The safest prediction is that our Democratic President and Republican Congress will not in fact be able to work together. Their present gestures toward cooperation may mean nothing more than a willingness to accept the other side's surrender. But hope springs eternal. Are there areas where common ground exists? That seems nearly impossible on some issues like climate change. But there may be others where, at least in principle, common ground might conceivably be found.

1. **Ocean issues.** Putting offshore oil aside and ratification of the Law of the Sea Convention aside, ocean issues tend not to be highly salient politically. That allowed George W. Bush to create an enormous marine preserve. So this might be an area where both sides could work together. Certainly there shouldn't be anything partisan about efforts to preserve important fishing stocks, for instance.

2. **Toxics.** The Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) is one of the worst drafted statutes in history, partly because it was a last-minute merger of two different bills. It has never really worked, and as a result, leadership on these issues has been left to the European Union and states like California. Real work was done on a bipartisan reform but it fell apart. Restarting the process would be helpful.

3. **Energy research.** Energy research is massively underfunded. It's hard to see why it shouldn't be an area of bipartisan agreement, if there's some way of figuring out where to find the money that both sides can agree on.

4. **Transmission siting and grid upgrade.** Democrats want to upgrade the grid because of renewable energy, and they're concerned (or at least, they *should* be concerned) about barriers to interstate transmission. Industry and Republicans also care about these issues, mostly because of concerns about grid reliability (and even national security). So maybe there's room for some joint effort.

5. **Invasive Species.** Hardly anybody seems to be in favor of invasive species. Is there common ground here?

6. **Health and Safety**. At various times under Reagan, Clinton, and Bush, there has been new legislation dealing with food safety, transportation accidents, and mine safety. In retrospect, even the Bush Administration seems like a more innocent era, compared with today's partisan conflict. Still, maybe something could happen in this area.

I can't say I'm optimistic about any of this — but if there actually *is* a desire for

bipartisan action, these are some possibilities that actually might work.