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Testimony introducing LD 1223: “An Act To Allow Crematories Using Chemical Dissolution Processes in Facilities Other Than Cemeteries”

Good afternoon Senator Curry, Representative Roberts, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business. I am Senator Anne Carney, representing District 29, the community of South Portland, Cape Elizabeth, and part of Scarborough.

I am here today to present LD 1223, “An Act To Allow Crematories Using Chemical Dissolution Processes in Facilities Other Than Cemeteries.” The impetus for this bill came from a constituent, Kathleen Blackburn, who owns a water-based crematorium business. Her business uses a process called known as alkaline hydrolysis (or aquamation), to provide respectful, dignified and environmentally sound end of life service for beloved dogs, cats and other pets that have passed away. The business is Aquamation Services of Maine, LLC.

More than a dozen states allow use of aquamation for people as well as pets, and LD 1223 is about making this respectful, dignified and environmentally sound end of life service available to the people of Maine.

Maine’s current statutes do not take into account this modern, less expensive and more environmentally beneficial cremation process as an alternative to incinerating human remains. Alkaline hydrolysis uses water, alkaline chemicals, heat, and sometimes pressure and agitation, to accelerate natural decomposition, leaving bone fragments and a neutral liquid. Allowing alkaline hydrolysis as an alternative to flame cremation for people as well as pets would enable Aquamation Services of Maine and other businesses throughout our state to offer this alternative process.

[LD 1223](#) modernizes Maine law by removing a barrier to alkaline hydrolysis. Currently a crematory must be in a cemetery that is at least 20 acres in size and has been in existence and used for burial for at least 2 years. [13 MRSA §1341\(1\)](#). Section 1 of the bill exempts from this requirement a crematory that exclusively uses a chemical dissolution process to dissolve human remains and operates in accordance with State Board of Funeral Service rules. In essence, this bill allows operators to work off the grounds of a cemetery in a commercial or industrial area. Section 2 gives the State Board of Funeral Service rulemaking authority. Section 3 directs the

State Board of Funeral Service to update its rules to reflect the unique needs of chemical dissolution operations and report back to this committee on the rulemaking process by December 1, 2021.

Thank you for your consideration. I'm happy to answer any questions you may have. Ms. Blackburn and her son Cade, who is her business partner, are here today and can better respond to your technical questions about aquamation.