

The Honorable Joseline Peña-Melnyk
Health and Government Operations Committee
House Office Building, Room 241
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: **HB 869 -Department of the Environment - Study on Deathcare and Funeral Practices / SUPPORT / FAVORABLE**

Dear Chair Peña-Melnyk:

I am writing to support the legislation mentioned above that would commission a research study by the Department of the Environment to examine the environmental impacts of various deathcare and funerary practices.

About 50,000 residents die each year in our state and the final disposition of human remains in cemeteries, funeral homes and crematories creates an enduring test of our land use and environmental policies. Meanwhile, during my recent visit to a website run by the Green Burial Council, a non-profit deathcare education group, Maryland has only one certified “green” funeral home and two certified cemeteries.

In this light, the study envisioned by Delegate Boyce in HB 869 makes very good sense. Although the rates of cremation in Maryland have been growing steadily over the past 20 years, the variety of funeral practices in our state have not changed much for a long time, and the study may help us shape future regulations in order to improve our state’s environment, specifically our water quality and soil conditions.

You may also be aware that I have sponsored a deathcare bill, specifically, **HB 1060 – Cremation – Natural Organic Reduction - Regulation**. Like the laws that have passed in six other states, the purpose of my bill is to give families another, new, natural choice for the disposition of their loved ones by natural organic reduction. As this and other new methods of disposition continue to evolve, policy makers will benefit from having a baseline understanding of the relative environmental impact of each.

Thank you for the opportunity to express my support.

Sincerely,



Delegate Anne R. Kaiser