

La Niña no longer seen as likely this winter

By Kurtis Alexander, San Francisco Chronicle

La Niña may not happen after all.

Federal climate scientists on Thursday dialed back their forecast for the influential weather pattern that is sometimes associated with dry years in parts of the Americas, including California – where another winter of scant rain could wreak havoc on the drought-plagued state.

The Climate Prediction Center, a division of the National Weather Service, projected that the equatorial Pacific probably won't see the abnormally cool temperatures – and the corresponding effects on the atmosphere – that characterize La Niña.

While a La Niña could still emerge this year, its absence leaves a vacuum for forecasters – and fewer clues on whether California will shake free of the drought.

Read the whole story