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From: **PSSG Correspondence PSSG:EX** <PSSG.Correspondence@gov.bc.ca>

Date: Fri, Apr 16, 2021 at 11:48 AM (referenced by BCWI as April 21, 2021)

Subject: 615927

To: bcwi@bcwi.ca <bcwi@bcwi.ca>

Cc: OfficeofthePremier, Office PREM:EX <Premier@gov.bc.ca>, Minister, ENV ENV:EX <ENV.Minister@gov.bc.ca>

Brenda Devauld

President

British Columbia Women's Institute

Email: bcwi@bcwi.ca

Dear Brenda Devauld:

I am writing in response to your February 24, 2021 e-mail and letter addressed to the Honourable George Heyman, Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy as well as your April 1, 2021 email addressed to me. I am responding as the Minister responsible for consumer protection policy and legislation in British Columbia, which includes funeral services laws.

I want to acknowledge that the current unprecedented events happening this last year as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic have been difficult for all British Columbians. Especially saddening is the loss of life from the virus and impact of the opioid overdose crisis.

Increasing cremation capacity in British Columbia through new technologies, such as Alkaline Hydrolysis, will require amendments to the *Cremation, Interment and Funeral Services Act* (CIFSA), which governs the handling and disposition of human remains in the province. CIFSA currently permits disposition only by burial of human remains or cremated remains, entombment of human remains, or inurnment of cremated remains. Disposition of human remains through other methods, such as alkaline hydrolysis, are not currently permitted.

The Province fully supports the development and use of technology that reduces our environmental footprint and while we recognize that alkaline hydrolysis has been implemented in other jurisdictions the Province must conduct its own due diligence. This method of cremation and the associated technology has implications that are broader than the *Cremation, Internment and Funeral Services Act*. In order to pursue such changes, additional research, public policy analysis and stakeholder engagement is required on topics that include environmental, local government zoning, worker safety, operator training, respectful handling of human remains, health and consumer protection considerations.

The ministry is contemplating future changes to CIFSA; however, this work is being prioritized in relation to other government policy initiatives and is not moving forward at this time. If changes to CIFSA become actively considered, the ministry will solicit input from a broad range of stakeholders. In the meantime, we will continue to monitor interest in the use of alkaline hydrolysis throughout the industry and are monitoring the experience of other jurisdictions that have implemented this form of cremation.

Thank you for writing.

Sincerely,

Mike Farnworth

Minister of Public Safety

and Solicitor General

pc: The Honourable John Horgan

The Honourable George Heyman
