

House Bill 1374

Environment – Crematory – Setback Requirements and Permits

Position: Unfavorable

Committee: Environmental and Transportation Committee of the Maryland General Assembly

Date: March 4, 2024

Written Testimony From: Jeffrey L. Gair, Sr., State of Maryland Licensed Funeral Director
practicing in Baltimore County since 1984

Dear Environmental and Transportation Committee,

I am providing written testimony today to oppose House Bill 1374 for the following reasons:

- This proposed bill does not take into consideration or respect funeral homes throughout our state that have already begun the application process for a crematory permit. These small business may have already invested substantial **time, effort and expense, not to mention taken irreversible steps prior to the introduction of this bill that would become untenable if this bill should pass.**
- This **proposed bill places additional cost of purchasing property** on the funeral homes, and **unduly restricts** the parameters under which the normal business operations may be undertaken by these small business, *vis-a-vis* the acquisition of suitably large real estate and building of infrastructure to accommodate the proposed limitations. This will create a **competitive disadvantage** for new crematories.
- The proposed bill would require many existing funeral homes to purchase satellite sites on which to build crematories, **preventing the expansion of business operations on-site, and increases transportation costs.**
- Pursuant to the second and third bullet points, these elevated operating and overhead costs (COGS) will only be passed on to the clients, forcing families to incur **additional expenses** in the care of their loved ones.
- This proposed bill will create a **monopoly** within our industry by preferentially benefiting those who already own and operate a crematory in our state.

Thank you for your consideration. I respectfully urge an **unfavorable** report on this bill.

Jeffrey L. Gair, Sr.