

Submitter: Aaron Adams
On Behalf Of: Myself and Deschutes Crematorium
Committee: House Committee On Climate, Energy, and Environment
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3729

Today I wright in support of this bill as a Funeral Service Practitioner, Embalmer and Certified Cremationist here in Oregon who is also believes in our need to care for our environment by making decisions that are science and fact based at are good for the generations that follow in the future.

As of last year, Oregon became the last state in the nation to require crematories to operate at 1800°F. Pennsylvania was the only other state, and they enacted legislation in 2024 lowering their requirement down to 1600°F

The Oregon Funeral Directors Association (OFDA) has been collaborating with the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to amend Oregon Administrative Rule 340-230-0210 (1). This amendment seeks to lower the required crematory operating temperatures from 1800°F to the national standard of 1600°F during the cremation process. Such a change would significantly benefit the environment, communities near crematories, and the funeral service industry.

Key Benefits of Lowering Crematory Operating Temperatures:

A 22% reduction in natural gas usage per cremation, cutting over 1,300 metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions annually in Oregon.

Improved air quality, with reduced particulate matter and visible emissions events.

Consumers will benefit by lowering natural gas costs for crematories.

Enhanced employee safety for crematory technicians.

A report released in May 2024 by Matthews Environmental Solutions, an industry leading manufacturer of crematories, analyzed 1.4 million cremations and confirmed that higher operating temperatures did not reduce emissions but instead extended cremation times and increased natural gas consumption.

Unfortunately, despite the compelling evidence and the DEQ's receptiveness to this proposal, their timeline for reviewing this matter and implementing change exceeds two years, with rulemaking unlikely to begin before 2026. This delay is unacceptable, given the pressing environmental and operational considerations.

We are encouraged to share that Representative McIntire has taken an interest in this initiative, successfully bringing it to committee and drafting a bill for legislative review. Because this initiative originates in Lane County, we believed it important to keep you informed and to respectfully request your support.

The OFDA and its members are firm in their belief that this minor change to Oregon's administrative rules can provide significant environmental benefits and garner bipartisan support. It is a straightforward, sensible approach to climate action that would positively impact Oregonians, the environment, and the funeral services industry. Additionally, there is no known oppositions to HB-3729 and this bill does not have a funding requirement.

We greatly appreciate your attention to this matter. Thank you for your leadership and your commitment to Oregon's environmental and legislative priorities.

Kind regards,

Aaron J. Adams

FSP/E, Certified Cremationist