Patrick McHenry has been Speaker *pro tem* with limited powers, but there's talk about trying to bump him up, giving him full power as Speaker for a limited time so the House can get back to work. That might be just a flash in the pan, but he turns out to be interesting enough to write about either way.

I guess the first thing we know about Patrick McHenry is that one of his parents had an interest in U.S. history and a sense of humor. Also, he's from North Carolina. But where does he stand, and in particular, where does he stand on environmental issues?

As usual, I'll begin with his League of Conservation Voters (LCV) scores — 5% in 2022, 6% lifetime. Both scores need interpretation. I've noticed that many Republicans had very low scores in 2022 — zeroes in a number of cases. So the 5% may actually be a decent score by comparison. The lifetime score also needs interpretation. Until 2018, McHenry was averaging something below 1%. But in 2018 he scored 9% and by 2021 the score was 17%, which seems quite high for a House Republican these days.

Also somewhat unusually for a House Republican, his webpage has positive remarks about environmental protection. His webpage even has an environmental tab:

"Congressman McHenry appreciates the natural beauty of the United States, and western North Carolina is home to some of America's most breathtaking scenery. It is important to provide adequate protections for our natural treasures.

> "Congressman McHenry helped to pass legislation to permanently reauthorize the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and was a strong supporter of the Great American Outdoors Act. This legislation fully funds the LWCF and provides $9.5 billion over five years to repair and maintain our national parks. Congressman McHenry was proud to vote in support of this bipartisan initiative to safeguard funding for our nation's public outdoor facilities and provide recreational opportunities to all Americans."

Less happily, he then adds a sentence on the need to reform the culture of EPA so it stops being "punitive and putting good people out of business."

The energy tab on the website is even more encouraging. It starts like this:

> "Congressman McHenry has supported an American energy policy that is

> balanced between conserving energy, investing in alternative energy sources, and continuing to use America's abundant energy resources. One day, America will be powered by alternative energy—and Congressman McHenry is working to make that happen—but until then, we must use American oil and natural gas to power the American economy and bring down energy costs for American families."

The sentence after this reads: "McHenry has been a tireless supporter of western North Carolina's growing solar energy industry. North Carolina is the second largest producer of solar energy in the United States and the Tenth District is home to seventeen solar energy companies, ranging from development to production."

McHenry then goes on to say that he is a co-sponsor of the Better Energy Storage Technology (BEST) Act, which he says "makes great strides in revolutionizing energy storage and U.S. electricity markets by updating grid scale technologies, which will make grid storage more widely available." Finally, although he opposes fracking bans, he supports a plan to invest revenue from fracking into R&D for solar, wind, nuclear, and hydroelectric.

Oh, and by the way, he didn't vote to overturn the 2020 election.

Seems almost too good to be true.

Postscript: Maybe it was too good to be true. When this posted at around 8AM Pacific Time, Jim Jordan had just endorsed the idea of empowering McHenry until a new speaker was chosen. The Republicans then held an acrimonious meeting, and by noon Pacific Time people were saying the idea was dead. *Sic transit gloria mundi*.