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Rock You Like a Hurricane (..Maybe)

[ENERGY & RESOURCES](#)
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Harvey, Maria, Irma, Michael, Florence – no, not the names of my cats, but rather the names of some of the major hurricanes (category 3, 4 or 5) to hit the United States in the past two years. On May 23rd, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) released its forecast for the 2019 Atlantic Hurricane Season. After a few years of above-normal seasons, NOAA is predicting a near-normal season, with an estimated 9-15 named storms, including 4-8 hurricanes, 2-4 of which are expected to be major.

So what does this mean for you? Well, it's possible that your summer beach vacation will be cut short, or that your loved ones living in coastal regions may have to evacuate or endure a storm. But, depending on the path of those 4-8 projected hurricanes, you can almost certainly expect to see at least one spike in prices at the pump over the course of the hurricane season.

In 2017, Hurricane Harvey slammed into the Gulf Coast, shutting down numerous oil refineries and causing gas prices to rise an average of 27 cents per gallon across the country. While Gulf area refineries were not significantly damaged by Harvey, it took some time to return to pre-hurricane output to fuel the pipelines responsible for transporting oil across the U.S.

In contrast, Hurricane Florence barreled over the Carolinas in 2018, but had little to no impact on the national average gas price. Unlike the Gulf area, which is home to approximately one-third of the nation's oil refining capacity – the largest capacity of any region in the country – only pipelines and terminals are housed in the Carolinas.

So will Erin or Nestor (both potential storm names on the World Meteorological Organization's 2019 list) cause you to dig a little deeper in your wallet this summer? Only time will tell.

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