

HB 2574 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY**Carrier:** Rep. Marsh**House Committee On Business and Labor****Action Date:** 03/15/21**Action:** Do pass with amendments. (Printed A-Eng.)**Vote:** 11-0-0-0**Yeas:** 11 - Bonham, Boshart Davis, Breese-Iverson, Bynum, Clem, Evans, Fahey, Grayber, Holvey, Post, Witt**Fiscal:** Has minimal fiscal impact**Revenue:** No revenue impact**Prepared By:** Jan Nordlund, LPRO Analyst**Meeting Dates:** 3/1, 3/15**WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:**

Clarifies permissibility of disposition of human bodies by alternative authorized processes that include alkaline hydrolysis and natural organic reduction. Clarifies authority of Mortuary and Cemetery Board to license and regulate alternative disposition facilities. Provides that lands, buildings, and personal property of alternative disposition facilities are granted the same property tax exemptions granted to crematories. Becomes operative July 1, 2022.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Demand for natural organic reduction as alternative to cremation or burial
- Washington State's recent allowance of natural organic reduction
- Public health concerns
- Licensing requirement to operate facility that will provide natural organic reduction

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

Modifies definition of alternative disposition facility. Restores deleted references to cremation and variations of the word; adds "reduction" and variations of the word when cremation is referenced. Provides that lands, buildings, and personal property of alternative disposition facilities are granted the same property tax exemptions granted to crematories.

BACKGROUND:

Oregon statutes generally contemplate the disposition of human remains either through cremation or leaving the body whole for burial or entombment. Cremation uses direct flame and heat to reduce remains to bone fragments. Crematories are licensed and regulated by the Oregon Mortuary and Cemetery Board. Alternative methods to reduce human remains have been developed, but are not expressly allowed in Oregon. Two such alternative methods are gaining interest: hydrolysis and natural organic reduction. Hydrolysis uses water, pressure, relatively lower heat than cremation, and an alkaline agent to reduce the human remains to bone fragments and essential elements. Natural organic reduction uses a contained environment to which straw, wood chips, and other natural materials are added to convert the human remains to soil.

House Bill 2574 A clarifies that it is permissible that disposition of remains occur through alternative authorized processes such as hydrolysis, natural organic reduction, and any other process approved by the Mortuary and Cemetery Board. The measure requires practitioners to obtain a certificate of authority from the Board in order to operate an alternative disposition facility.