

## **DISMAL FREEDOM PRESS**

*Accountability Journalism · Central Valley & Beyond*

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May 13, 2026

### **VIA EMAIL — website\_cao@ci.lathrop.ca.us**

Salvador Navarrete, City Attorney

City of Lathrop

390 Towne Centre Drive

Lathrop, CA 95330

**RE: CPRA Request Filed May 12, 2026 — Supplemental Notice of Material Misrepresentation on the Public Record — Chief Stefan Sealy, Item 5.5, May 11, 2026 City Council Meeting**

### **I. PURPOSE OF THIS SUPPLEMENTAL NOTICE**

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This letter supplements the California Public Records Act request filed by Dismal Freedom Press on May 12, 2026, acknowledged by Deputy City Clerk Sarah Pimentel the same day. It is submitted to place on the formal record a factual discrepancy between a statement made by Lathrop Chief of Police Stefan Sealy at the May 11, 2026 Regular City Council Meeting and the documented written record held by this newsroom.

### **II. WHAT THE ORIGINAL REQUEST ACTUALLY ASKED FOR**

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On March 23, 2026, a Lathrop resident submitted a formal written request to every member of the City Council asking the City to host a free community event focused on traffic and bicycle safety education — specifically directed at drivers and vehicle operators in compliance with the California Vehicle Code. The request was motivated by documented near-miss incidents involving the resident's minor child, including an incident in which a Tesla driver went around a seven-year-old child in an active crosswalk at Autumn Rain Drive and McKee Road. Officer Siler of the Lathrop Police Department responded to that incident and took a statement. That report exists and is in the possession of this department.

The request was for driver education. The documented safety threat was from drivers.

### **III. WHAT CHIEF SEALY SAID ON THE PUBLIC RECORD**

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During deliberations on Agenda Item 5.5 — Amendment to Chapter 9.28 (Bicycles) — at the May 11, 2026 Regular City Council Meeting, a council member asked Chief Sealy directly:

*"So what's the difference between these [events] and what Ms. Cortez was asking?"*

Chief Sealy responded, on the public record:

*"This is exactly what she was asking us to do."*

That statement is factually incorrect.

The Know the Rules, Ride Safe program is a bicycle rider safety course funded by an Office of Traffic Safety grant through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. It teaches bicycle riders — not vehicle operators. It does not address crosswalk compliance by motor vehicle operators. It does not address the California Vehicle Code violations at the center of the original resident request.

A pre-planned, grant-funded bicycle rider program is not — by any reasonable definition — the same thing as driver education requested in response to documented crosswalk violations. Chief Sealy's statement to the City Council on this point was a material misrepresentation on the public record.

### **IV. ADDITIONAL RECORDS REQUESTED**

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In addition to the records categories listed in the original May 12, 2026 CPRA filing, Dismal Freedom Press requests the following specific records:

1. The date the Office of Traffic Safety grant application for the Know the Rules, Ride Safe program was submitted by the Lathrop Police Department.
2. The date the grant award was received.

These dates are material. If the grant was applied for and awarded prior to March 23, 2026, it will confirm that the Know the Rules, Ride Safe program was not a response to the community request at issue — and that Chief Sealy's characterization of it as such was not accurate.

### **V. NOTICE TO THE CITY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE**

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Dismal Freedom Press is placing this office on formal notice that the public record of the May 11, 2026 City Council Meeting contains a statement by the Chief of Police that is directly contradicted by the documented written record held by this newsroom.

This office is currently processing a CPRA request that includes grant records directly relevant to that contradiction. Dismal Freedom Press expects those

records to be produced in full, on time, and without redaction of the dates requested in Section IV above.

This supplemental notice should be placed in the CPRA file. Please confirm receipt in writing.

Respectfully submitted,

**DISMAL FREEDOM PRESS**

Investigations

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