



# New York State Catholic Conference

THE OFFICIAL PUBLIC POLICY VOICE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN THE EMPIRE STATE

DENNIS POUST, *EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR*

December 5, 2022

The Honorable Kathy Hochul  
Governor of New York State  
State Capitol  
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Hochul,

I am writing regarding bill number A382 (in relation to the composting of human remains), which will soon be delivered by the Legislature for your executive action. The New York State Catholic Conference respectfully requests that you veto this bill.

Throughout history and in every culture, the disposition of human remains has been treated with care and following particular rituals, always involving interment or cremation. Given this fact, it is inappropriate to suddenly introduce a completely different method, with no input from the public, religious communities, or anyone else outside of the state Capitol.

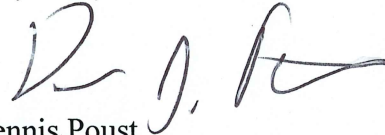
Composting is something we as a society associate with a sustainable method of eliminating organic trash that otherwise ends up in landfills. But human bodies are not household waste, and we do not believe that the process meets the standard of reverent treatment of our earthly remains. We have laws in our state across the nation prohibiting desecration of a human body, illegal burial of a human body and other abuses against the human body. This is because we recognize intuitively that the human body is a vessel of the soul and deserves dignified and respectful treatment. In the Catholic Church and in most religious traditions, there are rules that govern how we treat corporeal remains as well. A process that is perfectly appropriate for returning vegetable trimmings to the earth is not necessarily appropriate for human bodies.

That being said, the Catholic Church fully understands traditional embalming and burial is something that makes some people uneasy. Fortunately, the Catholic Church offers green burial options, as well as the option for cremation for those who wish to make that choice.

It is our hope that you will use your veto power to force a deeper conversation about the implications of human composting, one that involves all interested parties and is not abruptly decided on the last evening of the legislative session.

Thank you for your consideration of this request, and congratulations on your election to your first full term as Governor of New York. I look forward to working with you in the years to come on issues important to all New Yorkers.

Very Truly Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'D. J. Poust', written in a cursive style.

Dennis Poust  
Executive Director

cc: Karen Persichilli Keogh, Secretary to the Governor  
Elizabeth Fine, Counsel to the Governor  
His Eminence, Timothy Cardinal Dolan, and  
the Most Reverend Bishops of NYS