

[Second Reprint]

SENATE, No. 3007

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

221st LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MARCH 18, 2024

Sponsored by:

Senator JOSEPH F. VITALE

District 19 (Middlesex)

Senator JON M. BRAMNICK

District 21 (Middlesex, Morris, Somerset and Union)

SYNOPSIS

Allows for natural organic reduction and controlled supervised decomposition of human remains.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As reported by the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee on June 26, 2025, with amendments.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 5/29/2025)

1 AN ACT concerning the natural organic reduction of human remains
 2 and amending and supplementing P.L.1952, c.340.

3
 4 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
 5 *of New Jersey:*

6
 7 1. Section 3 of P.L.1952, c.340 (C.45:7-34) is amended to read
 8 as follows:

9 3. As used in this act:

10 (a) "Board" means the State Board of Mortuary Science of New
 11 Jersey.

12 (b) "Embalming" means the disinfecting or preservation of a
 13 dead human body, entirely or in part by the use of chemical
 14 substances, fluids or gases in the body, or by introduction of the
 15 same into the body by vascular or hypodermic injection, or by
 16 direct application into the organs or cavities.

17 (c) "Funeral directing" means (1) the engaging in or conducting
 18 or holding one's self out as being engaged in or conducting the
 19 preparation (other than embalming) for burial or disposal and the
 20 direction or supervision of burial or disposal of dead human bodies;
 21 or (2) maintaining, using or operating a mortuary; or (3) in
 22 connection with one's name or mortuary using the words
 23 "mortician" or "funeral director" or "undertaker" or any other words
 24 or title of like import or signification.

25 "Funeral directing" also means the engaging in or making, or
 26 holding one's self out as being engaged in or making, funeral
 27 arrangements, including at need funeral arrangements or preneed
 28 funeral arrangements; or the offering or holding one's self out as
 29 offering the opportunity to purchase or enroll in a prepaid funeral
 30 agreement. As used in this definition, "funeral arrangements," "at
 31 need funeral arrangements," "preneed funeral arrangements" and
 32 "prepaid funeral agreement" shall have the same meaning as they
 33 are defined in section 1 of P.L.1993, c.147 (C.45:7-82).

34 (d) "Mortuary science" means embalming and funeral directing,
 35 as the same are herein defined.

36 (e) "Embalmer" means a qualified person who practices or
 37 engages in embalming, as the same is herein defined.

38 (f) "Funeral director" includes "undertaker" and "mortician" and
 39 means a qualified person who practices or engages in funeral
 40 directing, as the same is herein defined.

41 (g) "Practitioner of mortuary science" means a qualified person
 42 who practices or engages in mortuary science, as the same is herein
 43 defined and who (1) shall be licensed under the provisions of **[this**
 44 **act]** ¹**[section 19 of P.L.1952, c.340 (C.45:7-50)]** P.L.1952, c.340

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets **[thus]** in the above bill is
 not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

Matter enclosed in superscript numerals has been adopted as follows:

¹Senate SCM committee amendments adopted June 12, 2025.

²Senate SBA committee amendments adopted June 26, 2025.

1 (C.45:7-32 et seq.)¹ as a practitioner of mortuary science, or (2)
2 holds a license as both an embalmer and a funeral director under the
3 provisions of any prior law or laws of this State, or (3) holds a
4 license as an embalmer under the provisions of any prior law or
5 laws of this State and shall have been licensed ¹~~under the~~
6 provisions of section ~~21~~ of P.L.1952, c.340 (C.45:7-52) 18 of
7 P.L.1952, c.340 (C.45:7-49)¹ as a funeral director, or (4) holds a
8 license as a funeral director under the provisions of any prior law or
9 laws of this State and shall have been licensed ¹~~under the~~
10 provisions of section ~~21~~ of P.L.1952, c.340 (C.45:7-52) 18 of
11 P.L.1952, c.340 (C.45:7-49)¹ as an embalmer.

12 (h) "Mortuary" means any place or premises devoted to or used
13 in the care and preparation for burial, disposition, or transportation
14 of dead human bodies, or any specifically designated location or
15 address where any person or persons shall hold forth that he, she, or
16 they are engaged in the practice of mortuary science, embalming or
17 funeral directing, and shall mean and include any premises of any
18 kind whatsoever in which mortuary science in any of its branches is
19 practiced or in which more than five funerals may be conducted in
20 any calendar year, except publicly owned buildings, places of
21 worship and meeting places of fraternal organizations.

22 (i) "Registered trainee" means a person who is duly registered
23 with the board and who is engaged in the State of New Jersey in
24 learning to practice as a practitioner of mortuary science under the
25 personal instruction and supervision of a person duly licensed as a
26 practitioner of mortuary science and who has an annual case volume
27 as hereinafter provided in section 18 of ~~this act~~ P.L.1952, c.340
28 (C.45:7-49).

29 (j) "Natural organic reduction" or "controlled supervised
30 decomposition" means the contained, accelerated conversion of
31 human remains into a soil-like product.

32 (k) "Natural organic reduction facility" means a secure
33 structure, room, or other space within a registered mortuary, or on
34 registered mortuary property devoted to the process of natural
35 organic reduction of a human body.

36 (cf: P.L.1993, c.147, s.14)

37

38 2. Section 7 of P.L.1952, c.340 (C.45:7-38) is amended to read
39 as follows:

40 ¹7.¹ The board is authorized and empowered to adopt such rules
41 and regulations, not inconsistent with this entire act or any
42 amendment or supplement which may hereafter be adopted, as shall
43 be reasonably proper and advisable for the promotion or
44 improvement of the standards of service, protection and practice to
45 be followed in the practice of mortuary science, embalming, natural
46 organic reduction, and funeral directing by individuals,
47 corporations, partnerships and associations in the State of New

1 Jersey, and for and in the interest, preservation and improvement of
2 the public health, morals, safety and welfare.

3 In addition to the powers otherwise herein granted to the board,
4 the board is specifically empowered to adopt rules and regulations
5 concerning the following:

6 (a) the manner in which a mortuary or funeral establishment is
7 conducted,

8 (b) establish minimum requirements for a preparation room and
9 as to the manner in which it shall be maintained,

10 (c) issuance of lists of licensees,

11 (d) trainees, apprentices and preceptors,

12 (e) unethical or unprofessional conduct,

13 (f) practice of mortuary science by individuals, corporations,
14 partnerships and associations, ¹and¹

15 (g) establish minimum requirements for a natural organic
16 reduction facility and as to the manner in which it shall be
17 maintained, and the minimum requirements for the process for
18 conducting natural organic reduction.

19 (cf: P.L.1960, c.184, s.4)

20

21 3. Section 24 of P.L.1952, c.340 (C.45:7-55) is amended to
22 read as follows:

23 24. Every individual, partnership, or corporation which operates
24 or maintains within this State a mortuary or natural organic
25 reduction facility, or which in the usual and regular course of his or
26 its practice makes use of a mortuary or natural organic reduction
27 facility owned, operated, or maintained by another shall annually
28 apply to the board for a certificate of registration for each mortuary
29 and natural organic reduction facility operated, maintained, or used
30 by the applicant and shall report under oath any facts requested by
31 the board, and such individual, partnership, or corporation shall pay
32 an annual registration fee of \$25.00 for each such mortuary or
33 natural organic reduction facility. Upon verification of the
34 statements thus reported and the receipt of the requisite fee, the
35 board shall issue a certificate of registration which shall bear date of
36 January 1 for the year of issue and shall expire on December 31 of
37 such year. No mortuary ¹or natural organic reduction facility¹ shall
38 be operated, maintained, or used at any location by any person, firm
39 or corporation at any location not specified in a certificate of
40 registration issued under this section.

41 (cf: P.L.1967, c.245, s.2)

42

43 4. (New section) No person shall operate, maintain, or use a
44 natural organic reduction facility within this State unless:

45 a. the individual, partnership, or corporation annually
46 registered with the board in accordance with the provisions of
47 section 24 of P.L.1952, c.340 (C.45:7-55) ²and after inspection and
48 approval by the Department of Environmental Protection of the

1 facility prior to its opening, which shall include a review of
2 compliance with paragraph (2) of subsection e. of this section²;

3 b. the certificate of registration issued by the board shall be
4 conspicuously displayed within the natural organic reduction
5 facility;

6 c. the license of the natural organic reduction operator of the
7 natural organic reduction facility, shall be conspicuously displayed
8 within the facility;

9 d. the facility shall be under the immediate and personal
10 supervision, direction, management, and control of a person duly
11 licensed as a practitioner of mortuary science, under the provisions
12 of P.L.1952, c. 340 (C.45:7-32 et seq.), or of a person duly licensed
13 as a funeral director under the provisions of P.L.1952, c. 340
14 (C.45:7-32 et seq.) or of any prior law of this State; and all natural
15 organic reduction shall be under the immediate and personal
16 supervision, direction, management, and control of a person duly
17 licensed as a practitioner of mortuary science, under the provisions
18 of P.L.1952, c. 340 (C.45:7-32 et seq.), or of a person duly licensed
19 as a funeral director under the provisions of P.L.1952, c. 340
20 (C.45:7-32 et seq.) or of any prior law of this State; and

21 e. the construction, maintenance and operation of the facility
22 shall conform to the rules and regulations of²;

23 (1)² the board promulgated to safeguard and promote public
24 health, safety, morals and welfare²; and

25 (2) the Department of Environmental Protection with regards to
26 the appropriate setback distance of sites for natural organic
27 reduction remains from any drinking water well, which shall be at
28 least 200 days time of travel or 500 feet from the well².

29
30 ²5. (New section) a. At the time arrangements for disposition
31 are made, a funeral director shall inform a customer, in writing, that
32 a cemetery on the list maintained by the New Jersey Cemetery
33 Board pursuant to paragraph (2) of subsection b. of this section is
34 an option for the placement of remains of the deceased after natural
35 organic reduction has been performed.

36 b. The New Jersey Cemetery Board shall:

37 (1) notify the State Board of Mortuary Science of New Jersey of
38 cemeteries that express interest in and are in compliance with New
39 Jersey Cemetery Board rules and regulations to receive remains of
40 the deceased after natural organic reduction has been performed;
41 and

42 (2) maintain a list of cemeteries that may receive remains of the
43 deceased pursuant to subsection a. of this subsection.²
44

45 ²6. (New section) a. The State Board of Mortuary Science of
46 New Jersey shall promulgate rules and regulations as the board

1 determines are necessary to effectuate the provisions of P.L. , c.
2 (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill).

3 b. The New Jersey Cemetery Board shall promulgate rules and
4 regulations as the board determines are necessary to effectuate the
5 provisions of section 5 of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the
6 Legislature as this bill), as the section relates to use of cemeteries.

7 c. The Department of Environmental Protection shall
8 promulgate rules and regulations as the department determines are
9 necessary to effectuate the provisions of subsection a. of section 4
10 of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this
11 bill), as the subsection relates to inspections by the department.²

12
13 ²**[5.] 7.**² This act shall take effect on the first day of the 10th
14 month next ¹following enactment¹, except that the director may take
15 any anticipatory administrative action in advance as shall be
16 necessary for the implementation of this act.