

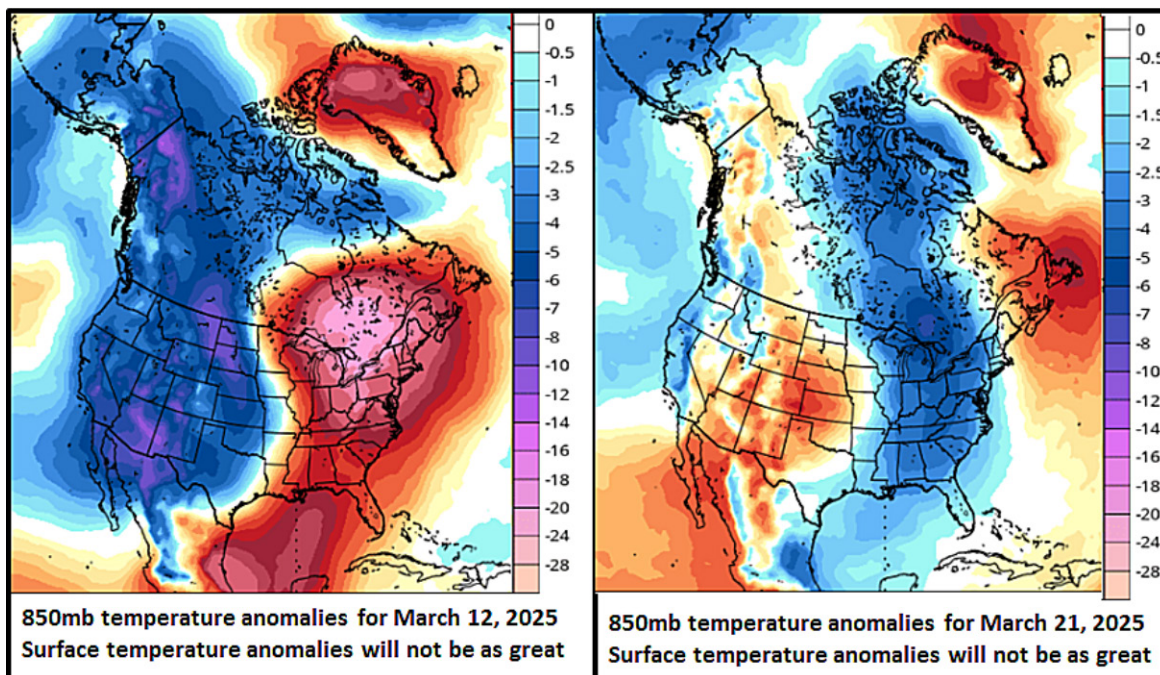
# Canada, Europe Impact from Stratospheric Warming To Be Low

By Drew Lerner

Kansas City, March 7 (World Weather Inc.) – Plenty of hype has been given to the amazing warm up that is suddenly occurring in the stratosphere this week. Stratospheric warming and its potential impact on the polar vortex will be substantial. However, the impact from the current event is going to prove disappointing to the energy trade because the cold air feared to reach into North America and Europe will likely prove to be less intensive and persistent than predicted and the big draw on supplement heating fuel (whether it is natural gas, heating oil or electricity) will probably fail to evolve. Cooling is likely, but the impact will be low.

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The world's energy trade has been very excited in recent days about the talk of significant warming in the stratosphere and the possible impact that will have on displacing and then splitting the polar vortex before finally dissipating the vortex. If this was January the impact of stratospheric warming would be phenomenal and huge demands for supplemental heating fuel would likely result. However, this event - despite its significance - will likely have a low impact on energy demand because the cold that comes with it will not be seriously anomalous and it is unlikely to fall into heavily populated areas where the need for supplemental heating fuel is normally greatest. The duration of the event may also be too short to draw down on energy supply enough to support higher futures prices which have already been put into the market place.



The stratospheric warming event is certainly substantial and meteorologically speaking it is quite a scene to be dreamed about. However, the reality for those of us dwelling on planet earth is that the impact is going to be a little benign. Canada will probably see the most anomalously cold weather from this event, but temperatures across

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**that nation are unlikely to be anywhere near as cold as the readings in January and February.** In addition to that, the coldest temperatures will be in north-central Canada and then across the Prairies before finally reaching British Columbia and the western and north-central United States. Most of that will occur next week. **It will be another ten days before cold air reaches eastern parts of North America and even though this is an evolving situation the odds do not favor enough cold in the east for a long enough period to support all of the excitement.**

This is March (the start of meteorological spring) and the atmosphere is already warming in a significant manner. It is very difficult to get seriously cold air to move from the arctic into the lower latitudes at this time of year, although it has happened in the past and will do so again in the future. Despite the desire by energy traders for this to be the big event of the year it is going to disappoint many who have gambled on an aggressive rise in supplemental heating fuels because of unprecedented cold March weather. That is just not likely to occur.

The upper air wind flow pattern is not conducive of bringing the most intense cold into eastern North America and most of Europe will miss the coldest air as well. Some cooling is possible in both regions, though the impact on energy demand will be lackluster – to say the least.

Initial cooling is expected next week in Canada and the western United States. Cooling in eastern North America may be another week to ten days after that. Europe's cooling will begin next week as well, but no crazy cold temperatures are likely and there may be a short term bout of warming before another shot of cold comes around in the last ten days of March. By that time in March, the atmosphere will have already warmed additionally because increased hours of daylight in arctic further reducing the intensity of any cold air mass that comes into the lower latitudes.

**The situation certainly merits a close watch, but energy traders should prepare to become more defensive of their market positions before much longer. More clarity of the impact on this event will surface next week. Do not be surprised to find changes in some of the bullish comments drifting through the trade today to something more conservative next week.** Medium range computer forecast models like the GFS and ECMWF are slow to respond to stratospheric warming events which still leaves the door of debate on the possible impact from this event open for several more days. **The outlook could turn colder, but some caution is certainly advised.**

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