

## Bauman, Shay (SBOH)

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**From:** Casey Husseman <casey@peoplesmemorial.org>  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 16, 2024 4:49 PM  
**To:** Bauman, Shay (SBOH)  
**Subject:** Opinion on WAC 246-500, HB 1974

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### External Email

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I'm Casey Husseman, the Executive Director of People's Memorial Association, a Washington state nonprofit dedicated to education, advocacy, and promoting consumer choice in end of life matters.

Personally, I feel in support of this change. I think it will increase the availability of refrigeration space in county-owned facilities, and that decreases pressure on the end of life care industry overall for the limited resource that is refrigerators for bodies. And there is an ongoing crisis of increasing death rates and not enough refrigerators at care facilities for the deceased.

I don't see a sizable impact in the reduction of time for NOK to be found and notified. From my experience speaking with workers at the King County Medical Examiner's Office, the problem is not getting in touch with NOK. The problem is getting NOK to accept responsibility and PAY for disposition services.

Best,

**Casey Husseman**  
*Executive Director*  
People's Memorial Association  
(Pronouns: they/them)

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## Letter of Support

May 17, 2024

Washington State Board of Health  
P.O. Box 47990  
Olympia, WA 98504-7990

RE: CR-102 Proposed Rule Alert: Handling of Human Remains, WAC 246/500

On behalf of the Washington Association of Coroners and Medical Examiners, I would like to submit this letter of support for the proposed changes related to the adoption of Substitute House Bill 1974, disposing of human remains.

Sincerely,

*Hayley Thompson*

Hayley Thompson, D-ABMDI  
President  
Washington Association of Coroners and Medical Examiners

## Bauman, Shay (SBOH)

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**From:** Timothy Grisham <tim@countyofficials.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 4, 2024 3:59 PM  
**To:** Bauman, Shay (SBOH)  
**Cc:** Hayley Thompson  
**Subject:** Public Comment - Handling of Human Remains – Response to SHB 1974

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### External Email

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Chair Hayes and members of the Board:

For the record my name is Timothy Grisham, Deputy Director of the Washington Association of County Officials. Today I am writing in comment on proposed rules changes in Chapter 246-500 WAC in response to SHB 1974 on behalf of the Washington Association of County Officials. I am sorry I cannot be there to provide comment in person, however this meeting conflicts with another event I must attend.

The Washington Association of County Officials supports the alignment with SHB 1974; the bill was a 2024 legislative priority voted on by our membership (consisting of the elected county assessors, auditors, clerks, coroners, medical examiners, prosecutors, sheriffs, treasurers and their appointed counterparts in each county) to support the Coroner/Medical Examiner and funeral home efforts to reduce the unclaimed remains holding period.

Prior to this legislation it had been some time since the unclaimed remains holding period was last examined. In the years since tools to identify and locate next of kin have greatly reduced the search time. In many cases remains are held even after next of kin are notified due to refusal to take custody of the remains by family members. This, along with times of increased incidents of unattended deaths, has put some strain on storage capacity when held for 90 days.

This was most noticeable in the smaller counties where funeral homes are contracted as morgues. For example at the height of the pandemic many counties purchased cold storage units in case they faced storage overloads. The 90 day unclaimed remains period only complicated the matter more.

After careful review and consideration in the medical death community it was determined that 45 days would be sufficient to execute a well done and thorough search of next of kin, as well as transfer remains. Anecdotally I have been told, "If we don't find them in under 45 days – we won't find them by 90."

I want to note that this holding period does not apply to remains that are part of an active investigation or criminal proceeding. These are the cases where an unattended death occurs, the case is closed (or no criminality is found), and is being prepared for interment.

I am available if you have any follow up questions. Thank you for your time.

**Timothy Grisham**  
Deputy Director  
Pronouns: He/Him/His  
[Tim@countyofficials.org](mailto:Tim@countyofficials.org)  
360-489-3044



*The Washington Association of County Officials is a non-profit, nonpartisan organization providing legislative advocacy, education and training, and day-to-day support on a wide variety of issues of importance to counties. Our 260 members are the elected county assessors, auditors, clerks, coroners and medical examiners, prosecuting attorneys, sheriffs, treasurers and comparable appointed officials in charter counties.*

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**From:** [shellies4@netzero.com](mailto:shellies4@netzero.com)  
**To:** [DOH WSBOH](#)  
**Subject:** Human remains rule. Public Comments  
**Date:** Friday, May 17, 2024 7:04:18 PM

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External Email

Good afternoon.

I would just like to say that I think ANY unclaimed human remains should be required to have a new tree planted and be put under the tree anywhere in our national forest!

Personally I would be honored to be put back to earth under a tree! We need more trees anyway so let's help the planet as much as we can for our children and grandchildren!

Thank you!

Have an amazing day!

Thank you for all your work and time!