



Chairman Marc Korman
Vice Chair Regina T. Boyce
House Environment and Transportation Committee
Maryland General Assembly
Annapolis, MD 21401

March 4, 2024

Honorable Chair and Vice Chair and Members of the Committee,

I urgently write as the President of the Guilford Association, which includes 800 residences here in north Baltimore City.

I strongly request a favorable vote for House Bill 1374 that would require a 1,000-foot setback for new crematorium incinerators from homes, schools and daycare facilities. This prudent measure will ensure the availability of cremation services while protecting the health of nearby residents and vulnerable populations.

Crematoriums are incinerators but lack pollution monitors and emission controls and operate under outdated Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) regulations, which were last updated more than 30 years ago. Crematories emit mercury, heavy metals, hydrochloric acid, dioxins, furans, volatile organic compounds (VOCs), and small particulate matter into the air. MDE does not require stack tests or monitor emissions.

Because of the increased demand for cremation, which is much cheaper than burial, there is an increase in new crematorium incinerator proposals – including in the jurisdictions where there are already clusters (Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Frederick, Harford, and Prince George’s Counties).

Most disconcerting is that because funeral homes seek to add these crematories at their neighborhood-based funeral homes, we could be looking at a large increase in future years of these small incinerators located in residential neighborhoods – all over our state.

Here in north Baltimore’s York Road community, neighbors are united across a stark racial divide to fight a proposed new crematorium incinerator at a funeral home in a densely packed neighborhood with many homes 150 feet from this proposed new pollution source. The blocks directly around the funeral home, majority Black population, already have elevated levels of asthma, COPD and other diseases causally related to air pollution. This location is one of the worst places to place a new crematory incinerator.

Because of inadequate current regulations, we urge you to support this simple and reasonable fix to protect our neighborhoods and our health, especially the most vulnerable, to unnecessary, additional air pollution.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Emily Brennan', is placed below the word 'Sincerely,'.

Emily Brennan, President
Guilford Association, Inc.

cc: Members of the Committee