

There are a surprising number of governor's seats in play in this election, with many ranked as toss-ups. After looking at ratings by different experts, I've picked four elections as especially interesting. As you'll see, there were major differences between candidates in these races on environmental and energy issues. Besides showing yet again why elections matter— hopefully you figured that out since November 2016, if you hadn't done so earlier —, the views of these candidates also reflect something about the state's voters and their values.

Illinois

Bruce Rauner (R) is the Republican incumbent. He's signed some important renewable energy legislation as part of a deal to get subsidies for nuclear plants. No environment/energy tab on his campaign website.

J.B. Pritzker (D) is the Democratic challenger. He promises to “put Illinois on a path toward 100% clean, renewable energy and attract commercial investment in clean energy production and transmission here in Illinois.” He wants Illinois to join the U.S. Climate Alliance.

Maine

Shawn Moody (R) billed himself as a “lifelong conservative” on his [website](#). His pledge to “work to ensure Maine does not fall behind” seems very New England to me, conveying a becoming modesty about the state's prospects. The environmental tab on the website sends a mixed message. It calls for a balance between environment and economic needs – usually code for saying the environment comes in second – but he also touts an environmental certificate for his business and participation in a renewable energy project. This may be window dressing: he's a climate change denier. (see [here](#))

Janet Mills (D) has a more optimistic view of Maine's future, saying it's time for bold change and that the state's best days are ahead. A bit unusually for a Democrat, her website didn't have an environmental tab on her webpage. But as state Attorney General, she has a strong record on environmental issues has been endorsed by the Maine Conservation Voters Action Fund. She does believe in the reality of climate change.

Michigan

Bill Schuette is the state attorney general. He brags that “successfully opposed President Obama's job-killing energy regulations that would have hurt Michigan's economy and

increased utility bills for hard-working families." You get the picture.

Gretchen Whitmer is the Democratic challenger. Her website pledges to "Fix the Damn Roads." I wish a California candidate would say that! The environmental issue discussed on her website is the need to clean up Michigan's water after the Flint episode. She's endorsed by the Sierra Club's Michigan chapter.

New Mexico

Steve Pearce is the Republican candidate. He sounds ok on the environment if you read his website, but his voting record tells another story. His lifetime score as a member of the U.S. House from the League of Conservation Voters (LCV) is 4%. For comparison, Paul Ryan's lifetime score is almost three times as high. Still, his LCV score does edge out Ted Cruz's, though only by a whisker.

Michelle Lujan Grisham, the Democratic candidate, is also a House member. Here LCV score is 91%. The numbers speak for themselves here about the difference between the two candidates.

In these and at least another half-dozen states, the Governor's race will have a bit impact on state policy. As they used to say in TV ads, "vote for the candidate of your choice, but vote!"