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**MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF LABOR OF INFORMATION ON HB724.**

TO: House Health & Government Operations Committee  
FROM: Deborah Rappazzo, Executive Director, Office of Cemetery Oversight  
DATE: February 18, 2025  
BILL: HB 724-Commission on Abandoned and Neglected Maryland  
Cemeteries - Establishment

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House Bill 724 establishes a new Commission on Abandoned and Neglected Maryland Cemeteries within the Office of Cemetery Oversight (“OCO”). The Commission will consist of 15 Board Members, each with specialties surrounding deathcare, preservation planning, development industry, knowledge of cemetery history, architecture, archaeology, and a consumer in which all will be appointed by the Director of OCO. They will be charged with establishing standard definitions for neglected and abandoned cemeteries, support the development of a statewide inventory of cemeteries and burial sites in Maryland, as well as develop recommendations relating to historical cemeteries. Furthermore, this new Commission will be required to submit an annual report to the Governor and the General Assembly by December 1 each year.

The OCO is a small self-funded unit. When fully staffed, the OCO consists of a total of three full-time employees and one part-time employee. Currently, the OCO is advised by a 12-member Advisory council with decades of deathcare experience. Due to OCO’s limited staffing, the OCO will have to increase staff to handle the new duties created by House Bill 724. Furthermore, since the OCO is a self-funded unit, it will be challenging for the OCO to absorb the additional staffing and legal expenses that will be necessary to fulfill the goals of this new Commission.

For questions, please contact Andrew Fulginiti, at **[Andrew.Fulginiti@maryland.gov](mailto:Andrew.Fulginiti@maryland.gov)**

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