



**The Maryland Department of the Environment**  
**Secretary Serena McIlwain**

***House Bill 711***

***Office of Cemetery Oversight - Study of Deathcare and Funeral Practices***

**Position:** Informational  
**Committee:** Health and Government Operations  
**Date:** February 18, 2025  
**From:** Alex Butler, Deputy Director of Government Relations

---

The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) offers the following **INFORMATIONAL** testimony on HB 711.

**Bill Summary**

House Bill 711 would require the Office of Cemetery Oversight (Office) under the Maryland Department of Labor, in consultation with the Maryland Department of Health, Maryland Department of Labor, and the Maryland Department of Environment (MDE), to conduct a comprehensive study on the environmental and public health impacts of death care and funeral practices in Maryland.

**Position Rationale**

As proposed, HB 711 would require MDE to consult with the Office on:

- (1) MDE's permitting and licensure processes for facilities and professionals engaged in death care;
- (2) the environmental impacts of each specific death care and funeral practice; and
- (3) related public health and equity issues.

Given the comprehensive nature of the study, the need for scientific analysis, the requirement for stakeholder engagement, and a challenging budgetary landscape for the Department and the State, MDE recommends that the interim report deadline be extended from December 1, 2025, to September 1, 2026. This will better allow agencies time to collect and analyze data before making preliminary recommendations. MDE would also recommend moving the final report deadline from July 1, 2026 to at least Dec 31, 2026, providing additional time for comprehensive policy analysis, environmental testing, and regulatory review.

MDE respectfully requests the Committee consider this **INFORMATIONAL** testimony on HB 711.