

LAKE ELSINORE VALLEY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

April 9, 2025

The Honorable Ken Calvert
2205 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

RE: Support for the City of Lake Elsinore's Project Requests

Dear Representative Calvert:

We are writing to express our support for the City of Lake Elsinore's community project funding requests for Fiscal Year 2026. The three proposed projects are not only essential to addressing current community needs but also represent strategic investments in the City's long-term growth and prosperity.

Each initiative is thoughtfully designed to enhance the quality of life for residents, stimulate economic development, and provide lasting benefits to the broader region. Most importantly, these projects are fully aligned with the City's long-range strategic framework—the Dream Extreme 2040 Plan—as well as its comprehensive economic development strategy.

Together, these efforts reflect Lake Elsinore's bold vision to become Southern California's premier lakefront destination—an inclusive community where individuals and families can live, work, play, build their futures, and realize their dreams.

1. Water Quality Project

Lake Elsinore is proud to be home to Southern California's largest natural freshwater lake—a unique and treasured asset that serves as both an ecological resource and a vibrant recreational destination for the region. Spanning approximately 3,000 acres, this natural lake is a centerpiece of the community, drawing residents and visitors alike for boating, fishing, kayaking, and other outdoor activities.

Located at the terminus of the vast 780-square-mile San Jacinto Watershed, Lake Elsinore relies primarily on rainfall and watershed runoff to maintain its water levels. However, while this natural inflow is critical to the lake's replenishment, it also presents significant environmental challenges. Runoff from across the watershed often carries high volumes of sediment, nutrients, and pollutants that accumulate in the lake over time.

This ongoing sedimentation process disrupts the lake's delicate ecological balance, leading to water quality degradation and contributing to a host of environmental issues. Among the most concerning impacts are periodic fish die-offs and the frequent occurrence of harmful algal blooms (HABs), which not only pose risks to aquatic life but also affect public health, recreational use, and the overall vitality of the lake.

Addressing these challenges requires sustained investment, innovative technology, and a comprehensive lake management strategy to protect and preserve this invaluable natural resource for generations to come.

In 2023, the City of Lake Elsinore adopted its first-ever Lake Management Plan and began implementing targeted projects to restore and improve the lake. Over the past two years, the City has invested more than \$5 million toward these efforts.

LAKE ELSINORE VALLEY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

While significant progress has been made, additional support is crucial to protect the investments already made. Continued funding is needed to fully implement the remaining strategies in the Lake Management Plan—especially those aimed at improving water clarity and controlling algal blooms. Without this critical final phase of funding, previous investments risk being lost, and the lake's recovery could be set back dramatically.

- **Federal Funding Sought: \$8 million**
- **City Contribution: \$2 million**

2. Central Avenue Interchange: Linking Lake Elsinore to Riverside County

The City of Lake Elsinore, in partnership with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), is advancing a critical infrastructure project to improve the Interstate 15 (I-15) and State Route 74 (SR-74)/Central Avenue Interchange. This interchange serves as a major gateway into the city and is a key connector for both regional commuters and local residents. The proposed improvements are essential to easing current traffic congestion, improving safety, and enhancing overall mobility in and around the project area.

The I-15/SR-74 Interchange Improvement Project is not only a response to existing traffic and safety concerns—it is also a proactive measure to accommodate future growth. The State of California has placed significant housing mandates on cities, requiring them to plan for and support substantial increases in residential development. Lake Elsinore has embraced these mandates and is actively working to expand its housing supply to meet current and future needs. However, the success of this growth depends heavily on modern, efficient infrastructure.

Without strategic investments like the I-15/SR-74 Interchange Project, the city's transportation network will be unable to support the volume of new residents and the corresponding increase in vehicular traffic. Local intersections near the interchange are already experiencing congestion and delays, and traffic volumes are projected to worsen as housing construction accelerates. Upgrading the interchange is critical to maintaining safe, efficient travel for residents, commuters, emergency responders, and commercial vehicles.

The total cost of construction for this project is estimated at \$45 million. Federal appropriations are being sought to fund key components of the project, including right-of-way acquisition and construction. These improvements will not only address immediate transportation needs but also lay the foundation for sustainable regional growth and development.

This project represents a strategic opportunity to align infrastructure investment with state housing goals, ensuring Lake Elsinore and the surrounding region can grow responsibly while protecting the quality of life for current and future residents. Federal support is vital to moving this project forward and achieving the long-term vision for a more connected, livable, and economically vibrant region.

- **Federal Funding Sought: \$4.25 million**
- **City Contribution: \$2 million**

LAKE ELSINORE VALLEY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

3. Hospital Development

The City of Lake Elsinore is home to more than 70,000 residents, with a retail population of approximately 250,000 and a regional draw of over 1.5 million people. Despite this growing population, the region is served by only two urgent care centers, making Lake Elsinore a medical desert for even the most basic healthcare services.

This severe shortage contributes to higher mortality rates, unmanaged chronic diseases, and widening healthcare disparities. Both Lake Elsinore and the broader Southwest Riverside region lack the healthcare infrastructure, and the workforce needed to meet the growing demand, further compounding the crisis.

To address this, the City is pursuing the development of a full-service hospital complex through a public-private partnership. The proposed facility will include behavioral health treatment beds, as well as pediatric, cardiology, oncology, and geriatric services—directly targeting the region's most pressing health needs. This initiative will not only improve access to essential care but also reduce the current two-month wait times for specialty physician appointments.

By alleviating pressure on surrounding hospitals and emergency services, this project represents a vital investment in the region's future. It will enhance public safety, promote economic development, support cultural preservation, and improve overall healthcare accessibility. Federal support is critical to bring this vision to life and ensure long-term sustainability and a higher quality of life for Lake Elsinore residents and the surrounding communities.

- **Federal Funding Sought: \$3.5 million**
- **City Contribution: \$1.5million**

We strongly support each of these projects. We look forward to your support for the continued growth and development within the City of Lake Elsinore.

Sincerely,



Kim Joseph Cousins
President/CEO
Lake Elsinore Valley Chamber of Commerce
132 W. Graham Avenue
Lake Elsinore, CA 92530
(951) 834-5521
www.lakeelsinorechamber.com
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KAREN SPIEGEL
SECOND DISTRICT SUPERVISOR
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS



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COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE

April 14, 2025

The Honorable Ken Calvert
United States House of Representatives
2205 Rayburn House Offices Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

RE: Support for the City of Lake Elsinore's Project Requests

Dear Honorable Congressman Ken Calvert,

As the Riverside County Supervisor for the Second District, I would like to express my support for the City of Lake Elsinore's community project funding requests for Fiscal Year 2026. The three proposed projects are not only essential to addressing current community needs but also represent strategic investments in the City's long-term growth and prosperity. Each initiative is thoughtfully designed to enhance the quality of life for residents, stimulate economic development, and provide lasting benefits to the broader region. Most importantly, these projects are fully aligned with the City's long-range strategic framework—the Dream Extreme 2040 Plan—as well as its comprehensive economic development strategy.

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I strongly support each of these projects and respectfully request your consideration of the City of Lake Elsinore’s funding requests. Should you have any questions regarding my support, please feel free to contact my office at (951) 955-1020. Thank you for your time and consideration on behalf of the residents of Riverside County’s Second District.

Sincerely,



Karen Spiegel
Second District Supervisor
County of Riverside



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951.674.3124

130 S. MAIN STREET

LAKE ELSINORE, CA 92530

WWW.LAKE-ELSINORE.ORG

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We are fully committed to championing every one of these projects, recognizing their significant potential for the betterment of our community. With great anticipation, we seek your invaluable support to bolster the continued expansion and progress within the vibrant landscape of the City of Lake Elsinore. Together, let us pave the way for sustained growth and development, ensuring a prosperous future for generations to come.



Brian Tisdale
Mayor
City of Lake Elsinore



Jason Simpson
City Manager
City of Lake Elsinore