

# Siberian winter may predict U.S. forecast

By Brian K. Sullivan, Bloomberg

Snow falling over Siberia is raising the prospect for frigid temperatures in New York come January.

Enlarge image [Snow in Siberia](#)

The weather half a world from Central Park can set off atmospheric events that result in icy air descending from the North Pole in December and January, driving U.S. temperatures down and natural gas and heating oil use up, according to Judah Cohen, director of seasonal forecasting at Atmosphere & Environmental Research in Lexington, Mass.

“It’s the best winter predictor that we have,” Cohen said in a telephone interview. “We haven’t made a forecast yet, but we’re watching it closely and the snow cover has definitely been above normal so far.”

The more ground covered by snow across northern Europe and Asia at the end of October, the greater the chances of triggering a phenomenon known as the negative phase of the Arctic Oscillation. That would flood North America, Europe and East Asia with polar air and possibly erect a blocking effect in the North Atlantic that would bottle up the cold in the U.S.

In September, 2.36 million square kilometers (911,000 square miles) of northern Europe and Asia were covered by snow, according to the Rutgers University Global Snow Lab. That compared with the 1981-2010 mean of 1.5 million.

“It’s running well above normal,” said Matt Rogers, president of Commodity Weather Group LLC, a commercial forecaster in

Bethesda, Maryland. “Through the last week of September, it’s the highest snow total in Eurasia since 1977.”

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