



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF MEDICAL EXAMINER
1104 N. MISSION RD, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90033



Odey C. Ukpo, M.D., M.S.
Chief Medical Examiner

June 9, 2026

The Honorable Board of Supervisors
County of Los Angeles
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, California 90012

Dear Supervisors:

**APPROVAL TO EXECUTE A RETROACTIVE SOLE SOURCE AMENDMENT TO EXTEND
THE CREMATION SERVICES AGREEMENT WITH MONARCH CREMATORY AND
CONTINUE CONTRACTING WITH DESERT CREMATION SOCIETY, INC. AND UNION
CEMETERY ASSOCIATION FOR THE PROVISION OF AS-NEEDED CREMATION
SERVICES
(ALL DISTRICTS)
(3 VOTES)**

SUBJECT

The Department of Medical Examiner (DME) seeks approval to (i) execute a retroactive sole source amendment to extend the term of the Master Agreement with Monarch Crematory (formerly known as Macera Crematorium, Inc.) and formalize Macera Crematorium's name change to Monarch Crematory, and (ii) continue contracting with Desert Cremation Society, Inc., and Union Cemetery Association for as-needed cremation services.

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE BOARD:

1. Authorize the Chief Medical Examiner, or authorized designee, to retroactively amend Master Agreement Number 340122-04 with Monarch Crematory (formerly known as Macera Crematorium, Inc.), to retroactively extend the term of the agreement for a one-year term, from January 6, 2025, to January 5, 2026, and to allow for the retroactive payment estimated at the amount of \$226,000 for cremation services provided by Monarch Crematory (formerly known as Macera Crematorium, Inc.) since January 6, 2025, and to formalize the contractor's name change from Macera Crematorium, Inc. to FPG California Inc. DBA Monarch Crematory.

Accreditations:

National Association of Medical Examiners (Provisional)
California Medical Association-Continuing Medical Education

Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education
Peace Officer Standards and Training Certified

2. Authorize the Chief Medical Examiner, or authorized designee, to (i) execute a retroactive sole source amendment to further extend the agreement with current contractor Monarch Crematory for one year with two six-month options, and (ii) continue contracting with Desert Cremation Society, Inc., and Union Cemetery Association (Master Agreement Numbers 340122-04, 340122-06 and 3401122-07), for as-needed cremation services for a not-to-exceed annual amount of \$353,000.00 for DME and \$563,000.00 for DHS, and an aggregate not-to-exceed annual amount of \$916,000.00 (collectively), until such time as the DME can establish new Master Agreements for as-needed cremation services.
3. Retroactively approve annual expenditure amounts with contractors identified in Attachment I for the provision of as-needed cremation services for the DME and the Department of Health Services (DHS).

PURPOSE/JUSTIFICATION OF RECOMMENDED ACTION

On March 6, 2012, the Board approved and authorized the Director of DME to execute as-needed Cremation Services Agreements for use by the DME and DHS, effective upon the date of execution through five (5) years, with two (2) one-year renewal periods, and to execute applicable amendments. The Board also authorized annual expenditure amounts of \$140,000 for the DME and \$70,000 for DHS. Following the release of a Request for Statement of Qualifications (RFSQ) solicitation, the DME established a pool of qualified vendors to provide cremation services.

Based on the delegated authority DME believed it had to execute additional agreements for as-needed cremation services with qualified licensed crematories from the Board's March 6, 2012, approval, the Chief Medical Examiner executed Master Agreement Number 340122-04 with Macera Crematorium, Inc., on January 1, 2020; Master Agreement Number 340122-06 with Desert Cremation Society, Inc., on April 6, 2023; and Master Agreement Number 241022-07 with Union Cemetery Association on March 1, 2024, for the provision of as-needed cremation services. These agreements were intended to have a maximum total term of seven years to be consistent with the initial delegated authority approved by the Board, and to ensure that the DME would continue to have agreements with qualified licensed crematories sufficient to fulfill the cremation service needs of the County.

The initial term of the agreement with Macera Crematorium, Inc., was one year, commencing on January 1, 2020, with the option to extend the agreement for up to six (6) additional one-year periods, for a maximum term of seven (7) years. The agreement was subsequently amended for four additional one-year terms; however, the Agreement with Macera Crematorium, Inc., expired on January 5, 2025, because the parties failed to timely amend the agreement for a one-year additional period. In April 2024, Macera Crematorium, Inc., submitted to the DME a request for contractor name change for Agreement Number 340122-04, to reflect that the contractor's name changed from Macera Crematorium, Inc., to FPG California, Inc. DBA Monarch Crematory.

The initial term of the agreement with Desert Cremation Society, Inc., is for five years, commencing on April 6, 2023. The initial term of the agreement with Union Cemetery Association is for five years, commencing on March 1, 2024. The DME contracts with multiple qualified vendors in order to meet the County demands for cremation services and ensure timely cremation

and disposition of remains. These contracted services are essential and necessary to process all DME and DHS unclaimed and indigent cremation cases.

Approval of the first recommendation will allow for the retroactive payment for cremation services provided by Monarch Crematory since January 6, 2025, and allow the agreement to be amended to memorialize the contractor's name change so the agreement will reflect the contractor's current legal name and support the DME's ability to effectively manage transactions with the contractor and mitigate potential delays in invoice and payment processes.

Approval of the second and third recommendations will ensure continued timely cremation and disposition of remains and allow for the alleviation of potential backlogs until the DME can complete the solicitation process and execute new cremation services agreements.

IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

Approval of these recommended actions is consistent with the County's Strategic Plan North Star 1, Focus Area Goal D - Support Vulnerable Populations, and North Star 2, Focus Area Goal A - Public Health, by assuring the continuation of essential as-needed cremation services for County disposition of unclaimed and indigent cremation services.

FISCAL IMPACT/FINANCING

While seeking Board approval of the retroactive matter involving Monarch Crematory, the DME and DHS were made aware they exceeded authorized expenditures (\$140,000 for the DME and \$70,000 for DHS) approved by the Board in 2012. As reflected in Attachment I, DME exceeded authorized expenditures in Fiscal Year (FY) 2020-21, and FY 2022-23 through FY 2024-25, and projects it will exceed authorized expenditures in FY 2025-26. DHS exceeded authorized expenditures from FY 2019-20 through FY 2024-25. While both the DME and DHS exceeded their indicated expenditure amounts, all contractors rendering cremation services have been paid, with the exception of the requested retroactive amount of \$193,000, for retroactive services rendered by Monarch Crematory, from January 6, 2025, through March 2026 and an estimated \$33,000 for the remaining three months of FY 2025-26 (April, May and June) for a total of \$226,000 through the end of FY 2025-26.

DME's expenditures under the Master Agreement (MA) for FY 2024-25 were \$266,326, are estimated to be \$353,000 for FY 2025-26, and \$310,000 for FY 2026-27. DHS' LA General expenditures are estimated to be \$563,000, for each FY 2025-26 and FY 2026-27. Funding for this MA is included in the respective FY 2025-26 and FY 2026-27 operating budgets and will be included in budget requests for subsequent years. There will be no impact on the County General Fund.

ME is developing a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) that will address retroactive payments, the retroactive agreement, and exceeding the authorized agreement amount.

FACTS AND PROVISIONS/LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

Board Policy 5.300 (Retroactive Contracts) requires the Retroactive Contracts Review Committee (RCRC) to review all requests for retroactive contract payments. As authorized under Board Policy 5.300 and Subsection 4.1 of the Implementation Instructions for RCRC Procedures (Implementation Guidelines), the Chief Medical Examiner has determined that the payment to Monarch Crematory is urgent, as well as the need to retroactively extend the agreement to ensure there is no disruption in these critical services. Further, given the time needed for the DME to complete the solicitation process, the Chief Medical Examiner has determined that it is necessary to extend the agreement with Monarch Crematory beyond January 6, 2026, and that contracts with the two other cremation service vendors need to remain in place until such time as DME can establish new agreements for as-needed cremation services. Cremation services are of critical nature, and of urgent necessity to protect public health, and there would be a negative impact on the County and its residents if the DME were unable to continue to provide as-needed cremation services. Accordingly, the DME is seeking the Board's approval of the above recommended actions prior to meeting with the RCRC. Additionally, the recommended Board action, to extend cremation services agreements, is subject to Board Policy 5.100 (Sole Source Contracts and Amendments to Extend Contracts) requirements, as the DME did not have authority to extend the term of the contracted services beyond the original term and any extension options. The DME seeks approval of the recommendations to ensure essential services are available during the time period required to complete a solicitation for replacement services and to ensure the availability of indigent cremation services Countywide (Attachment II-Sole Source Checklist).

Board Policy 5.100 requires that notice is sent to the Board at least six months prior to expiration of an existing contract. The DME provided your Board with notification ("Notice of Intent to Enter into Sole Source Negotiations") on March 26, 2026. The Department recognizes that this notice was not provided in a timely manner as required. This is because the Department incorrectly believed that it had delegated authority based on the March 2012 approved Board Letter.

As required under Board Policy 5.300 (Retroactive Contracts), the DME will present this item to its Cluster, and will obtain Cluster approval before proceeding to seek Board approval of the retroactive issue before meeting with the RCRC. Upon Board approval, the DME will follow the RCRC procedures. The presentation to the RCRC is anticipated to occur in July 2026, following which DME will submit its Board memorandum notifying the Board of completion of the retroactive review process and provide the Board with its CAP.

As a corrective action, DME will require its Contract Manager to update the Administrative Deputy monthly via spreadsheet preparation, on progress related to the execution and amendment of all DME agreements. This process will continue until the Administrative Deputy determines adequate progress has been made by executing and managing all DME agreements. Additionally, in seeking Board approval to execute future agreements for as-needed cremation services, the recommendation will include that the term of such agreements will expire no later than a specified number of years from the date of Board approval to ensure that future agreements are executed and are effective within the timeframe approved by the Board.

CONTRACTING PROCESS

The DME will release a RFSQ solicitation to establish a pool of qualified vendors to provide cremation services on an as-needed basis. The RFSQ will remain open continuously to ensure the needs of the County are met. The DME will be responsible for evaluating and qualifying vendors to ensure that they meet the minimum requirements to perform the contracted services. The DME will negotiate rates with such qualified contractors, not to exceed the budgeted amount, and will return to your Board to seek approval to establish new Master Agreements for as-needed cremation services.

Monarch Crematory has agreed to a one-year extension of Agreement Number 340122-04 at the same terms, effective January 6, 2025, to January 5, 2026, and has agreed to continue providing services for an additional one year with two six-month options, upon approval by the Board. This extension is of critical nature and an urgent necessity, in order to provide essential cremation services for the DME for County disposition of unclaimed and indigent cremation services. The extension of the MA with Monarch Crematory will prevent any gap in the provision of cremation services and potential backlogs. Upon Board approval, the DME will execute retroactive Amendment Number 5 to Agreement Number 340122-04. The DME will present to the RCRC to discuss the factors that led to the retroactive agreement and to discuss the CAP developed by the DME to prevent the recurrence of future retroactive agreements. Recommendations made by the RCRC members will also be incorporated into the CAP.

County Counsel has approved Amendment Number 5 to Agreement Number 340122-04 as to form. Contingent upon the Board's approval of recommendation number two, Agreement Numbers 340122-06 and 241022-07 with Desert Cremation Society, Inc., and Union Cemetery Association will remain effective until such time as the DME can establish new Master Agreements for as-needed cremation services.

IMPACT ON CURRENT SERVICES

There will be no impact on current services. The extension with Monarch Crematory provides for the continuation of existing as-needed cremation services. The agreements with Desert Cremation Society, Inc. and Union Cemetery Association will remain in effect until the DME can establish new agreements for the provision of cremation services.

CONCLUSION

Upon approval by your Board, please return one adopted copy of this Board letter to the DME and one adopted copy to ISD. It is requested that the Executive Office notify the DME's Administrative Deputy Director, Dr. Nichelle H. Shaw, at nshaw@me.lacounty.gov or via mail at 1104 N. Mission Rd., Los Angeles, CA 90033, when the documents are available.

Honorable Board of Supervisors
June 9, 2026
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Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Odey C. Ukpo", with a stylized flourish at the end.

ODEY C. UKPO, M.D., M.S.
Chief Medical Examiner

OCU:AT:nhs

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