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Daniel R. Cayan is a research meteorologist in the Climate Research Division of Scripps Institution of Oceanography, University of California, San Diego.

Cayan studies climatic influences on the transfer of heat and moisture between the ocean and atmosphere, and the impacts of atmospheric circulation and precipitation on the surface hydrology over North America. Regionally, Cayan is studying climate variations over the West Coast and in particular over California.

Cayan directs the California Applications Program, a National Atmospheric and Oceanic Administration-sponsored effort to improve climate information for decisionmakers in the California region, and also directs the Scripps component of California Climate Change Center (CCCC), a multi-investigator effort sponsored by the California Energy Commission to assess potential climate change effects in California. In 2006, the CCCC released the report "Our Changing Climate — Assessing the Risks to California", and is currently beginning work to release a follow-up report in 2008.

Cayan is also a researcher with the Water Resources Division of the U.S. Geological Survey.

He was born in 1949, in Muskegon, MI. He received a BSc (1971) and an MSc (1972) in physical oceanography from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. He received a second MSc (1977) in atmospheric sciences from the University of California, Davis. In 1990, he received a PhD in oceanography from Scripps Institution of Oceanography/UCSD.

He is a member of the American Meteorological Society and the American Geophysical Union.

Cayan and his family reside in Ramona, Calif.

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