

The 2020 Senate race pits Republican incumbent Susan Collins against Sarah Gideon. Collins is far more environment-friendly than her GOP colleagues. That still makes her much less so than Joe Manchin (D-W. Va.) on the other side of the aisle. In contrast, Gideon supports much stronger climate action.

Susan Collins. Collins is an outlier among Senate Republicans in her environmental views. Her campaign website doesn't have an issues tab, which seems fairly usual among GOP candidates right now. Her Senate website says that, "throughout her time in the U.S. Senate, Senator Collins has worked to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, spur the creation of green energy jobs, and reduce our dangerous dependence on foreign oil – while retaining important American manufacturing jobs." In a virtual act of heresy for a Republican she voted against a resolution to disapprove Obama's Clean Power Plan. She explained that:

"Our state, which is situated at the end of the nation's air pollution tailpipe, has made substantial progress in reducing harmful emissions by increasing energy efficiency, adopting clean energy technologies, and improving air quality and public health. [T]he Administration's rule to repeal and rewrite the Clean Power Plan is a step in the wrong direction."

She continued:

"Climate change is a significant risk that threatens Maine's working forests, fishing, and agricultural industries, as well as tourism and recreation and our coastal communities. I will continue to work in Congress to support realistic, responsible solutions that help reduce harmful emissions and protect our environment and the health of our citizens."

Sarah Gideon. Gideon is the speaker of the state House of Representatives. Her website touts her legislative accomplishments:

"In Maine, Sara has been a champion for the environment and fighting against climate change. She passed the most aggressive goals the state has ever seen for reducing carbon emissions and increasing renewable energy production, making Maine an example for states across the nation, and jumpstarting our clean energy economy and the good-paying jobs it brings."

Gideon provides a list of environmental efforts that she supports:

- Rejoining the Paris Climate Agreement;

- Investing in the clean energy economy;
- Setting aggressive goals to move to a completely clean energy system powered by renewables;
- Modernizing and upgrading our transportation and energy grid infrastructure;
- Overhauling our transportation system;
- Setting the carbon emissions reduction goals needed to slow climate change; and
- Ensuring that nominees to fill key environmental positions in the administration are qualified individuals who will work to protect our environment and fight climate change, not put the interests of the fossil fuel industry first.

Gideon is endorsed by the League of Conservation Voters.

Maine uses ranked-choice voting, which means that in a really tight race, the outcome could be determined by who gets the most “second choices” by people who vote for a third-party candidate. That makes the outcome of this key race all the harder to forecast, unless Collins or Gideon can pass the 50% threshold.