

Jan 30, 2015

TO THE COMMITTEE:

Thank you for allowing testimony from afar. I won't be back to Vermont until 2/13 and I am very interested in the natural burial bill. I testified at the hearing several years ago and was disappointed that it didn't move forward.

I have worked with hospice programs for almost 20 years. I moved to Middlebury in 2003 and immediately began working as a Hospice Volunteer with Addison County Hospice Volunteer Services. When HVS considered creating a hospice chorus I helped start what is now called Wellspring, a group that sings to dying people, the second hospice chore in Vermont (there are now over a dozen). I trained with Beth Knox in counseling families interested in home funeral and do it yourself death care. I attended the first couple of national meetings of the Home Funeral Alliance and I am often called for information regarding natural or green burial.

More and more, as we are aware of the environmental degradation caused by our way of living on Planet Earth, we desire our last act--death care--to have a smaller footprint. Burial with embalming and a steel or concrete value, or even cremation (fossil fuel), has a large carbon footprint. Passing this natural burial bill would allow organizations such as the Watershed Center and Metta Earth Institute to establish a natural burial ground--as well as private citizens who have expressed such an interest to me--to create this much lower carbon footprint alternative.

I don't see a lot of reason not to pass this legislation. Thank you again.

Ron Slabaugh, Middlebury
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