ALEXANDRIA, Va.—“Environmental issues will be focused on by both parties,” predicts David Crow, a Washington-based political consultant to RISE, Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment.

“We need to work the regulatory process a lot harder than we have been,” Crow contends. “Our issues have become politicized in a way we didn’t want.

“We don’t expect to get much work done [in Congress] in 1996,” says Crow, because politicians will be posturing for the election year. “In a lot of ways, the system isn’t built to work better.”

Crow was one of a raft of speakers at RISE’s annual meeting here last month.

“We think we can get FIFRA through this year,” he said, “and maybe a water bill and the Safe Drinking Water Act, the newest press release from RISE says.)

Delaney—Congressmen, generally, are recognizing that the Delaney Clause to FIFRA is outdated because of definitions that have not evolved with technology.

If passed, H.R. 1627, now in committee, would:
• replace the Delaney Clause with a negligible risk standard;
• require tolerances that protect the health of infants and children;
• streamline EPA’s authority to remove certain pesticides from the market by requiring it to cancel and suspend dangerous pesticides within one year;
• provide uniform pesticide tolerances; and more.

Despite a Republican majority, the ‘Senate didn’t really embrace the Contract with America,’ David Crow says.

“Simply blowing debris from one place to another accomplishes nothing, except polluting the air and making people angry.”

Braude of Los Angeles has proposed the third bill in nine years aimed to ban the sale and use of gasoline-powered leaf blowers.

“They merely blow one person’s dirt and leaves onto someone else’s yard or onto their car or under their door and into their living rooms,” Braude contends. “Simply blowing debris from one place to another accomplishes nothing, except polluting the air and making people angry.”

Section 112.05 of the current Municipal Code allows leaf blowers if they are no louder than 65 decibels at a distance of 50 feet.

“If we had a law which simply banned... these machines, we would not have to worry about having specially trained [noise abatement] officers using expensive, sophisticated equipment to handle enforcement,” Braude said in a press release.

The press release went on to mention that:
• “one hour’s use of a leaf blower produces as much volatile organic compound pollution as 100 miles of driving an automobile” and
• “by generating air currents...twice the speed of a hurricane, the blowers kick up clouds of dust, insecticide, animal waste and debris which can be harmful to people with respiratory problems.”

Similar legislation was also up for review in Greenwich, Conn., at pretime.
Taking the side of the AMA, Dr. Suellen Pirages of the Environmental Sensitivities Research Institute noted that “MCS doesn’t follow the principle of toxicology and causation. We need carefully designed and controlled medical studies on this phenomenon.”

RISE’s approach—Issues like MCS mean a change in philosophy for RISE. “We will become activists for our industry,” RISE executive director Allen James promised. “Defense is no longer adequate.”

—Jerry Roche