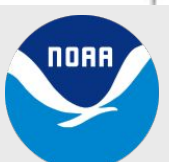
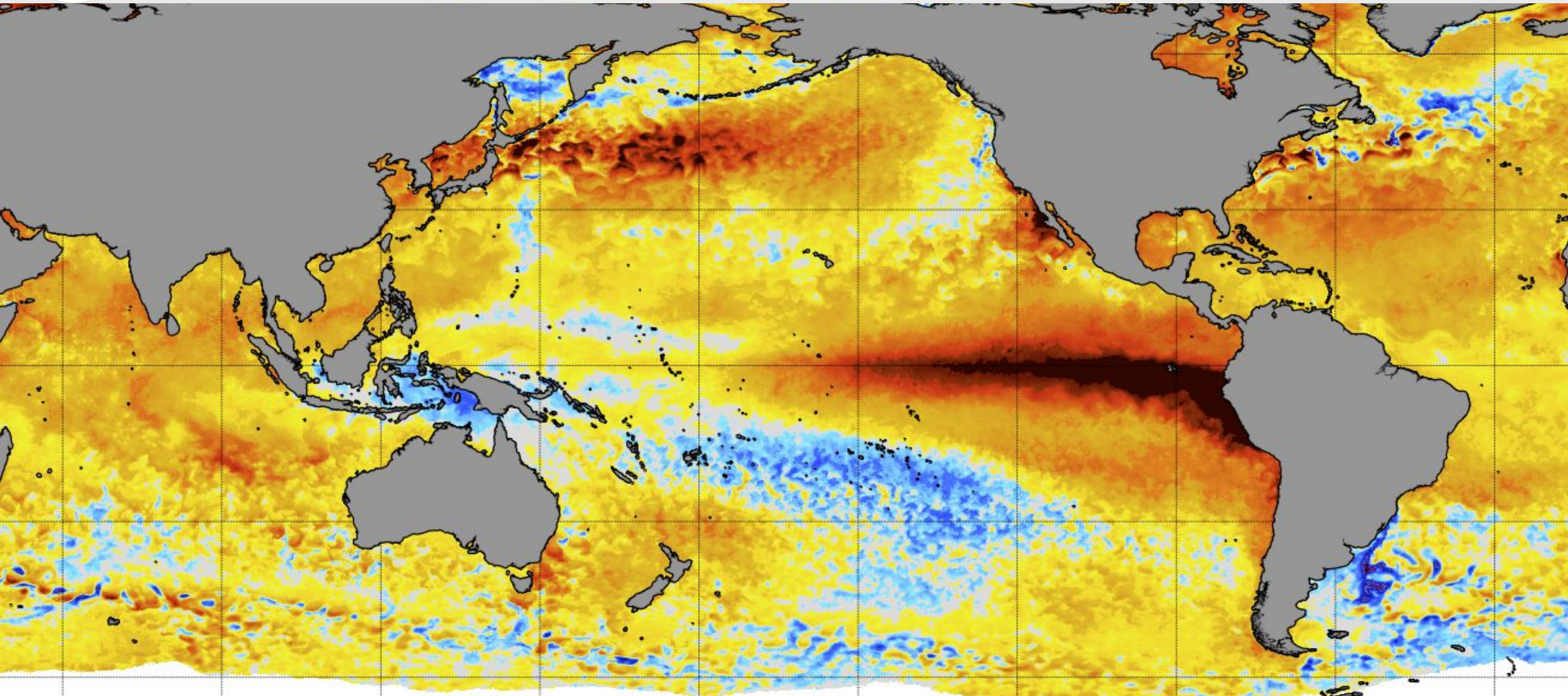


ENSO Outlook - October 2026 Update

October 16, 2026
2:00 PM PDT

Prepared By: NWS Eureka



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

National Weather Service
Eureka, CA



What is El Niño?

October 16, 2026
2:00 PM PDT

El Niño is the **warm phase** of the coupled climate pattern between the ocean and atmosphere called El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) in the tropical Pacific Ocean.

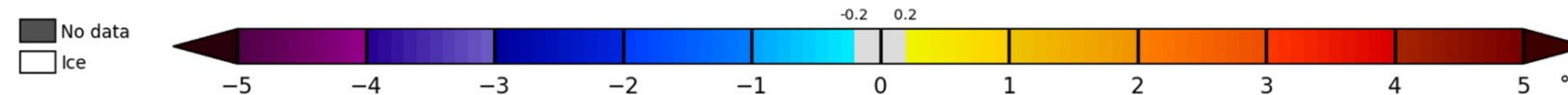
How is it quantified?

Sea-Surface Temperature Anomalies in this region

Niño 3.4 Region

El Niño technically occurs when this SST anomaly exceeds a 3-month average of $+0.5^{\circ}\text{C}$ for 5 consecutive monthly periods.

NOAA SST Anomalies



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El Niño/La Niña Status & Outlook

October 16, 2026
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El Niño/La Niña Status & Forecast

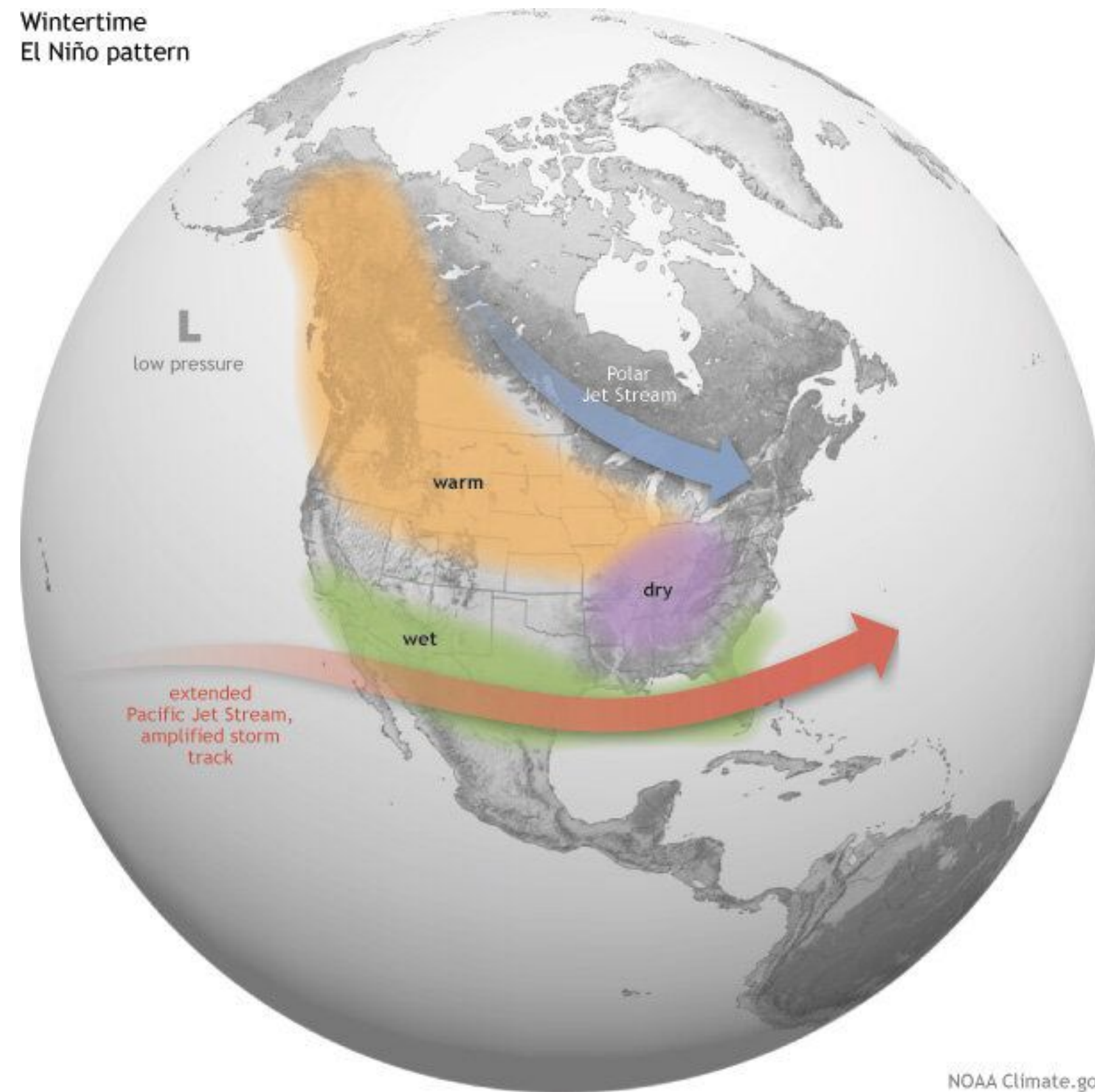
El Niño Advisory

Typical Wintertime Effects Shown Here

⚠ No two years are alike

- El Niño is present.
- Equatorial sea surface temperatures (SSTs) are above average across the Central and Eastern Pacific Ocean.
- El Niño will strengthen over the next few months and become a **very strong event**.
- There is a **83% chance of an historic event** that would exceed that strengths of previous El Niños dating back to 1950.

Wintertime
El Niño pattern



NOAA Climate.gov



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How Strong Will It Be?

October 16, 2026
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El Niño Categories

$\geq +0.5^{\circ}\text{C}$

Weak El Niño

$\geq +1.0^{\circ}\text{C}$

Moderate El Niño

$\geq +1.5^{\circ}\text{C}$

Strong El Niño

$\geq +2.0^{\circ}\text{C}$

Very Strong El Niño

$+2.4^{\circ}\text{C}$

Record Strength

Probability of Peak Strength

100%

Last month's update: 100%

100%

Last month's update: 100%

100%

Last month's update: >99%

100%

Last month's update: 98%

83%

Last month's update: 75%

WY1983

Record Strength
does not guarantee
Record Impacts

Past ENSO RONI values available here: [Climate Prediction Center - Relative Oceanic Niño Index \(RONI\)](#)



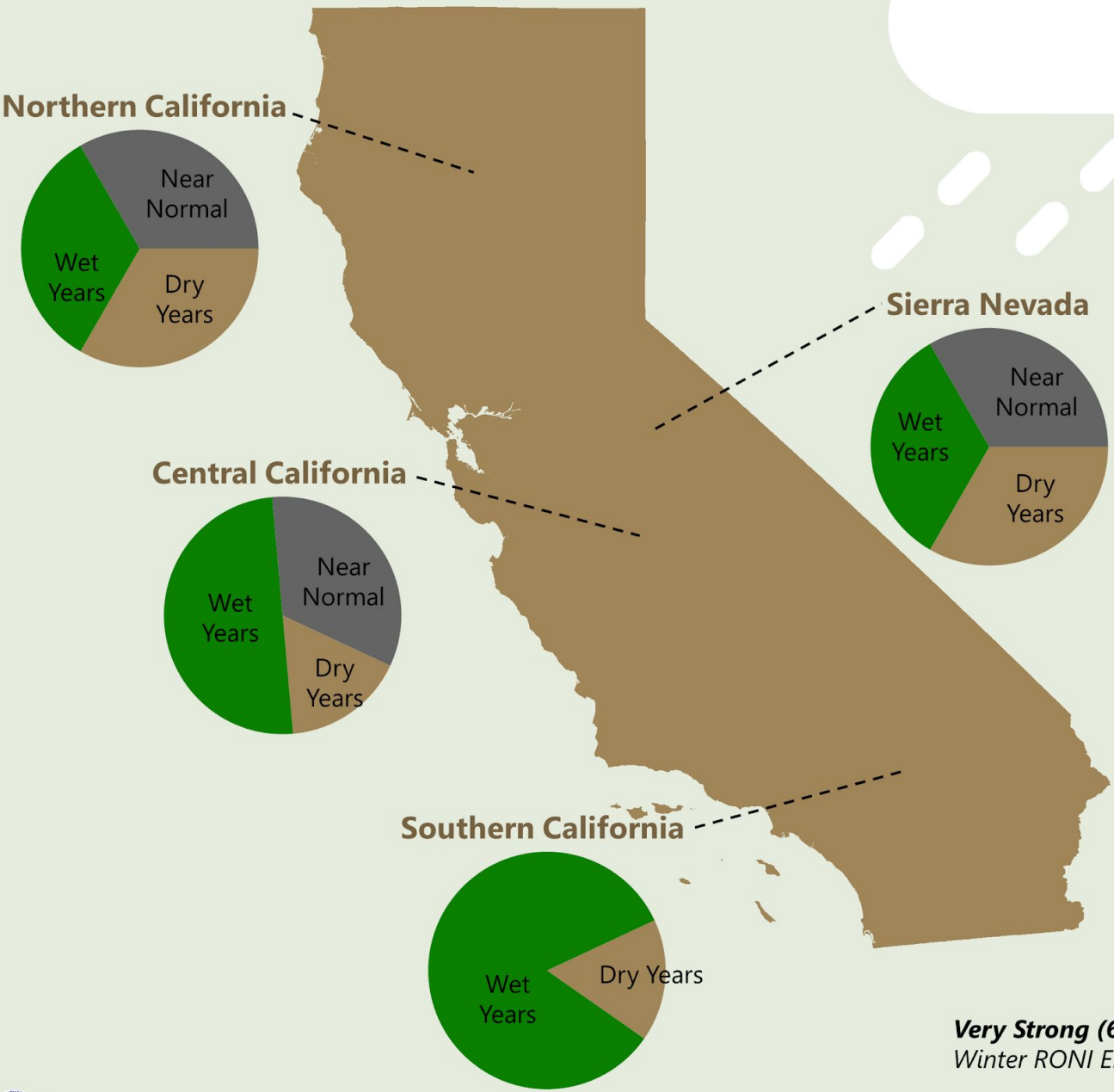


Historical **Very Strong** El Niños

October 16, 2026
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Very Strong El Niños

Past observations do not guarantee a future outcome



NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE
SACRAMENTO, CA

Data: PRISM, Oregon State University
Updated: WY2026

- There have been **6 Very Strong El Niños** since 1950: 1965-66, 1972-73, 1982-83, 1991-92, 1997-98, and 2015-16.
- Of those 6, the breakdown has been...
 - **Northern CA:**
 - 2 Wet
 - 2 Normal
 - 2 Dry
 - **Central CA:**
 - 3 Wet
 - 2 Normal
 - 1 Dry
 - **Southern CA:**
 - 5 Wet
 - 0 Normal
 - 1 Dry
 - **Sierra Nevada:**
 - 2 Wet
 - 2 Normal
 - 2 Dry

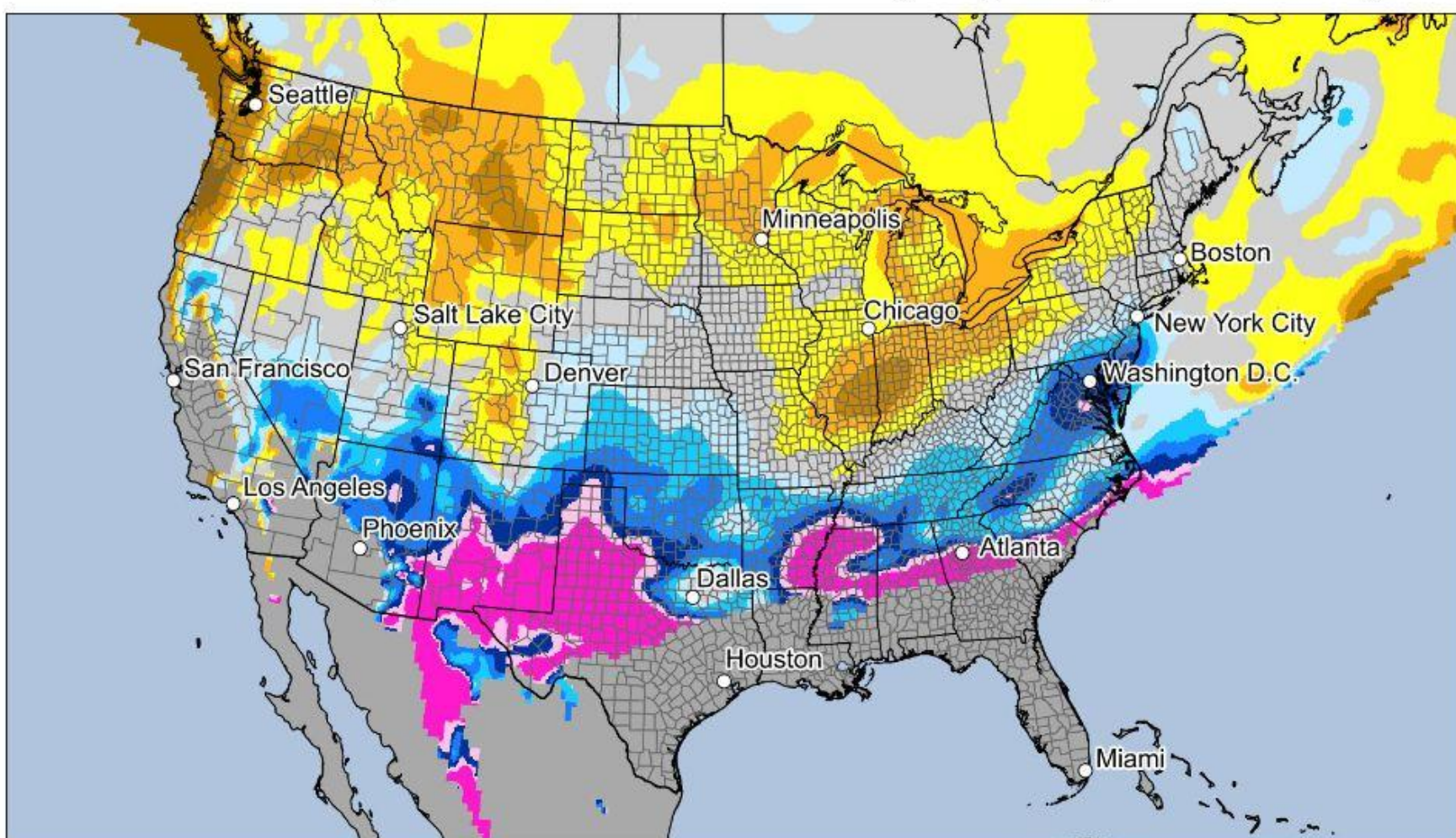




Snowfall during Strong/Very Strong El Niños

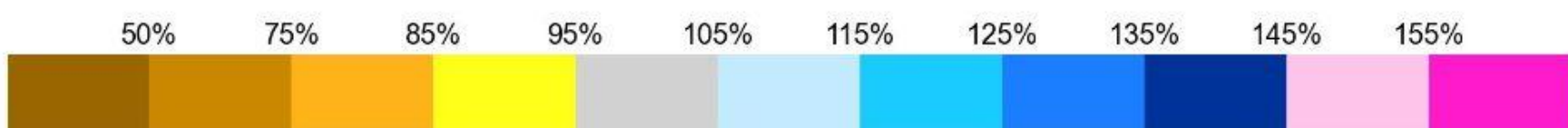
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Snowfall Departure for Dec-Feb (Str/Very Str Ninos)



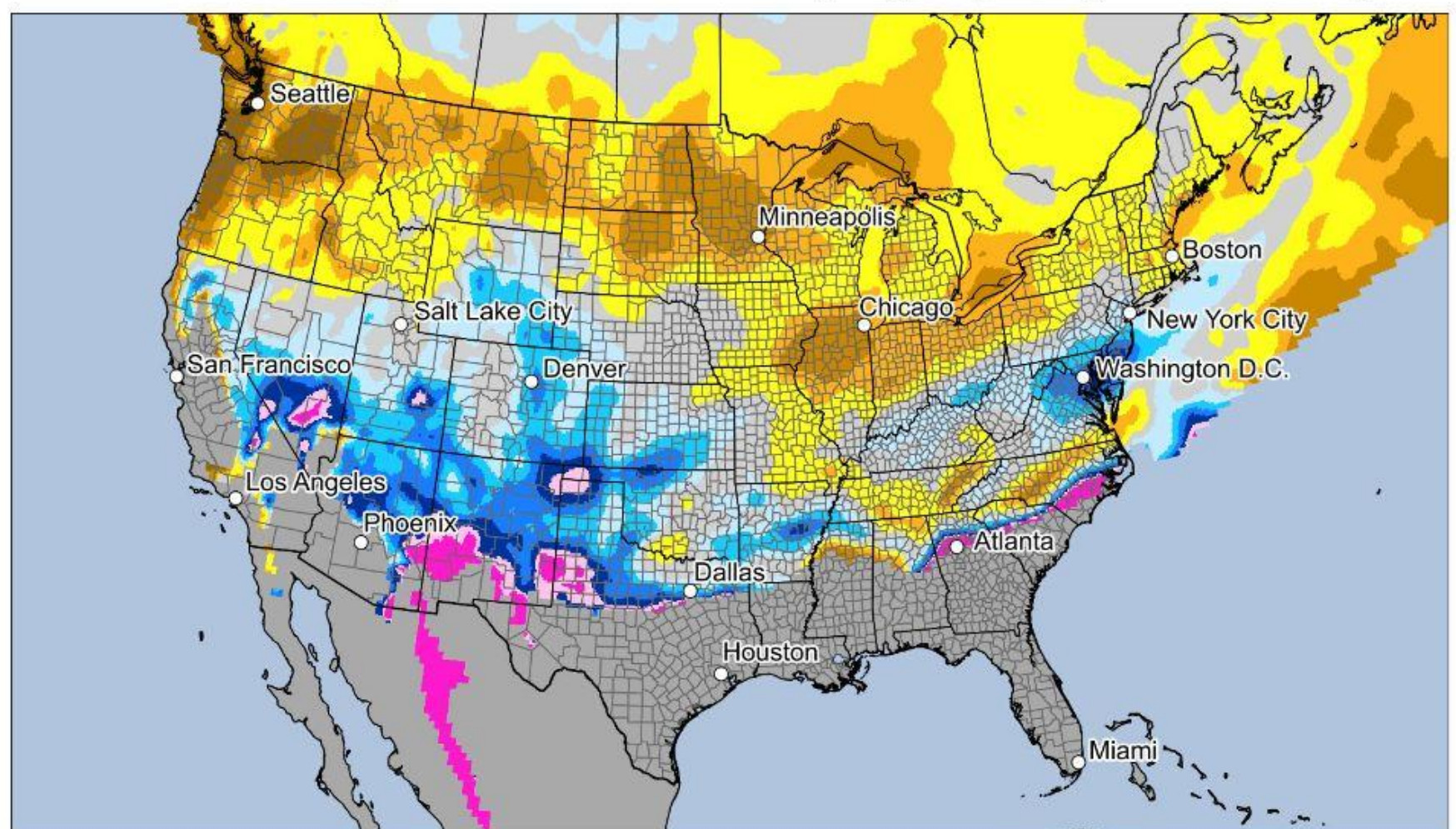
Source: ERA5 Reanalysis Composite of 11 years since 1950. Map by: Brian Brettschneider

Years: 1958, 1966, 1973, 1983, 1988, 1992, 1998, 2003, 2010, 2016, 2024



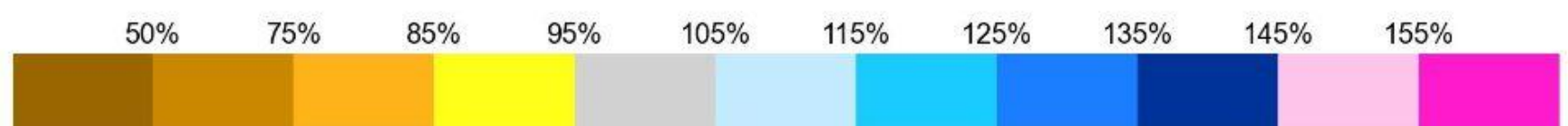
Percent of (Detrended) Average(Since 1950)

Snowfall Departure for Feb-Apr (Str/Very Str Ninos)



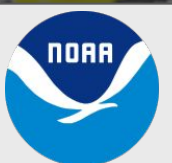
Source: ERA5 Reanalysis Composite of 11 years since 1950. Map by: Brian Brettschneider

Years: 1958, 1966, 1973, 1983, 1988, 1992, 1998, 2003, 2010, 2016, 2024



Percent of (Detrended) Average(Since 1950)

In general, above average snowfall at higher elevations and below normal snowfall at lower elevations.



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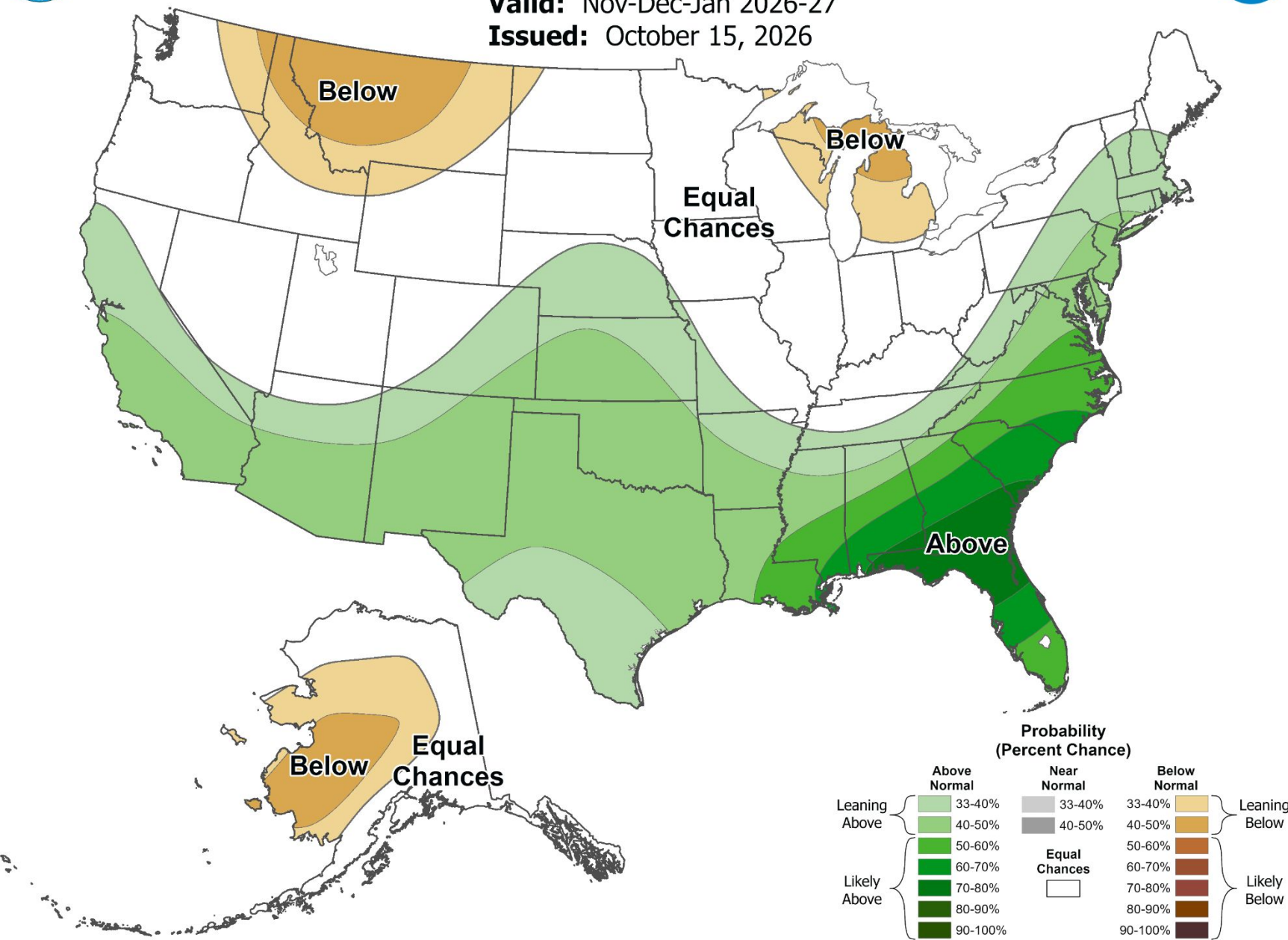
Official CPC Outlook: Nov-Dec-Jan

October 16, 2026
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Seasonal Precipitation Outlook

Valid: Nov-Dec-Jan 2026-27
Issued: October 15, 2026

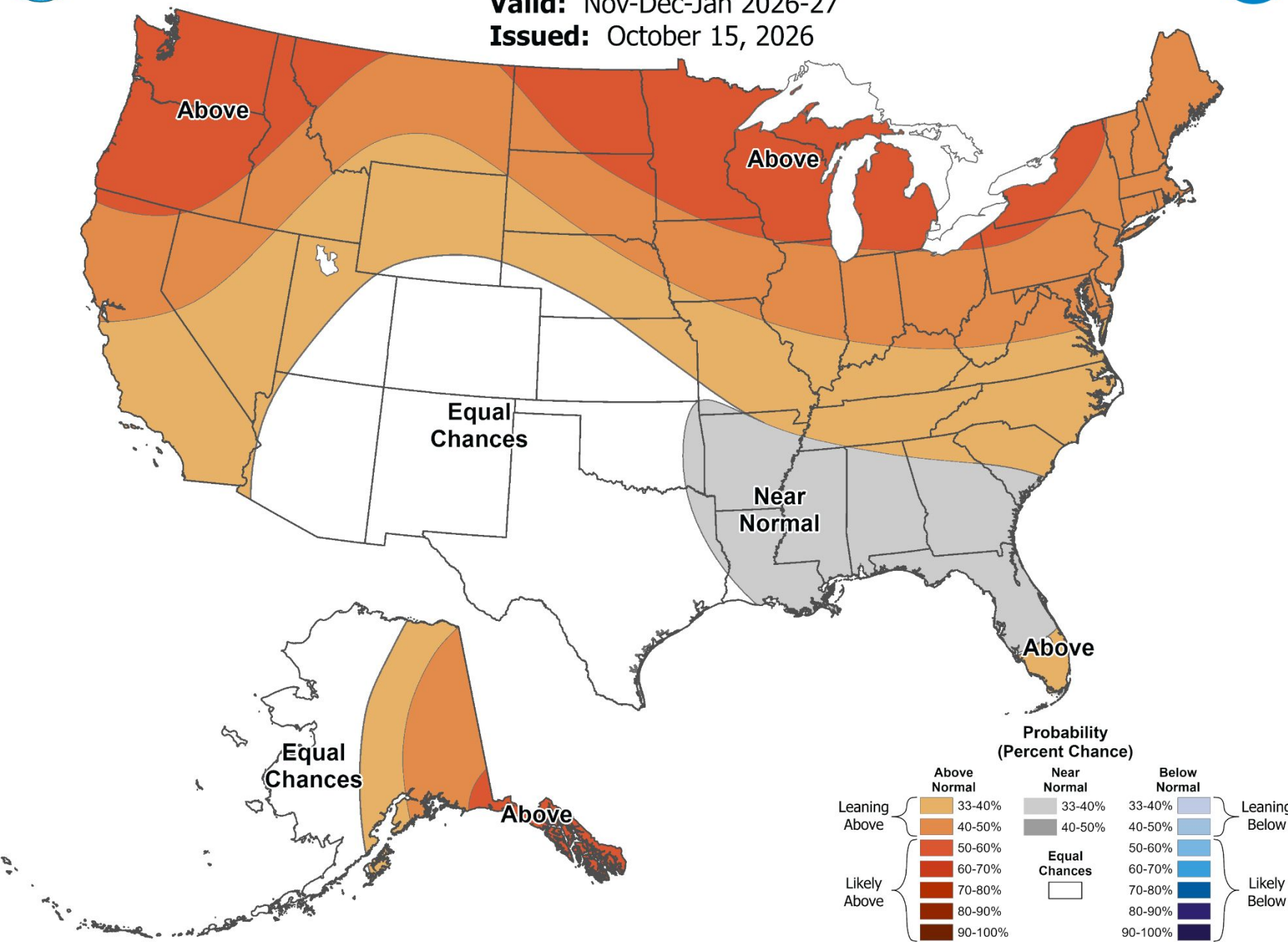


Northwest California Precipitation:
Leaning Above Normal



Seasonal Temperature Outlook

Valid: Nov-Dec-Jan 2026-27
Issued: October 15, 2026



Northwest California Temperatures:
40-60% Probability of Above Normal





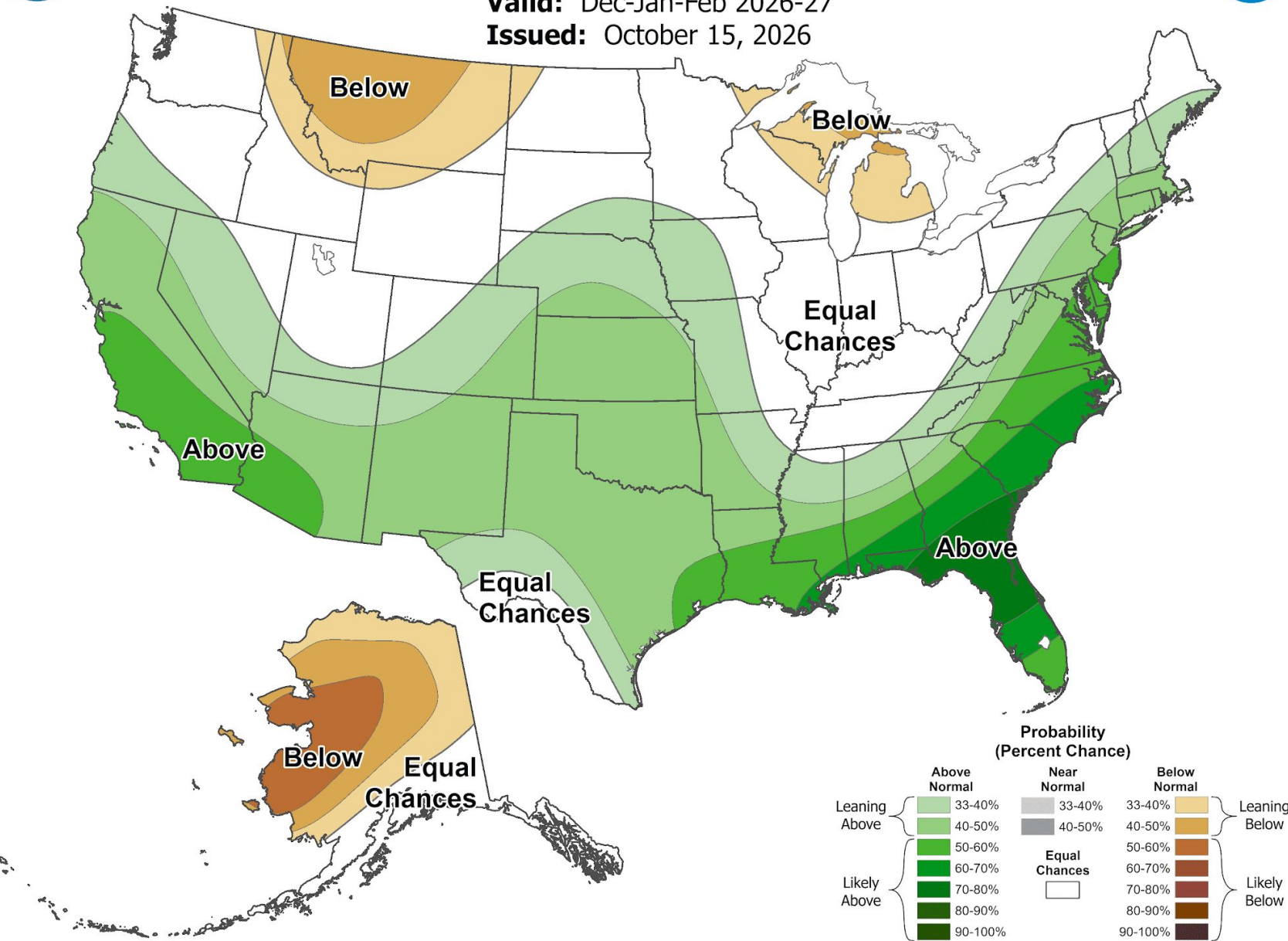
Official CPC Outlook: Dec-Jan-Feb

October 16, 2026
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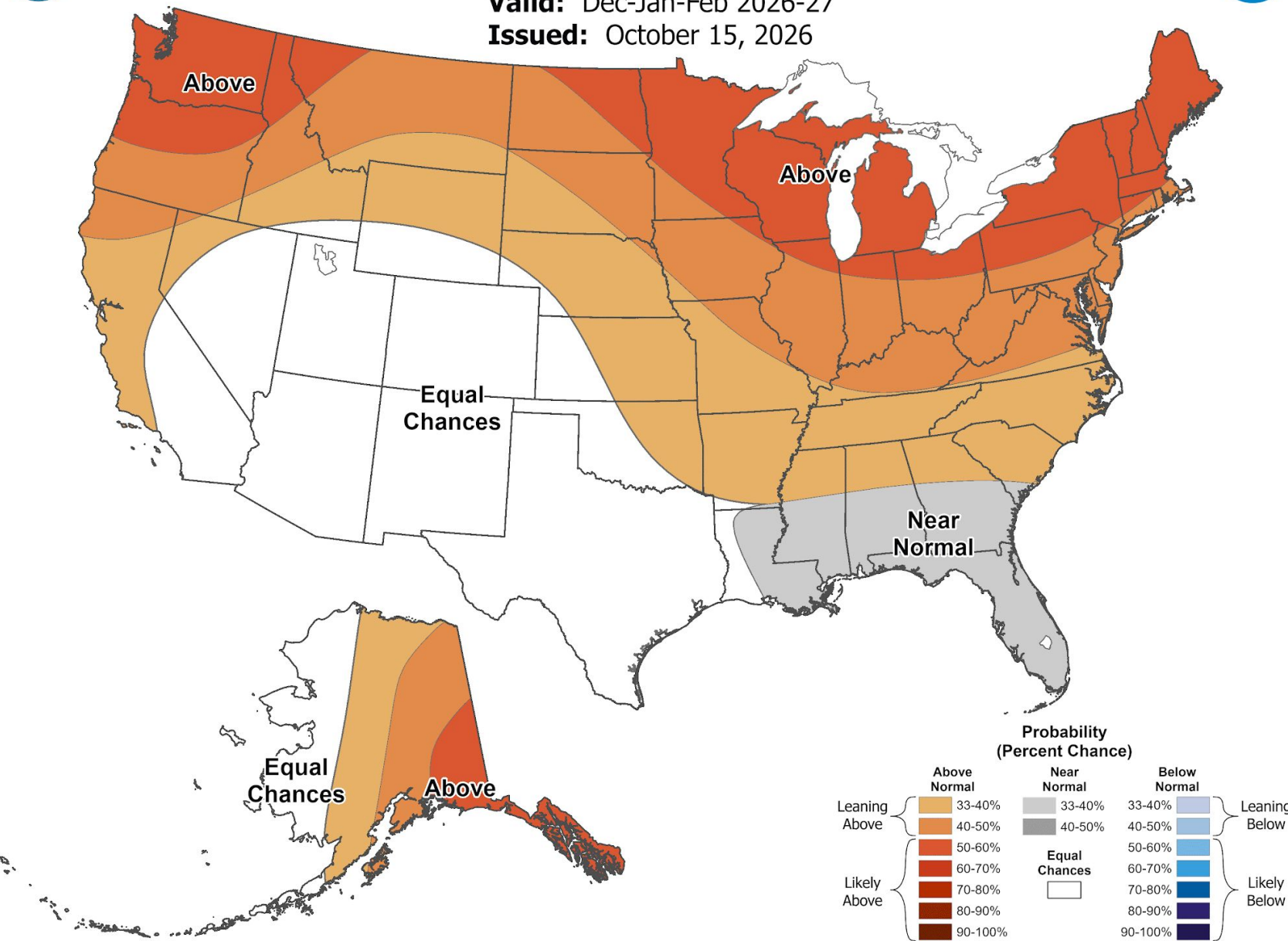
Seasonal Precipitation Outlook

Valid: Dec-Jan-Feb 2026-27
Issued: October 15, 2026



Seasonal Temperature Outlook

Valid: Dec-Jan-Feb 2026-27
Issued: October 15, 2026



Northwest California Precipitation:
40-50% Probability of Above Normal

Northwest California Temperatures:
30-50% Probability of Above Normal





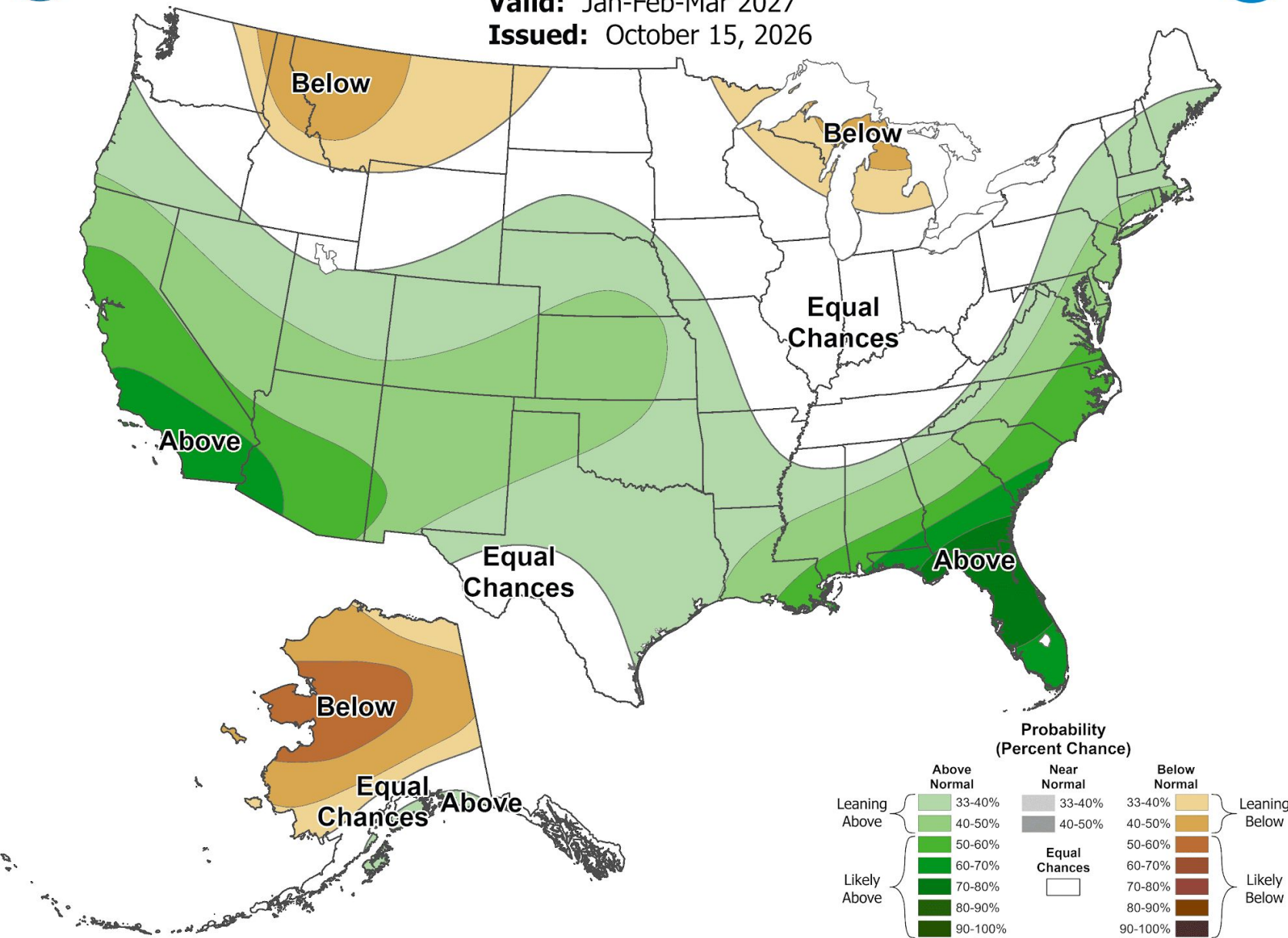
Official CPC Outlook: Jan-Feb-Mar

October 16, 2026
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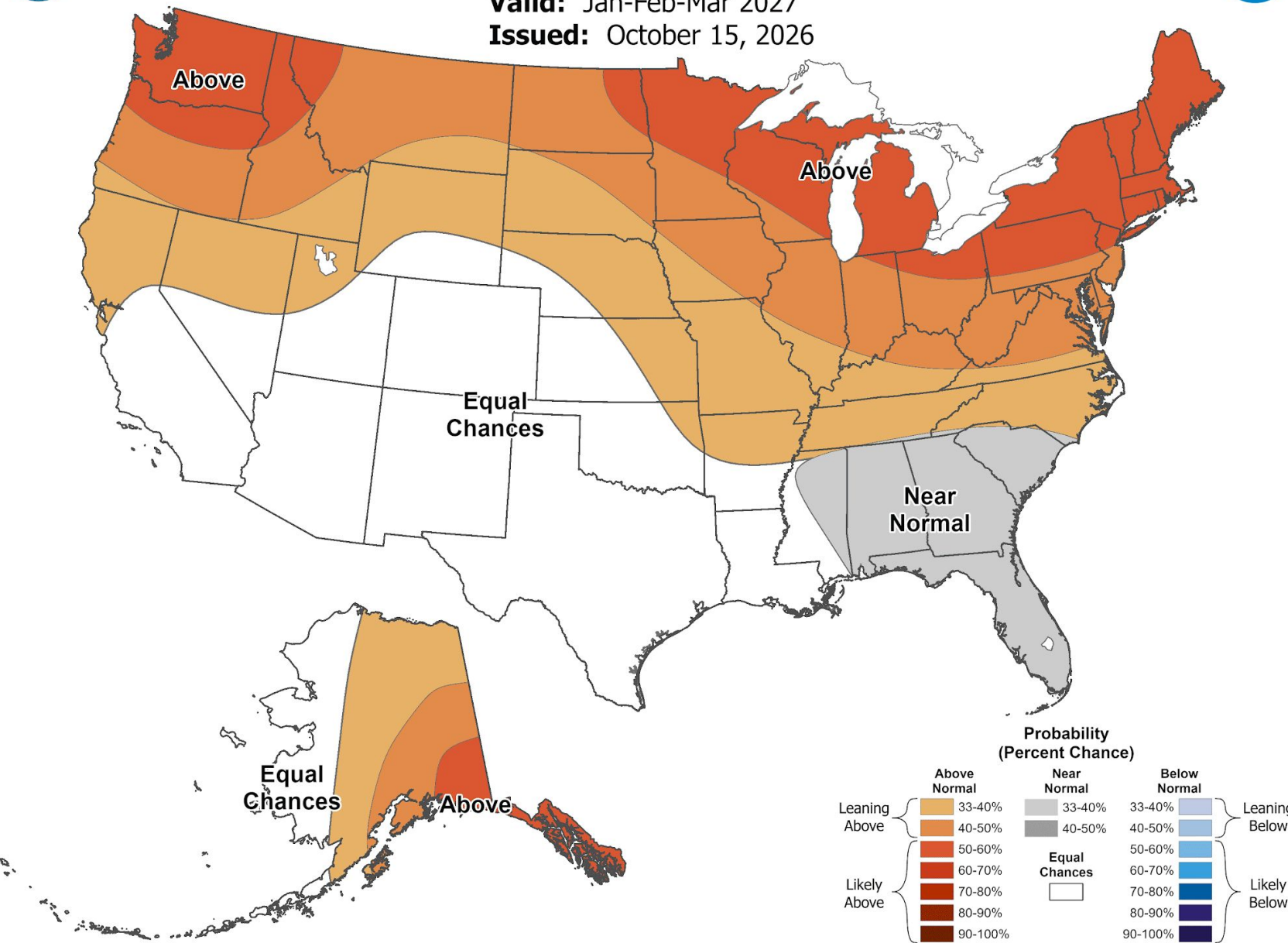
Seasonal Precipitation Outlook

Valid: Jan-Feb-Mar 2027
Issued: October 15, 2026



Seasonal Temperature Outlook

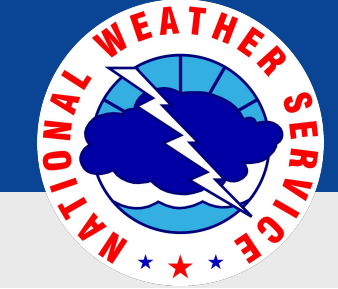
Valid: Jan-Feb-Mar 2027
Issued: October 15, 2026



Northwest California Precipitation:
40-60% Probability of Above Normal

Northwest California Temperatures:
30-40% Probability of Above Normal

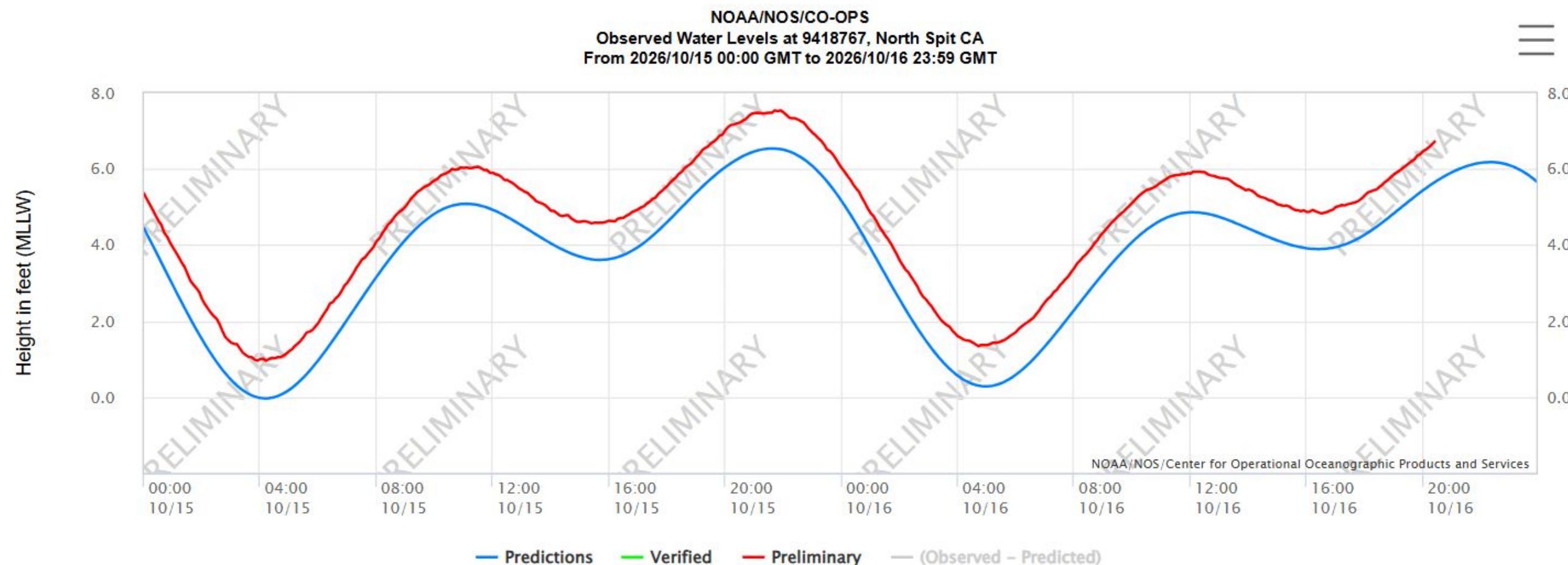




Coastal Flooding Potential

October 16, 2026
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- Tide gauge data at the North Spit in Humboldt Bay shown below:
 - Blue is the predicted tide height from a tide chart.
 - Red is the actual recorded level running approximately 0.9 ft above the predicted tide.
- Warmer water expands → Higher water levels. The higher water levels may persist into the winter.
- Potential for more coastal flooding this wet season, especially if storms coincide with highest tides.

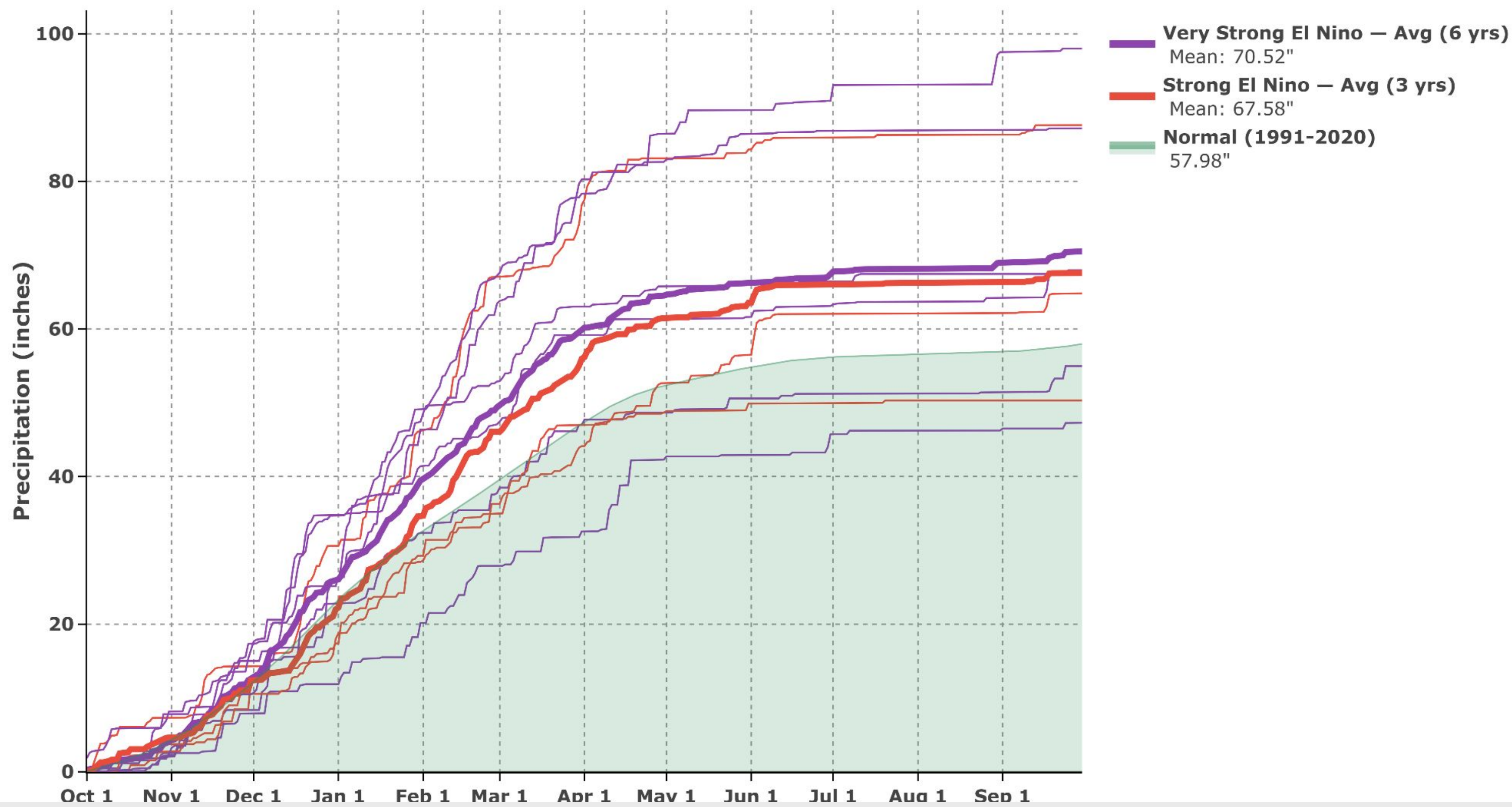




Strong & Very Strong El Niños in Crescent City

October 16, 2026
2:00 PM PDT

Rainfall Accumulation October Through September (Water Year)

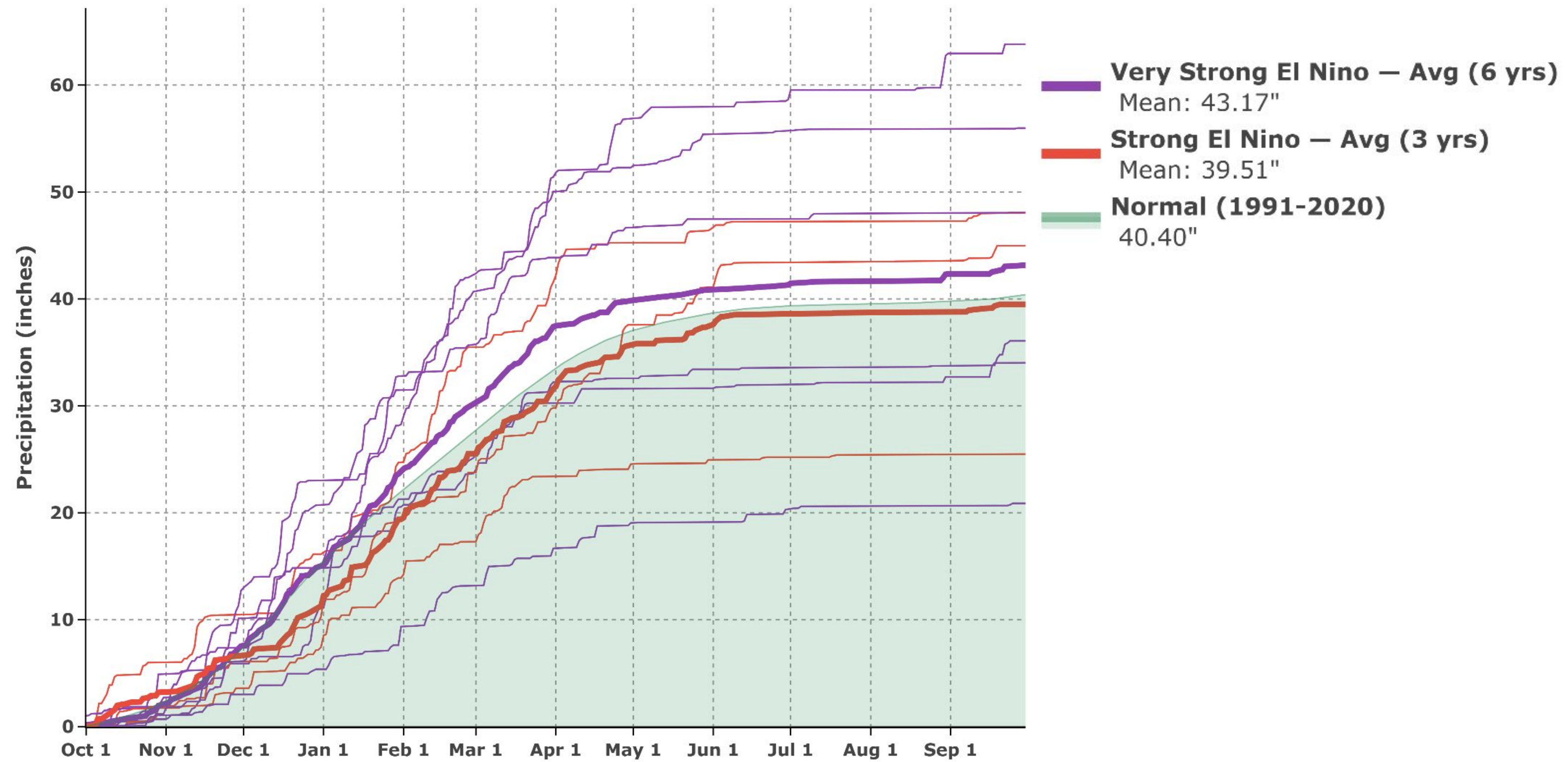




Strong & Very Strong El Niños in Eureka

October 16, 2026
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Rainfall Accumulation October Through September (Water Year)

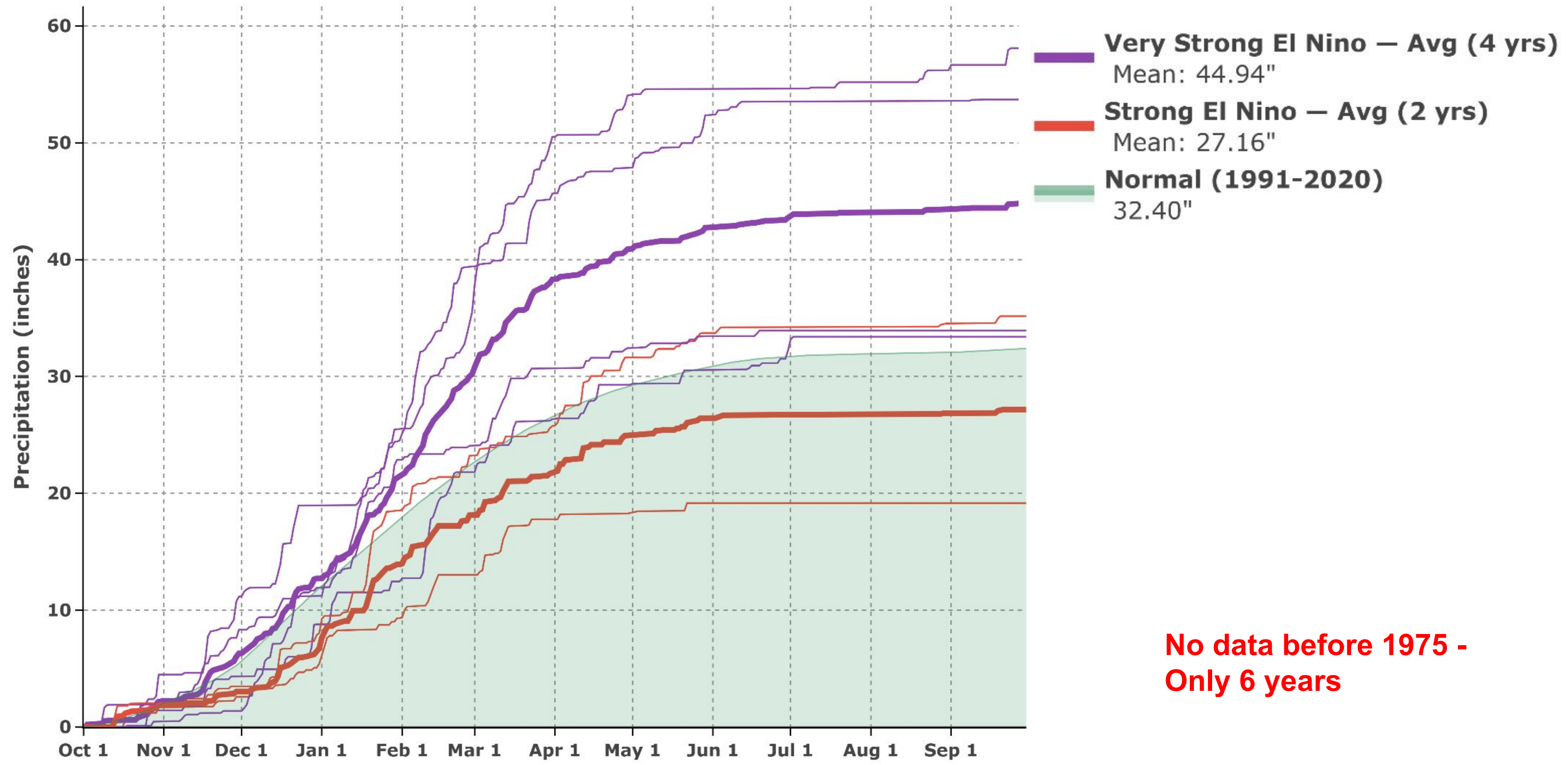




Strong & Very Strong El Niños in Lewiston

October 16, 2026
2:00 PM PDT

Rainfall Accumulation October Through September (Water Year)

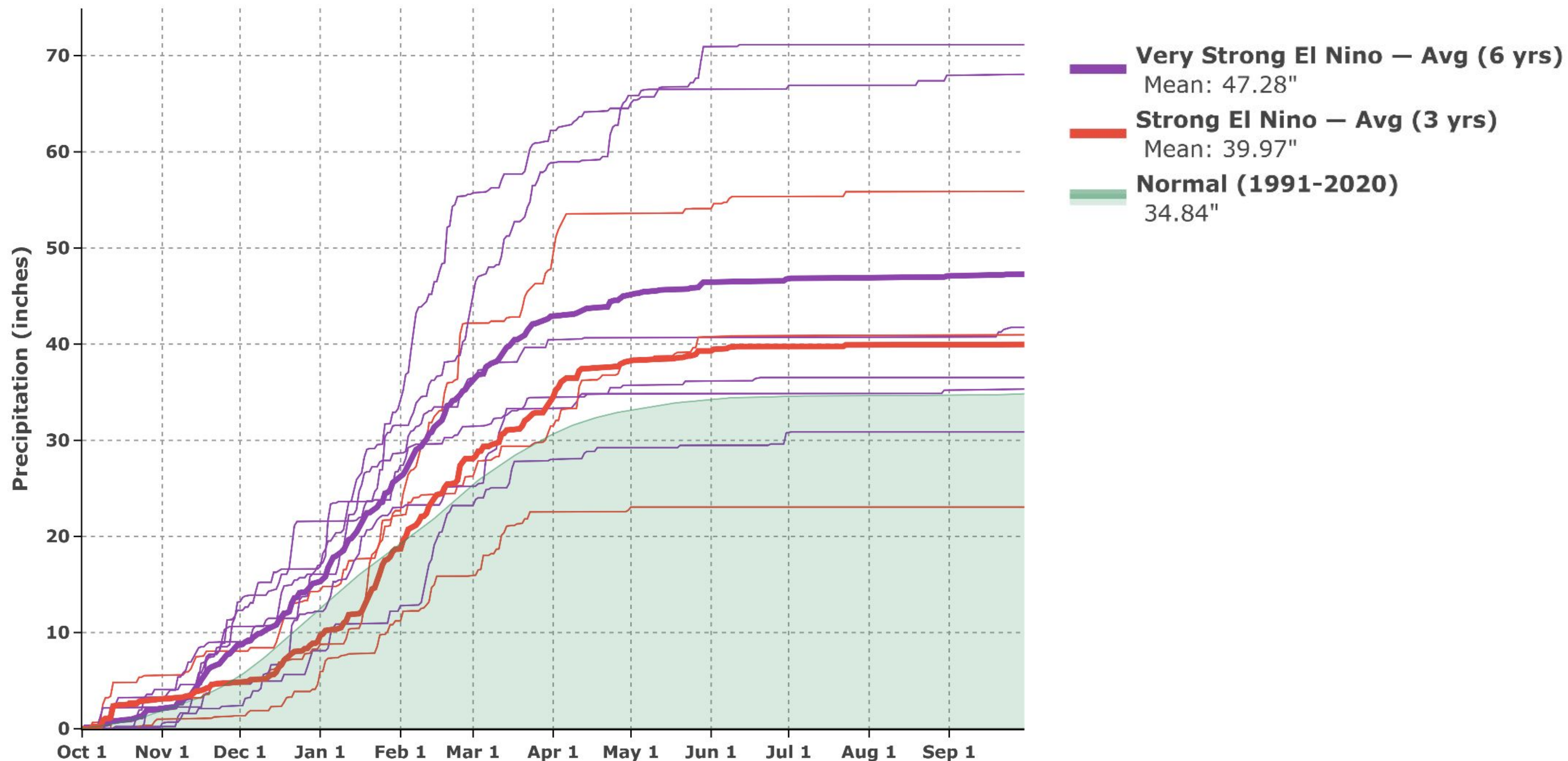




Strong & Very Strong El Niños in Ukiah

October 16, 2026
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Rainfall Accumulation October Through September (Water Year)

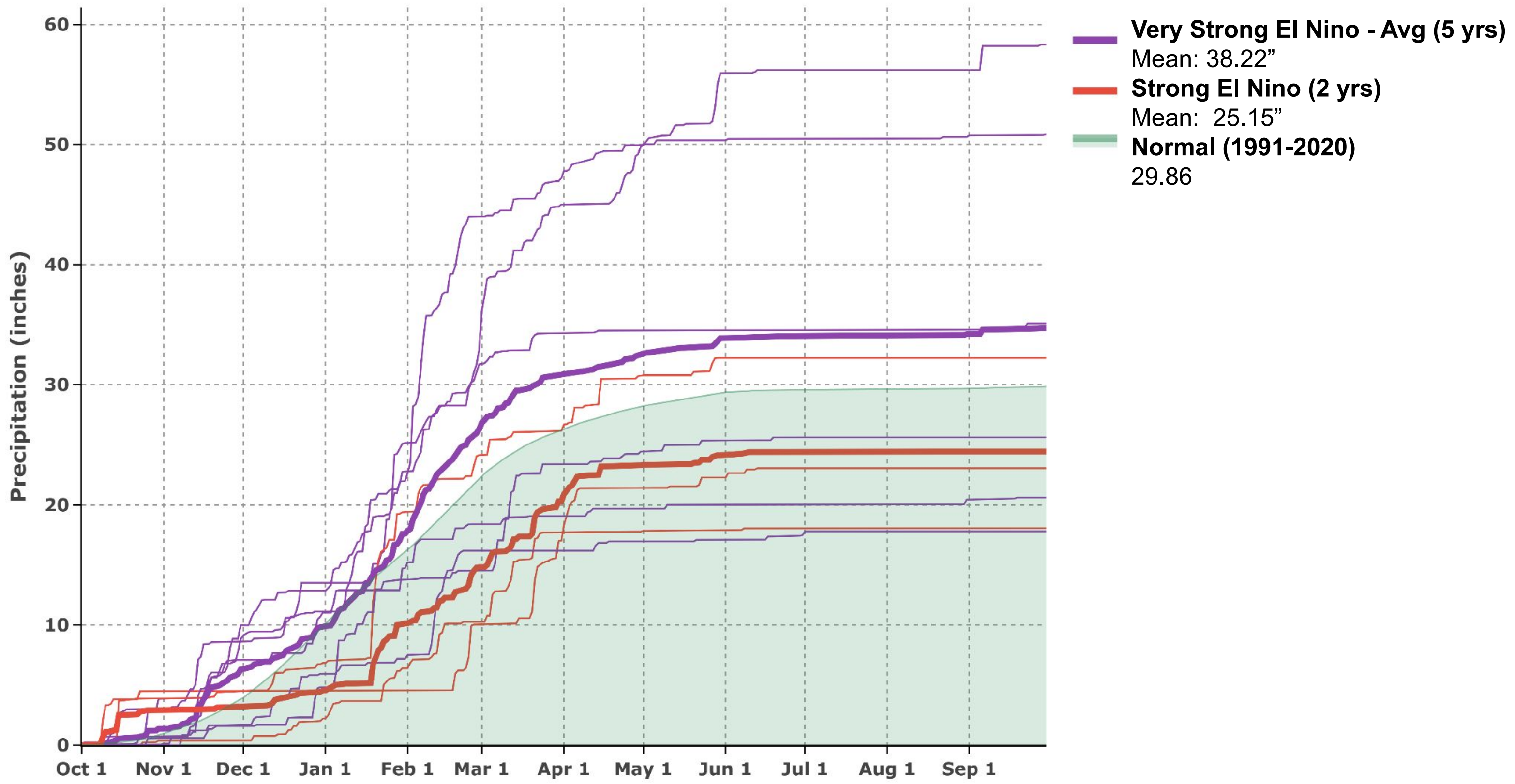


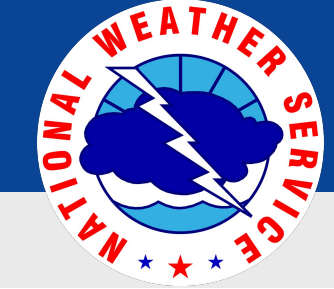


Strong & Very Strong El Niños in Clearlake

October 16, 2026
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Rainfall Accumulation October Through September (Water Year)



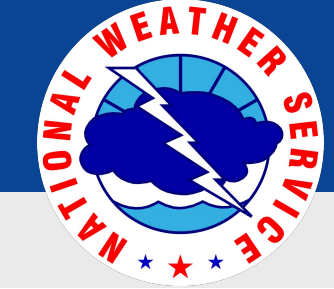


What Do We Know?

October 16, 2026
2:00 PM PDT

- ✓ El Niño is here with a 83% chance of a record-level strength event.
→ *Record strength does not guarantee record impacts* but likelihood of a wetter-than-average winter has increased since last month's update.
- ✓ El Niño in Northern California can bring mixed results - have had dry, near normal, or wet winters.
- ✓ El Niño causes higher than normal sea surface levels. This has already been observed so far.
→ Combined with King Tides or a winter storm, there is increased chance for coastal flooding & erosion. King Salmon of particular concern.
- ✓ Individual storms can define a season for a community. One strong storm can cause impacts.
- ✓ We should be preparing for flood/storm season now, like we do every year, with heightened awareness.





What Don't We Know?

October 16, 2026
2:00 PM PDT

🙋 How many winter storms will impact us?

🙋 How strong the winter storms will be?

🙋 Will a series of storms impact the state?

🙋 How much will it rain or snow at a location?

🙋 What specific flooding may (or may not) occur?

→ These are not reliably predictable on a seasonal-level; information becomes more apparent in the *weather* forecast within 1-2 weeks.



El Niño Shifting Actions Timeline

Seasonal Outlooks

KNOW



Know how El Niño can change weather risks in your area.



Know your home insurance policies. Flood insurance is often a separate policy.

Monthly Outlooks

PREPARE



Prepare your home by clearing brush and debris from drains and gutters.



Obtain/check flood remediation items such as sandbags and pumps.

Weekly Outlooks

REVIEW



Review the contents of your emergency supply kit. Replenish any medicine or other items as needed.



Review your family communication plan.

Weather Outlooks

ACT!

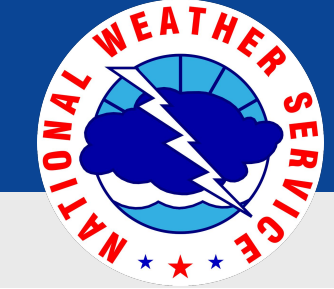


Be ready to act in the days ahead of forecasted hazards.

This could include securing loose outdoor items, deploying sandbags, or even preparing for evacuation.

[weather.gov](https://www.weather.gov)





Contact Information

October 16, 2026
2:00 PM PDT



NWS Eureka

→ weather.gov/eureka



Next ENSO Briefing

→ Mid-November 2026



Disclaimer

- Information contained in this briefing is time-sensitive
- Do Not Use After: Mid-November 2026



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