Georgia has two Senate contests due to a fluke of timing — one a regular election, the other a special election. Both elections have gone into runoffs. The outcomes will have major implications for the environment because control of the Senate is at stake.

The regular election pits David Perdue (R) against Jonathan Ossoff (D). The special election pits Kelley Loeffler (R) against Rev. Raphael Warnock, the African-American pastor of the historic Ebenezer Baptist Church where Martin Luther King was once pastor. The Republican candidates are favored in both runoffs but they aren't necessarily out of reach for the Democrats if they can get their voters to the polls.

Control of the Senate is at stake, and with it the possibilities for climate legislation. Even if the Democrats win both races, they would need every single Democratic vote to pass legislation. That would the Democratic Senator from West Virginia, Joe Manchin, the swing voter. Even so, Democrats could pass some significant environmental legislation, though probably nothing earthshaking.

If the Democrats pick up only one seat, they would still be better positioned than they are today. The Senate would be split 51(R)-49(D) (counting two independents who caucus with the Democrats). Getting legislation to a floor vote would be a problem, since Mitch McConnell would be the gatekeeper. But if environmental legislation could get to the floor, maybe as part of an omnibus bill, Democrats would only need to pick up Susan Collins's vote. She has already signaled her willingness to break with the GOP leadership by congratulating Biden on his victory, one of only four Republican Senators to do so.

I posted a few months ago about the Georgia candidates. Here's a reprise. As you'll see, there's a stark difference in the environment views of the Republican and Democratic candidates.

Perdue versus Ossoff.

David Perdue.

Perdue has a 3% lifetime score from the LCV, fairly standard for a conservative Republican. For comparison, that's a slightly worse LCV score than Ted Cruz has in the Senate.

His Senate website doesn't have an Issues tab, but it does have one for "Donuts

with David.” Which admittedly does sound like more fun.

During an earlier debate with his opponent, Perdue said of the Green New Deal, “this is the greatest threat to Medicare and Social Security that we have in America today, is this outrageous spending plan the Democrats are trying to perpetrate in this election.”

Jonathan Ossoff.

Ossoff’s campaign website says, “The scientific consensus is unambiguous: if pollution from fossil fuel combustion is not controlled, the consequences will be dire.” He pledges to “support a historic infrastructure plan that includes massive investments in clean energy, energy efficiency, and environmental protection,” as well as pushing for the U.S. to rejoin the Paris Agreement and for EPA to reverse Trump’s rollbacks.

In a debate, Ossoff said, “We can unite this country right now, at a moment when so many are out of work and struggling economically, behind a historic infrastructure plan with unprecedented investments in clean energy, to make Georgia the leading producer of renewable energy in the American Southeast.”

Ossoff is endorsed by the League of Conservation Voters.

Loeffler versus Warnock.

Kelley Loeffler.

Loeffler hasn’t been in the Senate long enough to have a score from the League of Conservation voters. Her campaign web page doesn’t say anything about her environmental views, but she does accuse her opponent of radicalism for supporting the Green New Deal (as well as being anti-American on other grounds.) Loeffler does have an issue tab on her Senate site, but it only provides a list of sponsored or cosponsored legislation. Her attitude toward regulation is indicated by her bill telling agencies to waive regulatory requirements and enforcement to reduce burdens on business during the COVID outbreak. She also introduced a bill to write into law Trump’s executive order imposing a regulatory budget on agencies. Her main campaign strategy has been to embrace Trump as fully as possible, saying at one point that she couldn’t think of a single remark he had ever mind that she disagreed with. Ever.

Raphael Warnock. Warnock's website is pretty barebones. He pledges to "focus on fighting for quality, affordable health care, for the dignity of working people who are paid too little as our government works more for Wall Street, and to make sure every voice is heard." He has a history of bringing environmental issues into his work as a pastor. He told LCV, "Too often, fossil fuel lobbyists and politicians have taken advantage of the revolving door between corporate boardrooms and political backrooms so much that we cannot tell the difference between the two."

Republicans are favored to win these races. Given the Georgia vote in the presidential race, however, neither race should be considered a done deal. The environmental stakes are tremendous.