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**HOUSE BILL 1907**

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**State of Washington 65th Legislature 2017 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Orcutt, Blake, DeBolt, McDonald, and Van Werven

AN ACT Relating to abandoned cemeteries; amending RCW 68.60.010; and adding a new section to chapter 68.60 RCW.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

**Sec.**  RCW 68.60.010 and 1990 c 92 s 1 are each amended to read as follows:

((~~Unless the context clearly requires otherwise,~~)) The definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

(1) "Abandoned cemetery" means a burial ground of the human dead ((~~in [for]~~)):

(a) For which the county assessor can find no record of an owner; ((~~or~~))

(b) Where the last known owner is deceased and lawful conveyance of the title has not been made; or

(c) In which ((~~a~~)) the cemetery company, cemetery association, corporation, or other organization that formed for the purposes of burying the human dead:

(i) Has ((~~either~~)) disbanded, has been administratively dissolved by the secretary of state, or has otherwise ceased to exist, and for which title has not been conveyed; or

(ii) No longer has a valid certificate of authority as determined by the funeral and cemetery board.

(2) "Cemetery" has the same meaning as provided in RCW 68.04.040.

(3) "Historical cemetery" means any burial site or grounds which contain within them human remains buried prior to November 11, 1889; except that (a) cemeteries holding a valid certificate of authority to operate granted under RCW 68.05.115 and 68.05.215, (b) cemeteries owned or operated by any recognized religious denomination that qualifies for an exemption from real estate taxation under RCW 84.36.020 on any of its churches or the ground upon which any of its churches are or will be built, and (c) cemeteries controlled or operated by a coroner, county, city, town, or cemetery district shall not be considered historical cemeteries.

((~~(3)~~)) (4) "Historic grave" means a grave or graves that were placed outside a cemetery dedicated pursuant to this chapter and to chapter 68.24 RCW, prior to June 7, 1990, except Indian graves and burial cairns protected under chapter 27.44 RCW.

((~~(4) "Cemetery" has the meaning provided in RCW 68.04.040(2).~~))

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 68.60 RCW to read as follows:

(1)(a) The funeral and cemetery board must consult with the department of archaeology and historic preservation to promulgate rules in order to allow for burials in abandoned cemeteries.

(b) The landowner of an abandoned cemetery must allow for burials in accordance with rules promulgated by the funeral and cemetery board.

(2) Any records, maps, or other documents associated with an abandoned cemetery must be transferred to the state archives at the time the cemetery becomes an abandoned cemetery.

(3) Any endowment care funds held by the cemetery authority at the time such cemetery becomes an abandoned cemetery must be transferred to the department of archaeology and historic preservation.

**--- END ---**