The NY Times reports that Obama has endorsed the idea of two-year law schools:

> On Friday, he questioned the utility of a third year of classes and suggested that students use their final two semesters to gain work experience. “In the first two years, young people are learning in the classroom,” Mr. Obama said. “The third year, they’d be better off clerking or practicing in a firm even if they weren’t getting paid that much, but that step alone would reduce the costs for the student.”

It’s easy to imagine lots of ways that law firms and would-be lawyers would respond to this change; hard to know which ones will turn out or whether students would end up better off. Part of me would like this to happen just because I’m curious about how it would play out.

One things that does seem clear is that a two-year law school wouldn’t leave any time for specialized courses like environmental law that aren’t on the bar exam. It would also leave no time to participate in law school’s environmental law clinics or environmental law reviews. (Or for corporate tax or intellectual property, for that matter). To the extent that education in environmental law is valuable to students, another mechanism would be needed: maybe a master’s degree program, maybe just very extensive Continuing Legal Education programs from private companies.