CMA Reverses Policy on Early Crediting. (Chemical Manufacturers Association) (Brief Article)

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CMA will support the Clinton Administration's concept of providing companies with emission reduction credits for voluntary steps taken to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, says CMA climate change leader James McIntire. The move is a key policy reversal for CMA (CW, Oct. 6, 1999, p. 33). It reflects an increased recognition by chemical companies that emission reduction mandates may be inevitable, despite the reluctance by Congress to ratify the Kyoto Protocol. The Kyoto Protocol would mandate greenhouse gas emission reductions worldwide.

The Global Climate Coalition (GCC; Washington), which opposes the Kyoto Protocol, has lost several major corporate members in recent months, including Union Carbide and Ford Motor. Dow Chemical had previously dropped out of the coalition. GCC says early crediting could be a ploy by the Clinton Administration to build more support for the Kyoto agreement. GCC also criticizes environmental groups' argument that scientific evidence warrants sharp cuts in industry emissions. CMA remains a member of GCC and opposes the Kyoto Protocol.

Several companies that left GCC have since joined the International Climate Change Partnership (ICCP; Arlington, VA). ICCP, which represents more than 40 trade associations and companies, argues that early crediting is needed to ensure that voluntary efforts to reduce emissions will be recognized in the event the Kyoto Protocol is ratified in Congress, or other emission reduction mandates take effect.

Chemical companies' ICCP membership is on the rise. It includes Dow Chemical, DuPont, Elf Atochem, the European chemical industry council, Honeywell, and 3M, says ICCP executive director Kevin Fay. CMA is not an ICCP member. A similar business alliance, the Pew Center on Global Climate Change (Washington), includes BP Amoco Chemicals, DuPont, and Air Products and Chemicals.

The Kyoto Protocol, which would require the U.S. to reduce its emission levels to 7% below 1990 levels by 2012, will not be approved by the Senate without major revisions, says the Clinton Administration. Likewise, several bills in Congress that would codify an early crediting program have dim prospects for immediate action, say congressional sources. International negotiators hope to finalize key terms of the protocol this November.