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# El Niño should remain powerful in New England through winter's end

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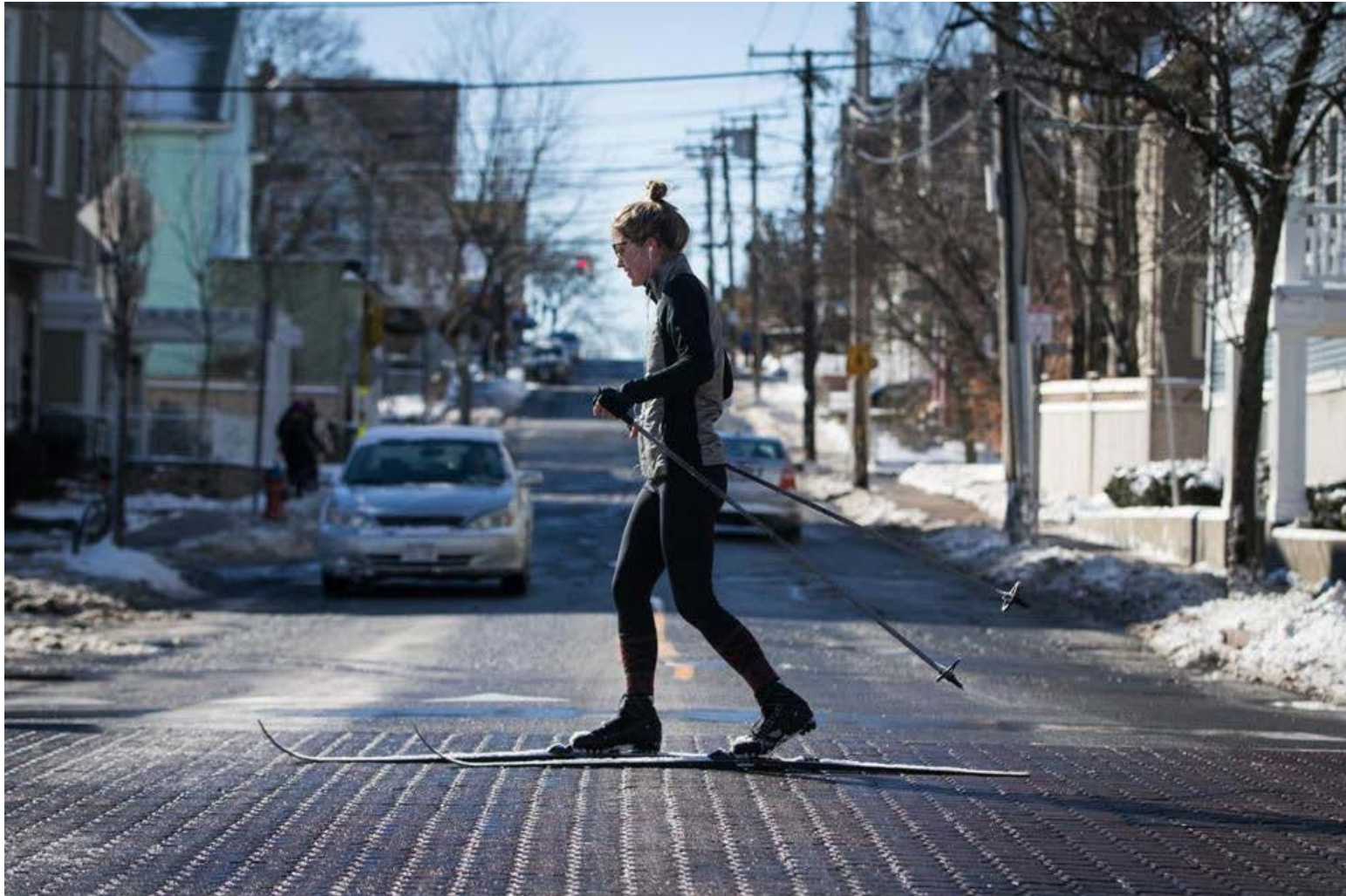
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KEITH BEDFORD/GLOBE STAFF

**Megan Fitzpatrick used her cross-country skis to cross the road in Somerville on Sunday.**

**By Matt Rocheleau**

GLOBE STAFF JANUARY 25, 2016

What's the rest of the winter got in store for us?

Forecasters say the El Niño phenomenon that has been driving weather patterns across much of the country has peaked. But even as it weakens, it should remain powerful enough to continue delivering above-average temperatures and precipitation to the area throughout the rest of winter.

The outlook for February, March, and April “favors above-normal temperatures across much of the continental U.S.,” including New England, the National Weather Service said in its [latest long-term outlook](#) discussion.

Above-median precipitation is also forecast for large swaths of the country, including Southern New England, the weather service said.

Those general patterns don't rule out the possibility that precipitation will coincide with temperatures dropping below freezing to create snowstorms, including major ones.



## Warm, rainy conditions coming

The storm is expected to rapidly intensify Thursday night into Friday and pass off the coast, the National Weather Service said.

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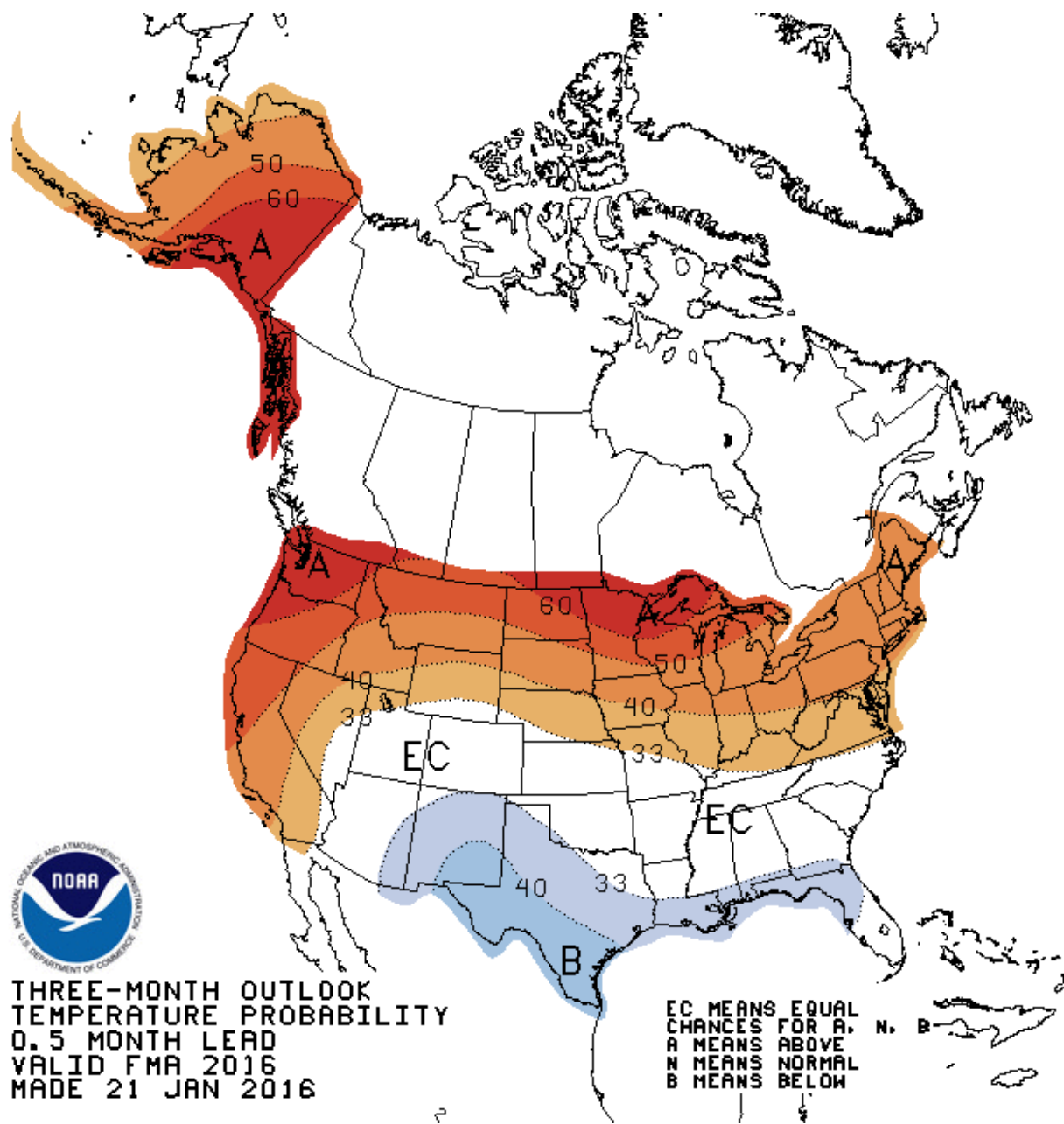
The state's first major snowstorm Saturday dumped as much as 15 inches in parts of the Cape and islands, but there was a sharp cutoff, and some parts of Massachusetts to the north and west got no snow at all.

The seasonal forecast issued at the end of last week is largely based on El Niño — an area of unusually warm sea surface temperatures in the equatorial Pacific Ocean. When an El Niño is strong, as the

current one is, forecasters tend to have more confidence in predicting how it will impact weather patterns.

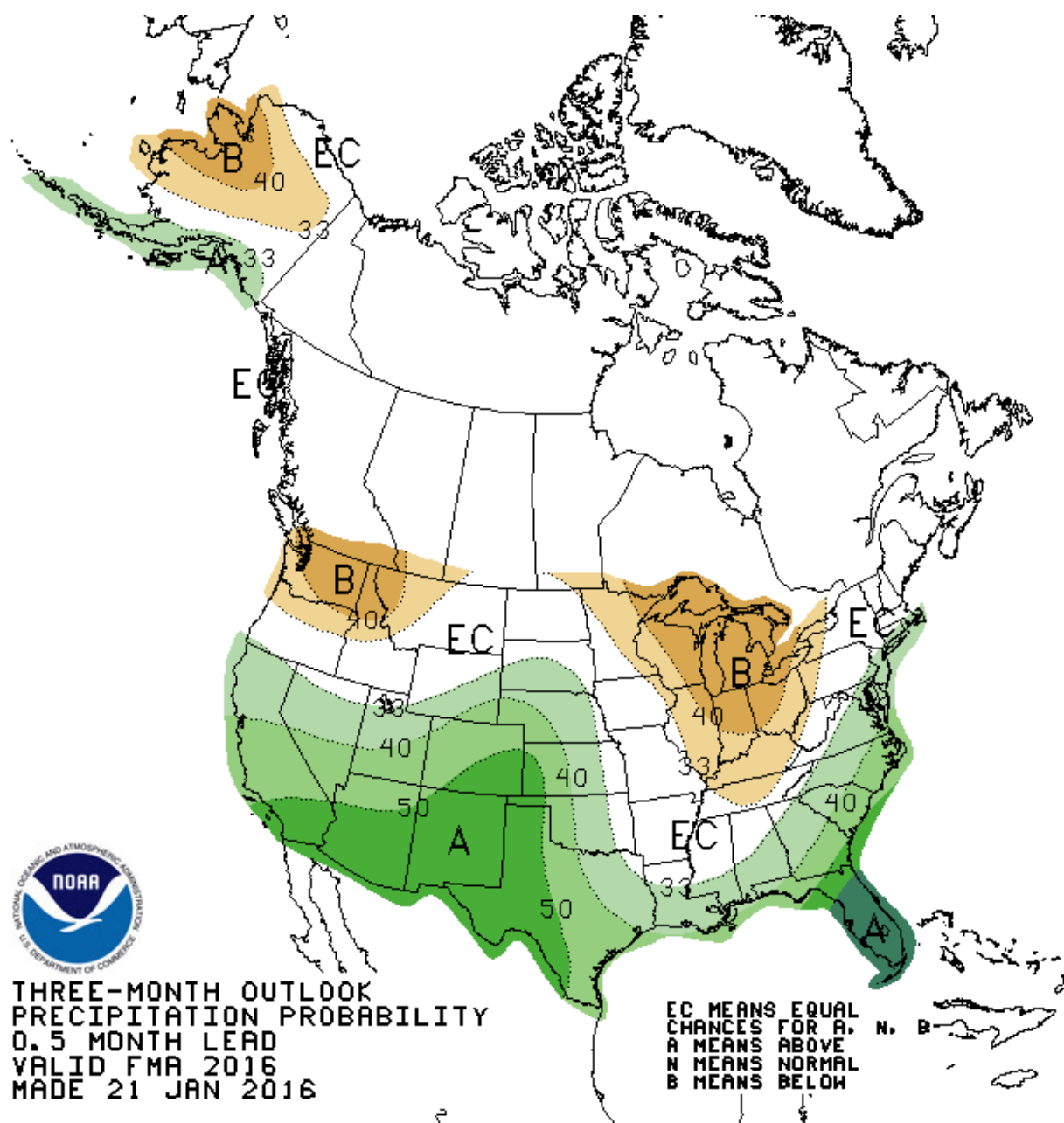
The El Niño should weaken going forward and is expected to transition to a neutral phase during the late spring or early summer.





NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE

**The above map shows temperature pattern expectations for February, March, and April. Red and orange colors signal the expectation for above-normal temperatures. Blue signals the opposite.**



NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE

**The above map shows precipitation pattern expectations for February, March, and April. Green colors signal the expectation for above-normal precipitation. Brown signals the opposite.**

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