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State of Minnesota

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NINETY-THIRD SESSION

H. F. No. 2605

03/06/2023 Authored by Huot and Dotseth
The bill was read for the first time and referred to the Committee on Health Finance and Policy

1.1 A bill for an act
1.2 relating to health; establishing a moratorium on green burials in certain locations;
1.3 requiring a study.

1.4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

1.5 Section 1. MORATORIUM ON GREEN BURIALS; STUDY.

1.6 Subdivision 1. Definition. For purposes of this section, "green burial" means a burial
1.7 of a dead human body in a manner that minimizes environmental impact and does not inhibit
1.8 decomposition of the body by using practices that include at least the following:

1.9 (1) the human body is not embalmed prior to burial or is embalmed only with nontoxic
1.10 chemicals;

1.11 (2) a biodegradable casket or shroud is used for burial; and

1.12 (3) the casket or shroud holding the human body is not placed in an outer burial container
1.13 when buried.

1.14 Subd. 2. Moratorium. Between July 1, 2023, and July 1, 2025, a green burial shall not
1.15 be performed in this state unless the green burial is performed in a cemetery that permits
1.16 green burials and at which green burials are permitted by any applicable ordinances or
1.17 regulations.

1.18 Subd. 3. Study and report. (a) The commissioner of health shall study the environmental
1.19 and health impacts of green burials and develop recommendations for the performance of
1.20 green burials to prevent environmental harm, including contamination of groundwater and
1.21 surface water, and to protect the health of workers performing green burials, mourners, and
1.22 the public. The study and recommendations may address topics that include:

- 2.1 (1) the siting of locations where green burials are permitted;
- 2.2 (2) the minimum distance a green burial location must have from groundwater, surface
- 2.3 water, and drinking water;
- 2.4 (3) the minimum depth at which a body buried via green burial must be buried, the
- 2.5 minimum soil depth below the body, and the minimum soil depth covering the body;
- 2.6 (4) the maximum density of green burial interments in a green burial location;
- 2.7 (5) procedures used by individuals who come in direct contact with a body awaiting
- 2.8 green burial to minimize the risk of infectious disease transmission from the body;
- 2.9 (6) methods to temporarily inhibit decomposition of an unembalmed body awaiting
- 2.10 green burial; and
- 2.11 (7) the time period within which an unembalmed body awaiting green burial must be
- 2.12 buried or held in a manner that delays decomposition.
- 2.13 (b) The commissioner shall submit the study and recommendations, including any
- 2.14 statutory changes needed to implement the recommendations, to the chairs and ranking
- 2.15 minority members of the legislative committees with jurisdiction over health and the
- 2.16 environment by February 1, 2025.