

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, March 3, 2026 12:49 PM
To: Vionna Lin <vionna.lin@losbanos.org>
Subject: For 3/04/2026 City Council Meeting-Public Comment on Ammonia Leak and Emergency Response Failures



External [REDACTED]



[Graymail](#) [Spam](#) [Phish](#) [More...](#) [Quarantine](#) [Allow & Block](#)

Public Comment on Ammonia Leak and Emergency Response Failures

Good Evening:

I'm writing today to raise concerns about the recent ammonia leak and the breakdown in public safety protocols that followed. While I surely appreciate the efforts of emergency responders and pray they remain safe always, several critical failures must be addressed for the safety of our community if other types of public emergencies should occur in the future.

First, the County's emergency notification system failed to notify residents in a timely manner. The system was recently changed, but residents were not informed that they needed to create new accounts. Many registered users did not receive alerts, leaving residents to learn about the situation through social media at least an hour after the leak was first reported. Why was the public not informed of the system change prior, and why was no backup method used to alert the community? Additionally, the delay in issuing a public warning left residents exposed to harmful fumes.

The Los Banos Fire Department was contacted and I assume responded immediately at 5:30 a.m., but residents didn't learn about the danger until 6:30 a.m., after the fumes had already entered homes. Why was there a delay between the initial response and the public alert?

The confusion compounded with conflicting messages from the Los Banos Unified School District. Eric Sowersby, Director of Elementary Education, via the parents app, said schools were open and accepting students.

While the Director gave the green light for schools to remain open, Principal Hicks at Lorena Falasco Elementary, which was closest to the leak site, initially announced that the school was closed, only to delete the post very shortly after. This lack of clear, consistent messaging caused unnecessary panic. Why was the decision to open schools made before the shelter-in-place order was lifted? The shelter in place order was lifted around 10:30 am by the Los Banos Police Dept. according to a Facebook post.

Will an after-action report be made public? And, most importantly, what steps are being taken to ensure that a situation like this is never repeated?

Thank you for your time and attention to these concerns.

Julie Creighton