used in these practices.

This bill touches on a topic that is often not discussed: death. It is hard, even scary, to confront our mortality, even more, it is hard to think about the remains of loved ones or ourselves: how do you want your remains managed? There are many opinions about which deathcare and funeral practice is "best" or the most environmental. However, I would argue that generally, all the practices available have environmental and health impacts. Through this study, we can make the determination of which method we would like to use based on how much of an impact it will make. An individual can also decide which mitigation practice to use for practices that may have higher impacts to lower them.

Thank you for your time and consideration of HB152. I ask for a favorable report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Regina T. Boyce".

Regina T. Boyce