

Weak El Nino won't be a drought buster

By Sharon Bernstein, Reuters

SACRAMENTO – The Pacific Ocean phenomenon called El Nino, which can lead to storms in the U.S. Southwest and other places, will likely start soon, but may not bring hoped-for relief to drought-parched California, U.S. government meteorologists said on Thursday.

Scientists with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration said in a report the likelihood was increasing that El Nino, characterized by a warming of the ocean temperature in the eastern Pacific near the equator, would be weak this year.

A weak El Nino could still bring flooding, storms and even hurricanes to Southern California, but it is too soon to tell whether that will happen, said Eric Boldt, a meteorologist with the agency.

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