POTENTIAL HIGH-IMPACT COASTAL STORM THANKSGIVING INTO FRIDAY MORNING

BRIEFING | 1600 EST | 23NOV26

Connecticut Department of Emergency Services & Public Protection

Division of Emergency Management & Homeland Security

Governor Ned Lamont

Ronnell A. Higgins, Commissioner

Deputy Commissioner Don Boyce

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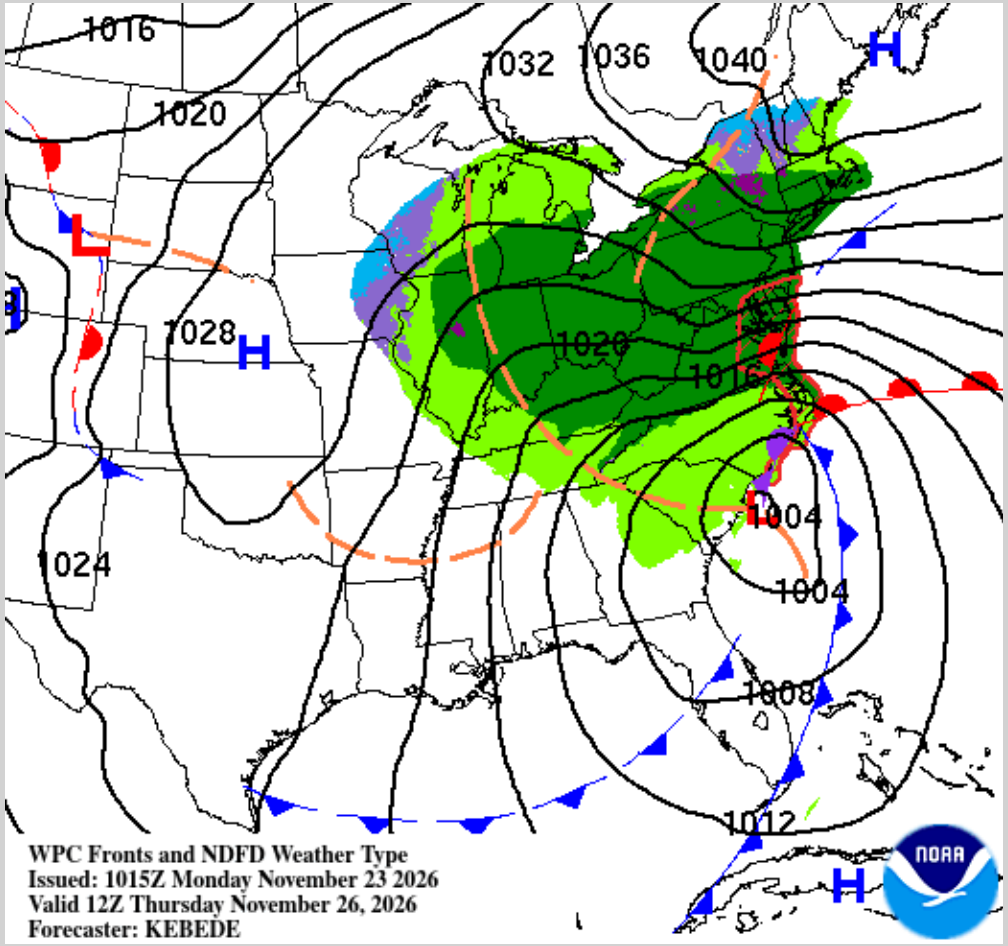
WEATHER SETUP

A potentially significant coastal storm is expected to impact Connecticut during the Thanksgiving holiday period. An area of low pressure developing along the Southeast U.S. coast will strengthen as it tracks northward toward southern New England. Meanwhile, a strong area of high pressure over eastern Canada will create a tightening pressure gradient across the Northeast, supporting increasing easterly winds ahead of the approaching storm.

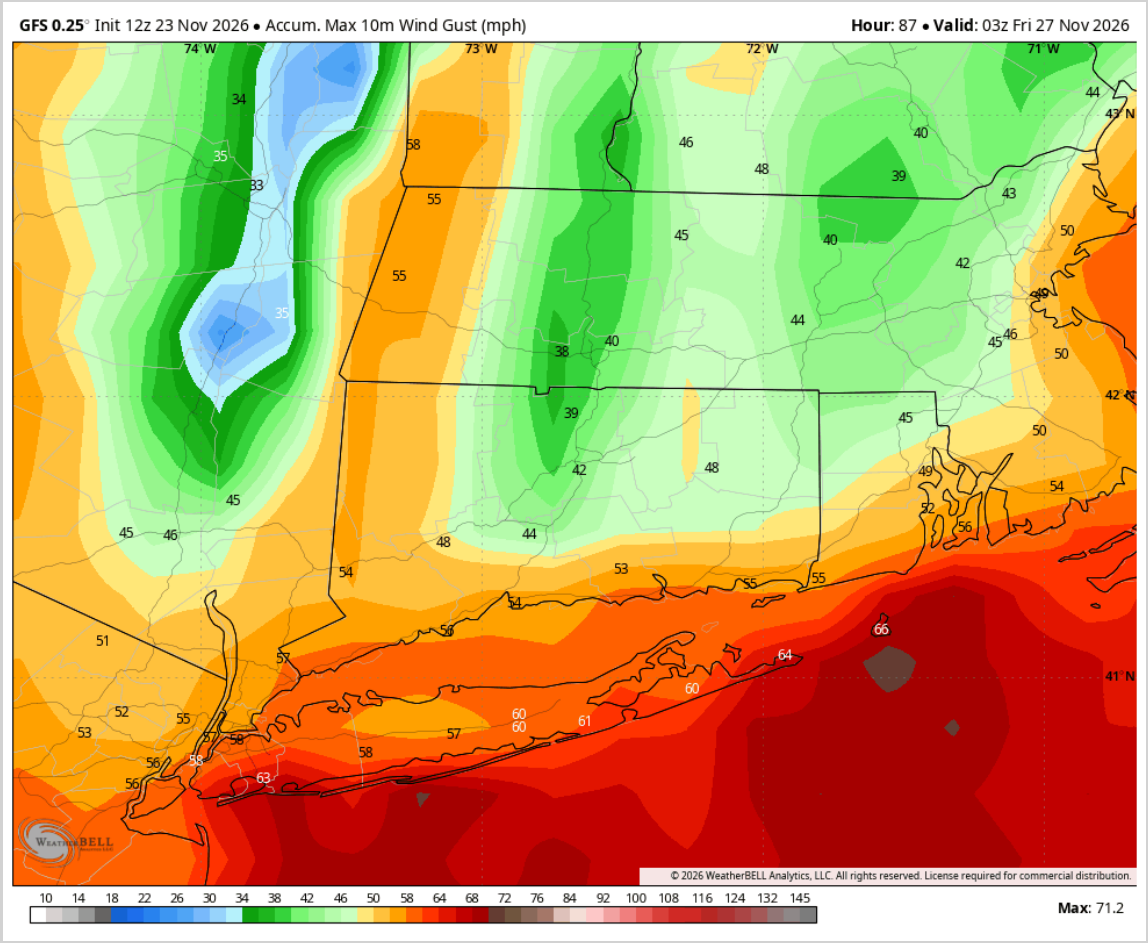
Confidence continues to increase that Connecticut will experience an impactful weather event Thursday into early Friday. The primary concerns include strong to potentially damaging wind gusts, periods of heavy rainfall, and coastal flooding. The combination of persistent onshore winds and astronomically high tides associated with Tuesday's full moon will increase the coastal flooding threat, particularly along vulnerable shoreline communities. While confidence in an impactful storm is increasing, uncertainty remains regarding the exact storm track, timing, and magnitude of impacts across Connecticut.



WIND THREAT

Strong easterly to northeasterly winds are expected to develop across Connecticut on Thanksgiving Day as a strengthening coastal storm approaches southern New England.

Wind gusts of 35–45 mph appear increasingly likely, with gusts approaching or exceeding 50 mph possible along the immediate coastline. The greatest wind threat is expected across coastal Connecticut, particularly southeastern portions of the state.

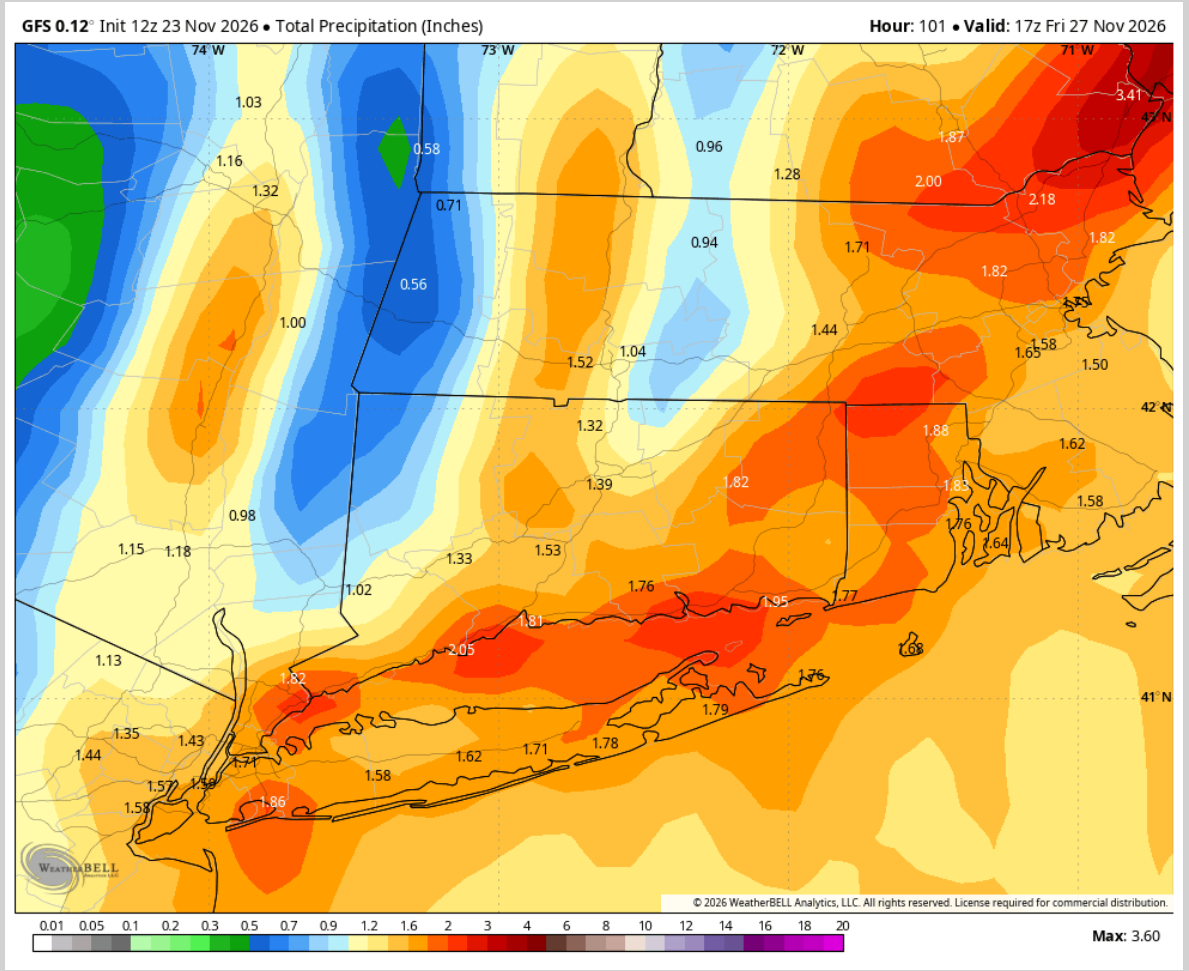


****These are preliminary estimates and are expected to change as forecast confidence increases closer to the event.****

RAINFALL FOREACAST

A widespread soaking rainfall is expected across Connecticut beginning Thanksgiving Day and continuing into early Friday. Current forecasts generally support rainfall totals of 1–2 inches statewide, with locally higher amounts possible depending on the eventual storm track and development of heavier rain bands.

While widespread freshwater flooding is not currently anticipated, periods of heavy rainfall could result in localized urban and poor-drainage flooding, particularly in areas with clogged storm drains or poor drainage infrastructure.



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COASTAL FLOODING THREAT

Coastal flooding remains a significant concern along the Connecticut shoreline as strong easterly winds coincide with a period of exceptionally high astronomical tides associated with the November 24 full moon. Prolonged easterly winds could result in water piling up across Long Island Sound, leading to elevated water levels and an increased coastal flooding threat.

Minor to moderate coastal flooding is possible, with major coastal flooding remaining a worst-case scenario if the strongest easterly winds coincide with high tide cycles. Considerable uncertainty remains regarding how water will accumulate within Long Island Sound, particularly the potential for tidal stacking over multiple tide cycles.

The exact storm track, duration of easterly winds, and timing of peak winds relative to high tide will ultimately determine the severity of coastal flooding. Even small changes in these factors could significantly increase or decrease impacts along the Connecticut shoreline.



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DESPP/DEMHS will continue to closely monitor the developing coastal storm and its potential impacts. The next external update will be issued on Tuesday, November 24th, at 4:00 PM.

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