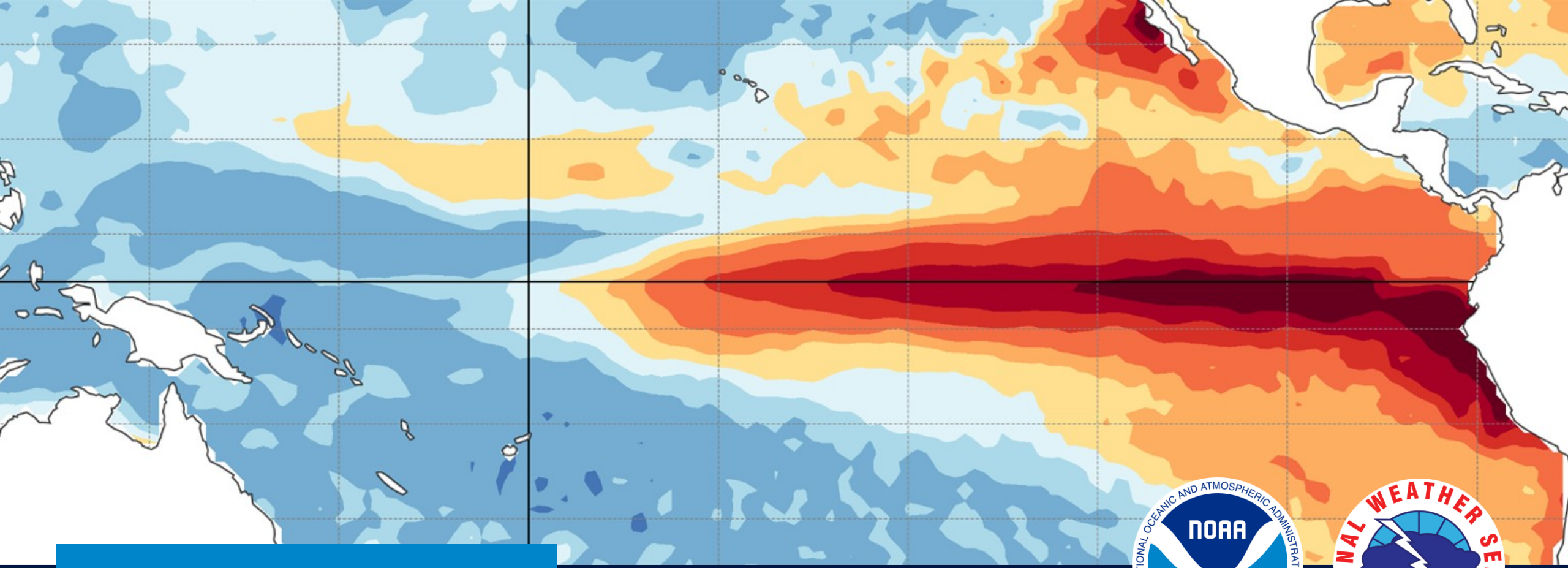


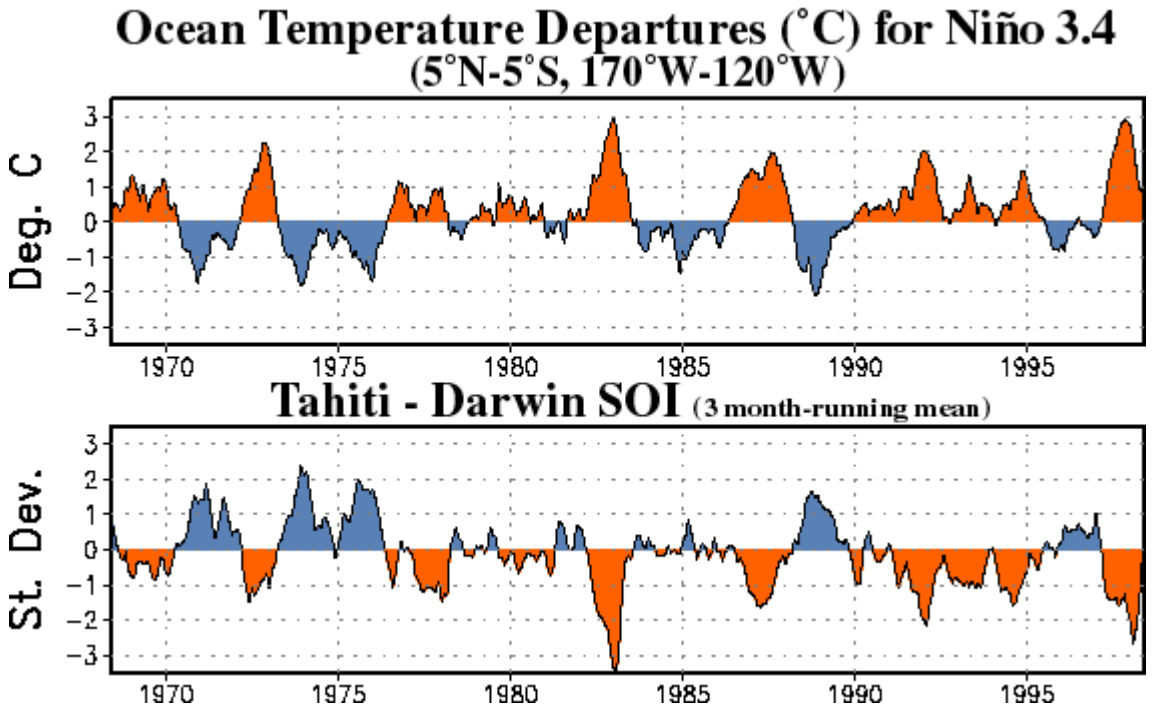
Winter Weather Outlook 2026-27

For the Oregon Chapter of the American Met. Soc.

Lee Picard, Lead Meteorologist, NOAA/NWS/WFO Portland OR

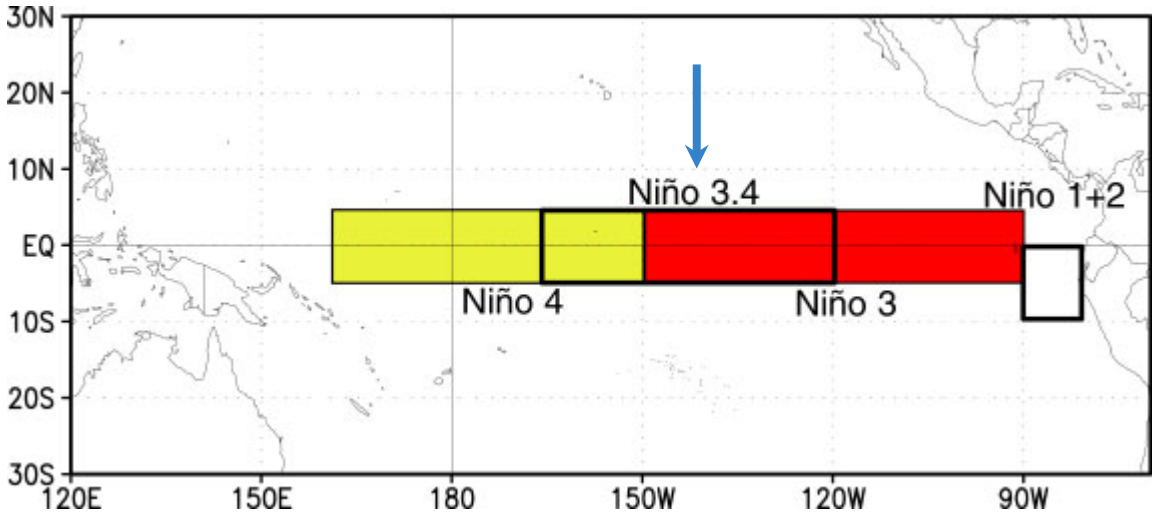
U.S. Department of Commerce
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
National Weather Service

What is the El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO)?



Ocean-Atmosphere Coupling

The temperature anomalies in the tropical east Pacific (El Niño) are strongly correlated with surface pressure anomalies (Southern Oscillation) in the tropical west Pacific. This is evidence of a coupled ocean-atmosphere system: **ENSO**

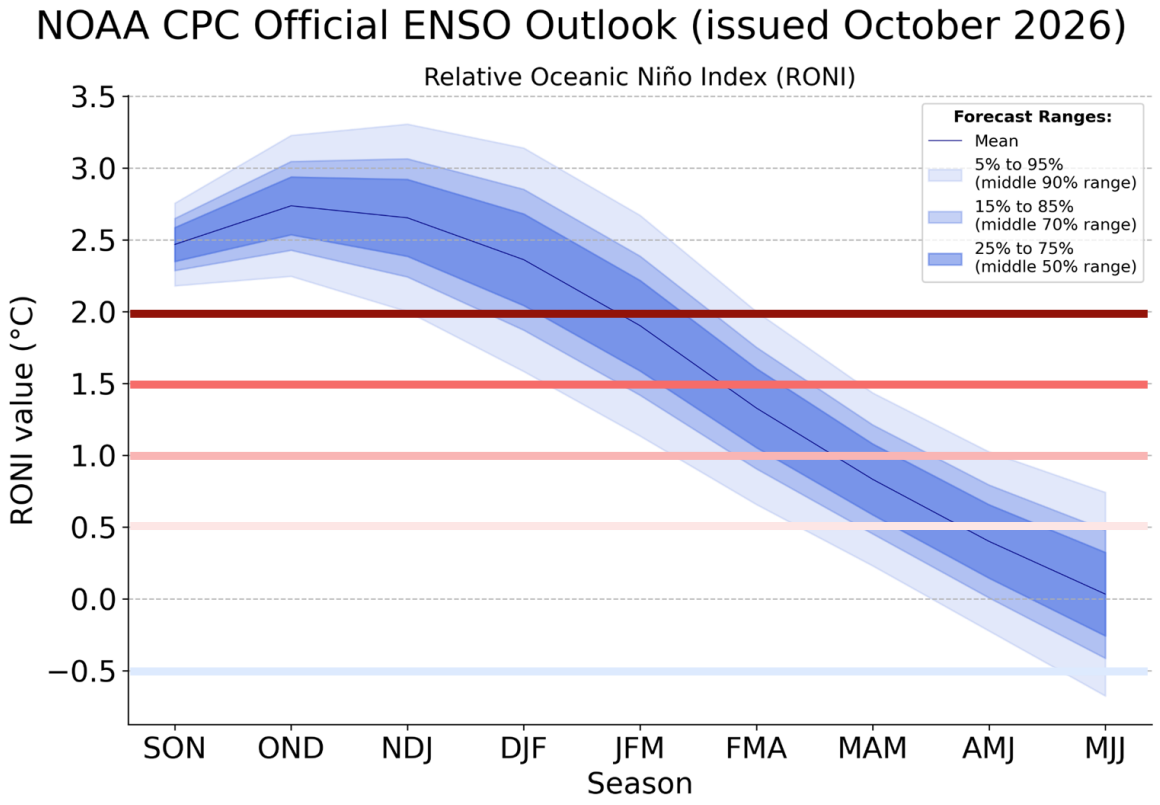


Sea Surface Temperature Regions

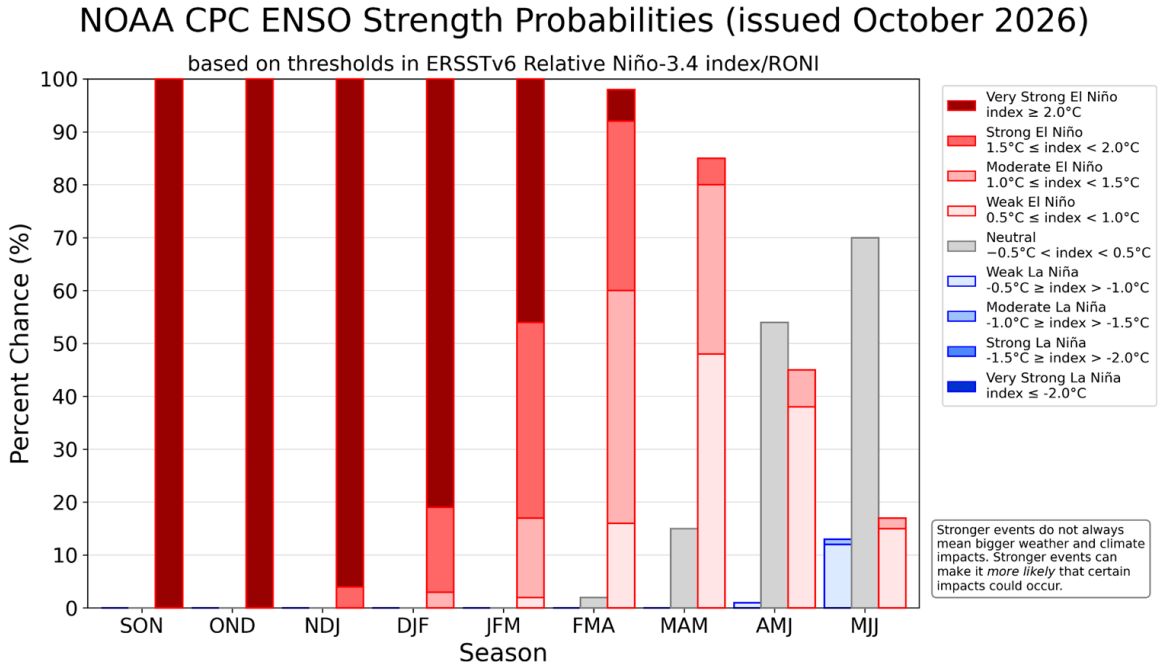
The Niño 3.4 region (center black box identified by the blue arrow above) is used for NWS ENSO status assessments.

Temperature anomalies compared to elsewhere in the tropics determine the Relative Oceanic Niño Index (**RONI**).

ENSO Outlook



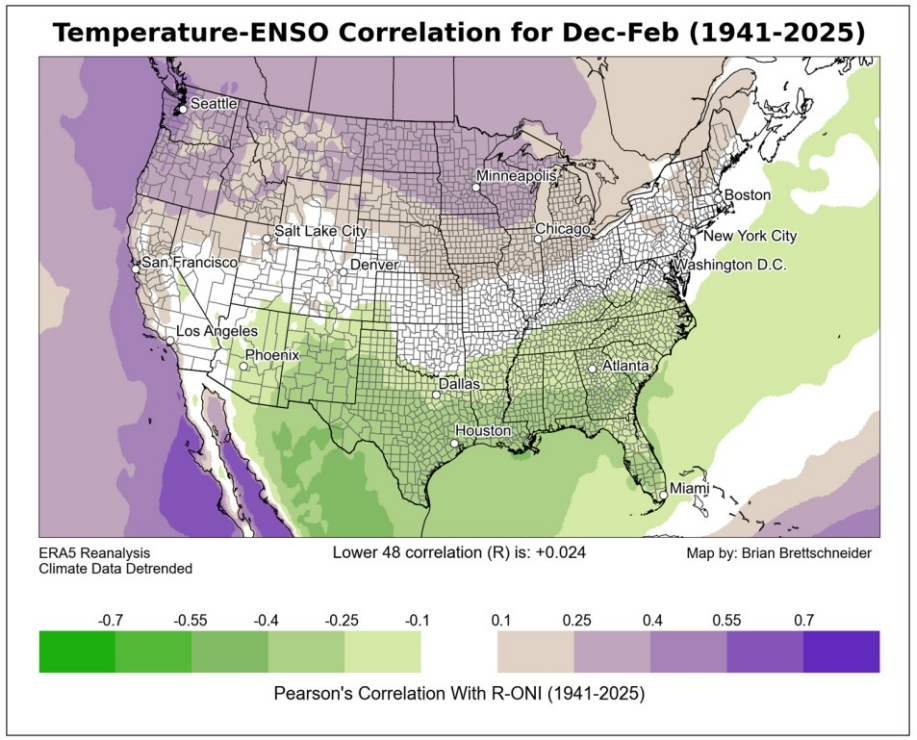
High confidence in continued Very Strong El Niño conditions through this winter (DJF)



Increasing chances for a weakening El Niño by the late winter or early spring

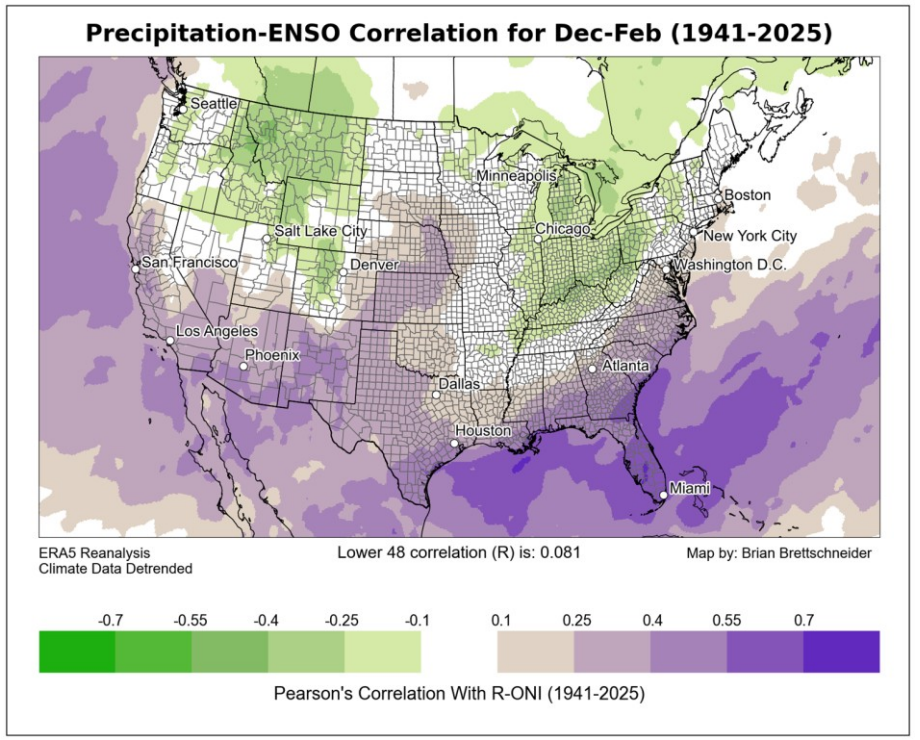
50% or greater chances for ENSO-neutral conditions by the late spring or early summer

ENSO Winter Correlations



Temperature

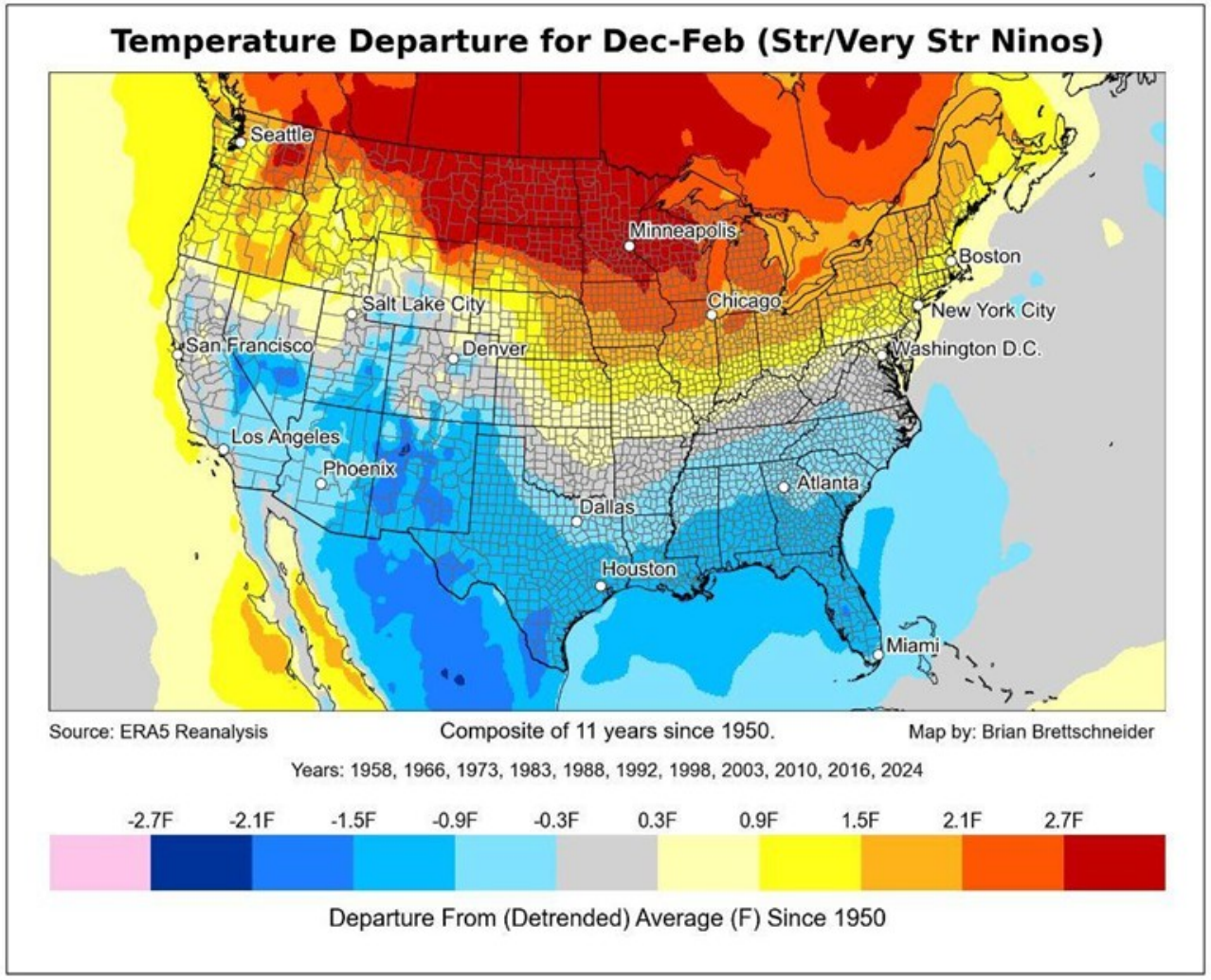
Modest positive correlation between RONI and winter temperatures in Oregon, decreasing to the south.

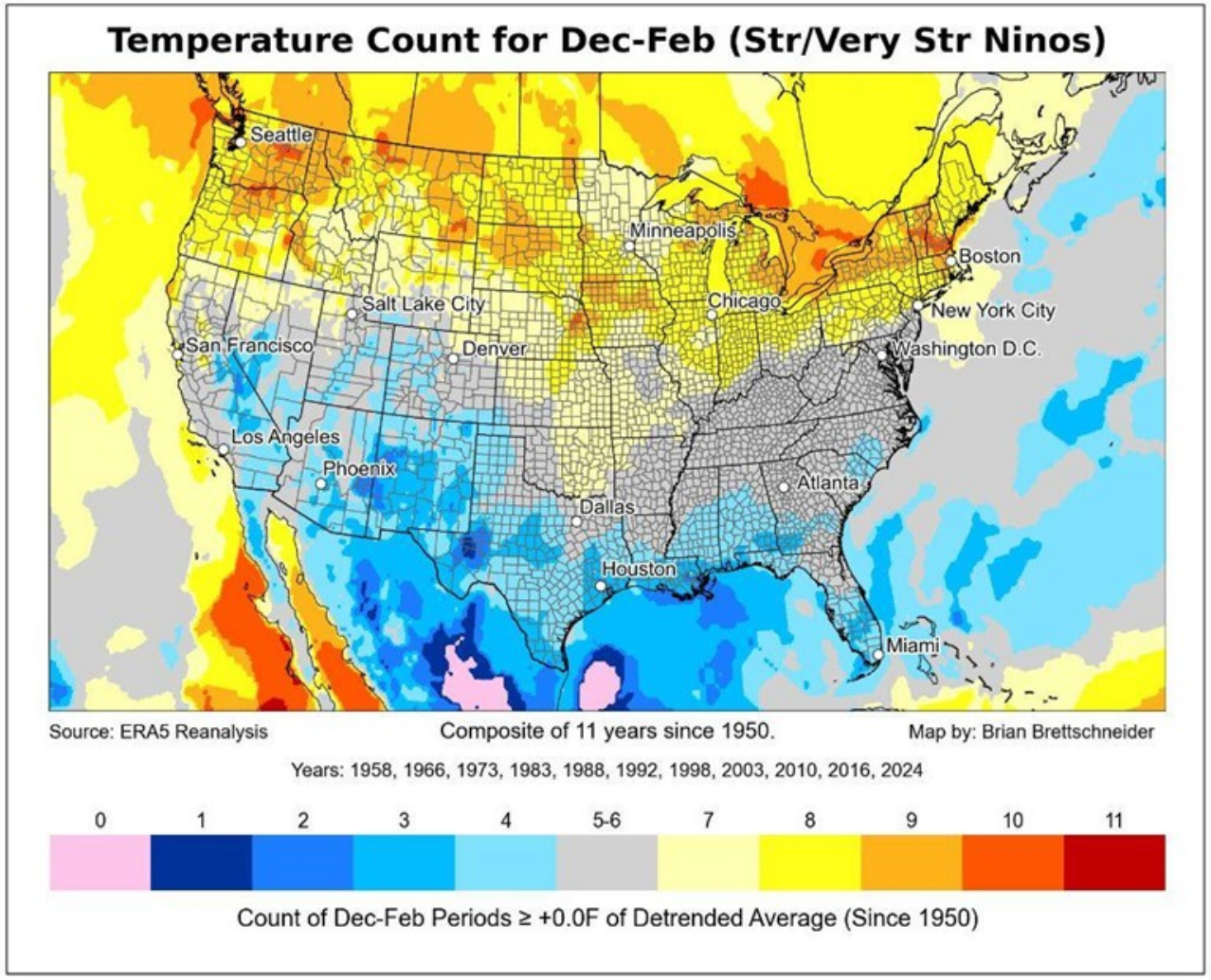


Precipitation

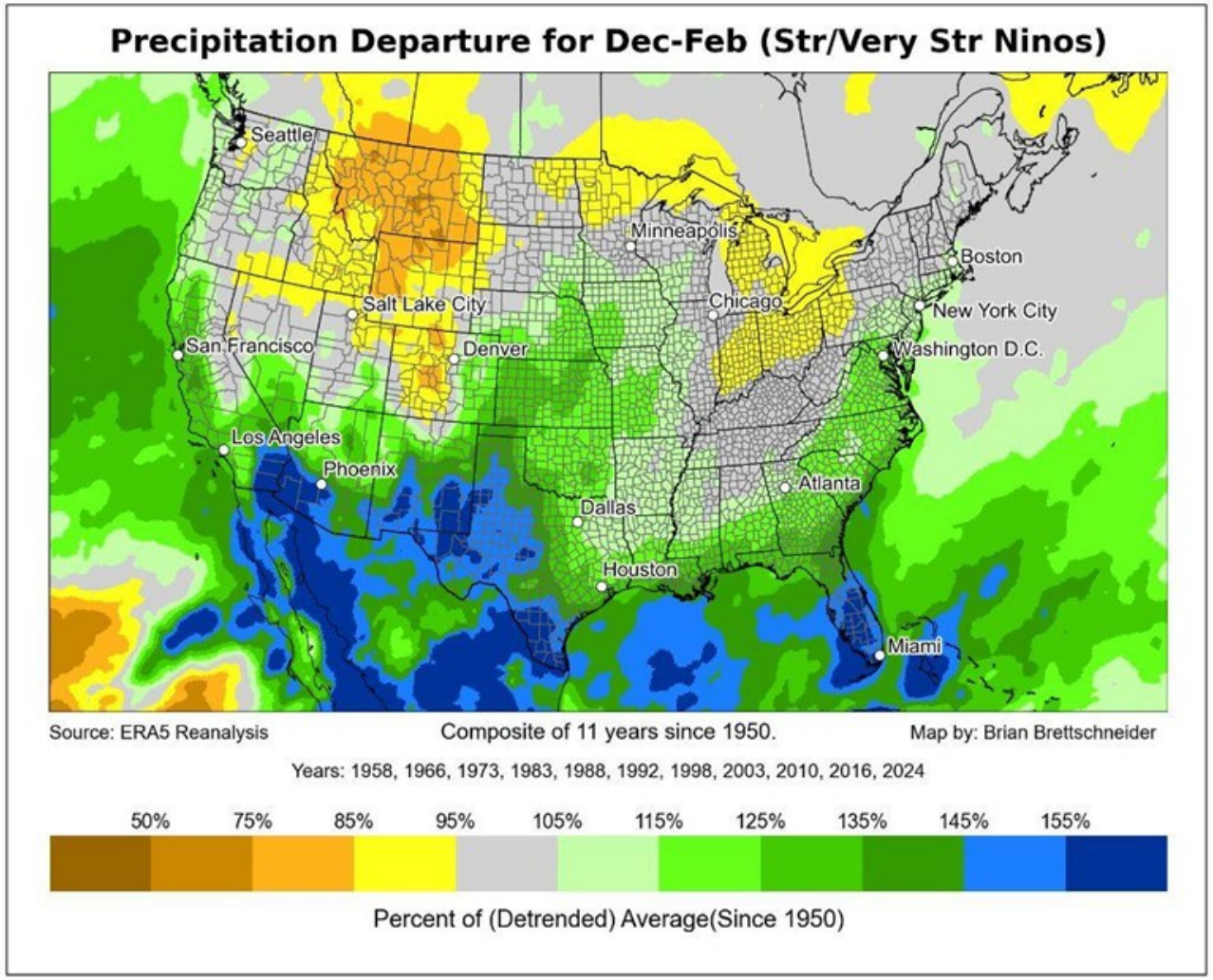
Minimal correlation between RONI and winter precipitation in Oregon, but a positive correlation to the south.

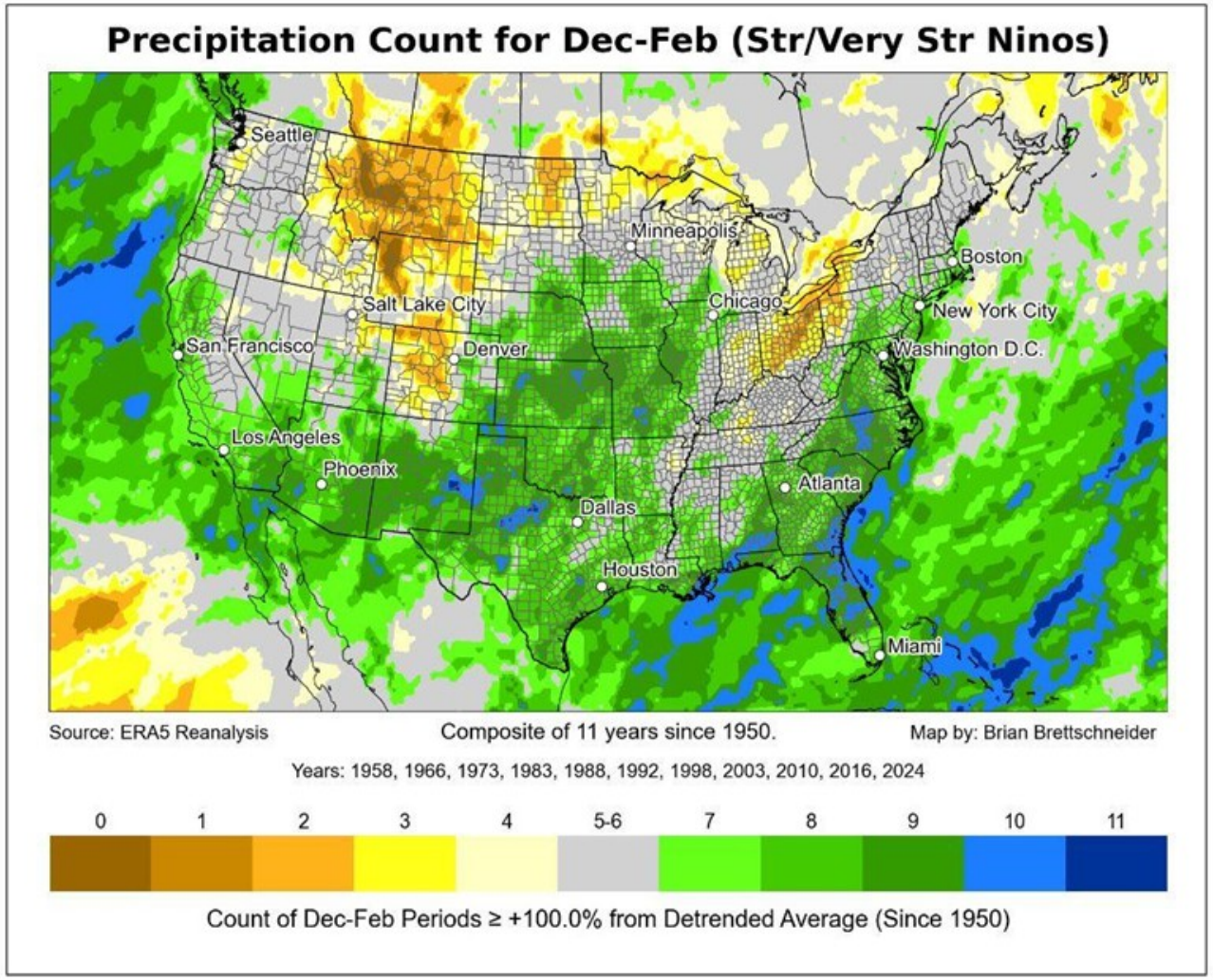
El Niño Winter Temperature Tendencies





El Niño Winter Precipitation Tendencies

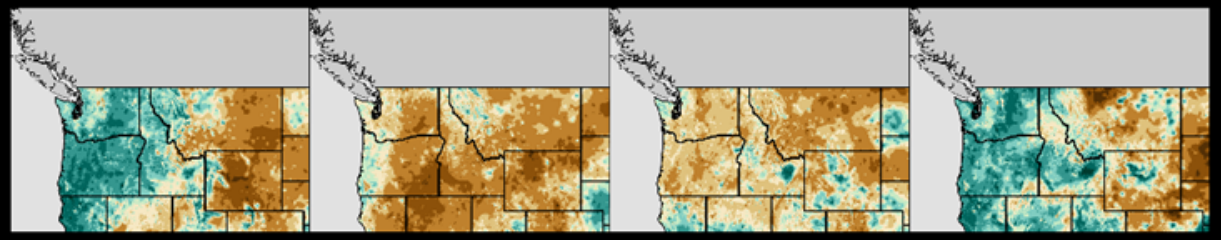




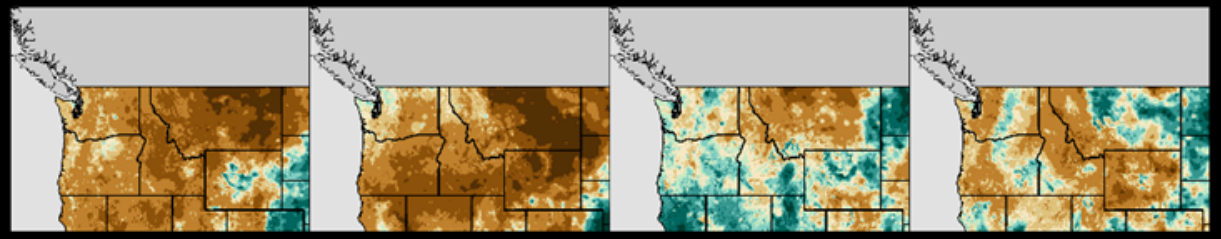
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE
NATIONAL OCEANIC & ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

STRONG EL NIÑO CASES

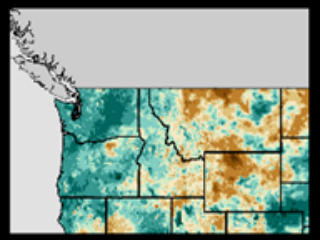
Precipitation



1957-1958 1965-1966* 1972-1973* 1982-1983*

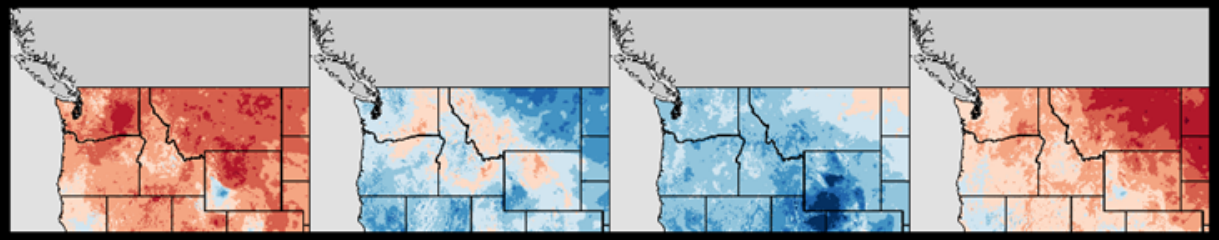


1986-1987 1991-1992* 1997-1998* 2009-2010

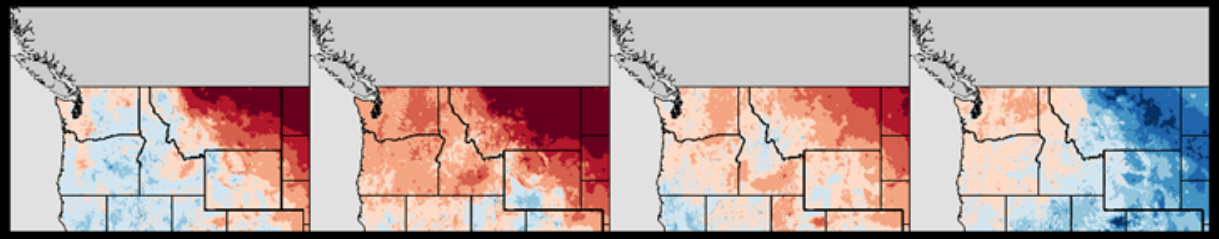


2015-2016*

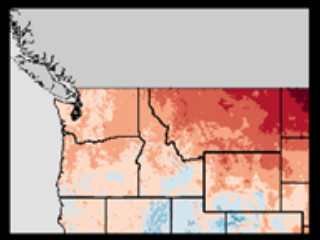
Temperature



1957-1958 1965-1966* 1972-1973* 1982-1983*



1986-1987 1991-1992* 1997-1998* 2009-2010



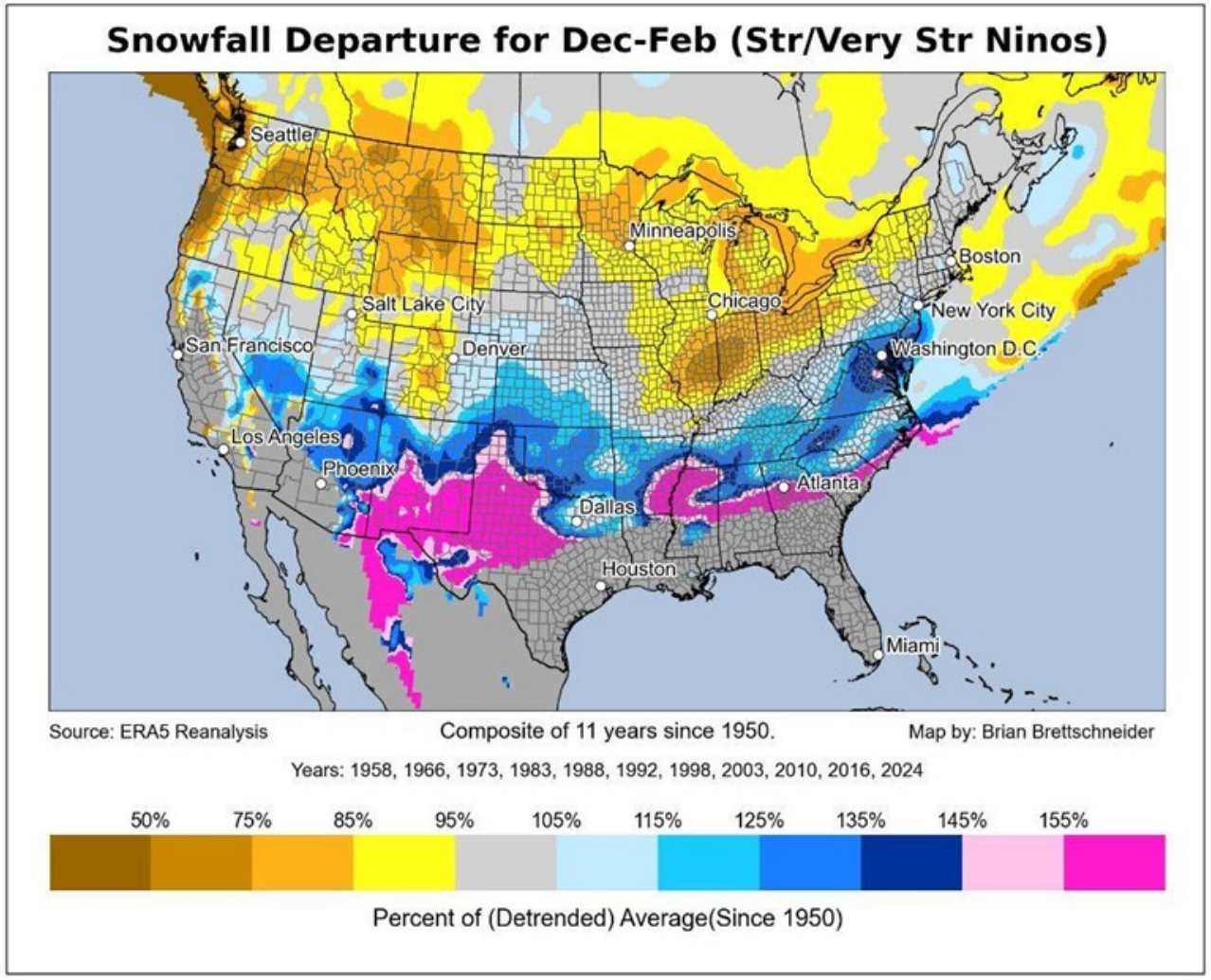
2015-2016*

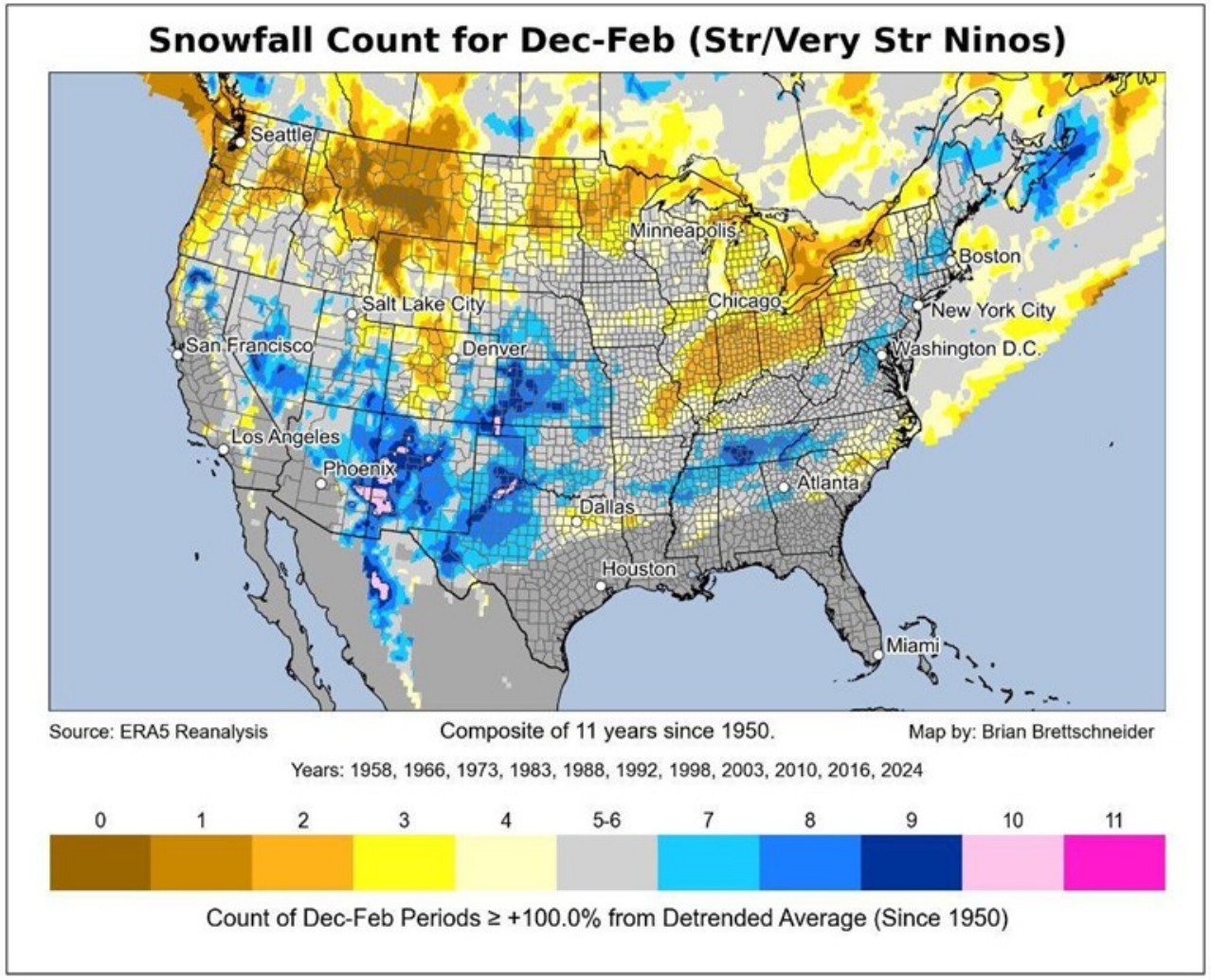
Precipitation
Percent of Normal
25 50 75 90 100 110 125 150 200

Data: PRISM, Oregon State University
*Very Strong El Nino Cases

-8 -6 -4 -2 0 +2 +4 +6 +8
Temperature
Departure from Normal

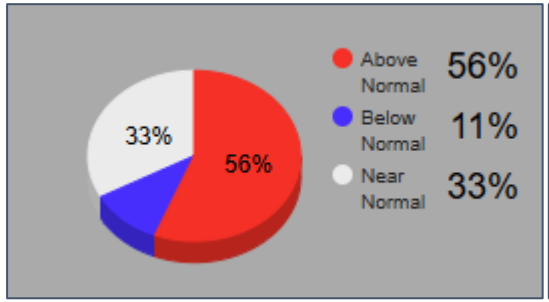
El Niño Winter Snowfall Tendencies



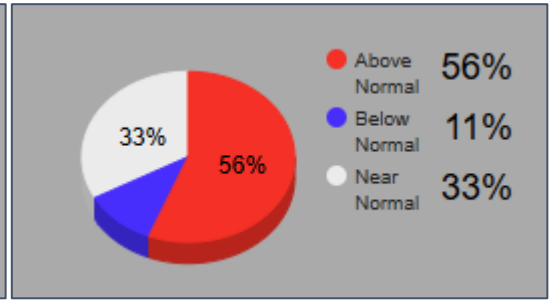


Winter 2026-27 Temperature Outlook

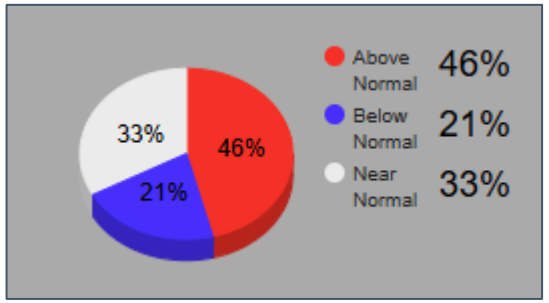
Warmer than normal temperatures favored across all of Oregon, with greater than 50% chances in the northern half of the state.



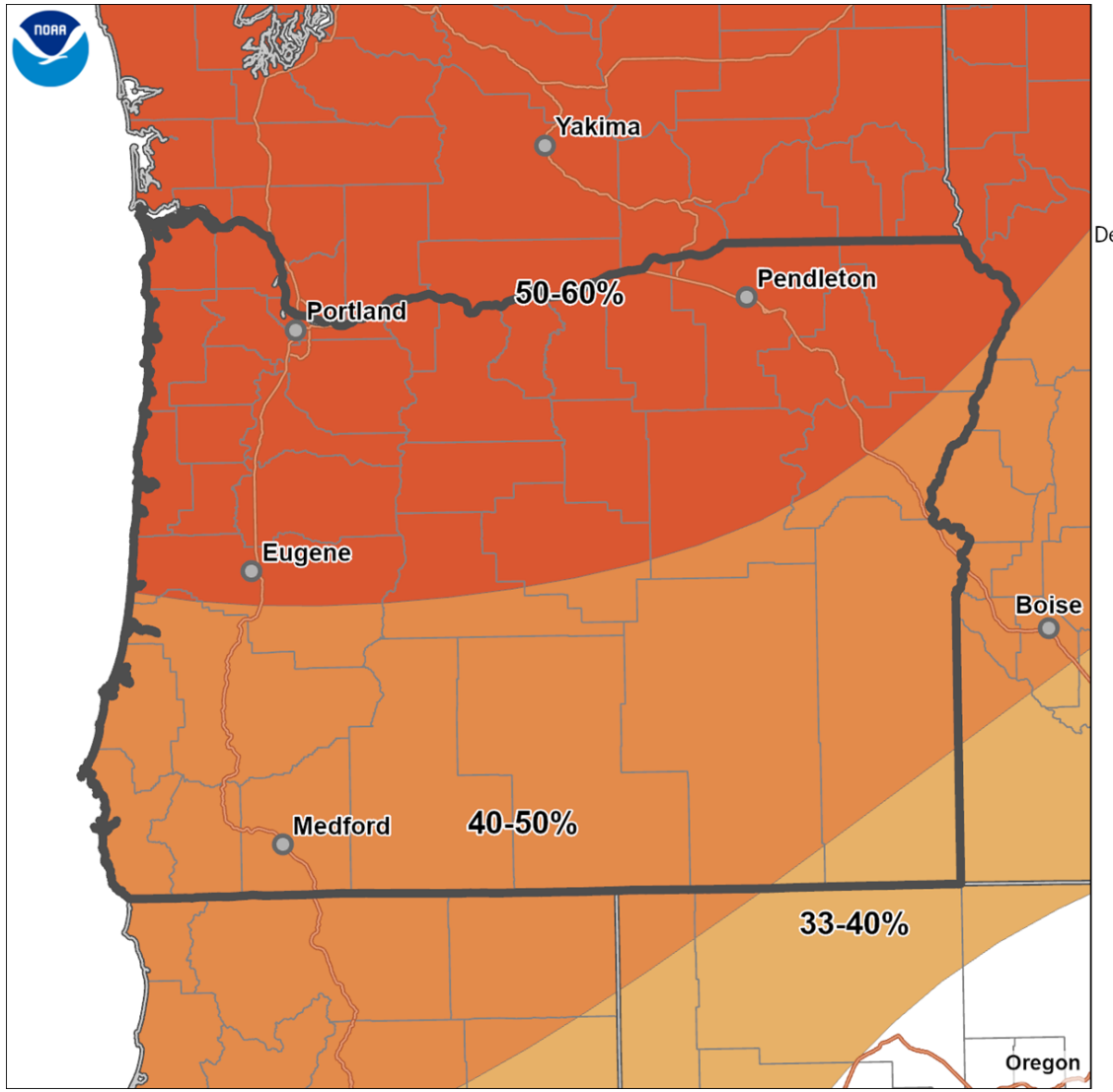
Portland



Pendleton



Medford



Seasonal Temperature Outlook

Valid:
December, 2026 - February, 2027

Probability (Percent Chance)

Above Normal
Likely Above: 90-100%, 80-90%, 70-80%, 60-70%, 50-60%
Leaning Above: 40-50%, 33-40%

Near Normal
33-40%
40-50%

Below Normal
Leaning Below: 33-40%, 40-50%
Likely Below: 50-60%, 60-70%, 70-80%, 80-90%, 90-100%

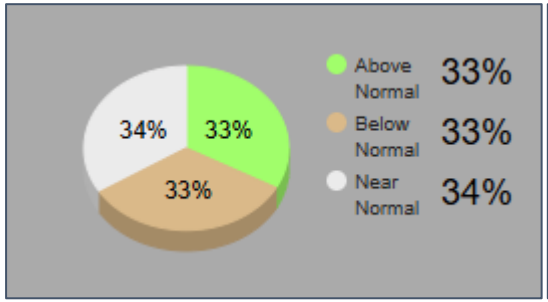
Equal Chances

Climate Prediction Center
Issued:
October 15, 2026

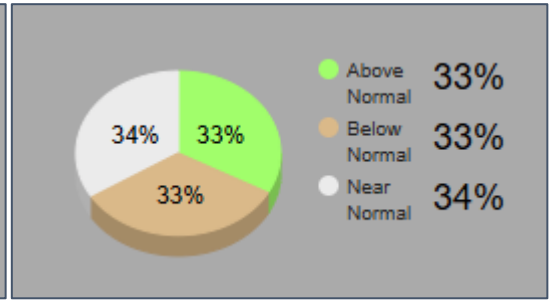
www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov

Winter 2026-27 Precipitation Outlook

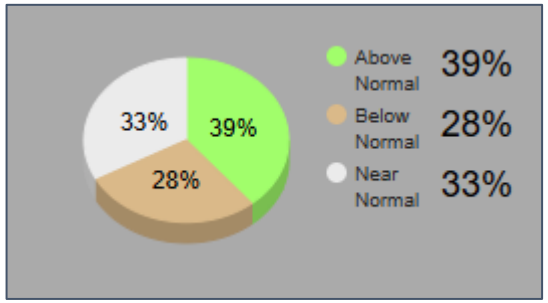
Wetter than normal conditions favored in southwestern Oregon, with **equal chances** elsewhere in the state.



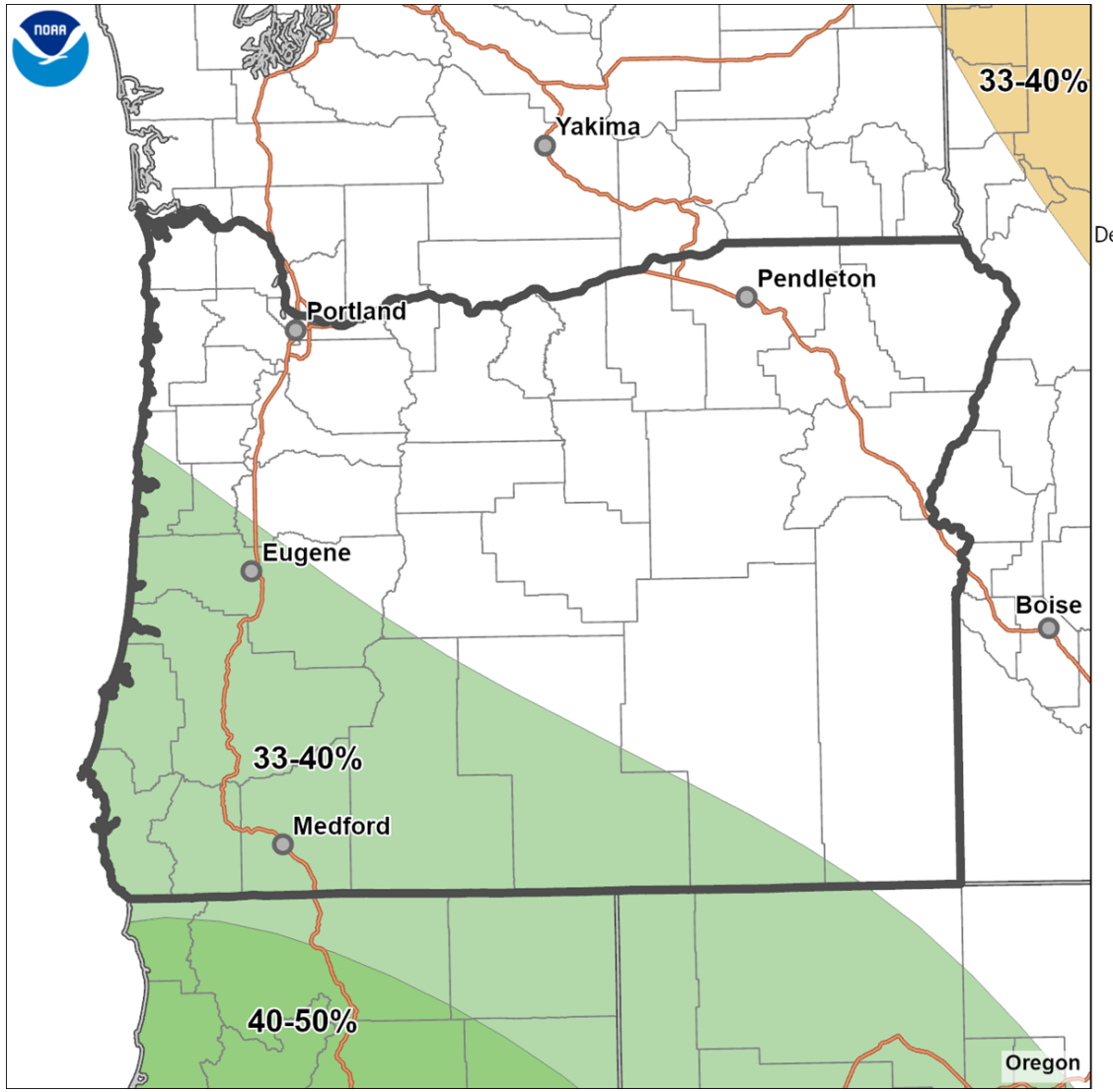
Portland



Pendleton



Medford



Seasonal Precipitation Outlook

Valid:
December, 2026 - February, 2027

Probability (Percent Chance)

Above Normal
- Likely Above: 90-100%, 80-90%, 70-80%, 60-70%, 50-60%
- Leaning Above: 40-50%, 33-40%

Near Normal
33-40%
40-50%

Below Normal
- Leaning Below: 33-40%, 40-50%
- Likely Below: 50-60%, 60-70%, 70-80%, 80-90%, 90-100%

Equal Chances

Climate Prediction Center
Issued:
October 15, 2026

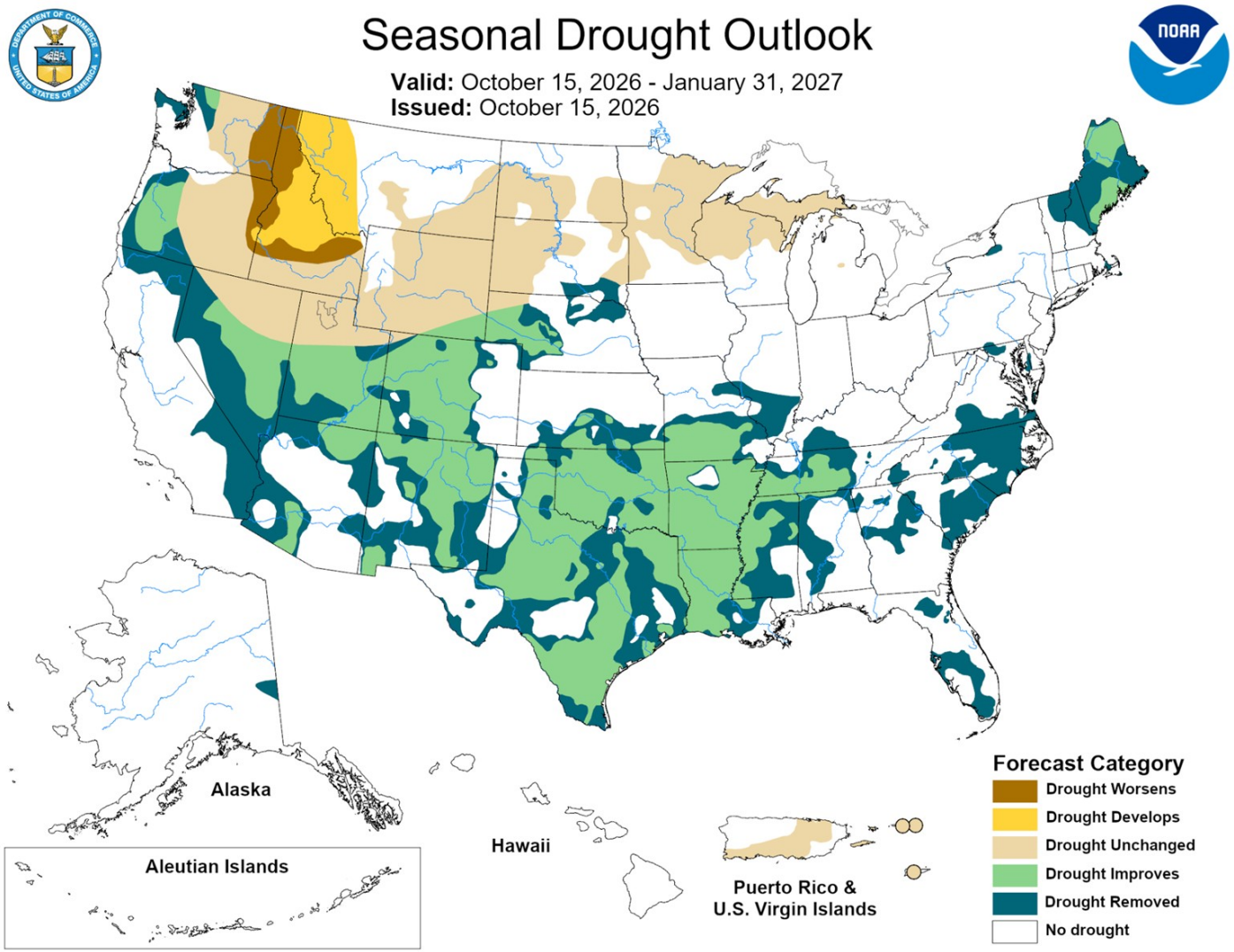
www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov

Winter 2026-27 Drought Outlook

Drought improvement favored west of the Cascades due to the upcoming wet season where about half of average annual precipitation falls in the winter.

Drought improvement also favored across southwestern Oregon where El Niño favors a wetter-than-normal winter.

Drought maintenance or intensification favored across central and eastern Oregon where there is an higher likelihood of near- or below-normal seasonal precipitation.



Winter Safety: *This Season Is No Different*



