What happened on Tuesday? And what does it mean for the environment>?

Going into Tuesday's voting, there were three possible scenarios about the outcome:

1. **The Least Favorable Scenario for Environmental Regulation**. In this scenario, the Republicans would hang on to control of the House by a smaller margin than today, and they gain several seats in the Senate.
2. **Split Control of Congress.**Most forecasters thought the Democrats would take the House and that the Republicans would hold their majority and perhaps end up with a small net gain in the Senate.
3. **The Most Favorable Scenario for Environmental Regulation.** In this scenario the Democrats would eke out a narrow majority in the Senate and a major win in the House. This outcome would maximize Democratic leverage in Congress.

Forecasters like Nate Silver gave about 1 out of 6 chances for the first and last scenarios, and about two-thirds for split control of Congress.

The forecasters turned out to be right: it was the scenario they considered most likely that came to pass. The Democrats gained control of the House with what appears to be a comfortable margin, and the Republicans kept the Senate. The Republicans seem certain to pick up one seat, maybe more, depending on how the elections in Arizona and Montana shake out.

Not all the results are in yet, but Democrats seem to have had a good night in terms of state-level races. They picked up governorships in Illinois, Kansas, Maine, Michigan, Nevada, New Mexico and Wisconsin., with one or two others still too close to call. They also won unified control of the state government in Colorado, Illinois, New Mexico, and New York.

Now, for the second question: what are the environmental implications? In the Senate, the main effect is to give President Trump an even freer hand than he has had in terms of judicial and executive appointments. In the House, the Democrats will be able to launch investigations into anti-environmental initiatives by agencies such as EPA. That can help build political pressure on the administration. They may also succeed in attaching an environmental rider or two to appropriations bills. But the most immediate policy impacts may be at the state level. In the past two years, a number of states have doubled-down on their commitments to renewable energy

and other forms of climate action. We can expect to see this dynamic operate in additional states given the shifts in governorships and legislative control. Those of us who live in California know the potential for state governments to really move the needle.

We won’t have a full picture of the election results for some time., Close races may not be called immediately or may result in recounts. And thorough analysis of the political dynamics will take longer still. But the overall vector of change was clearly favorable for environmental regulations and renewable energy.

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