

Climate Coalition's Shlaes Seeks Major Role In Global, Domestic Greenhouse Debates

BY DENNIS WAMSTED

A black belt in Tae Kwon Do, John Shlaes is well-prepared to defend himself in the contentious global warming policy battles that loom on the horizon. But

Shlaes, the newly appointed executive director of the Global Climate Coalition says he would rather talk than fight.

"Business needs a voice" in the debate, Shlaes told *The Energy Daily* in an interview last week just before his appointment was officially announced. And he hopes that the three-year-old, 46-member coalition will provide that voice.

Shlaes' appointment is the culmination of a roughly year-long effort by the coalition to formalize its organizational structure and begin playing a more aggressive role in the global warming debate. Formerly an all-volunteer group that granted membership to any company or association that contributed \$100, the coalition last fall approved a series of proposals to raise the membership dues and hire a full-time staff in Washington to represent business and industry interests.

There are clear parallels between the current initiative and the business community's decision to hire Bill Fay from the National Coal Association to run the Clean Air Working Group during the congressional debate in the 1980s to reauthorize the Clean Air Act. But Shlaes contends that the parallels are misleading.

The Climate Coalition will be broader-based than CAWG and focused on a range of issues instead of just the Clean Air Act, he says. Shlaes also discounts concerns that the coalition will become a just say no group interested solely in derailing consideration of global warming legislation. "How can you stop the process when you don't even know what the process is?" he asks.

Still, the coalition will be involved in both the national and international negotiations on global warming, he adds. "Business should be a deliberant in the [international] debate," says Shlaes, since the outcome will have a significant impact on the community's future operations. The coalition also will be actively involved in the domestic legislative debate, he says.

Although new to the scene, the coalition plans to be around for a long time, continues Shlaes. "This issue is a long-term issue," he says, adding that the June '92 conference in Brazil—where a global climate change treaty may be signed by world leaders—will be just the beginning of a lengthy debate on energy and environmental issues.

"We really are moving into a new era in inter-

national relations," says Shlaes. In the future, energy and environmental affairs will play an increasingly important role in the policy debates formerly

couched in Cold War terms, he says. In addition, the United Nations likely will become more important as a focal point for these debates. The coalition hopes to participate in this transition. "We're not a one-shot group," he adds.

One of the key issues for the coalition, according to Shlaes, will be developing a solution for the thorny issue of technology transfer. There are a host of existing and soon-to-be-commercialized technologies in the developed world that could help slow any future warm-

ing due to the greenhouse effect if transferred for use in the developing, he says. But, by and large, the developing world cannot afford to purchase these technologies. The question, then, is how to ensure that these technologies are used, while still compensating businesses for their research and development efforts.

The first step in this effort likely will be increased technology cooperation between businesses in the developed world and governments and business counterparts in the developing world. Another important piece to this puzzle is the Global Environmental Facility, an international monetary device that can be used to fund promising technology transfer efforts, he says.

Another challenge for the business community, Shlaes says, is to ensure that U.S. government efforts are not duplicative. Along these lines, the coalition sponsored a conference last year to educate officials from various federal departments about work elsewhere in the government and by outside groups. The coalition plans to pursue similar informational and educational efforts in the future, he says.

Shlaes was most recently director of government relations at the Edison Electric Institute; he has worked at EEI since 1979. Previously, Shlaes worked in the Ford White House and at the U.S. Information Agency and the Peace Corps, among other jobs. He is a graduate of the University of Southern California.

Initially, the coalition will be housed in offices at the National Association of Manufacturing. Although Shlaes has been selected to head the coalition, at press time the EEI executive still had not signed the contract offered him by the group's board of directors.



John Shlaes, executive director of the Global Climate Coalition