



City of Hobbs Contact:

Meghan Mooney, Dir. of Communications

575-391-4169

[mmooney@hobbsnm.org](mailto:mmooney@hobbsnm.org)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **City of Hobbs Prohibits Fireworks Due to Extreme Drought and Wildfire Risk**

At the May 16th Commission meeting, the City of Hobbs Commission approved a proclamation presented by Hobbs Fire Chief Barry Young to prohibit the use of certain fireworks due to extreme and severe drought conditions in the area of Hobbs, New Mexico. On April 26<sup>th</sup>, due to multiple recent wildfires in our state and the number of acreage burned, Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham urged New Mexican municipalities and counties to ban the retail sale of fireworks in their jurisdictions, with Lea, Eddy, Chavez, and Roosevelt counties of Southeast New Mexico doing so.

While our community is no stranger to drought, the majority of Lea County is in a state of Exceptional Drought per the National Drought Mitigation Center, as well as over 70% of our state and our bordering counties in Texas being in Extreme to Exceptional Drought. Changes in temperature, precipitation, and wind patterns have created the worst drought our state has ever seen. These weather and climate conditions are based on information from the National Weather Service. Wildfires have burned over 400,000 acres in New Mexico and over 50 miles worth of land, with one becoming the largest wildfire in New Mexico's history. Our current drought status causes the following conditions:

- Exceptional and widespread crop loss is reported; rangeland is dead; producers are not planting fields
- Seafood, forestry, tourism, and agriculture sectors report significant financial loss
- Extreme sensitivity to fire danger; fireworks restrictions are implemented

**The fireworks to be prohibited include aerial shell kit-reloadable tubes, aerial spinners, helicopters, mines, missile type rockets, stick-type rockets, roman candles (able to shoot balls of flames 50-60 plus feet in the air), shells, chasers, and firecrackers. No vendor will be allowed to sell these item within Hobbs city limits, and no person will be allowed to light them. These restrictions are subject to changed based upon weather conditions.**

A wildfire can quickly spread during times of low humidity and high winds in a region with dry grass, which creates many great challenges for local fire departments and places life and property at risk. Fire Chief Young stated, "While the City of Hobbs wishes to celebrate our nation's Independence Day, there are certain precautions needed to protect life and property. The rural region of our community places our residents at a very high risk of wildfire without following the proper precautions. It is critical we mitigate the potential of wildfires as much as possible. We hope to educate those we serve on the need for this restriction and to encourage them to help keep our community safe."

This restriction is permissible per City Ordinance in the City of Hobbs Municipal Code Chapter 8.12.

The City of Hobbs Community Fourth of July Fireworks Show to be held on Friday, July 1st is subject to change or be cancelled due to drought conditions. If it is held, it will be conducted by trained and certified professionals and with the City of Hobbs Fire Marshal's Office present. Continue to follow the City of Hobbs and Hobbs Fire Department for current updates.

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