

Dear Chair Holvey and Members of the Committee,

I, Allison Patrick, am pleased to offer my support for HB 2574. This legislation would allow a natural disposition of remains by natural organic reduction (NOR), gently converting human remains into soil in an accelerated process.

I am the solo parent of 5, currently working 2 jobs just to make ends meet. Every option available to me in my area is too expensive and not environmentally friendly enough for my taste, even with a payment plan. I am also an Environmental Science major, with just over a year left on my B.S.

If I wanted to be cremated, my impact on my community and world after I've departed would equal to about 534.6 pounds of carbon dioxide emissions. (1). "A mature tree absorbs carbon at a rate of 48 pounds per year" (2). Basic math warrants that: 534.6 (average pounds of carbon dioxide emissions from a cremation) divided by 48 (average amount of carbon dioxide a mature tree can absorb in a year)= 11.125 (number of mature trees it would take, for an entire year, to absorb the amount of carbon dioxide I created, when already deceased).

If I chose traditional burial, the impact could be even greater. "Typically, embalming fluid contains a mixture of formaldehyde, glutaraldehyde, methanol, and other solvents." "Formaldehyde is a naturally occurring organic compound with the formula CH₂O. It is highly toxic to humans and animals, regardless of method of intake. Embalming fluids that use formaldehyde are not only expensive and terrible for the environment, but are also linked to cancer." (3). Should my body ever be exhumed and consumed by animals, they will likely die, and then their bodies will be contaminated, and whomever eats them will also like be contaminated/die. Aside from that, caskets cost the environment, on average, 1500-2000 pounds of carbon dioxide. (4). I've considered "natural" burial in a wicker casket, no embalming, but that would still create 1000 pounds of carbon dioxide, due to the production and manufacturing of the casket, plus the "cost" of shipping the casket. (4).

HB 2574 gives everyone access to more options. Safer and better options for disposing of their/their loved one's remains. Using alkaline hydrolysis would only emit one-fifth the amount of carbon dioxide that traditional cremation emits. (5). Additionally, organic composting would only produce one-eighth the amount of traditional burial. (6).

We need better options. We need more environmentally-friendly options. I want my deceased body to have as little an impact on the world as possible. We already are creating so much stress on our environment and the people within it due to chemicals and carbon dioxide emissions, but this is something we can do to fix one part of that: the process of disposing of a deceased body.

For the above reasons, I ask for your support on this important legislation.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Allison Patrick

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Resources-

1. <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/science/article/is-cremation-environmentally-friendly-heres-the-science>
2. <http://www.tenmilliontrees.org/trees/>
3. <https://www.usurnsonline.com/burial/embalming-alternatives-avoid-formaldehyde/>
4. <https://www.northwoodscasket.com/northwoodscasket/2014/10/18/the-american-way-of-death-and-sustainability-10-troubling-facts>
5. <https://www.greenmatters.com/p/eco-friendly-burial-methods>
6. <https://recompose.life/our-model/>