In some states, the candidate's websites barely mention energy or environment. Not so in Ohio. Both the Republican incumbent and the Democratic challenger make these issues focal points of their campaigns.

The Republican is Rob Portman, who served briefly as U.S. Trade Representative before heading the Office of Management and Budget. He has a lifetime rating of 20% from the League of Conservation Voters, above the Republican average but well below Democratic Senators. His website argues for an "all of the above" energy policy, with some enthusiastic language about Ohio's capacity to develop renewables. He also introduced bipartisan legislation to encourage energy efficiency.

His opponent, Ted Strickland, has an LCV score of 77%. He is a former minister, prison, psychologist, member of the House, and governor, and is the only one in his family to go to college. (His website also recounts the story of how his family lost three houses when he was a child to flood, foreclosure, and fire.) His website says that, while he was governor, he "brought one of the most ambitious renewable and advanced energy standards to Ohio," saving Ohioans over a billion dollars in energy costs and creating twenty-five thousand jobs. He accuses his opponent of denying that humans contribute significantly to climate change, and he says Portman has "voted to gut the Clean Air and Clean Water Acts, and has voted against tougher regulation of carcinogens like arsenic, benzene, and dioxin."

Ohio has been a swing state in many recent presidential elections — particularly in 2004, when a narrow victory there put Bush in the White House for a second term. So this is a bellwether Senate race that may reveal a lot about the environmental orientation of the next Senate.