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TDLR Expert: Recent Rains May Have Knocked Out Texas Drought

AUSTIN – The recent rains across Texas dealt a serious blow to the drought that has gripped Texas over the past several months, says George Bomar, the state meteorologist with the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation.

“It has been severely dented,” says Bomar. “It is not yet totally vanquished. Many El Ninos have the capacity to spring us out of a drought and into a wet weather scenario. I would say, based on how September delivered, over half of Texas is already out of a drought, or on the verge of getting out of the drought.”

Bomar monitors the weather as a program specialist in the TDLR Weather Modification program. At the end of August, he says, one-third of the state of Texas was in a severe drought—or worse.

But the hefty rains that fell in Texas during September shrank the area battling drought to only 7 percent. The Dallas-Fort Worth area (12.69 inches) and San Antonio (16.86) both had the wettest Septembers in recorded history (or at least the past 125 years). Galveston (24.32) had half a year’s worth of rainfall to make the month the second wettest September in history. For the drought to end, Texas will need to continue receiving healthy rains in October and November—and the prospects for that look good.

Texas appears to be moving into an El Nino weather pattern over the next several months, he says. An El Nino is a band of warm water that develops in the equatorial Pacific Ocean. Those currents can influence the weather hundreds of miles away from them. El Ninos can last anywhere from a few months to 18 months. (Interestingly, they are not defined until after they’ve occurred.)

Bomar says Texas will probably experience a wetter winter and milder temperatures, so schoolkids and the young at heart shouldn’t count on missing any school thanks to snow days.

“We do get some cold weather during the winter in an El Nino, but the Arctic air is much more sporadic. You have to have the timing just right for that precipitation, which should be abundant, to be ice and snow as opposed to liquid water,” Bomar says.

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Because no two El Ninos are ever the same, there's no way of knowing exactly how much rain we'll receive this winter.

"Some El Ninos are stronger than others," Bomar says. "You can't always count on having a wetter than usual winter and a milder than usual winter. I would say that 70 to 80 percent of the time you'll get that."

The TDLR Weather Modification Program issues licenses and permits for projects that attempt to produce additional amounts of rainfall using cloud seeding. Most of these rainfall enhancement projects operate in West and South Texas – about one-sixth of the land area of Texas.

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About TDLR

TDLR provides oversight for a broad range of occupations, businesses, facilities, and equipment in Texas. The agency protects the health and safety of Texans by ensuring they are served by qualified, licensed professionals. Inspections of individuals, businesses, and equipment are done on a regular basis to safeguard the public. Currently, the agency manages 39 business and occupational licensing programs with more than 800,000 licenses across the state.

Visit TDLR's [website](#) for more information and resources. You can search the [TDLR licensee database](#), and also find [past violations](#) in which a final order was issued against companies or individuals. TDLR's Customer Service line is available anytime between 7 a.m. until 6 p.m., Monday through Friday, at 1-800-803-9202. TDLR representatives are fluent in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Korean and Chinese.

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