It looks like an early agenda item for the GOP will be eliminating EPA’s regulation of cement plants, according to press reports. H.J. Res. 100 would repeal the regulation and prevent any future similar regulation. Economists and environmentalists should be equally unhappy with this rollback effort.

This is one regulation where the cost-benefit analysis seems to come out firmly on the environmental side, according to the NY Times environmental blog,

> The E.P.A. estimates that the new rules will eliminate 92 percent of the mercury and fine-particulate emissions from cement kilns (more than 10 percent of the national total). The rule will also save 960 to 2,500 lives annually starting in 2013, not to mention avert hundreds of cases of bronchitis and 1,500 heart attacks, the agency said.
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> One of the economic models on which it relied projects that the new limits could cost 1,500 jobs, raise the price of cement 5.4 percent and cut demand by nearly 6 percent. Industry revenues would drop by $421 million, the thinking goes. But the health benefits, derived for the most part through reductions in fine soot, still outweigh the costs by a factor of anywhere from 7 to 1 to almost 20 to 1, the E.P.A. said.

In rough terms, it appears that each lost job would save approximately one life every year going forward. Losing a job is bad, no question about it. But killing people is worse. You have to wonder about the value systems of the folks who oppose the rule.