



NEW MEXICO
WATER ADVOCATES

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Water & Natural Resources Committee

**New Mexico's Dire Water Situation
September 12, 2025**

N Gaume photo

Elephant Butte Dam bathtub rings

Full 2,100,000
acre-feet (1995)



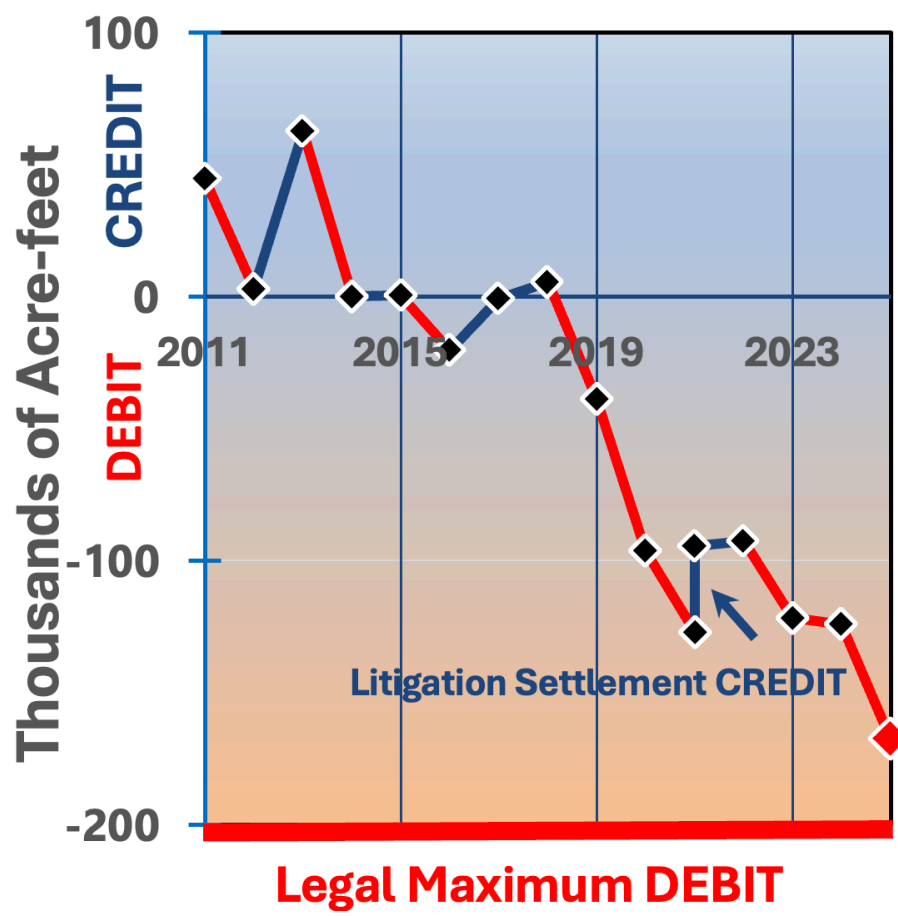
**After Silver City Water
Leader's Conference April
2025**

August 27, 2025
N Gaume photo

**The reservoir will be almost
empty after the 2025
irrigation season**

Middle Rio Grande Compact Status

Coming soon (2026): new compact violation triggering new SCOTUS litigation in 2027.



-167,600 acre-feet as of September 1, 2025



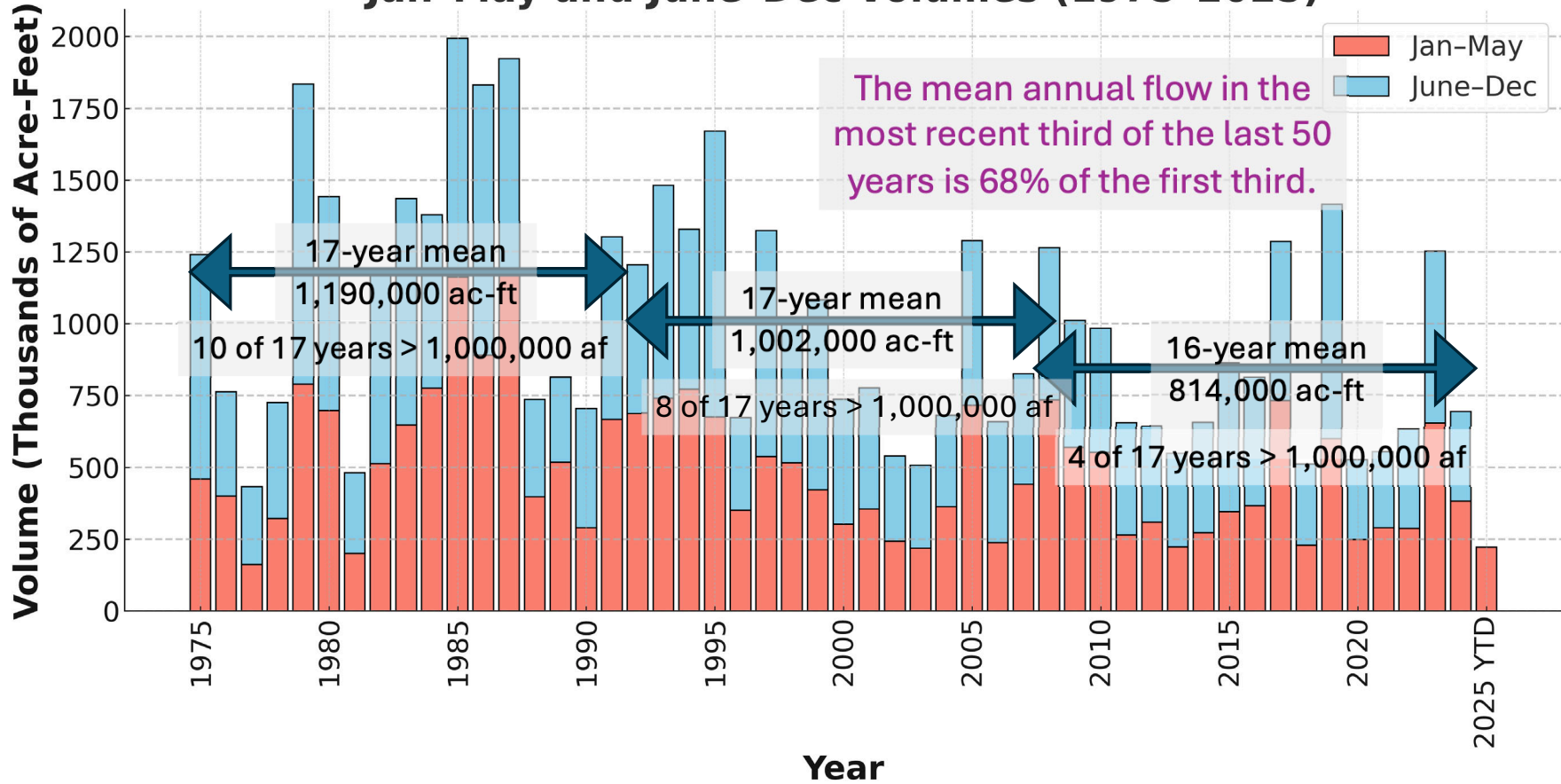
August 27, 2025
N Gaume photo

Elephant Butte Reservoir – August 2022



The Water Desk, © Mitch Tobin, by permission

Annual Rio Grande Flow at Otowi Bridge Jan-May and June-Dec Volumes (1975-2025)



A photograph of a river flowing through a rocky, vegetated landscape under a cloudy sky. The river is in the foreground, with water splashing over rocks. The background shows a hillside covered in dense, green vegetation and large rocks. The sky is overcast with grey clouds, and a bright light source is visible on the left side, creating a glow.

The Rio *Poco Grande*: This is Aridification, Not Drought

- **This is permanent drying. A drought is expected to end.**
- **A 25% percent decrease in useable water sounded bad.**
- **This year, the Rio Grande streamflow decrease exceeds 60%. The San Juan-Chama Project 2025 decrease is 69%.**
- **New Mexico is extremely vulnerable to hotter temperatures**

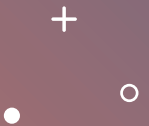
- +
 - • New Mexico has one managed aquifer

Which one?

When?

Why?

What's the lesson?



Groundwater (out of sight & mind)

- New Mexico is highly dependent on groundwater; more so than any other state.
- Across New Mexico, fossil groundwater is being mined and depleted.
 - Over 400,000 acres of groundwater only irrigation, most of it for hay
- We don't know how much groundwater is left or how fast those volumes are being depleted.
- Clovis and Portales situation
 - Eastern New Mexico Water Supply Project
- No state groundwater administration other than permits