



City of Elephant Butte
Office of the Mayor
PO Box 1080
Elephant Butte, NM 87935
(575)744-4892

I want you to know that the City of Elephant Butte recognizes what you, as business owners, are experiencing due to declining water levels in the lake. We are well aware of the negative impact on your businesses, employees, families, and our entire community.

As you know, our economy is closely tied to Elephant Butte Lake. When water levels decline, the effects reach far beyond the shoreline. Marinas, restaurants, lodging facilities, guide services, recreational businesses, retail shops, and other small businesses feel the impact immediately. These are locally owned businesses, like yours, that have invested in our community, created jobs, and helped make Elephant Butte an extremely popular recreation destination.

The low lake levels have been devastating. For that reason, **the City of Elephant Butte is prepared to formally declare a state of emergency due to the negative economic impact.**

We will work aggressively with state agencies and our federal partners to identify every available resource, including emergency assistance, economic development resources, small-business support, infrastructure assistance, and other programs that may provide relief to affected businesses. There is, of course, no guarantee that our requests for emergency funding will be granted. But we will relentlessly pursue every avenue possible.

We also want to hear directly from you. Your experiences and documentation regarding how declining lake levels are affecting your businesses will help us make our case to state and federal officials. We need decision makers to understand that this is not simply an environmental or recreational issue – it is an economic emergency affecting real businesses, real employees, and real families throughout our community.

Today I'm asking you for information (see bullet points below) regarding how the low water levels are affecting your business as well as what we can do to expand our tourism footprint. It will be most helpful if you respond quickly and honestly regarding the questions below. Identifying current challenges will likely prove to be very useful in our request for emergency funding. Plus, it's time we give serious thought to what we might do to create year-round, multi-faceted tourism experiences.

- How has this extreme reduction in water levels in Elephant Butte Lake affected your business?



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- Has loss of tourism put your business in a precarious position that is causing you to consider closing your business? Please include what you believe to be a percentage of decline in revenue over the same period in 2025 if available.
- What are your thoughts regarding what we can do to create year-round recreational activities NOT RELATED TO THE LAKE?
- What new year-round LAKE-BASED tourism activities could be created regardless of water levels? (i.e., national fishing tournaments, beach volleyball, or kite flying competitions ...)
- Would you participate in a Town Hall-type meeting to share your thoughts and concerns in a positive/productive way?
- Please share any additional thoughts or questions that you have.

Please focus on the future rather than past issues. Our City Council needs your positive, forward-thinking input to help us formulate a solid path forward together with concrete evidence that your business is facing severe challenges today.

Our current situation is a wakeup call and a real opportunity for us all to pull together and work collectively to make Sierra County a hub for year-round tourism to help stabilize and grow our local businesses in the years to come.

Our community has faced difficult times before, and we will face this one together.

Thank you for your input.
Richard Holcomb, Mayor
City of Elephant Butte
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Elephant Butte, NM 87935
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PLEASE RESPOND TO: r.holcomb@cityofebnm.gov



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