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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Testimony in Support of
House Bill 1060: Cremations - Natural Organic Reduction - Regulation
March 29th, 2023**

Madam Chair Griffith and esteemed members of the Finance Committee, it is my pleasure to come before you and offer testimony in favor of **House Bill 1060: Cremations - Natural Organic Reduction - Regulation**. This bill would add natural organic reduction (NOR) as another choice Marylanders would have after death, providing a sustainable alternative to cremation and burial.

NOR gently transforms human remains into soil in 4-6 weeks. The process uses large vessels to hold human remains which are combined with straw, wood chips, and other natural materials. The decomposing process creates heat of over 131F, which kills viruses, bacteria and pathogens. No chemicals are used.

With significant savings in fossil fuel emissions and land use, NOR addresses the increasing demand for more sustainable alternatives to traditional burial or cremation. Surveys show that 64% of Americans consistently express an interest in green burial options, indicating a need for sustainable alternatives.

Even before the process was first legalized, over 400 customers prepaid a funeral home in Washington State in the hopes it would be allowed eventually. Since then, six states have now legalized the process: Washington, Colorado, Oregon, Vermont, California and New York.

Maryland's funeral industry will have the ability to offer NOR as desired. With growing consumer interest in sustainable alternatives, this legislation simply provides another option for businesses to expand their scope of services (or not) and give people the final word on bodily autonomy.

This bill was amended in the House of Delegates in the following ways:

- To conform to the existing regulatory structure by allowing both the Office of Cemetery Oversight (OCO) and the Board of Morticians and Funeral Directors (BOMFD) to regulate
- To make the bill enabling by changing "shall" to "may"

HB 1060 passed the House of Delegates by a vote of 108-28.

I urge a favorable report on **House Bill 1060**. Thank you.