McMahon versus
Murphy
(CBS photo)

The Connecticut Senate race between Linda McMahon (R) and Chris Murphy (D) has major environmental implications. McMahon vigorously espouses the standard Republican positions on environment and energy. But Murphy stands out among Democratic Senate candidates in swing states because of his especially strong commitment on the environment. His House website emphasizes that commitment:

> *Our environmental policies are about more than making sure we have clean drinking water or healthy forests – they speak to the care and regard with which we treat the natural world around us, and the state in which we want to leave our planet for our children and generations to come.*

Murphy has also served on the House Energy and Commerce Committee and has a 100% rating from the League of Conservation Voters. Thus, if elected, Murphy might become a leader on environmental issues in the Senate, whereas McMahon would be a loyal member of the Republican caucus.

Linda McMahon's website has a lengthy, vehement attack on government regulation. For instance, she says, "For manufacturing companies, regulations kill roughly one job for every three people working." That sounds like it came right off of the Wall Street Journal's editorial page. I was initially surprised to see this anti-regulatory fervor in a Northeastern state, but then I realized that Connecticut probably has the highest percentage of WSJ readers in the country — all those investment bankers and business executives. Her solution is to require Congressional approval of all major rules.

McMahon shares the general Republican enthusiasm for fossil fuels:

> *We should utilize the vast resources in our country and encourage shovel-ready energy projects, such as the Keystone Pipeline, to drive economic growth. Areas including Pennsylvania, the Gulf of Mexico, the Western States, and Alaska contain oil and natural gas deposits that will promote our economic recovery, create jobs, and lessen our dependence on overseas foreign oil.*

She also makes a bow in the direction of renewables, with a mention of fuel cells

(apparently a significant industry in the state).

Chris Murphy's website stresses his commitment to protecting the environment:

> *It was environmental advocacy that first stimulated my interest in politics. As a teenager, I volunteered to clean up our Connecticut River riverfront, thinking that it was such a shame that our government didn't do more to prevent that type of pollution. I have carried that belief into government.*

The website also stresses his work on land conservation, climate change, and creation of a new scenic trail in the state. He emphasizes his support for cap-and-trade legislation and for ending subsidies to the oil industry.

In short, from an environmental perspective, this is definitely a race to watch carefully.