

Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee
Wednesday 29 October 2025
16th Meeting, 2025 (Session 6)

PE2084: Allow alkaline hydrolysis

Introduction

Petitioner Randall Graeme Kilgour Foggie

Petition summary Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to amend the Burial and Cremation (Scotland) Act 2016 to allow alkaline hydrolysis, accelerated composting and other more eco-friendly methods of disposal of human cadavers.

Webpage <https://petitions.parliament.scot/petitions/PE2084>

1. [The Committee last considered this petition at its meeting on 5 March 2025](#). At that meeting, the Committee agreed to write to the Scottish Government.
2. The petition summary is included in **Annexe A** and the Official Report of the Committee's last consideration of this petition is at **Annexe B**.
3. The Committee has received a new written submission from the Scottish Government, which is set out in **Annexe C**.
4. [Written submissions received prior to the Committee's last consideration can be found on the petition's webpage](#).
5. [Further background information about this petition can be found in the SPICe briefing](#) for this petition.
6. [The Scottish Government gave its initial response to the petition on 7 March 2024](#).
7. Every petition collects signatures while it remains under consideration. At the time of writing, 26 signatures have been received on this petition.

Action

8. The Committee is invited to consider what action it wishes to take.

Clerks to the Committee
October 2025

Annexe A: Summary of petition

PE2084: Allow alkaline hydrolysis

Petitioner

Randall Graeme Kilgour Foggie

Date Lodged

20 February 2024

Petition summary

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to amend the Burial and Cremation (Scotland) Act 2016 to allow alkaline hydrolysis, accelerated composting and other more eco-friendly methods of disposal of human cadavers.

Previous action

I wrote to my MSP, David Torrance MSP, who then wrote to the Scottish Government. The Scottish Government replied stating that they were going to consult on this in 2023. Then nothing happened.

Background information

Graveyards are filling up, more will be needed. Good quality land is being "sterilised" from productive use.

Cremation uses energy and produces toxic fumes, ash and CO2.

Alkaline hydrolysis and accelerated composting both produce inert by-product and allow for the recovery of medical implants and the safe disposal of mercury amalgam filled teeth.

Annexe B: Extract from Official Report of last consideration of PE2084 on 5 March 2025

The Convener: Our next continued petition, PE2084, which was lodged by Randall Graeme Kilgour Foggie, calls on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to amend the Burial and Cremation (Scotland) Act 2016 to allow alkaline hydrolysis, accelerated composting and other more eco-friendly methods of disposal of human cadavers.

We had a fairly grisly conversation about this when we last considered the petition on 15 May 2024 when we agreed to write to the Scottish Government.

Members will recall that the Government consulted on alkaline hydrolysis regulations and found that 84 per cent of respondents support the introduction of regulations to allow alkaline hydrolysis. The development of the regulations is taking place, but no definitive date is set for the regulations to be laid in the Parliament. Do members have any comments or suggestions for action?

It seems that, in this instance, public opinion and the Government accept the case for the disposal of human cadavers using alkaline hydrolysis. Regulations are being drafted, so we need to decide whether we feel that we want to keep the petition open until we see those regulations, or whether we can close the petition, content that the Government and public opinion seem to be in support and regulations are forthcoming. Does the committee have a preference?

Fergus Ewing: I am just re-reading that exchange, which you described as “grisly”, convener. I note that you said:

“I am happy to say to the petitioner that we will not bury the petition but will make efforts to keep it alive.”—[Official Report, Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee, 15 May 2024; c 18.]

Given that undertaking, convener, perhaps we should keep it open so that it is not given a premature burial.

The Convener: Thank you very much for that, Mr Ewing. I can see that you have mined the depths of the Official Report of the previous meeting to resurrect the commitment that I made on that occasion, which is very good of you.

Will we agree to keep the petition open until we see the regulations, which we believe are forthcoming, and perhaps just write to ask the Government whether it can give us an indication of when it thinks that that might happen?

Members *indicated agreement.*

Annexe C: Written submission

Scottish Government written submission, 28 March 2025

PE2084/C: Allow alkaline hydrolysis

Thank you for your letter of 10 March 2025 requesting an update on the timeline for when the alkaline hydrolysis regulations will be laid in parliament.

I am responding as Deputy Director for the Public Health Capabilities Division, with responsibility for the overarching policy governing the Burial and Cremation (Scotland) Act 2016 ('the 2016 Act').

The Alkaline Hydrolysis Regulations Working Group has been established and the first meeting took place on 3 March 2025. It is currently expected that draft regulations will be laid later in 2025, although exact laying and committee dates are still to be decided. The eventual timeline will be informed by the considerations of the Group and the development of the regulations.

Population Health Directorate