



Makes a Great Handkerchief!
Or Bathroom Tissue?

1) [Ann argues persuasively](#) that Obama's decision was terrible politics. But it is also terrible economics. [As the Shrill One pointed out the other day](#), we are currently in a liquidity trap, i.e. there is not enough demand in the economy to pull us out of the recession, and a lot of money is simply sitting on the sidelines, uninvested, for fear that there will be no customers. Under these conditions, new ozone rules are actually a net positive for the economy because they will force businesses to spend money, which is what we desperately need. Of course, as the Economic Policy Institute pointed out a few months ago, the scale of these rules is so small in the context of the whole economy that it's not a huge stimulus, but if you're looking for stimulus under these conditions, this is precisely what you want.

2) So over this past weekend I've had something of a cold: lots of sneezing, runny nose, the works. I could have gone through several boxes of tissues, but then I came upon an old "Environmentalists for Obama" t-shirt that I bought during the 2008 campaign. It worked great! I'll make sure to tell [everyone else who has one...](#)

The fact of the matter is that the Obama Administration has essentially been thumbing its nose at its most dedicated supporters since March 2010, and in a lot of ways even before then. It appears to believe that punching hippies is the way to re-election, and as much as I despise this decision, I hope that it is right. But this is nothing new.

So [Really](#), no one [could have predicted...](#)

3) I wonder whether Cass Sunstein had any influence in this decision. I suspect that he

did. Now, Sunstein is one of the great legal scholars of this or any generation: could he actually have pushed for something so stupid? Well, if you take [his comments in the New York Times the other day](#), the answer is yes:

“My view is that the Republican claim that ‘job-killing regulation’ is a redundancy is as ridiculous as the left-wing view that ‘job-killing regulation’ is an oxymoron,” said Cass Sunstein, head of the White House Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs. “Both are silly political claims that have no place in a serious discussion.”

[As Digby notes](#), it is simply fatuous to think that there is anyone on the left in the United States who believes that “job-killing regulation” is an oxymoron. *No one thinks this*. Who in the world is Sunstein talking about? Many people on the Right think that “job-killing regulation” is a redundancy: Perry and Bachmann want to get rid of EPA altogether. [House Republicans have essentially declared war on EPA and the Department of the Interior](#). *Nobody* on the Left thinks the opposite.

Sunstein has been saying some pretty vapid things recently on environmental regulation in any event. He even [compared the Clean Air Act to a Stalinist Five-Year Plan](#). He seems to spend lots of time trying to get Richard Epstein to agree with him, which, come to think of it, isn’t a bad description of the President’s political strategy, also.

When in doubt, blame the University of Chicago. That’s actually not a bad rule of thumb.