

Linden Lines

Linden Herald, 02/08/24

On January 16, 2024, the Sacramento County Superior Court denied the request of the Department of Water Resources (DWR) for an order “validating” bond resolutions that would have financed the Delta Tunnel project known as the Delta Conveyance Project (DCP). Like its failed predecessors, the DCP would divert water from the Sacramento River near Freeport out of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta for export to portions of the Bay Area, South San Joaquin Valley, and Southern California.

The Counties of San Joaquin, Contra Costa, Solano, Yolo, Butte, Plumas, and Sacramento, along with related water agencies, challenged DWR’s authority to issue an unlimited amount of bonds to finance the DCP. Specifically, the Superior Court of California, County of Sacramento stated: “The Court issued its Final Statement of Decision on January 16, 2024, finding DWR exceeded its statutorily delegated authority when it adopted the Bond Resolutions, which purported to authorize the issuance of the Delta Program Revenue Bonds.”

In response to the Court’s decision, San Joaquin County Supervisors Tom Patti and Steve Ding provided the following comments:

“This Court’s decision is a phenomenal win for the Delta and its 4 million residents. DWR’s attempt to force ratepayers and property taxpayers to open their wallets for unlimited spending on the proposed Delta tunnel will only cause more financial harm to people already on the brink. The Court stands behind us in finally ending these schemes to build a tunnel at the expense of the Sacramento-San Joaquin River, Delta communities and the local environment. We need to unite on solutions that will be a win for all Californians,” said San Joaquin County Supervisor Tom Patti.

“DWR’s bond plan would have burdened State Water Project ratepayers and property taxpayers with decades of debt for very little benefit. By rejecting DWR’s demand for a blank check to fund a risky, ill-fated megaproject, the Court’s decision proves that DWR doesn’t have the authority to fund the tunnel with bonds. Instead of bully tactics, the State should take more productive actions like improving levees, developing sensible above and below ground storage, and building additional water projects to conserve and reuse water throughout the state,” said San Joaquin County Supervisor Steve Ding.

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El Niño Is Fading – But La Niña May Be On Way. What It Means For California Weather

San Francisco Chronicle, 02/14/24

The current El Niño is among the strongest on record, according to the National Weather Service Climate Prediction Center. But El Niño's time in the limelight is coming to an end.

The warmer-than-average Pacific waters that define El Niño are cooling off and temperatures are expected to drop below normal in the coming months. The Climate Prediction Center issued a La Niña watch last week, meaning conditions are favorable for La Niña to develop this summer.

But even as El Niño fades, it doesn't mean that California's storms are going away.

"Southern California has some of its most active precipitation events in the latter part of the winter," said Dan Cayan, a climate scientist with UC San Diego's Scripps Institution of Oceanography, based on climatology.

'Very strong' El Niño

Scientists measure the strength of El Niños based on how warm waters are in the central and eastern Pacific, near the equator. All El Niños involve ocean waters at least half a degree Celsius warmer than average, but strong events feature water temperatures more than 1.5 degrees Celsius above normal.

From November to January, Pacific waters averaged 2.0 degrees Celsius, or 3.6 degrees Fahrenheit, warmer than normal — the unofficial threshold for a "very strong" El Niño. The figure places the current El Niño among the five strongest on record, going back to 1950.

"Stronger events tend to have more widespread impacts than weaker events," said Michelle L'Heureux, a climate scientist with the Climate Prediction Center.

Recent downpours have delivered, as an extended jet stream — a hallmark of El Niño — ushered storms to Central and Southern California.

"This last month or so really has been kind of following the script, if you like," Cayan said.

Transition to neutral

The strong El Niño is expected to fade away in the coming months, as sea surface temperatures in the equatorial Pacific drop. This chart shows the Climate Prediction Center's latest forecasts.

From April to June, there's a 79% chance of El Niño transitioning to "neutral" conditions, with sea surface temperatures closer to normal.

The shift, coinciding with the typical end of the wet season, suggests less precipitation in California in the spring, said Dan Collins, a meteorologist with the Climate Prediction

Center. Based on the latest forecast maps, “we effectively think that El Niño is going to diminish and somewhat not be an influence past, say, March,” he added.

But intense storms are still possible for now. Wet weather is on tap later this week and into the weekend, according to Chronicle meteorologist Anthony Edwards.

Flip to La Niña

By the fall, there’s a 77% chance of La Niña developing, according to the Climate Prediction Center’s forecast. Such a flip from El Niño to La Niña isn’t surprising: five out of eight strong El Niños since 1950 have transitioned to La Niña.

“The ocean dynamics are trying to put the ocean back into its former state,” Cayan explained.

As El Niño matures, ocean currents discharge heat that has built up in the tropics and frigid water from the depths pushes up to the surface. But exactly how much cold water upwells in the coming months depends on trade winds kicking in and strengthening, L’Heureux said. If sea surface temperatures do become cold enough, La Niña develops.

La Niña is typically associated with drier-than-normal conditions in Central and Southern California. But other factors can be at play too: The 2022-23 La Niña — a weak event — coincided with one of California’s wettest winters on record.

“We’ve had wet La Niñas and we’ve had dry La Niñas,” said Jan Null, a meteorologist with Golden Gate Weather Services and adjunct professor at San Jose State University.

As for next fall and winter, Null said, “I think it’s too far out.”



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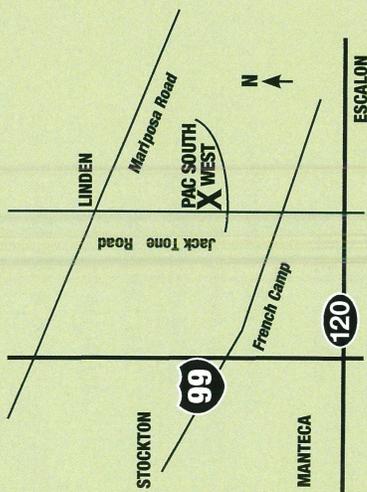
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