



Maryland State Funeral Directors Association, Inc.

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HB 1374 (2024)

Position of the MD State Funeral Directors Association: UNFAVORABLE

- This Bill would prohibit the construction and operation of crematories, is completely arbitrary and w/o any scientific basis, and would seriously harm both small businesses and consumers throughout the state.
- **The bill is completely arbitrary in its restrictions, and would prevent the state's environmental expert, MDE, from applying objective scientific criteria to the crematory permitting process.** That process is very extensive, is based on well-established scientific criteria developed over many years, and takes into account the individual circumstances of each crematory for a permit. The proponents of this legislation, in an apparent effort to stop one specific crematory from being constructed, are willing to discard years of objective, scientific permitting by MDE, and fail to offer any substantial support for their extreme and unfounded position.
- Consumers now choose cremation at a rate of about 52% in MD, and it is continuously increasing. By 2027, MD projections are 58%, and by 2045, 80%, based on projections from CANA, the Cremation Association of North America. **CANA further concludes that MD crematories are already at or near capacity.**
- **In response to increasing consumer demand for cremation , funeral establishments have invested, and continue to invest, substantial investment in new facilities.** These crematories are extensively regulated and permitted by the MD Department of the Environment.
- Consumers choose cremation because of personal choice, or because it is often less expensive than traditional burial.
- **This bill, if passed, will ensure that individuals who prefer cremation will pay substantially higher costs.** With increasing demand, and an inadequate supply of crematories to meet demand, consumers will face higher costs and storage charges as families wait for cremations for much longer periods,
- **At the same time, this bill would substantially harm funeral homes and crematories in MD.** Funeral homes have spent considerable sums to construct crematories, and to seek regulatory approval for new crematories, in response to consumer demand. Costs can easily run hundreds of thousands of dollars, for permitting, zoning approval, and the machinery itself, plus additional building space to house it. This bill will prohibit MDE from issuing renewals to many existing crematories, which will lead to shutdowns, when new, increased capacity is needed. **And persons who have justifiably spent tens of thousands of dollars**

and are in the process of seeking zoning and permitting would simply lose this money completely if this bill passes and they are prohibited from seeking approvals. Who will these individuals and businesses look to to be compensated for their losses?