

32 House races to watch on energy and environment

If Republicans take control of the House, they'll do so by unseating many prominent Democrats on energy and climate policy.



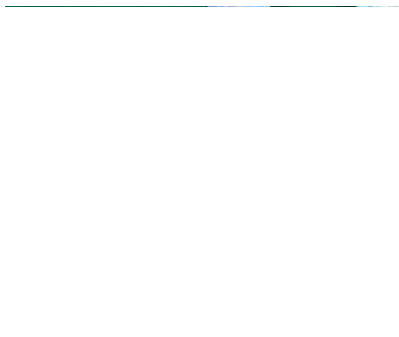
BY: **GEORGE CAHLINK** | 09/30/2022 06:25 AM EDT



Clockwise from top left: Reps. David Valadao (R-Calif.), Yvette Herrell (R-N.M.), Teresa Leger Fernandez (D-N.M.), Katie Porter (D-Calif.), Steven Horsford (D-Nev.) and Marcy Kaptur (D-Ohio) are in tough races this year. Former Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke (R) is campaigning to return to the House. | Francis Chung/E&E News (Kaptur, Porter, Horsford, Herrell); U.S. House/Wikipedia (Valadao, Leger Fernandez); Chip Somodevilla/Getty Images (Zinke)

E&E DAILY | The midterm elections are roughly a month away, and while Republicans are still favored to win back the House, the outlook for Democrats has improved in recent weeks.

Gasoline prices have fallen from their summer highs, and President Joe Biden's poll numbers have rebounded. Democratic leaders can point to a series of legislative wins, including passage of the massive climate, health care and tax package — the Inflation Reduction Act.



Democrats currently hold an eight-seat majority with several vacancies.

Favoring the GOP, inflation continues to be high. The party's prospects have been buoyed by multiple districts that were redrawn to make them more favorable to the party. There is also the long-standing pattern of presidents losing seats during their first midterm elections.

But Republicans may suffer from nominating more conservative candidates aligned with former President Donald Trump. They're also having to contend with the Supreme Court decision regarding *Roe v. Wade*, which has led to a surge in female voter registrations.

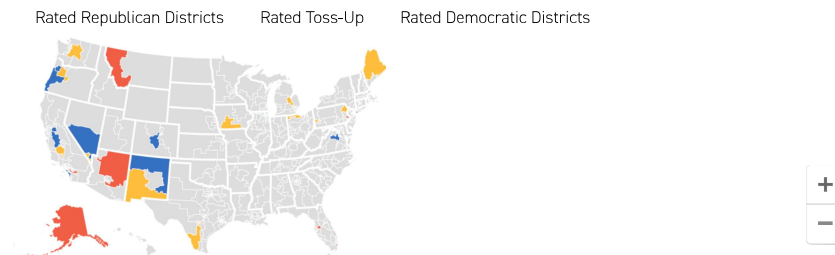
Democrats have outperformed Republicans in five straight special elections, including a surprise upset in Alaska.

With voters set to go to the polls on Nov. 8, here are 32 of the nation's most competitive races where energy and environment issues could prove a tipping point.

Fundraising totals come from Federal Elections Commission and OpenSecrets data. Ratings are from [POLITICO Forecast](#).

2022 House races to watch

POLITICO ratings for key House elections



Alaska at-large

A rematch is set for Alaska's lone House seat this November after Democrat Mary Peltola scored a major upset to win a special election in August. The seat was previously held for five decades by GOP Rep. Don Young, who died earlier this year.

Peltola, the first Native Alaskan elected to the House, calls herself "pro fish" and aligns herself with the state's oil and gas industry, including supporting drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

She defeated two Republicans, former Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin and Nick Begich III, in the first test of the state's ranked-choice voting system ([Greenwire](#), Sept. 1). Palin had won Trump's endorsement.

Both Republicans are also aligned with the state's energy interests but have spent considerable time attacking each other, to Peltola's advantage. Democrats believe Peltola has the edge after winning the state once, but Republicans counter that Alaska has long been dominated by the GOP and will try to link her to Biden, who is unpopular there.

Palin and Begich outraised Peltola by a significant margin, but that did not matter in the special election.

- Campaign total: Peltola — \$378,888; Palin — \$1,070,339; Begich — \$1,326,926

- Cash on hand: Peltola — \$124,789; Palin — \$107,548; Begich — \$655,421
- 2020 presidential vote: Trump +10
- Rating: Leans Republican

Arizona 2nd District

Republicans believe they have one of their best pickup opportunities in this vast new district that covers much of northern Arizona, including the Grand Canyon.

Energy and Commerce member Tom O'Halleran, a third-term moderate Democrat, will run in the new district, which contains about two-thirds of the voters from the one he currently represents. Under its new lines, it would have backed Trump in 2020.

O'Halleran has been active on cleaning up abandoned uranium mines in Navajo Nation and better protecting against forest fires. He's faced some criticism from Native American groups for not being more vocal in his opposition to the proposed Resolution Copper mine in the district (*E&E Daily*, Nov. 8, 2021).

His opponent is Eli Crane, a former Navy SEAL who won a crowded GOP primary this summer after nabbing Trump's endorsement. Crane is running on a promise of less regulation.

The Republican drew notice after appearing on the reality television show "Shark Tank" to promote his company that turns bullets into bottle openers. O'Halleran has a significant cash edge compared to Crane, who spent heavily to win his primary.

- Campaign total: O'Halleran — \$2,704,000; Crane — \$2,013,972
- Cash on hand: O'Halleran — \$2,049,188; Crane — \$219,313
- 2020 presidential vote: Trump +8
- Rating: Leans Republican

California 9th District

Democratic Rep. Josh Harder shifted districts in California's Central Valley and is betting that his work on water and agriculture issues will still appeal to voters there.

He is running in a redrawn district that was largely represented by retiring Democratic Rep. Jerry McNerney. The new district has more of a Democratic tilt than Harder's current 10th District, which is more evenly split.

His opponent is Republican Tom Patti, a San Joaquin County supervisor, whom the GOP is touting as a proven winner. Both oppose the proposed Delta tunnel that would divert water from the region to benefit other parts of the state.

Harder has been active on agriculture issues, including proposing new federal grant programs to incentivize farmers to reduce emissions and questioning whether the Forest Service has enough firefighters to combat wildfire threats (*E&E Daily*, April 28).

Harder holds a large fundraising edge, though Patti, a onetime amateur boxer, has received fundraising help from his former sparring partner, legendary heavyweight champion Mike Tyson.

- Campaign total: Harder — \$5,306,956; Patti — \$745,683
- Cash on hand: Harder — \$7,218,078; Patti — \$367,813
- 2020 presidential vote: Biden +12
- Rating: Leans Democratic

California 13th District

Access to water will be a key issue in the race to represent this newly created district in the agriculture-rich Central Valley.

The Democratic nominee — California Assemblymember Adam Gray — earlier this year led an effort to defeat state legislation against issuing new waters right permits. The bill, critics said, would have hurt water storage projects important to farmers.

Gray's Republican opponent, John Duarte, an owner of a family-run nursery, battled the Army Corps of Engineers in court over his plowing on land considered wetlands.

Gray, a moderate, is not popular with environmentalists because of his criticism of the California Air Resources Board and the \$60,000 he received from a super political action committee linked to energy giant Chevron this spring.

Duarte has narrowly outraised Gray and is strongly backed by Republican Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.), who also represents a Central Valley community.

While the 13th District has a Democratic tilt, both parties see the race as winnable in one of the more conservative parts of the state with a strong Hispanic population.

- Campaign total: Gray — \$946,316; Duarte — \$1,076,116
- Cash on hand: Gray — \$401,581; Duarte — \$372,668
- 2020 presidential vote: Biden +12
- Rating: Leans Democratic

California 22nd District

Republican David Valadao, who has led GOP efforts to deal with California's drought, is once again a major target in another Central Valley district that grew more Democratic after redistricting. He narrowly lost the seat in 2018 and regained it in 2020 (*E&E Daily*, April 22).

Valadao's Democratic opponent is state Assemblyman Rudy Salas, who has also campaigned on increasing Central Valley water supplies and has talked up efforts to win state aid for water projects.

While Democrats enjoy a significant edge in the district, Valadao has shown a willingness to buck his party and is only one of 10 Republicans who voted to impeach Trump after the Jan. 6, 2021, Capitol riots.

Still, Democrats accuse him of aligning mostly with the GOP, including opposing last year's bipartisan infrastructure law. Valadao enjoys a significant fundraising edge, and some Democrats were alarmed that Salas failed to clear 50 percent in this spring's nonpartisan primary, despite being the only Democrat running.

The area is 69 percent Hispanic, higher than other House district in the state.

- Campaign total: Valadao — \$2,453,745; Salas — \$986,879
- Cash on hand: Valadao — \$1,716,226; Salas — \$690,476
- 2020 presidential vote: Biden +13
- Rating: Toss-up

California 41st District

Democrats believe they have their best shot in years to unseat veteran Republican Rep. Ken Calvert in a redrawn district that is now evenly split between the parties.

Calvert, a mainstream conservative, touts his seniority on the Appropriations Committee, which has allowed him to steer hundreds of millions of dollars to the inland, southern

California district. As a top Interior-Environment appropriator, he favored Trump's efforts to slash EPA funding.

Calvert's opponent is Will Rollins, a former federal prosecutor, who has campaigned by saying Calvert believes "climate change is a hoax." National Democrats have gotten involved in the race after the seat was redrawn to include the more progressive Palm Springs, an LGBTQ stronghold.

Among Rollins' more prominent backers is former Senate Environment and Public Works Chair Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.), who has retired to Palm Springs and has been a fundraiser and mentor for his campaign.

- Campaign total: Calvert — \$2,340,522; Rollins — \$1,462,309
- Cash on hand: Calvert — \$1,394,802; Rollins — \$478,679
- 2020 presidential vote: Trump +1
- Rating: Likely Republican

California 47th District

Progressive firebrand Katie Porter, who heads the House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, faces a competitive reelection in a redrawn suburban Orange County swing district.

She'll square off against former California Assemblyman Scott Baugh in a county that long has been a national bellwether. Porter has been one of the House's lead critics of energy companies, accusing them of price gouging and spreading climate misinformation ([Greenwire](#), June 13).

She was an early backer of the Green New Deal and has called for a federal probe into former Interior Secretary David Bernhardt's handling of an environmental review of an Arizona housing project.

While greens see a crucial ally in Porter, Republicans are aiming to paint her as supportive of Biden policies that they claim have spiked inflation and gas prices. Baugh's website says he wants to address climate change but not in a way that costs jobs.

Porter's aggressive questioning at hearings has made her a favorite with the party's base, giving her a massive fundraising edge, ranking her only behind House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) as the top Democratic fundraiser this cycle.

- Campaign total: Porter — \$16,954,492, Baugh — \$1,773,064
- Cash on hand: Porter — \$19,860,783, Baugh — \$1,153,765
- 2020 presidential vote: Biden +11
- Rating: Leans Democratic

California 49th District

Democrat Rep. Mike Levin faces a rematch against Republican Brian Maryott, a former San Juan Capistrano mayor, in this coastal, southern California district that gained Republican voters in redistricting.

Levin, now in his second term, bested Maryott by 6 points in 2020. The Democrat has made combating climate change a priority, serving on the Select Committee on the Climate Crisis and the Natural Resources Committee. He has introduced numerous bills aimed at spurring clean and renewable energy production.

While both candidates oppose drilling off the California coast, they otherwise take different approaches on battling emissions. Like many Republicans, Maryott favors investing in technologies that will allow cleaner energy production. Levin supports the expansive Green New Deal.

Levin will likely look to tie Maryott to Trump, who is unpopular in the centrist district. Levin holds the cash edge, but Maryott has already put \$1 million of his own money into the race and could spend more.

- Campaign total: Levin — \$3,431,661; Maryott — \$2,409,300
- Cash on hand: Levin — \$2,938,772; Maryott — \$509,423
- 2020 presidential vote: Biden +11
- Rating: Leans Democratic

Colorado 7th District

A veteran state legislator is running against a former energy company manager in a bid to replace retiring Democratic Rep. Ed Perlmutter. The district includes the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (*E&E News PM*, Jan. 10).

Democratic state Sen. Brittany Pettersen is favored over the Republican nominee Erik Aadland, although both parties are keeping an eye on a district that partially shifted away from Denver's Democratic suburbs to more conservative, mountain communities.

As a state lawmaker, Pettersen has a strong record of favoring climate action and supporting electric vehicles and has said she would continue those efforts at the federal level.

Aadland, a West Point graduate, is a political newcomer who spent nearly a decade working for former energy giant Noble. He favors increased energy production and argues the oil and gas industry has helped to fund open space preservation around the state.

Petersen has a fundraising edge after Aadland had to spend to defeat a self-funding candidate in the GOP primary.

- Campaign total: Pettersen — \$1,311,173; Aadland — \$517,068
- Cash on hand: Pettersen — \$963,952; Aadland — \$48,531
- 2020 presidential vote: Biden +14
- Rating: Likely Democratic

Florida 15th District

An ally of Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis (R) and a Democratic congressional nominee from 2020 are squaring off in one of the Sunshine State's few competitive House races.

Republican Laurel Lee, a former secretary of state and state judge, will face Democrat Alan Cohn in a newly created central Florida district.

Lee is running as strong supporter of DeSantis' conservative agenda and has been a fierce critic of Biden's economic policies.

Cohn, a former television investigative journalist who lost a race for the old 15th District seat to Rep. Scott Franklin (R-Fla.) in 2020, is running as a moderate who favors including Tampa in a proposed high-speed rail connecting Orlando to Miami.

Lee, who's married to a former Florida Senate president, is narrowly favored in a district Trump carried. Neither candidate has a major fundraising edge after spending to win competitive primaries in August.

- Campaign total: Lee — \$663,458; Cohn — \$168,173
- Cash on hand: Lee — \$210,762, Cohn — \$131,199
- 2020 presidential vote: Trump +3
- Rating: Leans Republican

Florida 27th District

Freshman Republican Rep. Maria Elvira Salazar faces the state's most competitive reelection in a low-lying Miami district where environmental issues are often paramount.

Salazar has been among the most active Republicans on environmental issues, including drafting bipartisan legislation calling for national strategy for climate resilience, pushing ocean conservation measures and winning more than \$7 million in earmarks for hardening and resiliency projects (*E&E Daily*, June 8).

Despite that record, Salazar is one of a handful GOP members that green groups have taken out ads against in 2021 for opposing the Democrats' climate agenda.

Her Democratic opponent is state Sen. Annette Taddeo, who dropped out of a race for governor in June to run for the House. She lists combating climate change and red tides as her priorities but came under some fire during the primaries for sugar industry support.

A close race is expected in a district Trump won by only a point in 2020. Salazar holds a significant fundraising advantage.

- Campaign total: Salazar — \$3,707,704; Taddeo — \$673,214
- Cash on hand: Salazar — \$1,515,150; Taddeo — \$427,730
- 2020 presidential vote: Trump +1
- Rating: Likely Republican

Illinois 6th District

Democratic Rep. Sean Casten, one of the House's most vocal advocates for climate action, faces a race for a third term in a redrawn suburban, swing district that gained Republican voters.

A member of the Select Committee on the Climate Crisis, Casten has called the Inflation Reduction Act "only a start" in curbing emissions. He's pressed for action on a host of environmental issues, including updating Federal Energy Regulatory Commission regulations to better address grid reliability and renewable transmission.

Casten's GOP challenger is Orland Park Mayor Keith Pekau, who has focused on crime and economic issues. Republicans see the district as filled with independent voters frustrated by Biden. They'll also argue that Casten is backing policies that will financially benefit an energy recycling company he founded with his father.

Still, Casten is the favorite after easily besting progressive Rep. Maria Neuman (D-Ill.) in the primary with the backing of greens (*E&E Daily*, June 22).

- Campaign total: Casten — \$3,368,231; Pekau — \$435,122
- Cash on hand: Casten — \$574,339; Pekau — \$53,387
- 2020 presidential vote: Biden +11
- Rating: Leans Democratic

Iowa 3rd District

Democratic Rep. Cindy Axne, one of the House's leading biofuel boosters, faces a highly competitive race in a Des Moines-based district that she only narrowly held in 2020.

Axne, in her second term, has pushed for year-round ethanol sales, favored building out biofuel infrastructure and warned EPA against issuing ethanol waivers for small refineries.

Her GOP challenger is state Sen. Zach Nunn. Like Axne and nearly all Iowa lawmakers, he is eager to promote corn-based fuel, but has criticized the recently passed climate

package as a costly tax hike. Axne has touted the legislation as “one of most monumental pieces of policy this country has seen in decades.”

Axne holds a significant fundraising edge, and outside groups are spending to defend her against attacks related to inflation (*E&E Daily*, June 30). Both parties see another close contest in one of only seven Trump districts won by a Democrat in 2020.

- Campaign total: Axne — \$4,721,369; Nunn — \$1,142,650
- Cash on hand: Axne — \$3,0322,184; Nunn — \$301,804
- 2020 presidential vote: Even
- Rating: Toss-up

Maine 2nd District

Democratic Rep. Jared Golden is once again trying to hold on to one of the nation’s largest rural seats, where Trump remains popular.

He faces former GOP Rep. Bruce Poliquin (R-Maine) who held the seat for two terms before being ousted by Golden in 2018.

Golden has been a centrist in the House. And while he backed the recent climate package, he was the lone Democrat to oppose the broader social spending bill known as "Build Back Better" that passed the House last year.

Golden has also broken with Democrats in opposing legislation, [H.R. 7688](#), to increase the clout of the Federal Trade Commission to crackdown on energy price gouging.

Poliquin argues that Golden has voted with Democrats 80 percent of the time and has tried to link him to high energy prices.

Democrats concede that the race will be close in a district Trump won, but say Golden is a moderate who has proven appeal. GOP operatives say Poliquin will be better funded than the 2020 challenger and currently has a narrow cash advantage.

- Campaign total: Golden — \$3,688,361; Poliquin — \$2,600,495
- Cash on hand: Golden — \$2,307,833; Poliquin — \$2,311,005
- 2020 presidential vote: Trump +7
- Rating: Toss-up

Michigan 8th District

Democrat Rep. Dan Kildee, who led efforts to secure hundreds of millions in federal dollars to respond the lead water crisis in Flint, Mich., faces the most competitive race of his congressional career in a mid-Michigan district that gained Republican voters.

He faces Paul Junge, a former senior U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services official under Trump who lost a 2020 congressional race to Rep. Elissa Slotkin (D-Mich.).

Kildee, the chief deputy whip and a House and Ways and Means member, has pushed legislation to clean up "forever chemicals," or PFAS, and is seen as staunch ally of his state’s auto industry (*E&E Daily*, March 8).

Junge is hoping to tie Kildee to what the Republican sees as failed Democratic economic policies in a district that forecasters rate a toss-up. Junge also says Democrats’ push to end fracking could cost the state half a million jobs.

Kildee plans to attack Junge by noting he has spent most of his life outside Michigan and comes from a wealthy family, something that has allowed him to put more than \$1 million of his own money into the race.

- Campaign total: Kildee — \$3,335,031; Junge — \$1,412,185

- Cash on hand: Kildee — \$2,886,492; Junge — \$540,053
- 2020 presidential vote: Biden +2
- Rating: Toss-up

Montana 1st District

Former Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke is favored in his bid for a congressional comeback after western Montana gained a House seat in redistricting.

However, his race against Democratic clean energy attorney Monica Tranel is attracting more notice after Zinke narrowly survived a crowded GOP primary, despite widespread name recognition (*E&E Daily*, July 1).

Democrats are betting voters are tired of various ethics scandals swirling around Zinke that led to his resignation from Interior. A recent inspector general review found that Zinke lied to investigators about his role in a contentious Connecticut tribal gaming issue (*Greenwire*, Aug. 24).

Zinke has repeatedly called probes against him political. He has the former president's backing and a significant fundraising edge.

Tranel has chided Zinke over his ties to and support from fossil fuel firms. Zinke has said he believes in climate change but that fossil fuels will be in the mix for at least another 50 years.

- Campaign total: Zinke — \$3,736,255; Tranel — \$1,216,011
- Cash on hand: Zinke — \$904,419; Tranel — \$216,961
- 2020 presidential vote: Trump +7
- Rating: Likely Republican

Nevada 1st District

Veteran Democrat Rep. Dina Titus faces a competitive race after her safe, Las Vegas-based district was expanded into the Sin City's suburbs, which are filled with independent and swing voters.

Titus colorfully told a union audience late last year she was "fucked" by state Democratic leaders looking to shore up other districts. She is one of three Democrats being targeted in a state hit hard by economic woes.

Titus, who heads the Transportation and Infrastructure subcommittee overseeing FEMA, has pushed bills to enhance the agency's climate resiliency and mitigation efforts.

On land issues, Titus has been a critic of federal roundups of wild horses and wrote legislation, [H.R. 6751](#), to name Avi Kwa Ame, a sacred Native American site in the Mojave Desert, a national monument (*E&E Daily*, Jan. 14).

Her opponent is Mark Robertson, a former Army veteran who also worked as a supply chain manager for NV Energy. He believes in climate change but is wary of costly ideas to address it. He also favors the Keystone XL pipeline.

- Campaign total: Titus — \$1,714,616; Robertson — \$638,553
- Cash on hand: Titus — \$1,685,932; Robertson — \$201,112
- 2020 presidential vote: Biden +8
- Rating: Leans Democratic

Nevada 3rd District

Second-term Democrat Susie Lee once again faces a tight race in a district covering parts of Las Vegas that has been a battleground over the past several cycles.

Lee, who sits on the Energy and Water Development Appropriations Subcommittee, has been active in backing legislation to combat the southwestern drought and has helped lead Democratic efforts to limit speculative energy leasing on federal lands (*E&E Daily*, May 5, 2021).

Her Republican opponent is April Becker, a real estate attorney who narrowly lost a state Senate race in 2020. Becker, who says she would prioritize American energy independence to drive down gas prices, told the *Nevada Independent* she would join the House's Conservative Climate Caucus if elected. She has raised concerns about the cost of solar and wind energy projects.

Becker has also tried to tie Lee to Democratic economic policies in a district that has seen some of the nation's highest unemployment.

- Campaign total: Lee — \$4,232,814, Becker — \$1,417,377
- Cash on hand: Lee — \$2,558,468, Becker — \$363,091
- 2020 presidential vote: Biden +7
- Rating: Toss-up

Nevada 4th District

Ways and Means member Steve Horsford is another Nevada Democrat bracing for a competitive reelection in a swing district.

Horsford has been active on several energy and environmental issues important in the Silver State, including drought relief, weatherizing grid transmission lines and Lake Tahoe restoration efforts (*E&E News PM*, March 12, 2021). He also has pressed the Defense Department to better track emissions from its supply chain.

His opponent is Sam Peters, a conservative former military veteran who aligned himself with Trump to win a crowded GOP primary after failing to win the nomination two years ago. Peters has bashed Horsford for supporting the budget reconciliation climate package the Republican claims will raise taxes “across the board.”

Horsford received unwanted publicity this spring after his wife publicly criticized his reelection bid after he admitted to a long-term affair with an aide to former Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.). Like Nevada's other Democrats, Horsford has been a strong fundraiser.

- Campaign total: Horsford — \$3,222,345; Peters — \$937,570
- Cash on hand: Horsford — \$2,494,446; Peters — \$165,018
- 2020 presidential vote: Biden +8
- Rating: Leans Democratic

New Mexico 2nd District

First-term Republican Yvette Herrell, a Trump-aligned conservative who has pushed for more oversight of EPA and the Interior Department, is a top target of greens in a southwestern New Mexico district redrawn to favor Democrats after backing Trump in 2020.

The League of Conservation Voters announced this summer it will spend against Herrell, who made the group's “dirty dozen” list and is a leading recipient of donations tied to the oil and gas industry.

Herrell is the top Republican on the Oversight and Reform Subcommittee on the Environment and has used that perch to charge the Biden administration with

subverting congressional oversight (*E&E Daily*, July 28). While favoring GOP policies on expanded drilling, she has worked across party lines on some drought concerns and compensation for workers exposed to nuclear radiation.

Her opponent is Gabe Vasquez, a progressive former city council member. He is urging more action against climate and says southern New Mexico can be a leader in clean energy production.

Herrell is betting that even as the district has shifted in favor of the Democrats, its large contingent of oil and gas workers will support her.

- Campaign total: Herrell — \$2,645,435; Vasquez — \$1,173,141
- Cash on hand: Herrell — \$1,695,442; Vasquez — \$623,220
- 2020 presidential vote: Biden +6
- Rating: Toss-up

New Mexico 3rd District

First-term Democrat Teresa Leger Fernandez faces a rematch against Republican nominee Alexis Martinez Johnson, whom she beat handily in 2020 for the northeastern New Mexico seat.

Both parties expect a more competitive race this cycle. The district gained Republicans in redistricting.

Fernandez, who favors the Green New Deal, has been active on a range of energy and environmental issues, including pushing legislation to clean up abandoned oil wells.

She has also worked closely with New Mexico's senators to press the Biden administration to block any new drilling around her district's Chaco Canyon. Pelosi raised money with Fernandez this month.

Martinez Johnson, who lost a race for mayor of Santa Fe last year, said she favors free-market efforts to fight climate change and that Biden's energy policies are killing jobs and raising energy costs.

- Campaign total: Leger Fernandez — \$1,840,900; Martinez Johnson — \$74,553
- Cash on hand: Leger Fernandez — \$1,219,829; Martinez Johnson — \$28,689
- 2020 presidential vote: Biden + 11
- Rating: Leans Democratic

New York 4th District

A Long Island race to replace retiring Energy and Commerce Democrat Kathleen Rice features a candidate who led a still-pending lawsuit against manufacturers of chemicals found in her town's water supply.

Democrat Laura Gillen, the former supervisor of Hempstead, has sued chemical manufacturers for millions of dollars in cleanup costs. Gillen says she would prioritize environment action and has noted Superstorm Sandy's impact on many of the district's towns.

Republican Anthony D'Esposito has focused on crime and has alleged that Gillen favors economic policies that cause inflation. His website says he favors American energy independence as the best option for lowering gas prices.

D'Esposito backers note he has the fundraising edge after not having a competitive primary. Long Island has a track record of electing GOP officials locally. Democrats counter they have held the seat since 1996.

- Campaign total: Gillen — \$628,590; D'Esposito — \$634,804

- Cash on hand: Gillen — \$165,875; D’Esposito — \$545,416
- 2020 presidential vote: Biden +14
- Rating: Likely Democratic

Ohio 9th District

Democrat Marcy Kaptur, the House’s top Energy-Water appropriator, was seemingly facing the toughest race of her long career after her northern Ohio district was radically redrawn to favor Republicans.

But that was before an [Associated Press report](#) last week that found her opponent, J.R. Majewski, lied about serving in Afghanistan. The House GOP campaign committee [reportedly cut](#) a nearly \$1 million ad buy for Majewski, an attendee of the Jan. 6 "Stop the Steal" rally in Washington, who has also backed QAnon conspiracy theories.

That should be good news for Kaptur, the longest-serving woman in House history. She has used her annual spending bill to promote renewable energy development at the Energy Department and has long advocated Great Lakes cleanup for a district that borders Lake Erie.

Kaptur also recently gained a seat on the Agriculture Committee, which could help her woo new rural voters (*E&E Daily*, May 11). A longtime Biden ally, Kaptur has in recent weeks distanced herself from the president in a district that favored Trump and has been hard hit by the economic downturn.

Majewski, a surprise primary winner, has said he would prioritize investments in nuclear, which he sees as the energy of the future. The AP report found that Majewski also exaggerated his work history in the nuclear industry.

- Campaign total: Kaptur — \$1,761,762, Majewski — \$434,947
- Cash on hand: Kaptur — \$1,694,666, Majewski— \$113,154
- 2020 presidential vote: Trump +3
- Rating: Toss-up

Oregon 4th District

An open seat race in this coastal southwestern Oregon district is expected to be competitive after retiring Transportation and Infrastructure Chair Peter DeFazio held it by only 5 points in 2020.

The contenders are Democrat Val Hoyle, the elected commissioner of Oregon’s Bureau of Labor and Industries and a former state legislator, and Republican Alek Skarlatos, who lost the race to DeFazio two years ago.

Hoyle, backed by the Oregon League of Conservation Voters during a crowded Democratic primary, is campaigning on reducing car emissions and phasing out coal plants.

Skarlatos is running as a traditional Republican with a compelling personal story. He was one of four people who helped thwart a terrorist attack on a French train in 2015.

Skarlatos says he supports the GOP’s trillion tree initiative to reduce carbon emissions. He has also campaigned against environmental rules that have hurt the area’s logging industry.

Democrats believe they have the edge in a district redrawn to favor their party, although Republicans believe Skarlatos’ heroic record gives him bipartisan appeal and note that he holds a fundraising edge.

- Campaign total: Skarlatos — \$2,471,186; Hoyle — \$1,150,309
- Cash on hand: Skarlatos — \$662,757; Hoyle — \$318,332

- 2020 presidential vote: Biden +14
- Rating: Likely Democratic

Oregon 5th District

An upset of veteran Democrat Rep. Kurt Schrader in a primary this year by a progressive has Republicans believing they can win this redrawn district.

The Democratic nominee is Jamie McLeod-Skinner, who lost a 2018 race to then-GOP Rep. Greg Walden. The Republican candidate is Lori Chavez-DeRemer, a Latina former mayor of a small city outside of Portland.

McLeod-Skinner supports the Green New Deal and derided Schrader as the “Joe Manchin” of the House for favoring centrist policies (*E&E Daily*, June 17).

Chavez-DeRemer does not deny climate change but warned in a Facebook interview that Democrats are trying to “push everything through the lens of climate change” without considering the impacts on businesses.

Forecasters say the mostly suburban district still tilts toward Democrats, but it’s become less so after redistricting.

Both candidates have similar fundraising totals, although Chavez-DeRemer has loaned her campaign more than \$400,000.

- Campaign total: McLeod-Skinner — \$1,256,596; Chavez-DeRemer — \$1,122,251
- Cash on hand: McLeod-Skinner — \$388,719; Chavez-DeRemer — \$168,745
- 2020 presidential vote: Biden +8
- Rating: Toss-up

Oregon 6th District

The first newly created seat in Oregon in 40 years, covering parts of Portland and its suburbs, is seen as winnable by both parties.

The Democratic nominee is state Rep. Andrea Salinas, a Latina progressive who has one of the strongest environmental records of any nonincumbent running in the House this year (*E&E News PM*, May 4).

As a state legislator, she promoted bills on environmental justice, ending fossil fuel production on state lands and incentivizing solar power and electric vehicles. She has served on the boards of the Oregon League of Conservation Voters and as the legislative director of the Oregon Environmental Council.

Her opponent is businessman Mike Erickson, who twice ran unsuccessfully for Congress more than a decade ago. He’s mainly focused on economic issues and blames Biden’s green agenda for rising gas prices.

The candidates are evenly matched in fundraising, though Erickson has provided more than half the funding for his campaign.

- Campaign total: Salinas — \$1,312,431; Erickson — \$1,464,415
- Cash on hand: Salinas — \$363,029; Erickson — \$244,872
- 2020 presidential vote: Biden +13
- Rating: Likely Democratic

Pennsylvania 1st District

Republican Brian Fitzpatrick, the House’s leading centrist voice on climate change, is favored in one of the nation’s best-known swing districts.

He's consistently worked with Democrats on bipartisan environment issues, including pushing for increased federal oversight of chemicals, more clean energy spending and carbon pricing (*E&E Daily*, May 11, 2021).

He was one of only 13 House Republicans to back last year's infrastructure bill, although he opposed Democrats' climate spending package this summer.

Fitzpatrick's opponent is Ashley Ehasz, a West Point graduate and former Army pilot, who has framed addressing climate change as a national security issue. The League of Conservation Voters has endorsed him in the past.

But Democrats believe Ehasz has a shot if they can turn the race into a referendum on Trump and more extreme conservative policies, though they are not embraced by Fitzpatrick.

- Campaign total: Fitzpatrick — \$3,490,359, Ehasz — \$432,309
- Cash on hand: Fitzpatrick — \$1,028,408, Ehasz — \$146,972
- 2020 presidential vote: Biden +5
- Rating: Leans Republican

Pennsylvania 8th District

Veteran Democrat Matt Cartwright, a senior appropriator, faces a rematch with Republican Jim Bognet, whom he beat by less than 5 points in 2020. The northwestern Pennsylvania district is seen by both parties as competitive.

Cartwright oversees a spending panel that has pushed for more money for NOAA and called for the agency to focus on climate (*E&E Daily*, June 29).

Cartwright has also sought more money for abandoned coal mine cleanups and aid to miners suffering from black lung disease, both important issues in a district once filled with coal extraction operations.

Bognet, a former Export-Import Bank communications official and Washington-based consultant, has run on a platform of bringing jobs to the region and described Cartwright as a "lapdog" for Biden.

Republicans believe Bognet has a good shot at winning a district that Trump twice won, but Democrats say Cartwright has a fundraising edge and has consistently outperformed other GOP hopefuls in the district.

- Campaign total: Cartwright — \$3,458,215; Bognet — \$1,225,148
- Cash on hand: Cartwright — \$2,731,508; Bognet — \$580,352
- 2020 presidential vote: Trump +3
- Rating: Toss-up

Pennsylvania 17th District

Both parties are optimistic about taking this open seat, which covers part of Pittsburgh and western Pennsylvania and has benefited from the state's fracking boom.

Current Democratic Rep. Conor Lamb opted against House reelection to make a failed Senate bid.

The contest is pitting Democrat attorney Chris Deluzio, an Iraq War veteran, against Republican Jeremy Shaffer, a former township commissioner.

Deluzio favors tougher environmental standards on natural gas emissions but believes it would be a mistake to curtail domestic production until the grid can better handle renewable energy sources.

Shaffer does not see an either-or choice between a strong energy industry and clean environment and argues the United States should not rely on foreign oil.

Shaffer holds the fundraising edge in district that moved a bit more Democratic in redistricting after Lamb only narrowly won it in 2020.

- Campaign total: Shaffer — \$1,431,023; Deluzio — \$907,312
- Cash on hand: Shaffer — \$937,388; Deluzio — \$348,090
- 2020 presidential vote: Biden +6
- Rating: Toss-up

Texas 28th District

Republicans are targeting veteran Blue Dog Democrat Henry Cuellar, a moderate who has drawn the ire of environmentalists for his focus on protecting his state's oil and jobs.

Cuellar won the nomination after narrowly defeating progressive challenger Jessica Cisneros and being dogged by an FBI raid allegedly tied to a political influence investigation (*E&E News PM*, June 3).

Cuellar, who opposes most attempts to increase regulation of the energy and gas industry, only reluctantly backed the Democrats' climate reconciliation package this year.

His opponent is Cassy Garcia, one of several conservative Latinas that national Republicans have promoted this cycle. Garcia, a former state aide to Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas), would too be aligned with energy interests and says families in the district can't afford "expensive electric cars" favored by the White House.

Democrats say Cuellar remains personally popular in the district and has separated himself from his party, but GOP operatives believe a tough primary and the taint of an FBI raid could keep him from a 10th term.

Cuellar has been the stronger fundraiser, receiving nearly \$250,000 from the oil and gas industry so far this cycle, but had to spend heavily to win his primary.

- Campaign total: Cuellar — \$3,281,013; Garcia — \$692,740
- Cash on hand: Cuellar — \$239,206; Garcia — \$224,933
- 2020 presidential vote: Biden +7
- Rating: Toss-up

Virginia 7th District

Moderate Democrat Abigail Spanberger, who has led bipartisan efforts on agriculture, climate and conservation issues, is being targeted by Republicans this cycle in a redrawn district that stretches from the outer Washington suburbs to more rural central Virginia.

Spanberger, a senior Agriculture Committee member, has led a bipartisan push to write legislation, [H.R. 2820](#), to boost carbon capture in farming, and she has also been a backer of biofuels (*E&E Daily*, April 27).

She also has called for banning members of Congress from trading individual stocks, including holdings in fossil fuel companies.

Her opponent is Yesli Vega, a conservative Latina who sits on the Prince Williams County Board of Supervisors. Vega voted against a recent effort to join other northern Virginia communities in trying to cut greenhouse gases 50 percent by 2030.

Republicans believe Vega can capitalize on suburban voter dissatisfaction with Biden, but Spanberger has been aggressive in painting her as too extreme on social issues. The incumbent has a large fundraising edge, although the National Republican Congressional Committee could help close that gap for Vega.

- Campaign total: Spanberger — \$5,530,624; Vega — \$741,934
- Cash on hand: Spanberger — \$4,902,106; Vega — \$251,369
- 2020 presidential vote: Biden +7
- Rating: Leans Democratic

Washington 8th District

Energy and Commerce Democrat Kim Schrier, who has led her party's House efforts to crack down on price-gouging by energy companies and wants to temporarily repeal the federal gasoline tax, faces a competitive race for a third term.

Schrier, who flipped the seat in 2018, has also been active on western wildfire issues that are important for here district, which stretches from the outer Seattle suburbs across the Cascade Mountains. She is one of a half dozen Democrats for whom the League of Conservation Voters is running ads to tout as climate champions for supporting Democrats' climate efforts ([Greenwire](#), Aug. 29).

The Republican nominee is Matt Larkin, the party's pick for state attorney general in 2020. Larkin has said he wants to pass on a "better environment" to his children, but adds climate is not a priority for voters mostly concerned about economic and crime issues.

- Campaign total: Schrier — \$6,077,804; Larkin — \$967,683
- Cash on hand: Schrier — \$5,571,917; Larkin — \$480,440
- 2020 presidential vote: Biden +7
- Rating: Toss-up

YOUR ACCOUNT MANAGEMENT TEAM

Tejus Gangadhar

Sr. Business Development Associate, Pro
tgangadhar@politico.com

Aaron Czarnopys

Account Executive, Pro
aczarnopys@politico.com

