

# Wildfire Safety Advisory Board Quarterly Meeting

June 05, 2024, 1 p.m.



*Hybrid Meeting  
California Natural Resources  
Agency, Room 2-301  
715 P Street, Sacramento, CA 95814*

# Participation Information



*Using more than one participation option may create feedback.*

***Please begin your comment by stating your name and organization***

- **Zoom:** [https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81914544254?pwd=H\\_Z2zMlVN0Aof25aRr\\_xeGpt-c3gvQ.X6acigvlQiFDO3tf](https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81914544254?pwd=H_Z2zMlVN0Aof25aRr_xeGpt-c3gvQ.X6acigvlQiFDO3tf)  
**Webinar ID:** 167251 **Passcode:** 062871
- **Phone:** 404-433-6397 US Toll | 877-336-1831 US Toll-free | Conference code: 167251

Participants are placed in "listen/watch only" mode until the public comment portion of the meeting. During the public comment portions, participants may use the raise hand function on the Zoom videoconference or may dial #2 (pound/hashtag two) to be placed in a queue when they wish to speak. The hosting team will unmute callers in order of request.

- **Email:** Written comments may be emailed to [WSAB@energysafety.ca.gov](mailto:WSAB@energysafety.ca.gov).
- **Tech Issues:** For technical issues, e-mail [WSAB@energysafety.ca.gov](mailto:WSAB@energysafety.ca.gov) or call Unique Coleman at 916-709-3079



# Locating Meeting Materials



## Meeting Materials Available at:

<https://energysafety.ca.gov/what-we-do/wildfire-safety-advisory-board/wsab-events-and-meetings/>

## Public Comments Available at:

<https://energysafety.ca.gov/what-we-do/wildfire-safety-advisory-board/public-comments-received-by-the-wildfire-safety-advisory-board/>



# 1 - Call to Order and Roll Call



- **Jessica Block, Chair**
- **Chris Porter, Vice Chair**
- **Ralph Armstrong Jr., Member**
- **Diane Fellman, Member**
- **Tim Haines, Member**
- **John Mader, Member**
- **Alexandra Syphard, Member**



# Safety Briefing



# Agenda

- 1) Call to Order and Roll Call
- 2) Public Comment for Matters Not on Agenda
- 3) Approve Meeting Minutes
- 4) Office of Energy Infrastructure Safety Update
- 5) Review and adopt annual P.U.C. §8389 recommendations
- 6) WSAB Committee Updates
  - Staff Report on 2024 WSAB-POU WMP Working Group
  - Review and approve the draft WSAB Strategic Plan. Identify next steps
  - Other Committee updates
- 7) CAL FIRE Update
- 8) Next Steps
- 9) Adjournment



## 2 - Public Comments for Matters Not on Agenda



***Please begin your comments by stating your name and organization (if applicable).***

- a. On Zoom**
- b. On the Phone**
- c. Via Email**



# 3 – Approve Meeting Minutes



- Dec. 4, 2023
- Feb. 7, 2024
- March 21, 2024



# 4 - Energy Safety Update



*Jessica Tse*

*Supervisor, Electric Safety Policy Division*

*Office of Energy Infrastructure Safety*

***California Natural Resources Agency***



# 5 – Discuss and Adopt 2024 Annual PUC §8389 Recommendations to Energy Safety



## WMP Additional Requirements

1. Quantify the benefits of avoided PSPS events
2. Evaluate the risk of legacy, pre-GO 95 equipment
3. Prioritize undergrounding from the transmission substation
4. Clarify the cadence and total number of assets and miles to be inspected
5. Detail plans to remedy improperly rated equipment on the system
6. Risk evaluation of Public Resources Code (PRC) Section non-exempt equipment
7. Small and multi-jurisdictional utilities (SMJUs) describe how wildfire mitigation efforts fit within the broader context of their enterprise risk management (ERM).



# 5 – Discuss and Adopt 2024 Annual PUC §8389 Recommendations to Energy Safety (Cont.)



## WMP Additional Requirements (Cont.)

8. Strategy for mitigating PSPS vulnerability and enhancing resiliency for central business districts and downtown areas
9. Risk analyses by ecological regions (or pyromes)
10. Risk matrices showing the relative risks of different hazards (environmental and grid-specific)
11. Report infrastructure component risks of failure against risk of ignition including in matrix format
12. Hierarchical structure for Summary of Risk Models tables
13. Report Machine Learning methods and model

## WMP Performance Metrics

1. Update metrics based on events that occur during fire season



# 5 – Discuss and Adopt 2024 Annual PUC §8389 Recommendations to Energy Safety (Cont.)



## Safety Culture Assessment

1. Include a question about management integrity and ethics in the Workforce Survey
2. Include a question about employee comfort level in reporting safety concerns or safety misconducts that have not been fully addressed in the Workforce Survey
3. Include a question in the Workforce Survey about how frequently the electrical corporation performs workplace hazard assessments
4. Develop or submit details of behavior-based safety programs that are currently driving its safety culture
5. Curriculum for management safety culture trainings



# BREAK

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## California Wildfire Safety Advisory Board



# California Wildfire Safety Advisory Board

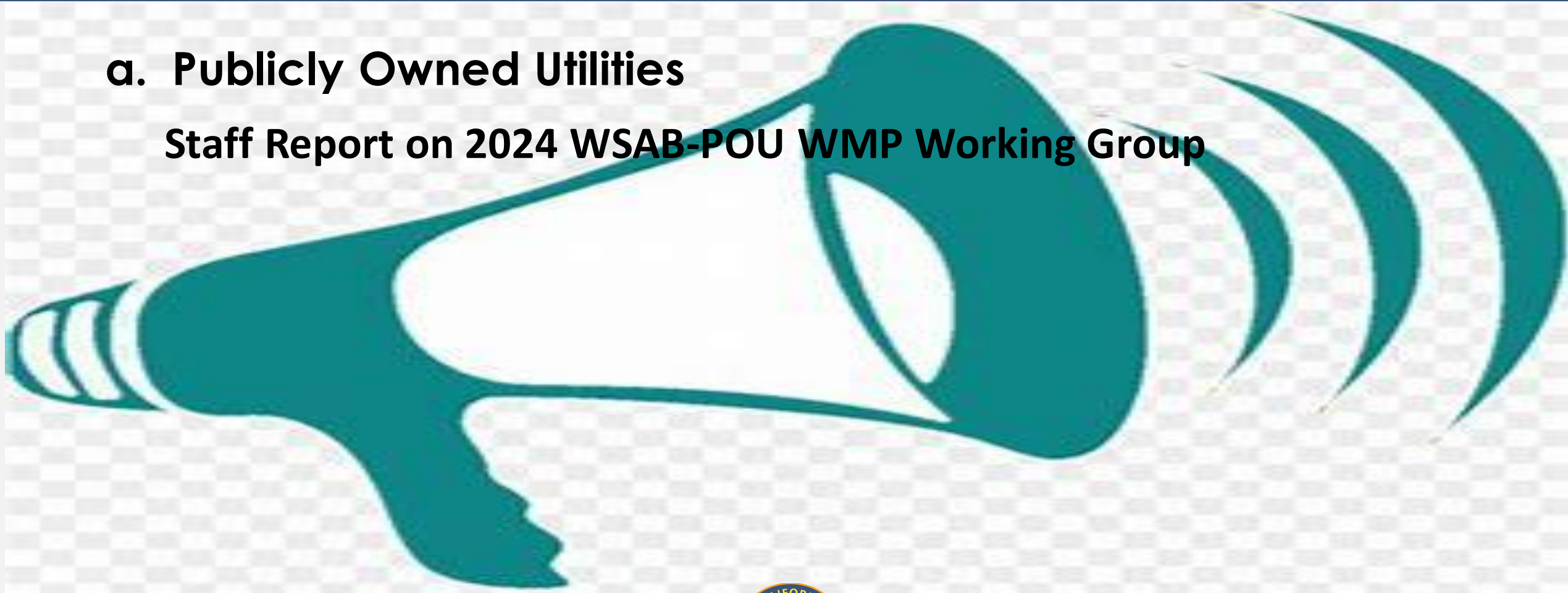
**WE ARE BACK!**

# 6 – WSAB Committee Updates



## **a. Publicly Owned Utilities**

### **Staff Report on 2024 WSAB-POU WMP Working Group**



# 6 a – Staff Report on 2024 WSAB-POU WMP Working Group



No.	Topic	Preliminary Recommendation
1.	Summary of Projects and Programs	Include a standalone summary of key wildfire mitigation initiatives.
2.	Late WMP Submissions	Submit a letter for late WMP submissions.
3.	Tracking Changes to WMPs	Include a summary of changes to indicate the year-to-year updates.
4.	Digital Accessibility	Include internal hyperlinks and follow the accessible content guidelines set out by Department of Rehabilitation (DOR).
5.	Areas That Exceed Minimum Standards in General Orders	Describe how they assess local conditions that require the utility to exceed any of the applicable minimum standards in GO. WSAB should engage with the GO 95/128 Rules Committee.



# 6a – Staff Report on 2024 WSAB-POU WMP Working Group (cont.)



No.	Topic	Preliminary Recommendation
6.	Independent Evaluator (IE) reports	Include an evaluation of the WMP strategy and projects in the IE scope.
7.	Alternative Reporting for POU's Without Overhead Electric Supply Facilities in the High Fire Threat District	Submit the same WMP together CMUA template supplemental letter for POUS without overhead electric facilities in the HFTD.
8.	Progress and Achievements	Provide details of progress and achievements in WMPs.
9.	QA/QC Programs	Provide descriptions of QA/QC programs in WMPs.
10.	Performance Metrics	Adopt the CMUA's 2024 revised metrics template.
11.	Other Topics	Continue to engage to refine the list of future topics and develop an action plan.



# 6 – WSAB Committee Updates (cont.)



## b. Policy and Utility Safety Culture

WSAB Draft Strategic Plan



# 6b – WSAB Draft Strategic Plan



## Mission

To advise and make recommendations to reduce the risk of utility-related wildfires.

## Vision

A fire-resilient California free of utility-caused wildfires.



# 6b – WSAB Draft Strategic Plan (cont.)



## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



Building Collaborative Relationships with External Partners



Actualizing our Mission in Collaboration with Energy Safety



Retaining and Developing Staff



Creating the Structures and Practices for Successful Implementation



# 6b – WSAB Draft Strategic Plan (cont.)



## Next Steps

- Develop an implementation plan
- Assign responsibilities for action items
- Identify and/or validate key performance metrics/measurements for each strategic priority



## 6 – WSAB Committee Updates (cont.)



- c. Grid Hardware and Technology
- d. Vegetation Management
- e. Scientific
- f. Executive



# 7- CAL FIRE Update



*Stephen Volmer*  
*Battalion Chief, Utility Wildfire Mitigation*  
  
*Department of Forestry and Fire Protection*  
*California Natural Resources Agency*





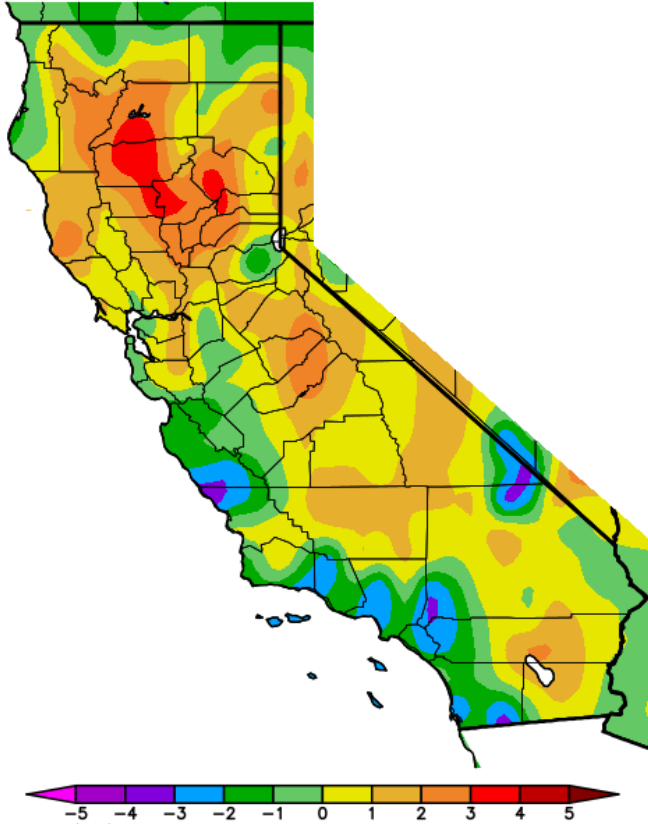
# California Seasonal Outlook

June – September 2024



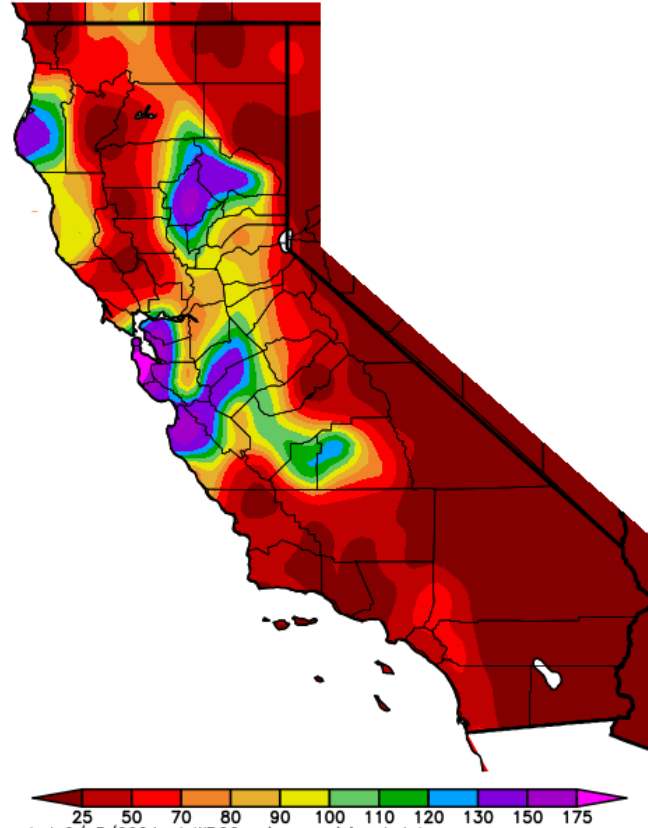
# Weather Discussion: May Temperature & Precipitation

Ave. Temperature dep from Ave (deg F)  
5/4/2024 – 6/2/2024



Generated 6/ 3/2024 at WRCC using provisional data.  
NOAA Regional Climate Centers

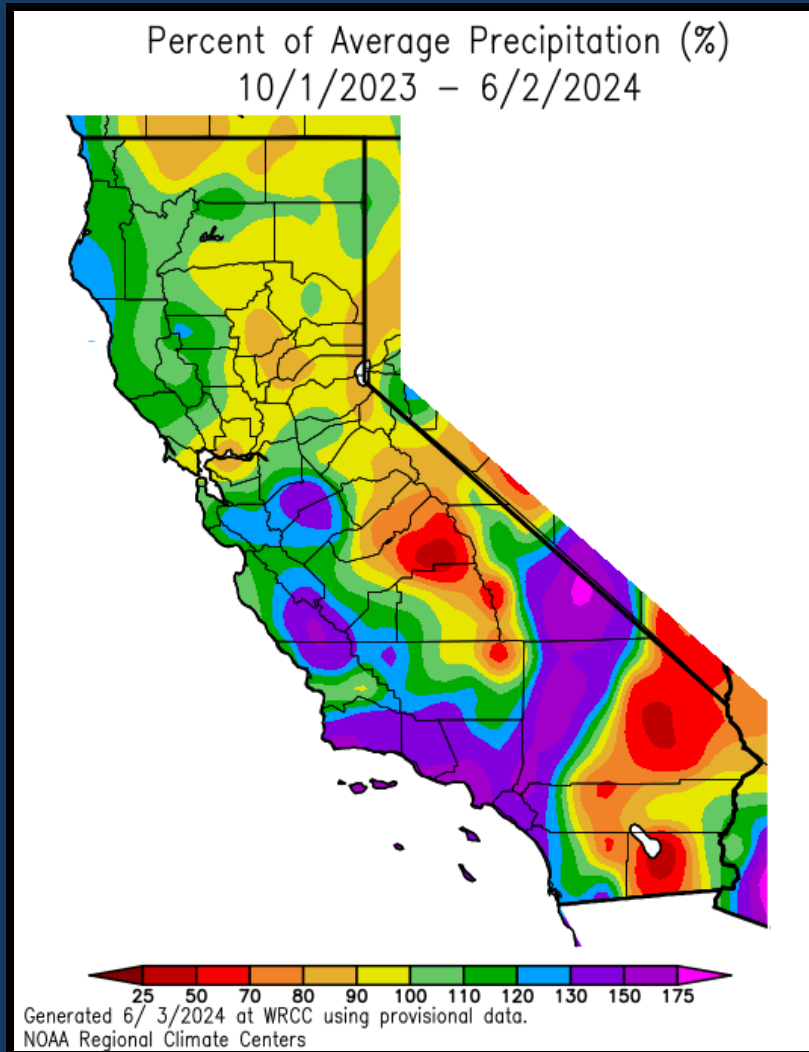
Percent of Average Precipitation (%)  
5/4/2024 – 6/2/2024



Generated 6/ 3/2024 at WRCC using provisional data.  
NOAA Regional Climate Centers

- The weather patterns remained quite variable during May with cool-moist and warm-dry periods.
- There was one significant wetting rain event, including snow, during the first week, and an extended warm-dry period that occurred between the 7<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>.
- A little over 850 lightning strikes were recorded during the month which fell well short of the 2012-2022 May average of around 5400 strikes.

# Weather Discussion: Water Year

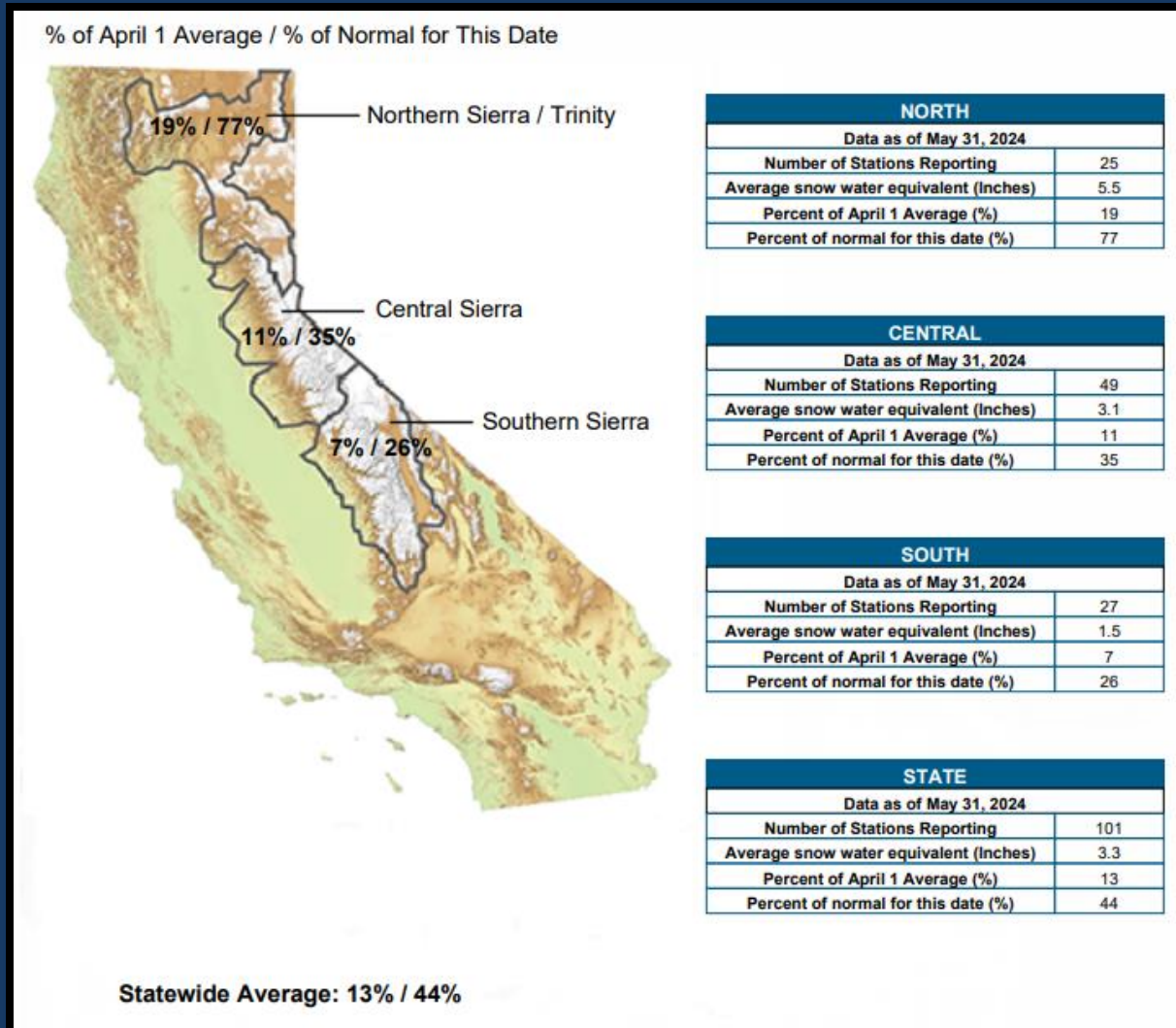


- Since the start of the water year (Oct. 1) the north coast, bay area, central and southern California have mainly experienced above normal precipitation.
- The strongest precipitation anomalies are in the high desert with some areas experiencing over 150% of the average precipitation.
- Near to below normal precipitation was seen in the Sacramento and San Joaquin valleys, and Sierra Nevada.
- The driest anomalies are in the lower and eastern deserts where many portions received 50-70% of their average precipitation.

Precipitation

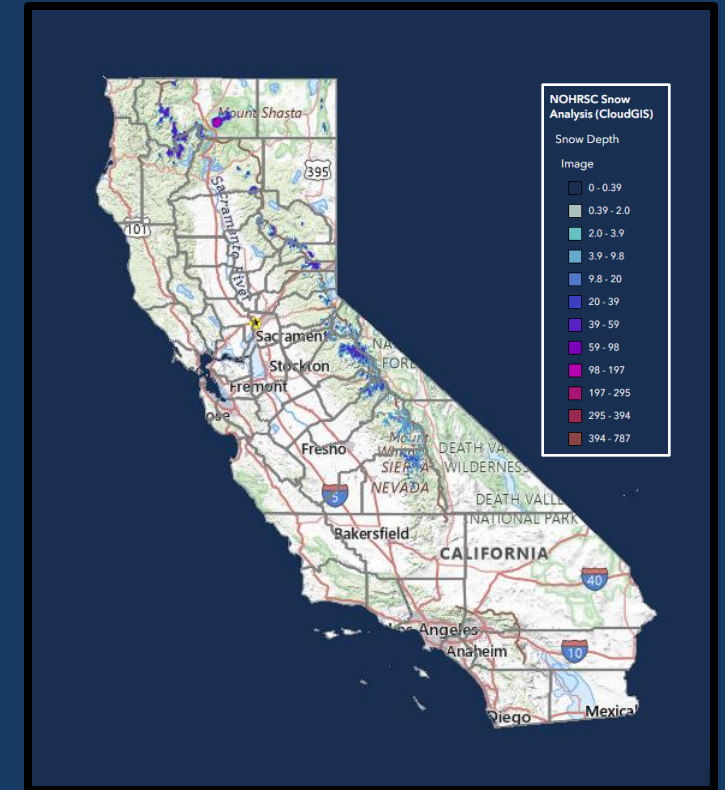
Source: [CalClim: California Climate Data Archive \(dri.edu\)](https://calclim.org/CaliforniaClimateDataArchive(dri.edu))

# Weather Discussion: Snowpack



- Moisture found within the snowpack noticeably dropped from 90-110% of normal on April 30<sup>th</sup> to 35-75% of normal on May 31<sup>st</sup>.
- By the end of May, snow accumulations were mostly confined to elevations above 6500-7500 feet in the most sheltered areas.

# Current Snow Depth

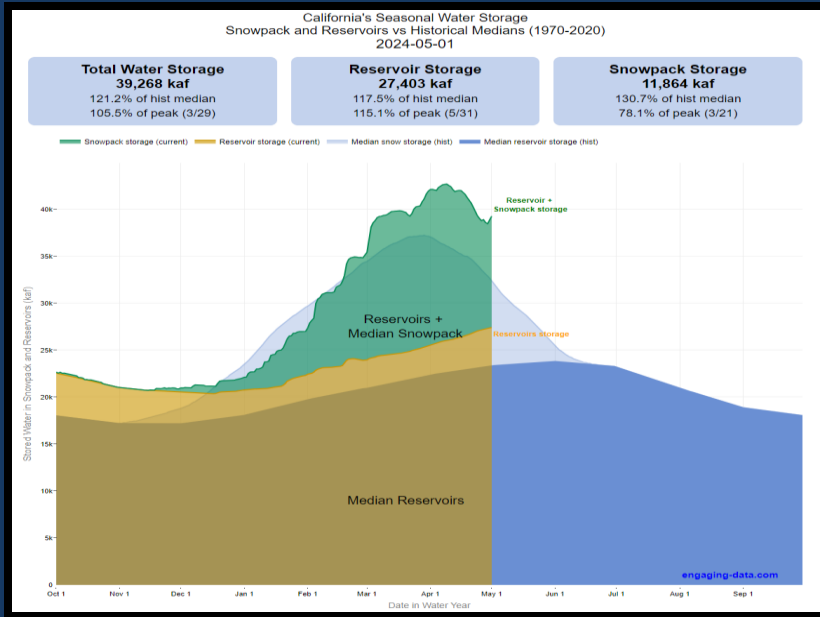


- Distinct change in snowpack between April and May, and signs of rapid melt-off.
- Snowpack will erode several weeks earlier this year compared to last, thus exposing the surface fuels to an earlier drying period.

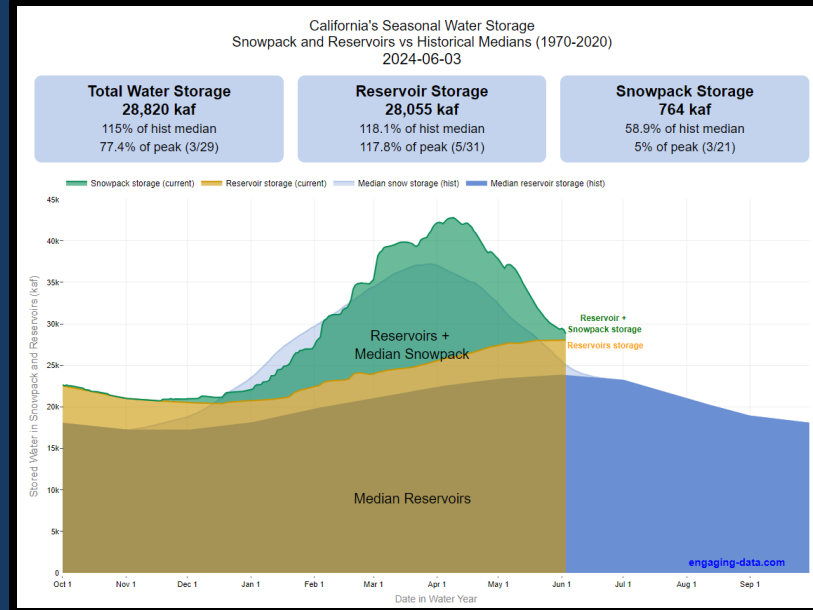
Source: <https://worldview.earthdata.nasa.gov/>

# Weather Discussion: Reservoir Storage

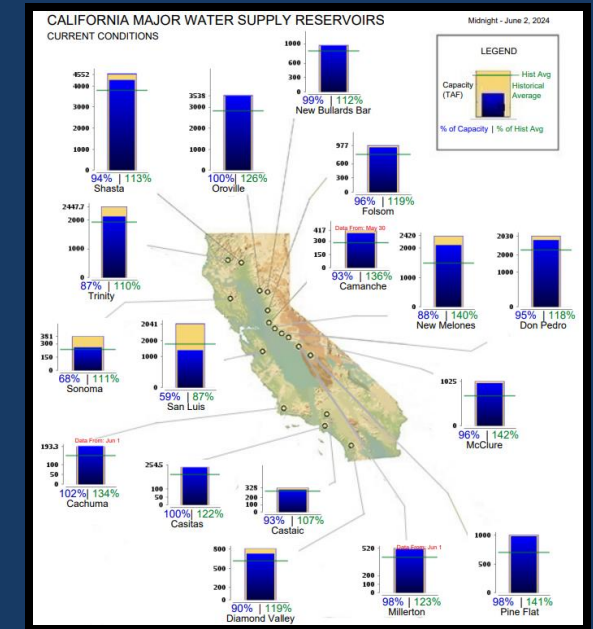
May 1, 2024



June 3, 2024



Current Reservoir Conditions

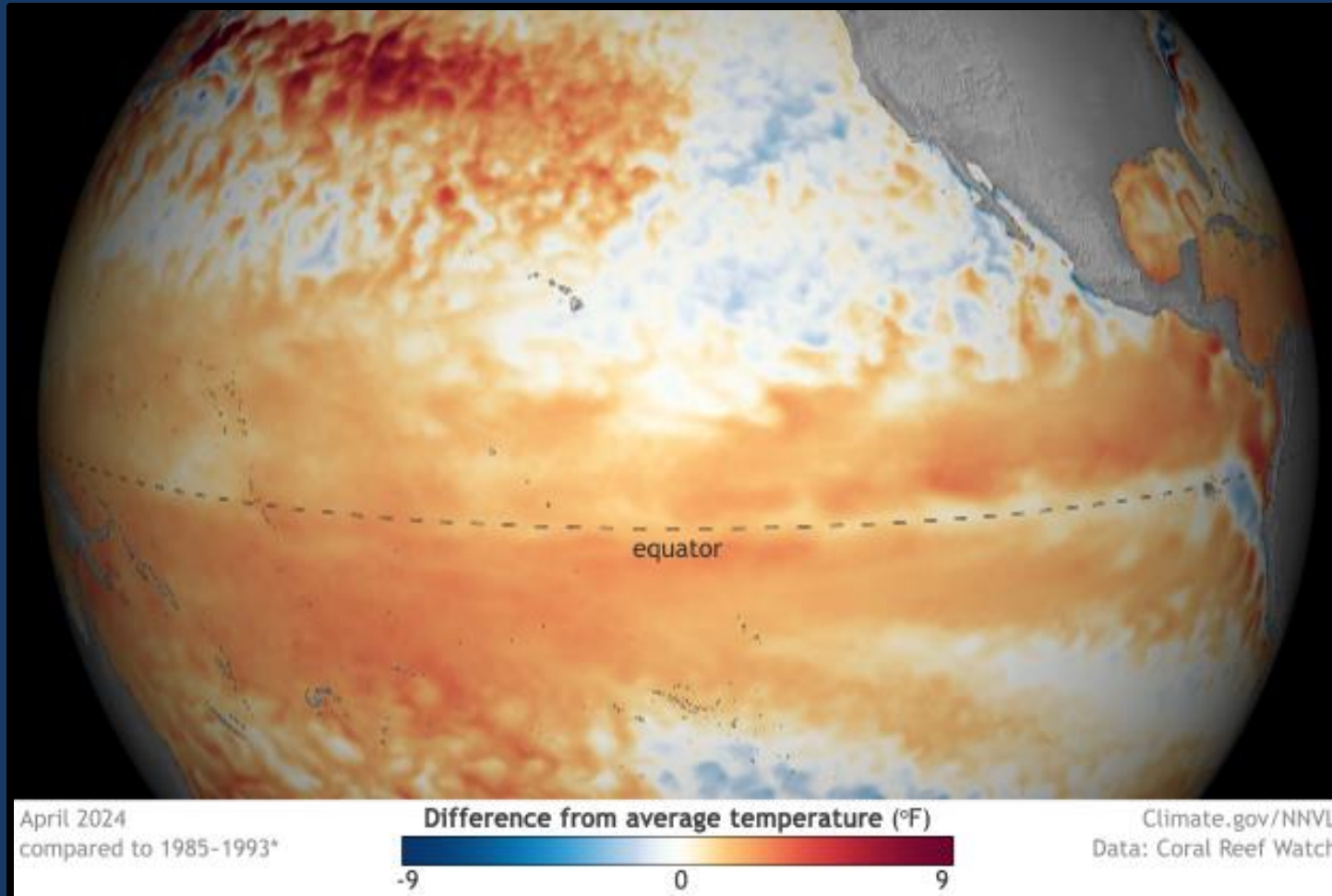


- Surface water throughout California remains above average for the water year.
- Major reservoirs are at 118% of average levels.

Reservoir Status

Source: [Visualizing California's Water Storage - Reservoirs and Snowpack - Engaging Data \(engaging-data.com\)](https://engaging-data.com/visualizing-california-water-storage-reservoirs-and-snowpack/)

# Weather Discussion: Exit El Niño, Enter La Niña

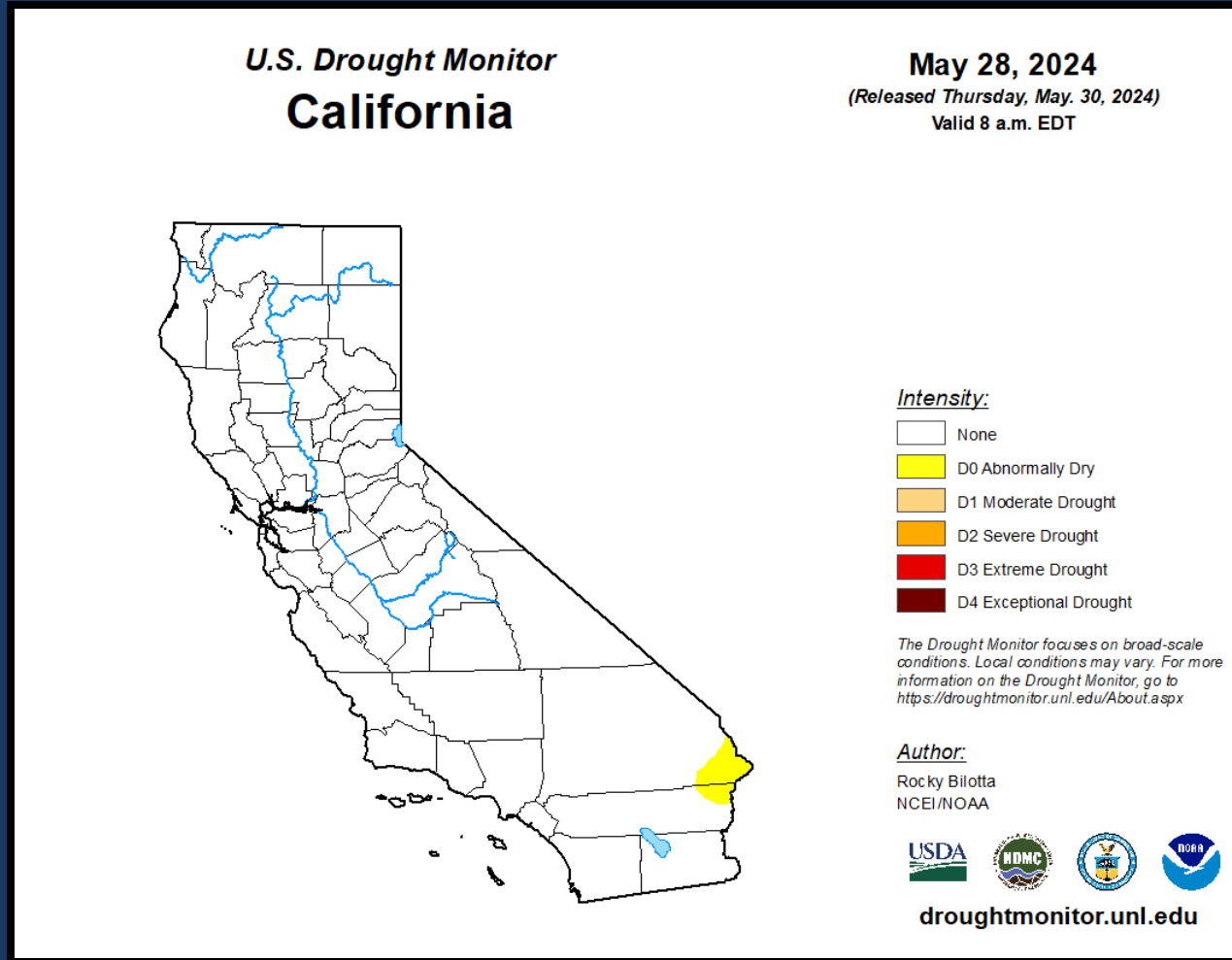


- The Atmospheric part of El Niño – the warm phase of the El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) climate pattern has more or less shut-off.
- The ocean part is weakening, conditions are likely to shift to ENSO-neutral in the next month.
- La Niña, the cool phase of ENSO, could emerge as soon as June – August

El Niño

Source: : [El Niño & La Niña \(El Niño-Southern Oscillation\)](#) | NOAA Climate.gov

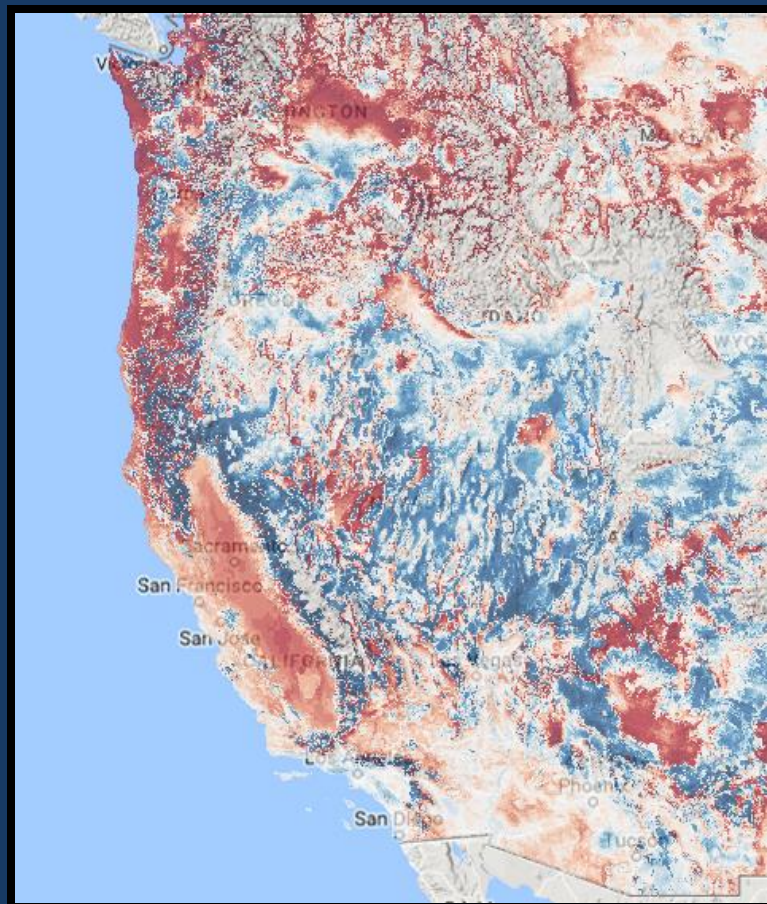
# Weather Discussion: Drought Monitor



- The latest Drought Monitor shows zero areas of drought across California.
- There is a small area of abnormally dry conditions in southeastern San Bernardino and northeastern Riverside Counties.
- Based on the weather forecast drought designations are not anticipated during the next 3-4 months.

# Status of Spring 2024

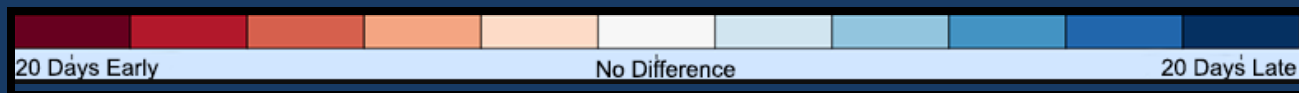
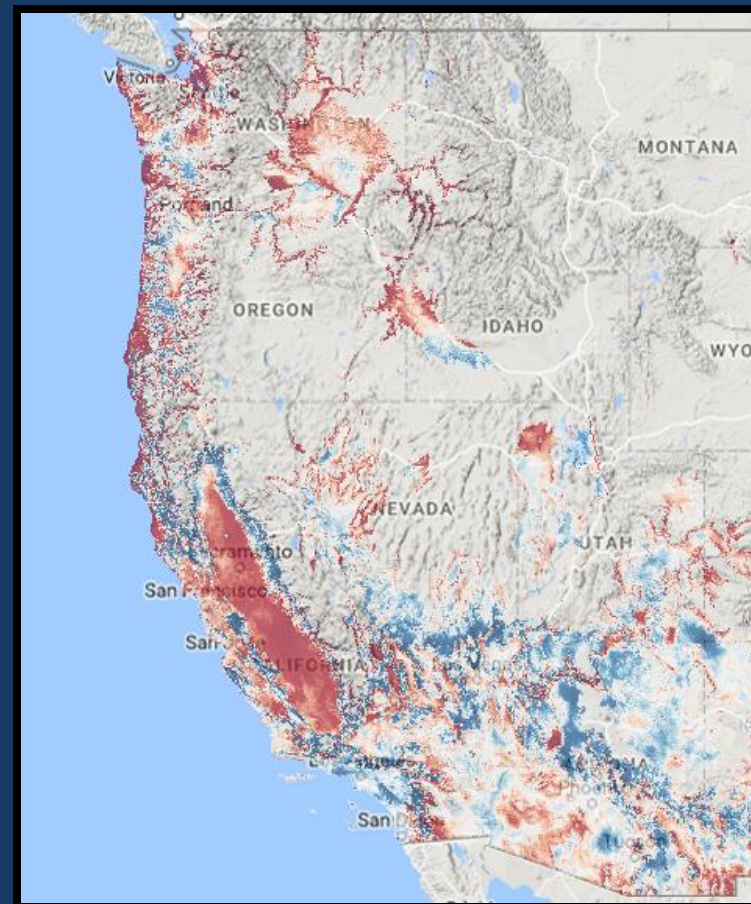
## Spring Leaf Index



How does this spring compare to “normal”?

- The Sacramento Valley and coastal areas of Northern California are seeing the earliest spring leaf out on record.

## Spring Bloom Index

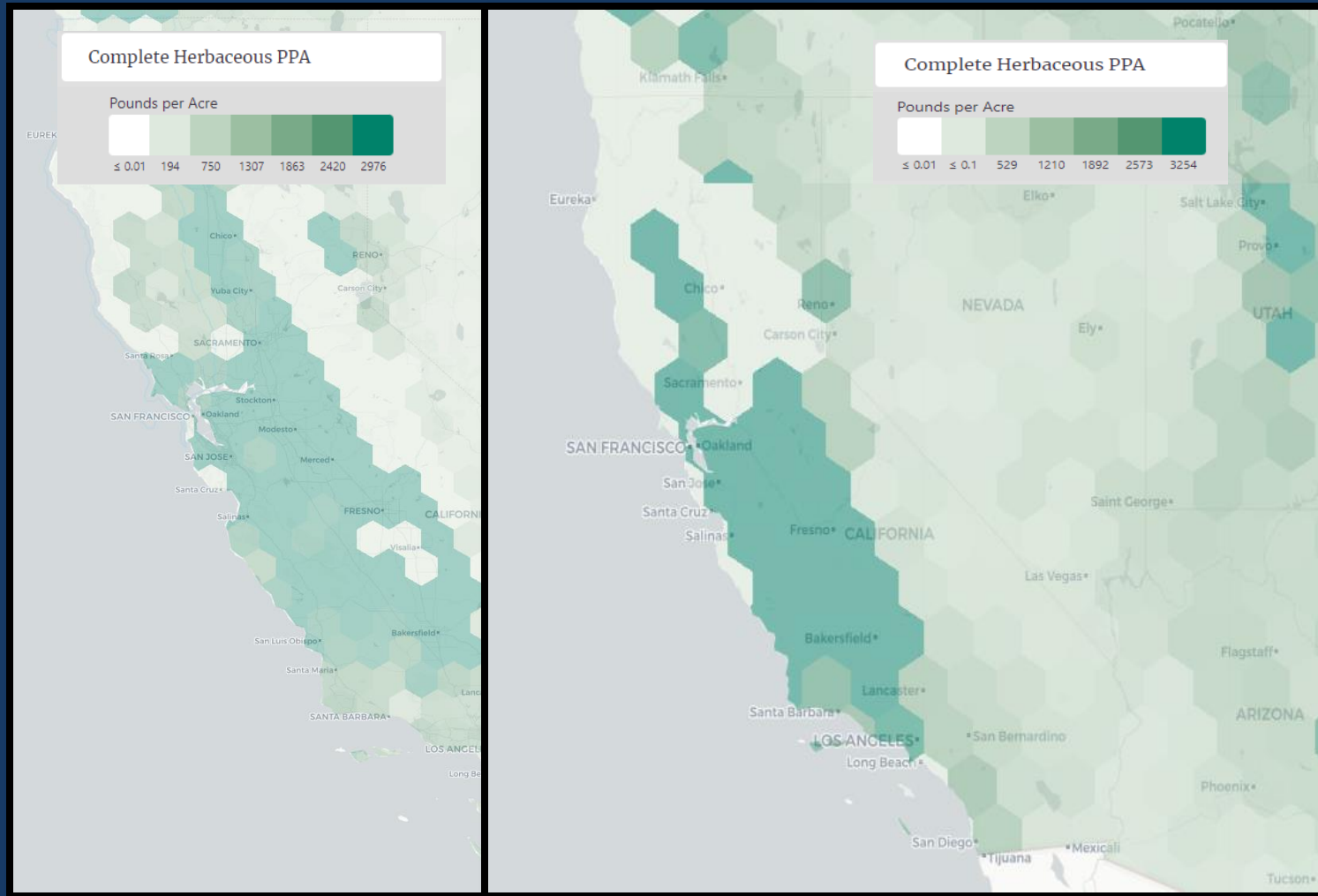


USA National Phenology Network

Source: [Status of Spring](https://usanpn.org/status-of-spring) | [USA National Phenology Network \(usanpn.org\)](https://usanpn.org)



# Fuels Discussion: 2024 Grass Fuel Loading



- Similar volume of herbaceous growth in California compared to last year's grass crop
- Grass fires will remain prevalent with rate of spread more consistent with historic rates once cured

# Fuels Discussion: Herbaceous Curing

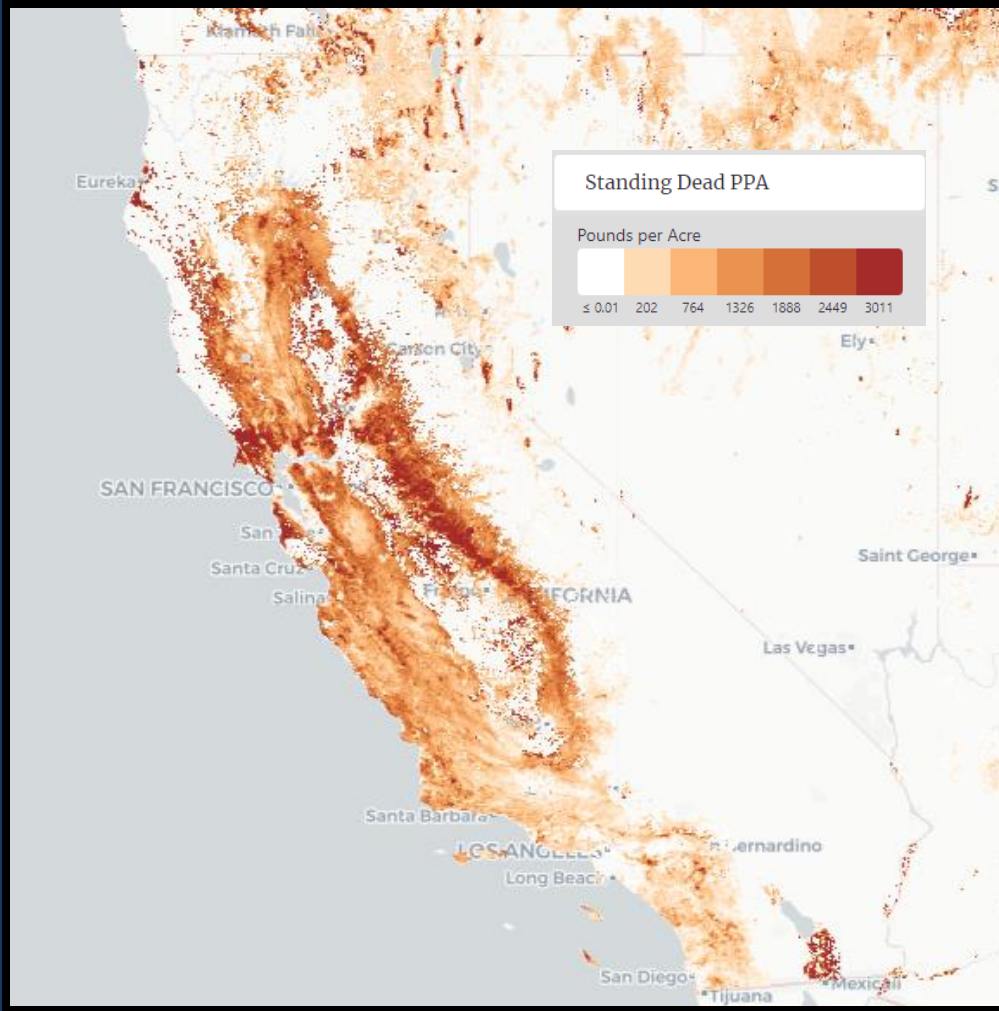
April 1, 2024

May 22, 2024



Bealville AlertCA camera – Tehachapi's near Keen CA

# Fuels Discussion: 2023 Grass Fuel Load Remain



- Last year's herbaceous loading exacerbates this year's fuels as the compacted material creates a receptive fuel bed to carry and maintain fire.
- User defined modifications to the grass fuel categories may be necessary for fire spread modeling in early summer.

# Fuels Discussion: Shrub and Tree Live Fuels



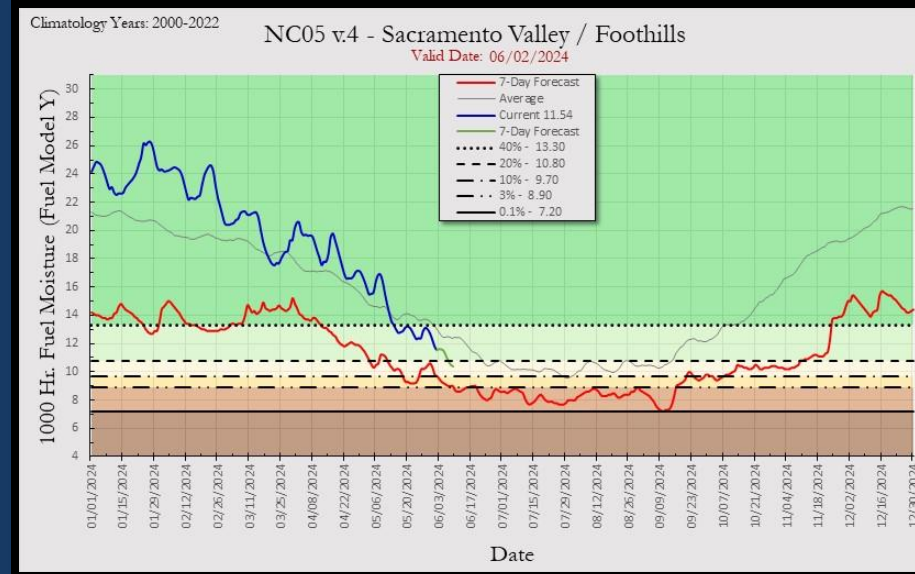
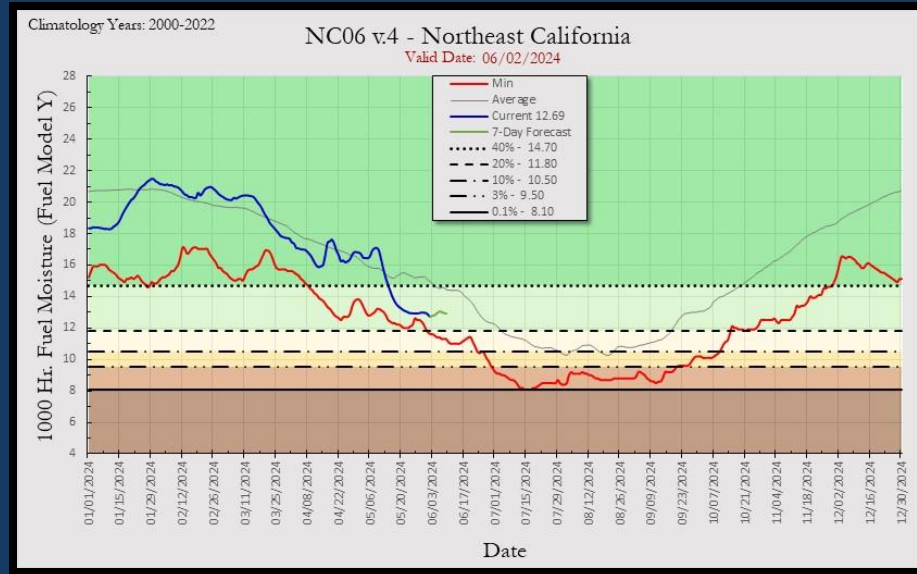
- Various phases of herbaceous curing was found below 4000 feet.
- Herbaceous fuels experienced transitional green-up between 4000 to 7500 feet, depending on the aspect and when the snow melt occurred.
- Rapid curing occurred further inland away from the coastal influences.

# Fuels Discussion: Accumulated Fuel Loading



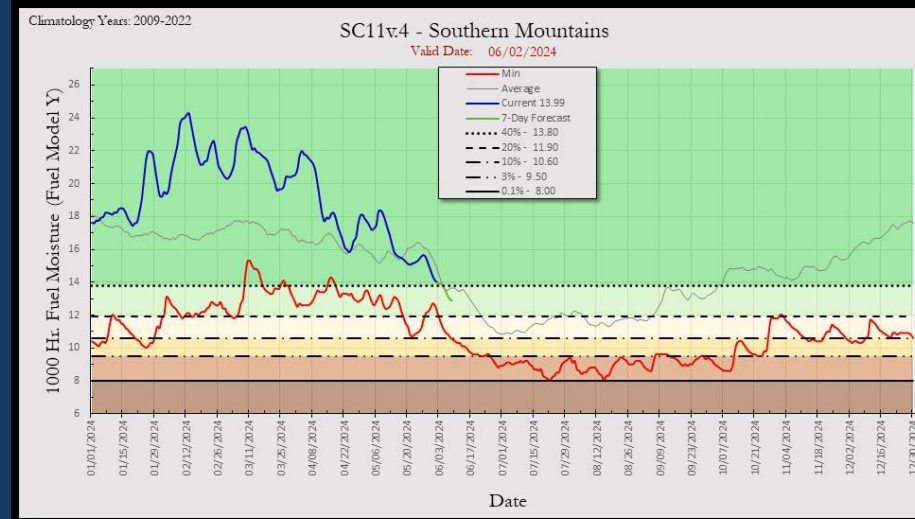
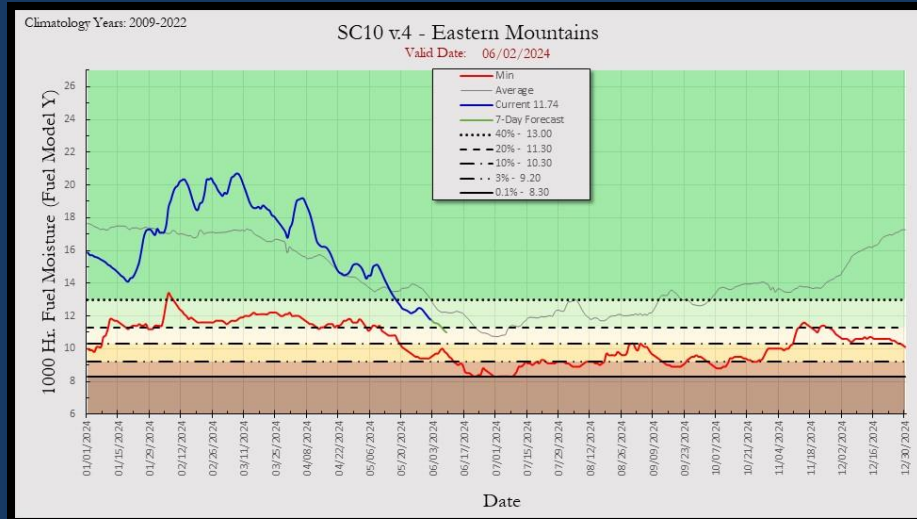
- Storm damage from last year has had a year to cure and compact
- Dead and Down vegetation still available fuel for 2024

# Fuels Discussion: 1000-hour Dead Fuels



## Northern California

- 1000-hr fuels moistures approached a more flammable reading across NE California and Sac Valley/Foothill PSA's during the latter half of May.



## Southern California

- 1000-hr fuel moistures below normal readings in Eastern and Southern mountains

1000-hour Dead Fuels

Source: [Predictive Services, Fuels and Fire Danger \(nifc.gov\)](https://www.nifc.gov/predictive-services/fuels-and-fire-danger)



# California Lightning Outlook



- Lightning numbers are expected to be less this summer due to a more subdued Southwest Monsoon and less potential for influences from East Pacific tropical systems as La Niña likely develops this summer.
- The bigger threat for problematic lightning should occur during August and to a lesser degree September.

# Four-month Significant Fire Potential

## June – September 2024 California Highlights

- Timely cool-moist intrusions are likely the next 2-3 months thus lessening the potential for extended critically dry fuel periods.
- Due to the large amount of precipitation in the wet season, there is a larger fine fuel load this season, specifically grasses and other 1-10 hr fuels.
- Abundant, cured herbaceous fuels fanned by gustier-dry winds should provide heightened significant fire potential at times
- Gusty dry-winds should also be a factor across PSAs, especially when the cured herbaceous and woody fuels align as the summer progresses.

# Four-month Significant Fire Potential

## June – September 2024 California Highlights

### Northern Region

- June and July: Significant fire potential is near to below normal.
- August and September: Significant fire potential becomes normal, due to seasonal curing and drying of fuels and a better potential for problematic lightning.

### Southern Region

- June: Slight tilt towards below normal large fire potential for the coast and Sierra Mountains.
- July: Tilt towards below normal for the coast and Sierra Mountains
- August: Odds favoring near normal large fire potential for all PSAs
- September: Odds Favoring above normal large fire potential for SoCal Mtns, Central Coast interior, and Sierra Foothills, due larger fuel loading of fine fuels with a likely warmer and drier pattern from transition to La Niña.

# Four-month Significant Fire Potential



June and July 2024

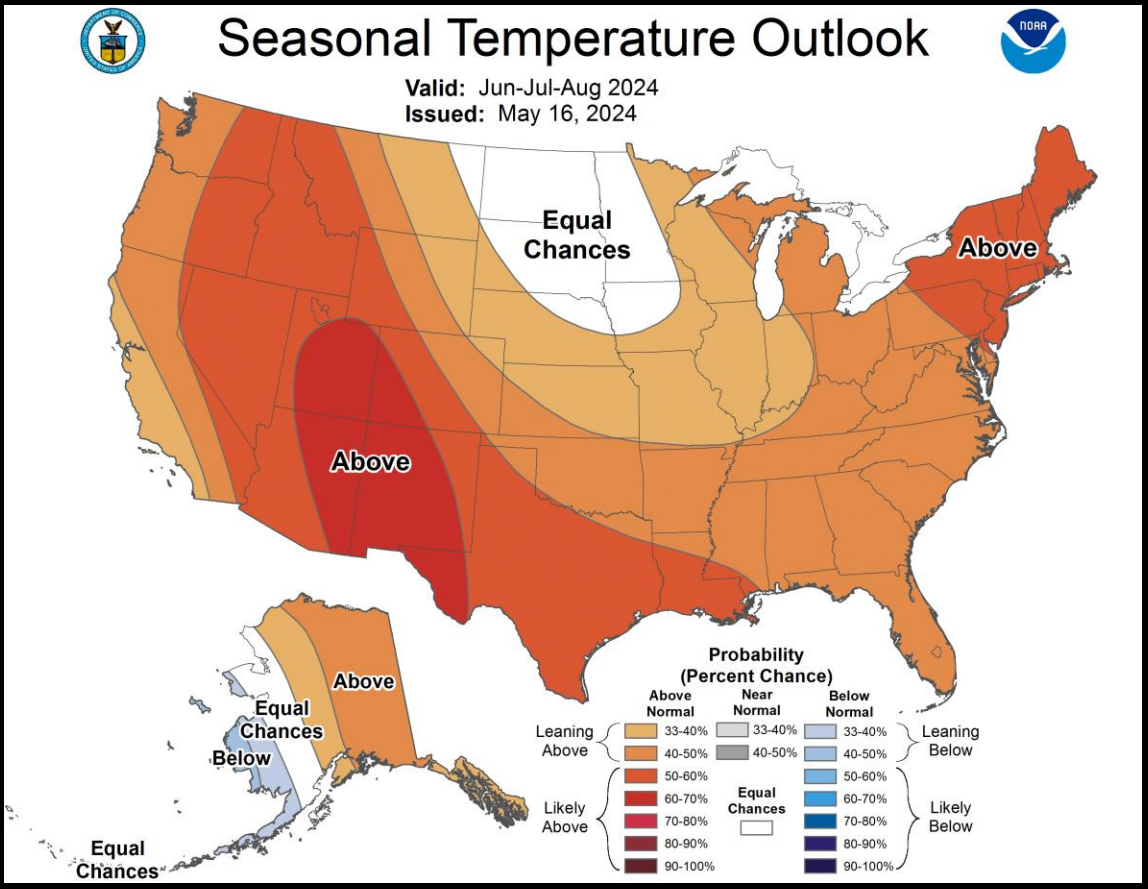
# Four-month Significant Fire Potential



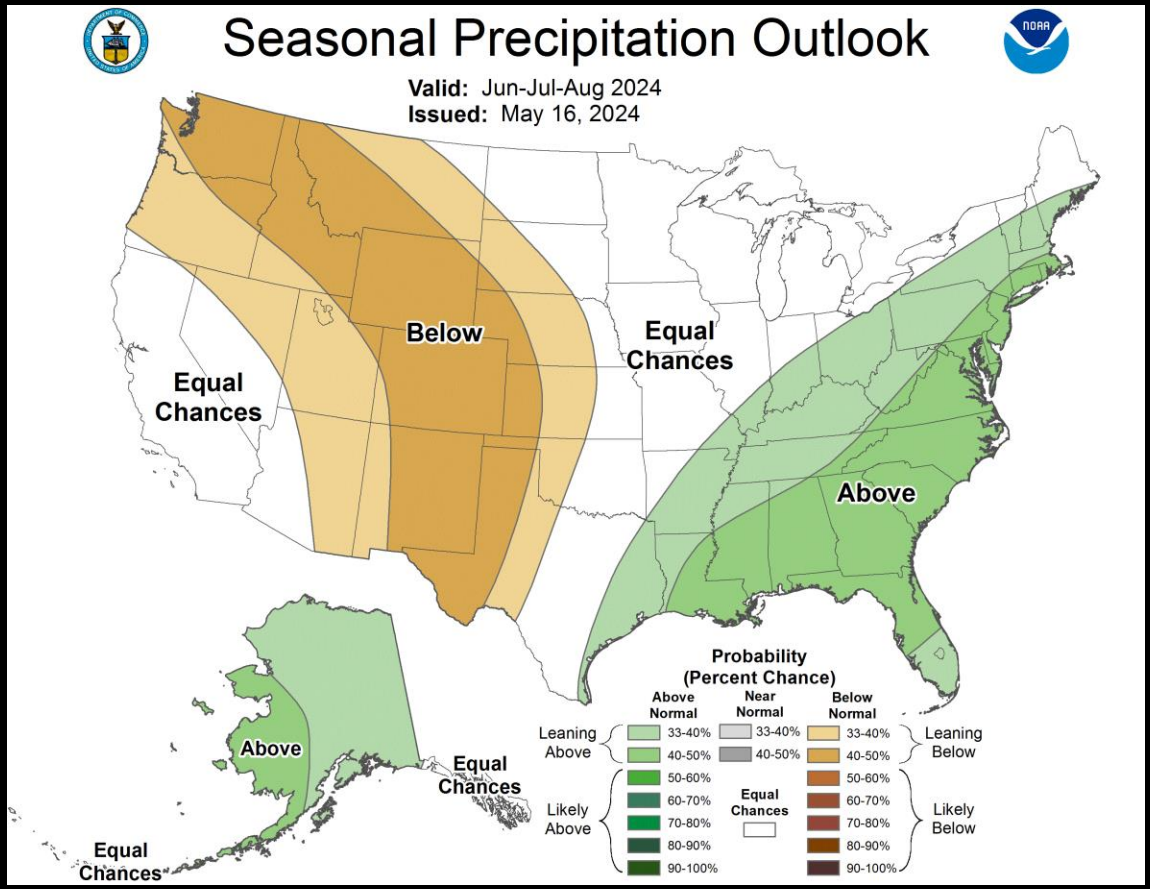
August and September 2024

# California Outlook

## Temperature Seasonal Outlook



## Precipitation Seasonal Outlook



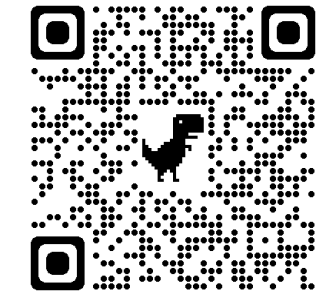
Four-month Temperature & Precipitation Outlook

Source: [Climate Prediction Center \(noaa.gov\)](https://climatepredictioncenter.noaa.gov/)



# Wildfire Forecast & Threat Intelligence Integration Center (WFTIIC)

<https://hub.wftiic.ca.gov/>





- a. Board Member comments/suggestions for next board meeting content
- b. Confirmation of next meeting date
- c. WSAB staff new hires and vacancies



# 9 – Adjourn Board Meeting



- For more information:
  - Website:  
[www.energysafety.ca.gov/wsab](http://www.energysafety.ca.gov/wsab)
  - Email: [WSAB@energysafety.ca.gov](mailto:WSAB@energysafety.ca.gov)

