

# US mulls tax break for space 'burials'

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Americans who want to save money on taxes may want to consider rocketing their ashes into space, according to legislation being proposed in Virginia.

The bill, up for debate next year, would offer state residents a tax deduction of up to \$8,000 for deciding to send their remains into space, US media has reported.

State officials say it would be good for the economy.

"I know there's a giggle factor, but it's time to get over that," J. Jack Kennedy, a board member of the Virginia Commercial Spaceflight Authority, told WTVR news in Richmond, Virginia.

"This is about business and job opportunities."

The goal is to boost visitors to the Mid-Atlantic Regional Spaceport at Wallops Island.

Mourners would eat at local restaurants, stay at hotels and visit attractions, said Donna Bozza, director of the Eastern Shore of Virginia Tourism Commission, according to WTVR's website.

"If you're spending that money to go to space, you're going to want your peeps to cheer you on," she said.

The space funeral industry is dominated by a Houston, Texas-based

company called Celestis, which says it has launched 10 "memorial spaceflights."

Costs range from \$1,000 to have one's remains launched into space and return to Earth, and \$10,000 to have one's ashes sent to the Moon.

On offer beginning in 2014 is the "Voyager Service (which) launches your loved one on a voyage through deepest space, leaving the Earth-Moon system on a permanent celestial journey," the company website says.

The cost for a single-gram sample of one person's ashes would start at \$12,500.

Some famous people who have had their remains launched into [space](#) include writer and LSD advocate Timothy Leary, Star Trek creator Gene Roddenberry, James Doohan -- also known as "Scotty" from Star Trek -- and Mercury 7 astronaut Gordon Cooper.

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