

Global Climate Coalition Prepares For The Long Haul

BY DENNIS WAMSTED

John Shlaes is nothing if not consistent.

Almost two years ago, speaking to the first meeting of the intergovernmental negotiating committee on climate change, Shlaes, then with the Edison Electric Institute, said business and industry had a critical role to play in addressing the global warming issue, particularly in the technology transfer arena. "Business and industry's participation in environmental technology transfer is of critical importance," he told the Feb. 4-14, 1991, meeting in Washington, D.C.

Now, as executive director of the Global Climate Coalition, Shlaes is singing the same tune. Business and industry must be involved if the world is going to solve the massive environmental and social problems in the less developed countries, he told *The Energy Daily* in a recent interview. "You don't just bundle up technology, fly it over and drop it in LDCs and expect it to take hold," he said. "Business must be involved."

Shlaes' consistent support for technology transfer is in keeping with his view of the global climate change issue: a long-term problem that will require concentrated global action to solve. There are no quick fixes, he says, adding that proponents of just such a solution—capping U.S. carbon dioxide emissions, for example—are misguided. Such a "solution" would be the worst possible outcome, he argues.

Similarly, Shlaes worries that politicians and policymakers are paying too much attention to measures designed simply to reduce CO₂ emissions, while far too little attention has been given to other issues, such as emissions of other greenhouse gases and potential greenhouse gas sinks. Perhaps more importantly, he says, policymakers are ignoring key questions, including: How to ensure that the LDCs can develop economically without skewing the greenhouse gas equation? What to do about the globe's explosive population growth?

The emphasis needs to be focused on the needs of the developing countries, Shlaes continues, since it is here where the greatest energy demand and population growth will occur over the next several decades. Adding his voice to a chorus of commentators who have called for global action, Shlaes notes that unless these issues are addressed, any policies pursued by the United States alone, or even the industrialized world as a group, will be ineffective.

Shlaes is also quick to defend U.S. policy over the past several years, saying environmentalists are wrong to make the Bush administration the whipping boy on this issue. The United States has done a great deal to address global warming, he says. Industry has cut its energy consumption, the amount of energy required to produce a unit of gross national product has dropped, and the country is footing the bill for a massive scientific research program. Not a shabby record, he adds.

As for the coalition itself, Shlaes is virtually a one-man show, working with a secretary and a couple of assistants. However, Shlaes says that the coalition's membership is extremely active, participating in nine committees. These committees—government affairs, the House and Senate, legislative analysis, commerce, international affairs, economics, science, industrial initiatives and state and local affairs—are like having a large full-time staff, he says.

Currently, the coalition has 54 members, 31 so-called board-level members and 23 general members. This membership number is somewhat deceiving, however, since a number of members are associations that, in turn, represent their membership, boosting the effective number of coalition participants into the hundreds.

The coalition's membership also includes a number of major U.S. corporations. Among them are: Amoco Corp., Bethlehem Steel Corp., Carolina Power & Light, Conrail, Dow Chemical Co., Du Pont, Duke Power Co., Eastman Kodak, LTV Steel Co. Inc., Norfolk Southern, Owens-Corning Fiberglass, Texaco Inc., The Southern Company and Union Carbide Corp.