

Dora Currea
3229 Klingle Rd NW, Washington DC 20008

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 1060:
Natural Organic Reduction

TO: Honorable Representative Kaiser, and Members of the House Health and Government Operations Committee

FROM: Dora Currea, District of Columbia resident and retiree

DATE: Monday, March 6, 2023

As a senior and retiree living in the DMV for over 3 decades, I welcome more sustainable options for disposal of human remains. As one ages, planning for end-of-life becomes critically important to minimize the burden and responsibilities for survivors. As I support family and friends in these end of life decisions, I also examine my own preferences and want to ensure that these end of life choices are consistent with my values.

As a resident of the metropolitan DMV area I strongly support House Bill 1060 as a means of expanding options for our bereaved families as they decide how to deal with human remains:

1. HB1060 amends current law by adding natural organic reduction (NOR) as another choice Maryland families would have after death, providing a sustainable alternative to cremation and burial. It will conform NOR to existing death care laws, enable appropriate regulation of the process and continue the tradition of giving Marylanders and those in the DMV the right to choose the method of mortuary disposition that's best for their family.
 - The primary benefit is the ability to offer consumers additional options after death.
 - With significant savings in fossil fuel emissions and land use, NOR addresses the increasing demand for more sustainable alternatives. It isn't the solution for climate change, but it is part of an effort that individuals can make to help our planet.
2. 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, and exceeds EPA requirements for heavy metals, which are stabilized in the soil, not volatilized. The resulting soil is safe for gardens, trees and scattering
3. Already six states have now legalized the process: Washington (2019), Colorado (2021), Oregon (2021), Vermont (2022), California (2022) and New York (2022). Research has proven NORs viability and market demand.

Therefore, Maryland should follow the lead of these states that have removed the obstacles to NOR, and thus expand the sustainable options for disposing of human remains.

I strongly urge a favorable report on House Bill 1060.

Respectfully submitted,
Dora Currea, District of Columbia resident and retiree