



**The Maryland Department of the Environment**  
**Secretary Serena McIlwain**

***House Bill 869***

***Department of the Environment - Study on Deathcare and Funeral Practices***

**Position:** SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS  
**Committee:** Health and Government Operations  
**Date:** March 07, 2023  
**From:** Gabrielle Leach

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The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE or the Department) **SUPPORTS WITH AMENDMENTS** House Bill 869. House Bill 869 would require MDE, in consultation with the Departments of Health and Labor, to conduct a study of the environmental and public health impacts of various types of deathcare and funeral practices, such as casket burial and cremation, in the State and report the findings to the Governor and General Assembly. Additionally, the bill allows for the Department to consult with subject matter experts, such as trade groups or organizations and academic institutions, to complete the study. MDE has worked with the House sponsor on the legislation and appreciates the consideration of our amendment.

While MDE may not have the subject matter expertise regarding funeral practices to lead this study, along with the required staff and resources, this concern is alleviated by HB 869's requirement that MDE coordinate with the Department of Health, which currently regulates and oversees the Board of Morticians & Funeral Directors in Maryland.

**Proposed Amendment**

On page 2, strike lines 3 through 20 in their entirety and substitute: "(c) For the purposes of this bill, "study" means a collection of data; documentation of critical information; and analysis and interpretation of that data and information, in accordance with suitable methodologies set by specific professional fields and academic disciplines."; in line 21 strike "(e)" and substitute "(d)"; and in line 23 strike "(f)" and substitute "(e)".

For the reasons detailed above, MDE urges a **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** report for HB 869.