

Because of North Carolina's unusual electoral scheme, it has a Democratic Governor (Roy Cooper) and a Republican Lieutenant Governor (Dan Forest). The two are now battling for the governorship. One of the big dividing lines is offshore drilling. Cooper is against oil drilling off the North Carolina coast, while Forest is in favor.

Roy Cooper. Cooper's campaign website mentions the environment briefly, saying that he "launched a Clean Energy Plan to create good-paying jobs, increase the use of renewable energy, and fight climate change." Cooper has been handicapped by a solidly Republican legislature that has worked to undercut his powers.

Cooper's gubernatorial website does have a tab for environmental issues. It trumpets North Carolina as "a proud leader in renewable energy" and "second in the nation in solar energy, creating thousands of jobs and reducing harmful emissions." It also stresses his opposition to offshore oil drilling. Finally, it links to an executive order. The order calls for reducing carbon emissions to 40% below 2005 levels by 2025, increasing the number of zero-emission vehicles to at least 80,000, and a 40% reduction in energy consumption in state-owned buildings.

Dan Forest. Forest is actually the Lieutenant Governor (elected separately from the Governor in the state). Forest has said that masks don't work for viruses, which gives you some sense of his general perspective. His campaign website is light on discussing issues, but his official website does touch on environmental matters. It expresses the hope that "North Carolinians will have the opportunity to develop on-shore energy production through the shale plays in our basins and explore the substantial energy resources in the waters off the North Carolina coast."

Although he supports research to "solve the problems associated with solar and wind energies." Forest says "available energies like nuclear, coal, and natural gas will continue to predominate." He also favors deregulation: "Having fewer regulations fosters a spirit of innovation in our state. And "rather than hindering business, we should have a 'customer service' mindset and assist companies already here and those relocating to North Carolina."

Cooper has been able to make some progress in the environmental area despite opposition from the GOP legislature. Forest would make a hard right, doubling down on fossil fuels.