

Hurricane Iselle gains strength as it nears Hawaii (Update)

August 6 2014, by Jennifer Sinco Kelleher



Shoppers lift cases of bottled water in preparation for a hurricane and tropical storm heading toward Hawaii at the Iwilei Costco in Honolulu on Tuesday, Aug. 5, 2014. Two big storms so close together is rare in the eastern Pacific. Hurricane Iselle could make landfall by Friday and Tropical Storm Julio could hit two or three days later, weather officials said. (AP Photo/Audrey McAvoy)

Hawaii is preparing for what could be the first hurricane to hit the state in more than 20 years as weather officials say an approaching storm isn't

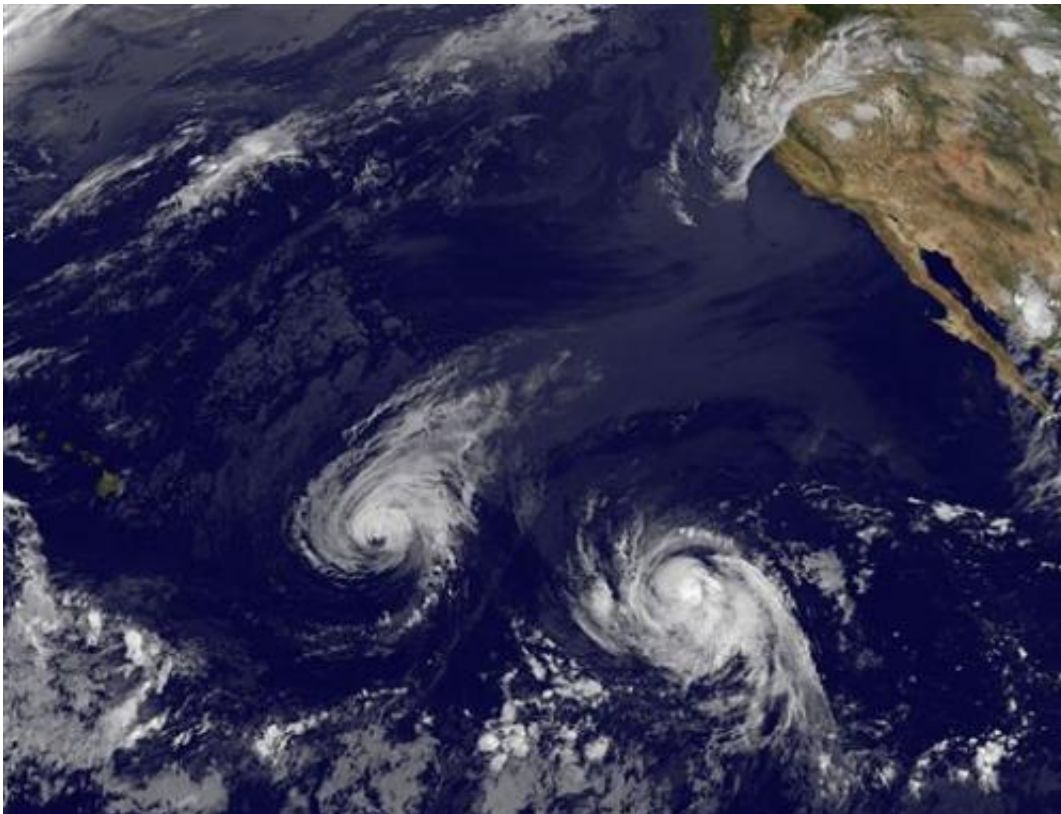
weakening as previously predicted.

Hurricane Iselle was expected to weaken into a tropical storm before reaching Hawaii's Big Island Thursday. But weather officials now say it has intensified and is forecast to maintain hurricane strength or become a strong tropical storm as it approaches the island.

The storm is expected to bring heavy rains, high surf and damaging winds.

A second hurricane is following closely behind. Hurricane Julio is expected to slowly strengthen and pass north of the Big Island sometime over the weekend.

The approaching storms are prompting officials to close schools, residents to stock up on supplies and tourists to change travel plans.



This image provided by NOAA taken Wednesday Aug. 6, 2014 shows Hurricane Iselle, center, and tropical storm Julio, right. Though it's not clear how damaging the storms could be, many in Hawaii aren't taking any chances as they wait for Hurricane Iselle to make landfall later this week and Tropical Storm Julio potentially hitting a few days later. (AP Photo/NOAA)

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