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Goodbye, winter! Hello . . . summer?

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DAVID L. RYAN/GLOBE STAFF

A group of students enjoyed a walk along the sands of Carson Beach in South Boston Tuesday.

By Matt Rocheleau

GLOBE STAFF MARCH 08, 2016

Goodbye, winter! Hello, summer?

Potentially record-breaking temperatures — reaching into the upper 60s and lower 70s — are expected to hit the area Wednesday and Thursday.

And that may just be a hint of what's in store this spring.

Meteorologists expect our region to see unusually warm weather for at least the next two weeks. The latest long-term forecasts also say that we can expect a pattern of generally above-average temperatures through the end of May.

“The general pattern for April, May, and probably June is going to lead to above-average temperatures,” said Tom Kines, senior meteorologist at AccuWeather.com.



‘A sign of spring’

Forecasters called Tuesday's weather “a sign of spring.”

But don't put your heavy jackets in storage just yet.

“There are going to be some cooldowns, but there's no really cold air heading our way any time soon,” said Kines.

He said temperatures will trend closer to seasonal averages during the last week and a half of March, and may even dip below normal around then, “but we don’t think it’s going to be extreme,” in terms of cold.

So is there still a chance for snow?

Kines said he’s not ready to rule out the possibility completely, but “the odds are becoming less and less.”

“If you were a betting man, you’d bet against snow, but that doesn’t mean it can’t happen,” he said.

The primary driver behind the warm weather forecasts — and the reason we just experienced one of the warmest winters on record, including the warmest December on record — is a powerful El Niño. Though El Niño has been weakening, it is expected to continue to dictate weather patterns and help push warmer weather to our area during at least the first part of the spring.

“The current El Niño is among the strongest events” ever recorded, the weather service said.



DAVID L. RYAN/GLOBE STAFF/FILE 2016

Winter 2015-16 has been marked unseasonably warm weather.

While the strength of El Niño is predicted to decrease in spring, “it is probable that El Niño conditions will remain strong in most of March.”

“All temperature tools continue to strongly favor above-normal temperatures across the northern half of the continental US through the early spring, which is consistent with a strong El Niño,” the service said.

Long-term forecasts also suggest our region can expect about average precipitation through May.

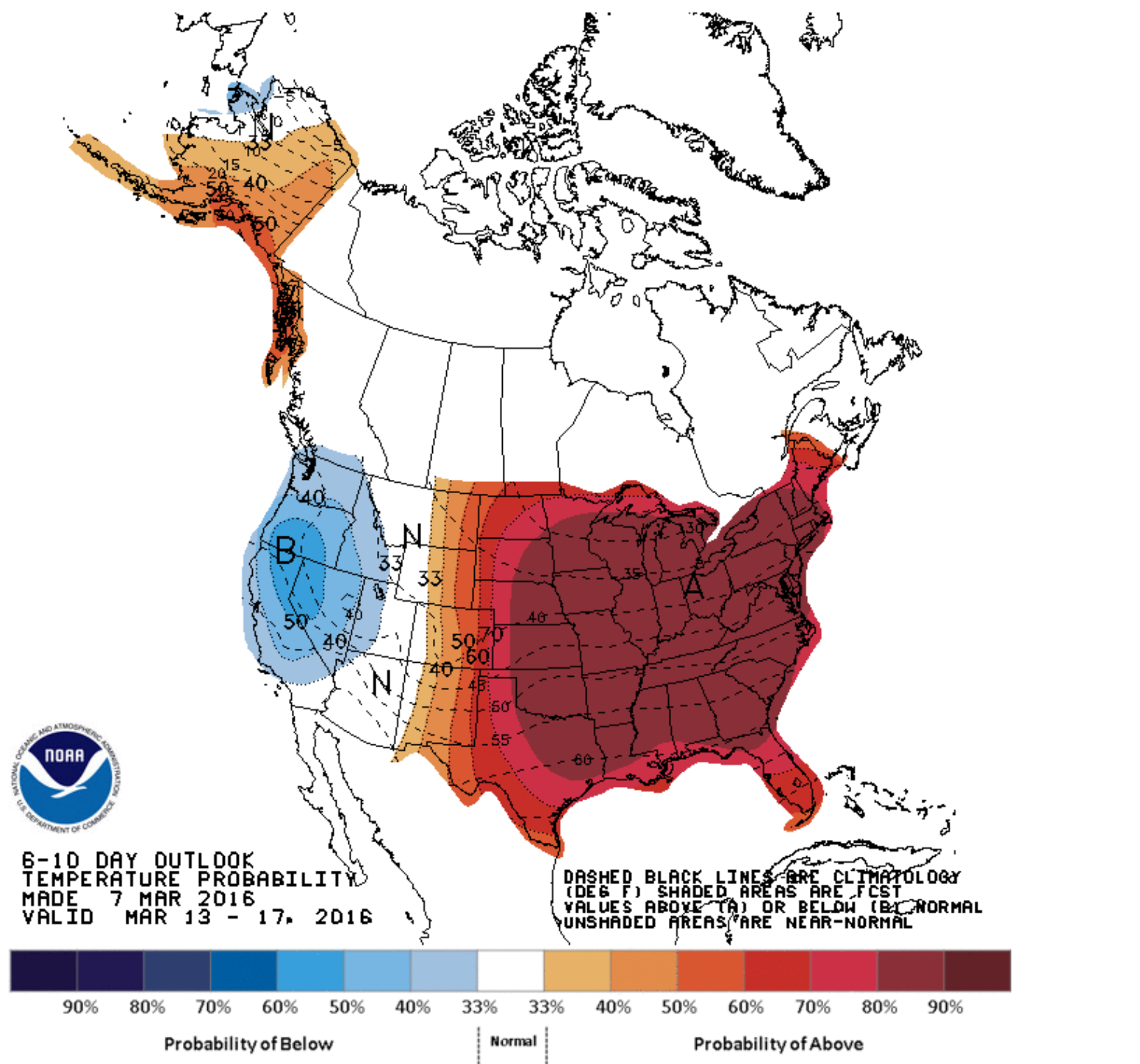
Kines said the early thinking for the summer is essentially more of the same, with temperatures expected to generally be above normal and precipitation close to normal.

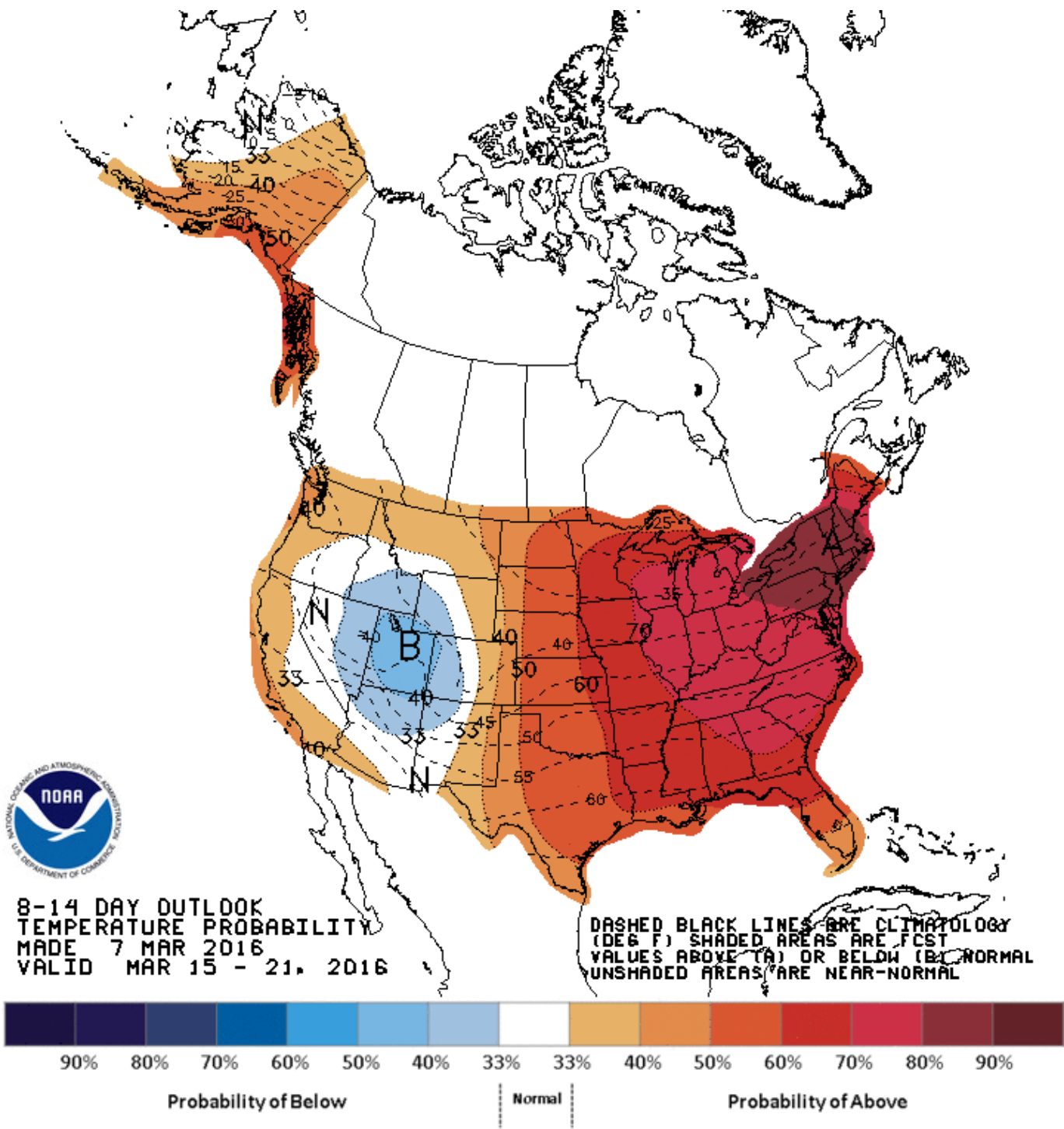
If the mercury does indeed eclipse the 70-degree mark Wednesday, it would be just the seventh year in recorded history that Boston has seen temperatures reach 70 before March 9, according to officials

at the National Weather Service office in Taunton.

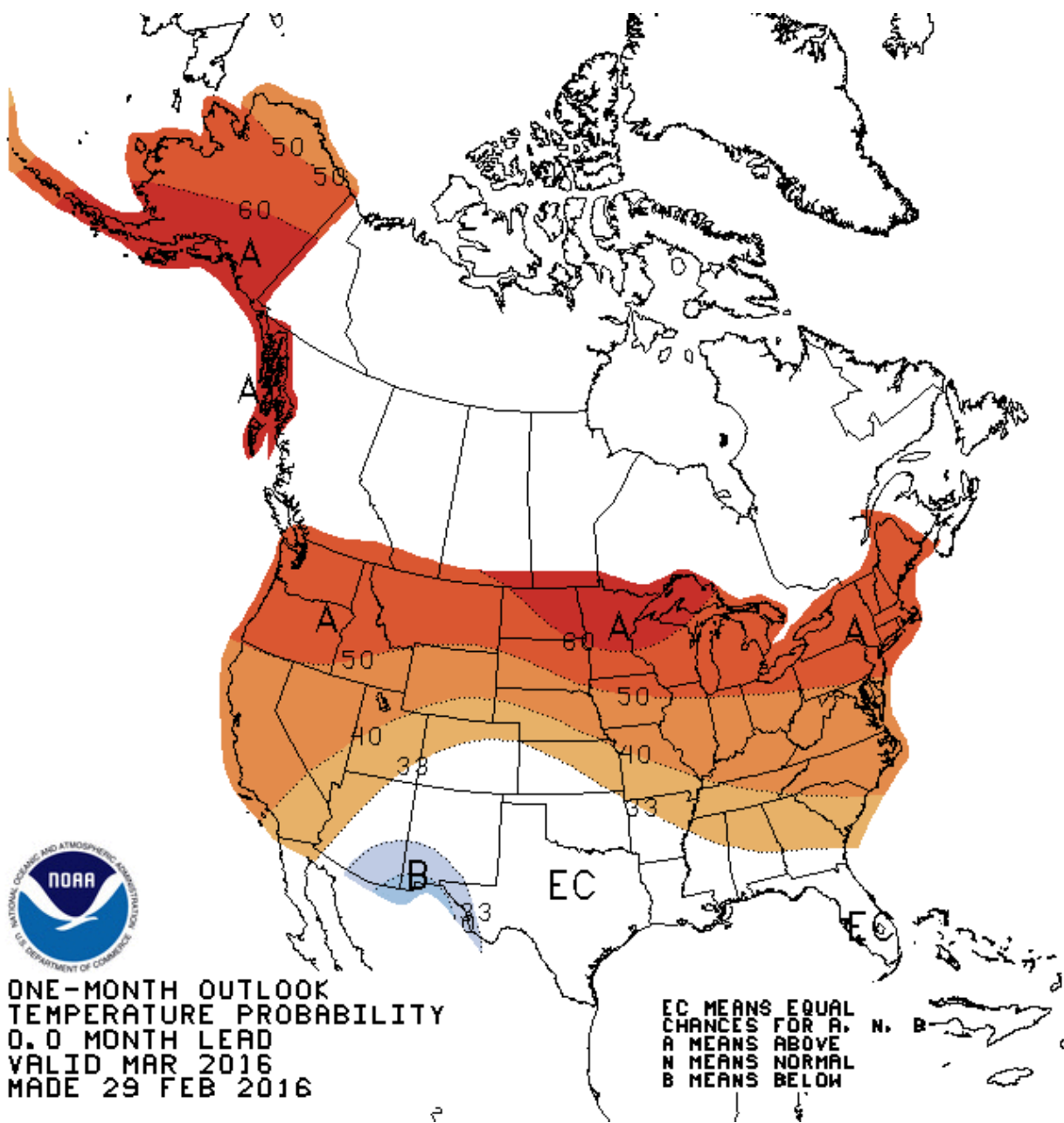
Based on historical averages, the city typically does not see temperatures rise above 70 until April 9, the weather service said.

The four maps below show, in order from top to bottom, the temperature outlooks for: 6-10 days out; 8-14 days out; one month out; and three months out.

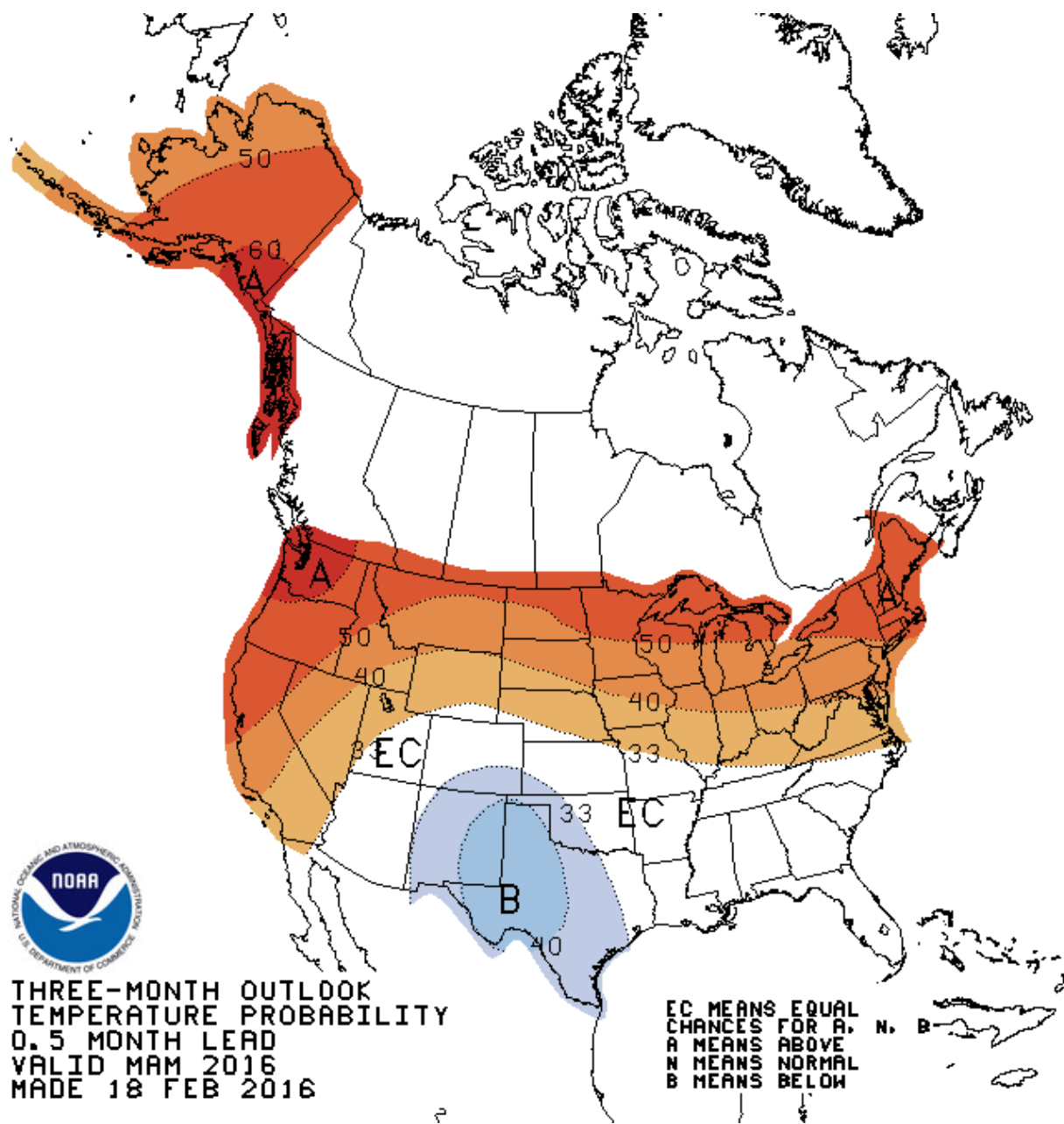




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