



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 5354
AN ACT CONCERNING TERRAMATION
March 7, 2024

To: Co-Chairs Sen. Lopes and Rep. Gresko, Vice Chairs Sen. Hochadel and Rep. Palm, Ranking Members Sen. Harding and Rep. Callahan, and Distinguished Members of the Environment Committee

From: Lori Brown, Executive Director, CT League of Conservation Voters

Thank you for the opportunity to comment **IN SUPPORT of HB 5354**. There are important reasons why NATURAL ORGANIC REDUCTION should be permitted in our state for environmental, personal, and economic reasons.

The practice of **natural body composting**, also known as Terramation, involves washing the corpses, wrapping them in natural linen shrouds, and covering them with flowers, wood chips, and other natural materials.

The positive effects on the environment are significant:

- Natural Organic Reduction has a lower carbon footprint because it does not produce CO₂ emissions from cremation. In contrast, each **cremation can emit 564 lbs. of carbon dioxide** due to the burning of natural gas.
- There would be no **hazardous embalming chemicals** released into the environment that would contaminate our soil, air, and water.
- Traditional burial practices in the U.S. include the use of wood or metal caskets, concrete vaults, headstones, grave liners, and other items. The U.S. uses **four million acres of woods just for caskets** each year. Terramation produces **only** soil - which can be used in gardens or other natural environments.

Many people do not want their last impact on earth to be pollution, wasted land, or cost their family a significant amount of money. They want to give back to the environment through Natural Organic Reduction and provide useful soil to go back into the earth. Without this option in their home state of CT, their remains would have to be shipped at great expense to another state that allows this natural burial process.

The opposition to this end-of-life option is mostly based on religious concerns and historic racial injustices regarding burials. But this is entirely optional and with many guardrails to address concerns about the process.

Terramation is being done in several other states and it was **supported last year by CT's funeral industry as a choice that more and more people are asking for.**

CTLCV urges the committee to **SUPPORT HB 5354** to provide Connecticut residents with the option to choose their final resting place through this completely natural process.

Thank you for considering these comments.

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