



Dean Heller (R) and Shelley Berkeley (D)
(Source: TPM)

As in other states, the Nevada Senate race features a gap between the “greener” Democratic candidate, Shelley Berkley, and the Republican Dean Heller. But it plays out a little differently. Heller’s website is strangely reticent about energy and environmental issues, while Berkley focuses heavily on the issues most relevant to Nevada — renewable energy and public lands.

Heller’s website, rather unusually, does not have pages devoted either to energy or to environment — not even one on public lands, in a state where over 80% of the land is owned by the federal government. (He does, however, mention public lands in his campaign biography). With a lifetime rating of 14% from the League of Conservation Voters, no one can accuse Heller of being an environmentalist. He has voted against tax credits for renewable energy, but in favor of favorable tax treatment for oil companies. His failure to highlight energy and environment is all the more peculiar because he serves on the Energy and Natural Resources Committee. I can only assume that his views on these issues are not popular with the Nevada electorate.

In contrast, Berkley’s website has tabs for “clean energy jobs” and “preservation/conservation,” with a third tab for Yucca Mountain. For instance, the website mentions that she “championed a 235-mile long brand new clean energy transmission line linking White Pine and Clark counties that will attract clean energy businesses to Nevada.” The website mentions an interesting piece of legislation relating to Nevada:

Shelley has been a big supporter of the Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act, which keeps proceeds from Nevada’s federal land sales from leaving the state Since its enactment in 1998, the act has generated \$3 billion for preservation of Nevada’s open spaces. . .

Presumably air pollution and climate change aren’t big issues in Nevada since they’re not discussed.

The Nevada race does not fit the usual mold, in which both candidates follow the template of their presidential candidates with small deviations. Heller doesn’t mention Romney’s main talking points on energy, while Dean focuses exclusively on issues with strong state relevance.