I've written elsewhere about how some elements of the Tea Party and the Republican party have made clear that their goal is not just "reform" of environmental laws, but the elimination of all environmental regulations. Dan has noted the same point in looking at Ron Paul's campaign platform in the last presidential election. Here's another example. Republican Senator David Vitter has developed a top ten list of the benefits from the government shutdown. Five them involve why it's a good thing that the vast majority of EPA employees were furloughed. Indeed, Vitter explicitly says that it's a good thing that "[a]pproximately 15,000 EPA employees are furloughed."

This is not an extreme view within the Republican party. Vitter is the ranking minority Republican member of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee.

(h/t Matthew Yglesias)