

Crowell & Moring Snags Gordon & Rees Energy Finance Atty

By **Michael Phillis**

Law360, New York (August 9, 2017, 6:52 PM EDT) -- Crowell & Moring LLP has hired a former Gordon & Rees LLP attorney with experience doing project development and finance work in the energy and construction sectors as a senior counsel in the firm's Orange County, California, office, where he will be part of its energy group.

Charles E. Schwenck joined the firm at the start of August. Over his career, Schwenck has handled more than \$100 billion in major project transactions, according to the firm. He was previously general counsel of Fluor Corp. and division counsel in the largest division of Bechtel, Crowell & Moring said. And he has worked on international projects including a nearly 2,000-mile Bolivia-to-Brazil natural gas pipeline that supplied power plants in Brazil, according to the firm.



Charles E.
Schwenck

Schwenck helps clients develop and finance assets, the firm said. He's dealt with a broad range of projects, including renewable energy developments, oil refining, biofuels and bridges and airports, a diversity he attributes in part to the multidecade length of his career.

Crowell also said that his knowledge of risk helps diversify his work.

"It is really a matter of being the person who manages risk in large projects and that job, although one needs detailed information about particular industries like the power generation industry or pipeline industry or what have you, the basic ways to minimize and allocate and appropriately absorb risks goes across all of those industries and that is what I tend to do," Schwenck told Law360.

By joining Crowell & Moring, Schwenck said he was joining a firm that could offer him additional support.

"I just needed more depth and breadth to my practice in the major projects area. I also do energy storage, which tends to be not such major projects," Schwenck said. "I expected to have that be a lot more of my practice and thought I didn't need as much depth, but that turned out not to be the case. The major projects area has just taken off so much that I was working 70 hours a week."

Over time, the types of projects Schwenck has worked on have shifted. He said he started his career doing work on nuclear projects and has recently done quite a bit of renewable energy work.

“I’ve done wind, solar — I do a lot of biomass now,” he said, adding that it is a particular need in California at this time.

“Five years ago, my practice was really focused on renewables. With the lower price of natural gas now, I find my practice — still a lot of renewables — but focusing on what other industrial petrochemical, chemical, various industrial facilities, which will come back to the United States now and are being built because the fuel is cheaper here than it is any place else now,” Schwenck said.

Larry F. Eisenstat, chair of the firm’s energy group, praised the hire.

“Charles’ addition not only deepens the firm’s project development, finance and general transactional capabilities, most particularly on the West Coast and Latin America, but also expands our service offerings in the rapidly changing and increasingly competitive energy sector, which will be of great value to our clients no matter how you slice it,” Eisenstat said in a statement.

--Editing by Jack Karp.