



EANY SUPPORTS

Eco-Friendly Ending



Memo #67

[S.5535 \(Comrie, et al.\)](#)

[A.382 \(Paulin, et al.\)](#)

Explanation:

This legislation establishes a program to allow for natural organic reduction as an alternative to cemetery burial or cremation, which are currently the two options for processing human remains after death in New York. Cemetery burial and cremation are both resource-intensive and have undesirable environmental impacts.

Cemeteries take up limited land space and are often a source of soil and groundwater pollution resultant from the embalming process which uses toxic chemicals, such as formaldehyde. Additionally, the construction of caskets is extremely resource intensive. In the United States [30 million feet of casket wood](#) 90,000 tons of steel, and 1.6 million tons of concrete are used to make caskets each year. Cremation is not much better for the environment, as 28 gallons of fuel are required for a single cremation, releasing 540 pounds of carbon dioxide into the air, along with other dangerous chemicals like monoxide and mercury.

Natural organic reduction provides an after-death option that is safe, more natural and better for our climate, air, and water sources. Natural organic reduction uses a composting process where microbes and oxygen gently convert the human remains into soil. Human remains are placed in specially designed vessels along with wood chips, alfalfa and straw where the remains will decompose over a period of weeks. Natural organic reduction is a much more environmentally friendly after death option, [estimated to save a metric ton of carbon dioxide](#) when chosen over cremation or burial. Natural organic reduction became [legal in Washington state in 2019](#), and New Yorkers should also have the option to choose a more natural and climate friendly after death option.

Summary:

This legislation amends Article 15 of the not-for profit corporation law to allow for the option of natural organic reduction after death. Natural organic reduction facilities would be required to comply with the same standards as crematories.