



Funeral Consumers Alliance of Maryland and Environs

Protecting a consumer's right to a meaningful, dignified, and affordable funeral.

House Health Committee, Maryland General Assembly

Testimony on: HB0698 “State Board of Morticians and Funeral Directors – Board Operations and Regulation of Crematories and Reduction Facilities”

Position: Support with amendment Hearing date: February 18, 2026

The Funeral Consumers Alliance of Maryland and Environs (FCAME) strongly supports HB0698.

It makes good sense to combine regulatory oversight of all crematories, including alkaline hydrolysis and reduction facilities, under one regulatory body, and to make that body the same one that supervises funeral establishments.

However, recent failure on the part of the Board of Morticians to adequately protect the public interest came to light in January 2025 when it was discovered that a crematory in White Plains had been allowed to continue operations until that time despite multiple complaints and evidence of improper practices since 2017. The reforms detailed in this bill should ensure that the Board has the resources, the processes, and the supervision needed to do the job of inspecting and regulating all funeral establishments, including more expedient resolution of serious complaints.

The one amendment FCAME requests is clarification of the regulation 7-205 (c) (2) (I) on page 28, line 18, of the bill that states: “REQUIRE A REGISTERED REDUCTION OPERATOR TO NOTIFY THE AUTHORIZING AGENT IN WRITING AND BEFORE INITIATING NATURAL ORGANIC REDUCTION THAT A PERSON WHO USES OR DISPOSES OF SOIL REMAINS IS IN VIOLATION OF § 5-514 OF THE HEALTH – GENERAL ARTICLE;” This statement lacks clarity and would be improved by stating which uses of soil remains specifically are in violation of the cited Maryland code.

FCAME also strongly supports the creation of a code of ethics for operation of a crematory or reduction facility.

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FCAME is the volunteer-run, regional chapter of the non-profit Funeral Consumers Alliance (FCA), the oldest and largest consumer protection organization focused solely on guarding the rights (and wallets) of grieving consumers. FCA and its chapters take no money from the death care industry or government.

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