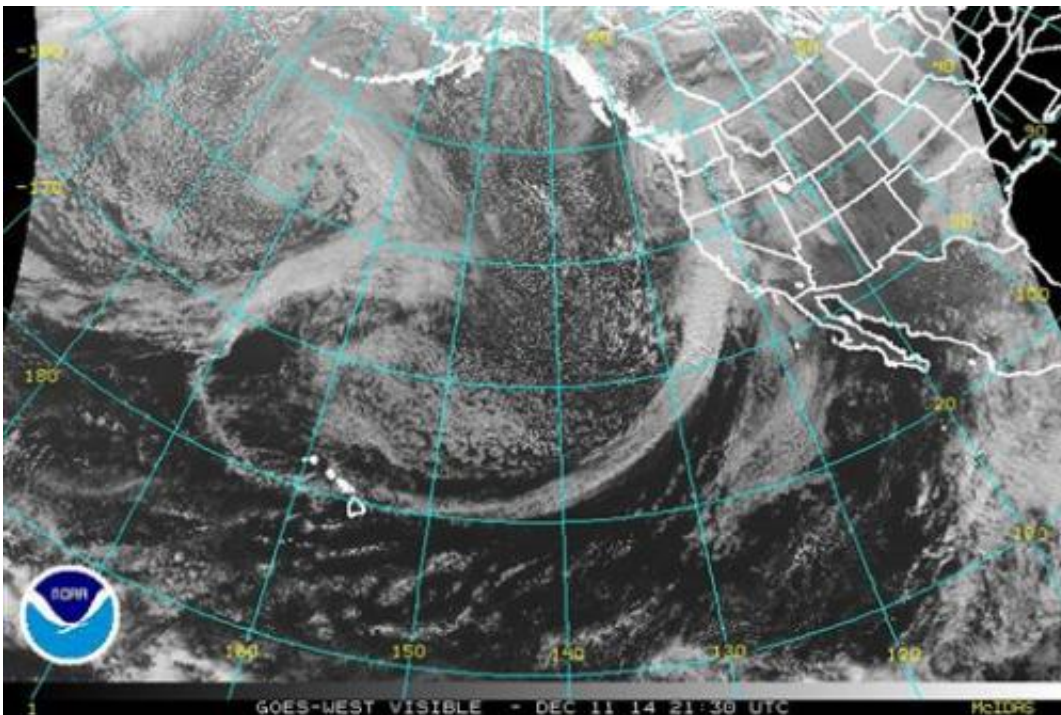


Approaching storm scrubs California rocket launch

December 11 2014



This Dec. 11, 2014 satellite imagery from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration shows the "Pineapple Express," a storm front extending from west of Hawaii and aimed directly at California, bringing strong gales and sheets of rain that knocked out electricity, flooded freeways and toppled trees in Northern California Thursday. Slide-prone Southern California was bracing for its own beating later Thursday evening and Friday morning. This "Pineapple Express" storm blowing down the coast was unusual not only for its force, but for the warmth it brought to San Francisco, which was a balmy 60 degrees, about 5 degrees above average for this time of year. (AP Photo/NOAA)

An approaching storm has delayed the launch of a U.S. defense satellite from California's central coast.

An Atlas V rocket carrying a classified payload for the National Reconnaissance Office was scheduled to lift off Thursday from Vandenberg Air Force Base.

However, the [launch](#) was postponed to Friday night because of concerns that the [storm](#) might bring rain, heavy clouds, gusty winds and even lightning.

Strong gales and sheets of rain from the storm knocked out electricity, flooded freeways and toppled trees in Northern California earlier Thursday.

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