Health Services
LOS ANGELES COUNTY

April 3, 2006

Los Angeles County
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TO: Mayor Michael D. Antonovich
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Don Knabe

FROM: Bruce A. Chernof, M.D.
Acting Director and Chief Medical Officer

SUBJECT: **UPDATE ON THE CHINESE GRAVE MARKERS**

On March 30, 2006, I informed you that DHS had been contacted regarding the relocation of Chinese grave markers at the County Crematorium and Cemetery. On Tuesday, April 4, 2006, Supervisor Molina will be introducing a motion on this subject, asking that DHS work with the appropriate Chinese historical and cultural organizations and the MTA, who uncovered grave sites adjacent to the Evergreen Cemetery, to relocate these markers.

On Friday, March 31, I visited the Evergreen Cemetery and the County Crematorium and Cemetery, which are adjacent to it, to talk with our staff and view the markers. My Chief Deputy, John Cochran, accompanied me on this visit. We met with our staff person, who has worked at the DHS facility for more than 20 years. He reported that the grave markers were at their current location when he began working at the cite over twenty years ago, and recalled that his predecessor, who had also worked at the cemetery for more than 20 years, also said they were in their current location when he started working at the cemetery. This indicates that these grave markers had been moved more than 40 years ago.

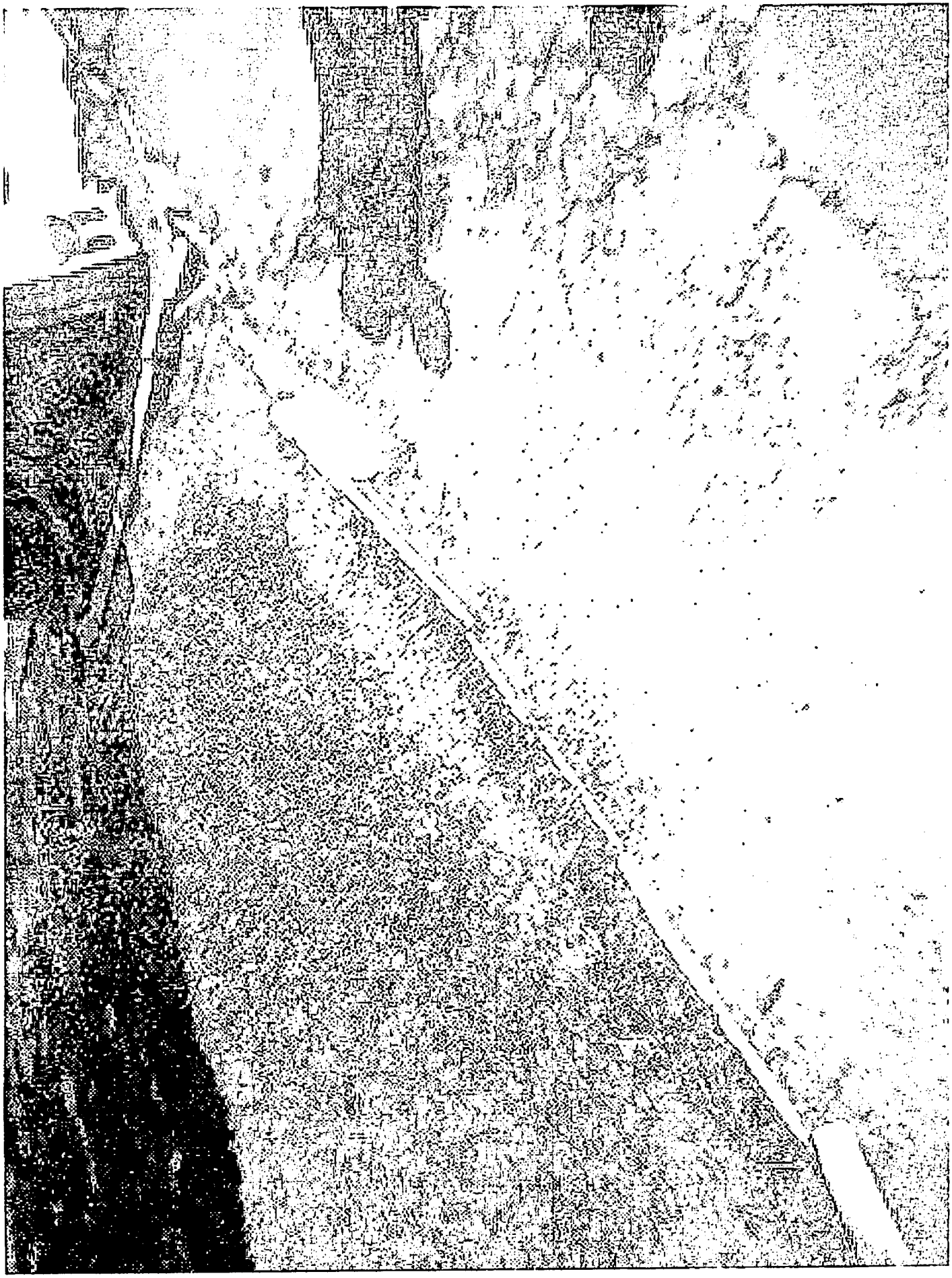
We did not count the number of the grave markers in question, but estimate that there are no more than ten. You can view a picture of the site on the Chinese Historical Society website, in their March 2006 newsletter (www.chssc.org).

During our visit we were also able to speak with the archeologist retained by the MTA since the beginning of the rail construction project and has extensively researched this Chinese burial site. It is her understanding that the Chinese Historical Society is asking MTA to arrange to relocate the remains uncovered through their construction project to a site in the Evergreen Cemetery and that they will ask if the County would consent to having the headstones relocated.

I support Supervisor Molina's motion, which asks that the Department retain expert assistance from a professional archeologist to properly catalogue and document the headstones, and for the Department to work with the appropriate Chinese historical and cultural organizations and the MTA to ensure that the markers are relocated to an appropriate location.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please let me know.

BAC:rs

Attachment

c: Chief Administrative Officer
County Counsel
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors