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LD 1223 An Act to Allow Crematories Using Chemical Dissolution Processes in Facilities Other Than Cemeteries

Sponsor Senator Anne Carney

Maine Funeral Directors Association

Testimony in Opposition

Good Afternoon Senator Curry, Representative Roberts and members of the Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business Committee. My name is Mike Martel, I am a resident of Auburn, and I am here today as President of the Maine Funeral Directors Association.

The MFDA is a statewide organization of licensed funeral directors started over 100 years ago. We currently have over 100 members statewide. Our mission is to advance the highest level of ethical and professional standards in funeral service for the families we serve.

MFDA opposes this bill for two distinct reasons:

- One centers on the definition of cremation
- The public health and environmental regulation of the chemical dissolution process.

Funeral practice, including the disposition of human remains, is heavily regulated in Maine for very good reasons. Most of these reasons focus on consumer protection, environmental protection, public health, and public safety.

The Definition of Cremation.

The practice of cremation is readily understood by the public: the disposition of the body through flame and intense heat. However, in 2009 the definition of cremation was expanded to include “liquid cremation”. This term is inaccurate and misleading slang not used in our profession. As a matter of **consumer awareness and protection** we strongly recommend that the accurate term “resomation” be used which is submerging the dead body in a strong base compound at high pressure and temperature until it dissolves.

Regulation of the Resomation Process.

We ask that the committee require that this process for the disposition of human remains be as heavily regulated as the other means of disposition allowed under Maine law. Specifically, we ask that any law that were to pass address the following issues:

- Operator and employee protection and training such as OSHA requirements for operators and employees
- Environmental regulations for water treatment concerns and disposal of remaining waste products that may be released into the groundwater in accordance with DEP standards.
- medical examiner sign off
- compliance with Vital Statistics and Records keeping
- add other requirements this unique process includes

And finally, we ask that the rules adopted by the State Board of Funeral Service come back to this committee as Substantive Rules rather than routine technical.

Thank you for this opportunity to appear before you today and I will try and answer any questions you may have.