

Dear Chair Fagan and members of the House Consumer Protection and Govt. Effectiveness Committee,

For the record my name is Wally Ordeman and I represent the Oregon Funeral Directors Association (OFDA). The OFDA has significant concerns with much of the language in HB 3056 that appears to severely prohibit or limit the construction of future crematoriums in Oregon.

While not every funeral home in Oregon operates a crematory, every funeral home in Oregon offers cremation. Oregon has one of the highest cremation rates in the country, with between 65% and 80% of all Oregonians opting for cremation. That may seem like a wide variation, but cremation rates vary depending on regional, cultural, and religious preferences throughout the state. That being said, there are likely to be more crematories added within the State of Oregon in the next several years.

The language of HB 3056 appears to paint the state's death care industry with one big brush, and doesn't appear to take science, or the authority of the DEQ and EPA, who currently monitor crematory installation and processes, into consideration at all. We also aren't convinced that there exists a portion of any community where children don't or can't "congregate." The reference to children appears to be inflammatory. If there's a risk, why not adults?

Our last concern, for the moment, is that this places an undue and impossible burden on the Oregon Mortuary and Cemetery Board (OMCB). Proximity to schools and where children might congregate are outside of the scope of what the State currently asks of the OMCB. And we find it unlikely that rulemaking could solve this burden. The OMCB is charged with educating the profession and protecting the citizens of our state. We don't believe that this bill does either of those. BUT, while the OFDA strongly opposes HB 3056, we would like to suggest a workgroup or task force to look at rulemaking for crematory training and/or operator training/certification, so that crematories and communities can coexist with confidence, and that deceased Oregonians are cared for in the manner and locations that THEY have chosen.

Wally Ordeman
Representing the Oregon Funeral Directors Association
girth@proaxis.com
541-979-8931