

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1700

As Reported by House Committee On:
Business & Financial Services

Title: An act relating to cremation by biochemical hydrolysis.

Brief Description: Concerning cremation by biochemical hydrolysis.

Sponsors: Representatives McBride, Jinkins, Peterson and Fitzgibbon.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Business & Financial Services: 2/7/17, 2/8/17 [DP], 1/16/18, 1/17/18 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Adds alkaline hydrolysis as an approved final disposition of a deceased person's body.
- Updates various statutes to include alkaline hydrolysis, hydrolyzed human remains, and hydrolysis facilities in the regulation of handling, storing, and scattering human remains.
- Adds licensing and inspection regulations for hydrolysis facilities.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS & FINANCIAL SERVICES

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Kirby, Chair; Reeves, Vice Chair; Vick, Ranking Minority Member; Walsh, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bergquist, Blake, Jenkin, McCabe, Santos and Stanford.

Staff: Robbi Kesler (786-7153).

Background:

The Department of Licensing (Department) regulates certain professions and businesses, including funeral directors, embalmers, funeral establishments, cemeteries, and crematories.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

There are laws related to how human remains may be handled, stored, and disposed of. In instances where the deceased human body is cremated, there are regulations related to scattering the cremated human remains. Facilities, including crematories, that perform services related to the final disposition of human remains are licensed by the Department and may be inspected.

Summary of Bill:

Alkaline hydrolysis is defined as the reduction of human remains to bone fragments and essential elements using heat, pressure, water, and alkaline substances. Alkaline hydrolysis is included as an allowed final disposition of a deceased person's body.

Alkaline hydrolysis facilities must be licensed and may be inspected by the Department of Licensing.

Various statutes governing the final disposition of human remains, handling and scattering of the reduced remains, and operation of a facility that offers these services are amended to include alkaline hydrolysis, hydrolyzed human remains, and hydrolysis facilities. Generally, the amendments include alkaline hydrolysis and the related terms in a similar manner to cremation terms.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This is a tough subject, but important because it adds another option for the disposition of human remains. This process produces less emissions and doesn't offer toxic gases to the atmosphere. Human remains are handled in the same manner as cremation. Alkaline hydrolysis is already offered in several other states, including Oregon. This is a dignified process and will simply be another choice for individuals and families.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative McBride, prime sponsor.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.