

# Forecasters backing away from La Niña predictions

By Kurtis Alexander, San Francisco Chronicle

The “Godzilla” El Niño is gone. But its sibling climate pattern, La Niña, which typically emerges in the aftermath with a cooling effect on the globe and potentially drier weather in California, has yet to show.

Federal forecasters said Thursday that La Niña is still likely to develop, though its probability and potential strength are both down. Those calculations may ease some fears about another dry winter for California, but they mostly leave climate experts with little agreement on whether the state’s drought picture will improve.

The downgrade comes not only because of slower-than-expected ocean cooling, but a failure of west-moving trade winds to pick up. The winds help bring more cold water to the surface of the tropics and are necessary for sustaining a potential La Niña

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