

HOUSE BILL 869

M3, J1, J2

3lr1839

By: **Delegate Boyce**

Introduced and read first time: February 9, 2023

Assigned to: Health and Government Operations

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Department of the Environment – Study on Deathcare and Funeral Practices**

3 FOR the purpose of requiring the Department of the Environment, in consultation with the
4 Maryland Department of Health and the Maryland Department of Labor, to conduct
5 a study of the environmental and public health impacts of deathcare and funeral
6 practices in the State; and generally relating to a study of deathcare and funeral
7 practices.

8 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
9 That:

10 (a) The Department of the Environment, in consultation with the Maryland
11 Department of Health and the Maryland Department of Labor, shall conduct a study of the
12 impacts of deathcare and funeral practices on the environment and public health of the
13 State.

14 (b) The study shall examine the environmental and public health impacts of the
15 following deathcare and funeral practices:

16 (1) casket and vault burial;

17 (2) mausoleum burial;

18 (3) casket only burial;

19 (4) natural or green burial;

20 (5) cremation;

21 (6) alkaline hydrolysis or water cremation;

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 (7) resomation or natural water cremation; and

2 (8) natural organic reduction.

3 (c) In examining the environmental impacts of the practices listed in subsection
4 (b) of this section, the study shall include an analysis of:

5 (1) the impact of each practice on:

6 (i) land use, including soil contamination;

7 (ii) water quality; and

8 (iii) air quality, including greenhouse gas emissions; and

9 (2) the environmental impact of the:

10 (i) energy required to carry out the practice;

11 (ii) chemicals used while carrying out the practice; and

12 (iii) materials required to carry out the practice.

13 (d) The study shall include an analysis of current and emerging practices that
14 may mitigate the impact of each of the practices listed in subsection (b) of this section on:

15 (1) land use and soil contamination;

16 (2) water quality;

17 (3) air quality;

18 (4) energy used;

19 (5) chemicals used; and

20 (6) materials used.

21 (e) The Department of the Environment may consult trade groups or
22 organizations and academic institutions to complete the study.

23 (f) On or before October 1, 2024, the Department of the Environment shall report
24 its findings and recommendations to the Governor and, in accordance with § 2–1257 of the
25 State Government Article, the General Assembly.

26 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July
27 1, 2023.