Consider that an estimated 25 million US Baby Boomers will die within the next 20 years. Half are expected to be cremated, half buried. That adds up to an estimated 1.74 billion pounds of carbon dioxide emissions wafting into the atmosphere and more than 12.5 million tons of concrete paving parking lots for eternity underground for just this one demographic alone. Together with excessive crematory retort fuel consumption and the significant carbon footprint required to transport and process exotic woods from depleted third world country rainforests for caskets, the environmental cost of doing death American-style is a much overlooked area of concern.

With alternatives to contemporary funeral and disposition goods and practices rising rapidly — home funerals and green burial cemeteries at the forefront — policymakers will be faced with untangling legal obstructions, cultural impediments, and land conservation issues while dealing with a failing $20B a year funeral industry. We will explore the appeal of these and other sustainable funeral and body disposition practices, both in the US and around the world, discuss why addressing this taboo eco-problem matters and to whom, and reveal what policymakers will be expected to grapple with when making end-of-life — and death — decisions in coming months and years.

Part 1 Lee Webster, President, National Home Funeral Alliance; Green Burial Council (20 minutes)
- global overview of after-death care and disposition practices
- the increasing desirability of non-invasive body care and minimal disposition footprint
- the 9 states that impede American families’ rights to care for their own after death
- the price of funeral industry self-regulation
- policy concerns and suggested legislative language

Part 2 Matt Alcide, Co-President, Green Burial Council (Education)
Ed Bixby, Co-President, Green Burial Council (Certification)
- the environmental cost of ignoring toxic disposition practices
- the critical conservation link to green burial
- the case for independent, verifiable standards
- the scientific facts about soil, water contamination, pest control, contagion
- environmental and cultural promise of green burial
- policy impact of natural burial at federal, state and community levels

Part 3: Panel discussion, Q & A (20 minutes)
PANEL BIOGRAPHIES

Ed Bixby, Green Burial Council Director (President), owner and operator of Steelmantown Green Burial Preserve in Steelmantown, NJ

Ed Bixby has led presentations on natural burial for numerous organizations and has provided educational training for both funeral directors and cemeterians alike. He has been instrumental in revitalizing the GBC and furthering its mission to educate the public while supporting certified providers.

Lee Webster, President of the National Home Funeral Alliance, Green Burial Council Director (Treasurer), and Director of New Hampshire Funeral Resources, Education & Advocacy

Lee Webster is a writer, researcher, editor, public speaker and 30+ year hospice worker. Her writing career spans over 30 years in the areas of public relations and development in the conservation, education and healthcare nonprofit sector.

Matthew Alcide, Green Burial Council Director, Development Director for Inscape Publico and managing partner for Land8

Matt Alcide has significant experience in fundraising and development within the nonprofit sector, including the Landscape Architecture Foundation and the Alice Ferguson Foundation. Matt also consults for small businesses and nonprofits in enhancing their operations through web design, marketing, and development.