

---

**Consumer Protection & Business  
Committee**

---

**ESSB 5001**

**Brief Description:** Concerning human remains.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Labor & Commerce (originally sponsored by Senators Pedersen, King, Rivers, Keiser, Palumbo, Saldaña, Lias, Carlyle, Conway, Kuderer and Van De Wege).

**Brief Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill**

- Adds alkaline hydrolysis and natural organic reduction as approved means of final disposition of a deceased person's body.
- Updates various statutes to replace cremation with reduction, to include alkaline hydrolysis and natural organic reduction in the regulation of handling, storing, and scattering human remains.
- Adds licensing regulations for alkaline hydrolysis and natural organic reduction facilities.

**Hearing Date:** 2/19/19

**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.

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.

---

*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.*

**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.

"Natural organic composition" is defined as contained, accelerated conversion of human remains to soil.

"Natural organic composition facility" means a crematory, an alkaline hydrolysis facility, or a recomposition facility. Reduction facilities must obtain a license or endorsement from the Department.

Various statutes governing the final disposition of human remains, handling and scattering of the cremated remains, and operation of a facility that offers these services are amended to "reduce/reduced/reduction" as more general terms which include cremation, alkaline hydrolysis, or recomposition. Generally, the amendments include reduction and the related terms in a similar manner to the laws related to cremation.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect May 1, 2020.