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Honorable Chair Wiklund and Members of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee,

My name is Rachel Battles, and I am writing to express my strong support for SF3134, which permits the conversion of human remains to basic elements using natural organic reduction. I am not an expert in this field, but I believe in the environmental benefits and personal significance of human composting.

Human composting, or natural organic reduction, is an environmentally sustainable alternative to conventional burial and cremation methods. According to the natural organic reduction pioneers at Recompose, for every person who chooses natural organic reduction over conventional burial or cremation, approximately one metric ton of carbon dioxide is prevented from entering the atmosphere. Furthermore, this approach requires only 1/8 of the energy compared to conventional burial or cremation.

Conventional burial practices involve the consumption of valuable urban land, soil pollution, and contribute to climate change through resource-intensive manufacturing and transportation of caskets, headstones, and grave liners. Similarly, cremation emits carbon dioxide and particulates into the atmosphere, adding to environmental concerns.

As an avid gardener, I understand the importance of organic matter breakdown in nurturing healthy ecosystems. Soil is the foundation of life, filtering water, providing nutrients to plants, sequestering carbon, and regulating global temperature. Natural organic reduction aligns with the natural cycle of death, rebirth, and new life, providing a deeply meaningful last act for many people. Personally, I would find great solace in knowing that my body, and the bodies of my loved ones, could nourish new plant life through this process.

It is worth noting that human composting is legal in several states, including Washington, Colorado, Oregon, California, Vermont, New York, and Nevada. I strongly urge the committee to support SF3134 and make this environmentally friendly and meaningful option available to residents of Minnesota.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of SF3134. I believe this bill aligns with our responsibility to protect the environment and offers a respectful and sustainable approach to end-of-life practices.

Sincerely,

Rachel Battles