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Judge temporarily halts construction of DC arch



In her order, U.S. District Judge Tanya Chutkan directed federal officials to notify anybody involved in the arch project that any construction-related activity is prohibited under the court order. KYLIE COOPER/REUTERS FILE

Project had just cleared key planning hurdle

Thao Nguyen
USA TODAY

A federal judge temporarily blocked construction of President Donald Trump's proposed 250-foot triumphal arch in Washington, DC, on Nov. 5 after the project cleared a key planning hurdle.

The National Capital Planning Commission voted Nov. 5 to approve the project after hearing from about opponents, including lawmakers. Rep. Don Beyer, D-Virginia, said the project would "snarl traffic for years, impact the nearby airport, and present even more serious threats to public safety that this commission has refused to acknowledge and grapple with."

The commission's approval had appeared to clear the way for the Trump administration to begin excavation and foundation work within days. The Justice Department previously said an initial six to eight months of excavation and foundation work could have begun as early as this week, while the National Park Service could issue final permits or other authorizations.

But U.S. District Judge Tanya Chutkan on Nov. 5 granted a temporary restraining order sought by the District of Columbia and Virginia, barring the administration from starting construction.

The order blocks, for 14 days, any construction, excavation, demolition, land-disturbing work, utility installation, roadway closures or other activity related to building the arch at

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No injuries reported after arsenal brush fire

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USA TODAY NETWORK – NEW JERSEY

A brush fire broke out on Nov. 4 within a U.S. military center located in North Jersey. The wooded area within Picatinny Arsenal in Morris County experienced a fire that required mutual aid and first responders from the facility, officials said.

At around 12:46 p.m., first responders of the military center were notified of the fire. Mutual aid was requested at 1:30 p.m. when the facility's emergency operations center was activated by Picatinny Arsenal officials, said Eric Kowal the public affairs specialist of Picatinny Arsenal in an emailed statement to NorthJersey.com.

No injuries were reported, said Kowal. No structural damage to the facility was reported either. A drone U.S. Army Combat Capabilities Development Command (DEVCOM) Armaments Center provided an areal view for first responders.

As of around 5 p.m. the fire was still being extinguished by first responders. About 80 percent of the fire has been contained and the emergency operations center was deactivated, said Kowal. Officials hope forecasted rain may help firefighters in their efforts.

An estimated 40 acres of land are impacted by the fire as of 5 p.m. The cause of the fire is not yet known and will remain under investigation.

Picatinny Arsenal officials credited local firefighters in helping extinguish the flames. "Truly a New Jersey community team effort today, and Picatinny couldn't have had such a swift response to contain the fire without support from the local municipal fire fighters," said. Lt. Col. John Meier, Picatinny Arsenal's Garrison Commander.

Military and local crews will continue to monitor the fire until it is contained and contained and extinguished.

Picatinny Arsenal is a Joint Center of Excellence for Guns and Ammunition, according to the facility's website. The enclosed location provides products such as weapons to the U.S. military. The area is in Morris County with about 6,500-acre military installation near the townships of Rockaway, Dover and Wharton.

The facility has been manufacturing and testing weapons since 1880, when it was first known as the Dover Powder Depot. Along with the development of weapons, Picatinny Arsenal also conducts research of wartime technology. The facility also has law enforcement and fire services to support local agencies.

NJ may be warmer, wetter this winter, report says

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USA TODAY NETWORK – NEW JERSEY

New Jersey residents could experience a warmer and wetter winter than usual as a strengthening El Niño weather pattern is expected to influence temperatures and precipitation across much of the United States, reported the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

NOAA's 2026-27 U.S. Winter Outlook, released Oct. 15, predicts above-average temperatures across much of the East, including New Jersey, and increased chances of wetter-than-normal conditions along the East Coast.

The seasonal forecast covers December 2026 through February 2027 and comes as forecasters anticipate a strong to very strong El Niño event that could significantly influence weather patterns nationwide.

El Niño occurs when ocean temperatures in the central and eastern tropical Pacific become warmer than average, affecting atmospheric circulation and shifting weather patterns across the globe.

During a strong El Niño, changes in the jet stream can bring warmer conditions to parts of the northern United States while increasing the likelihood of stormy weather across the South and along the East Coast.

"As we know from decades of observations, a very strong El Niño will likely bring a southward and eastward shift to the jet stream for the contiguous U.S., which tilts the odds toward stormier weather across the South," said Ken Graham, director of NOAA's National Weather Service.

"While higher chances of rain and snow may bring relief to drought-afflicted areas, too much precipitation on dry soil can fuel destructive flash floods and mudslides." Graham said. "Now is the time for communities and individuals to plan ahead for the upcoming winter."

For New Jersey, the forecast suggests that average temperatures could remain above seasonal norms, although periods of freezing temperatures and winter storms are still possible.

The outlook also favors above-average precipitation, meaning residents could experience more rain or snow than usual over the three-month period.

However, warmer and wetter conditions do not necessarily translate into greater snowfall. The amount of snow New Jersey receives will depend on temperatures and individual storm tracks throughout the winter.

NOAA cautioned that its seasonal outlook does not predict total snowfall accumulation or the timing of individual winter storms. Snowfall forecasts generally become more reliable within about a week of a potential event.

The agency's Climate Prediction Center reported on Oct. 8 that El Niño was continuing to strengthen, with more than an 83% chance of a strong to very strong event persisting through the January-to-March 2027 period.

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