



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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12-Year-Old Takes North Carolina's Environmental Management Commission to Court Over Climate Change

Raleigh, North Carolina – Yesterday, in North Carolina Superior Court in Wake County, 12-year-old Hallie Turner [appealed](#) a decision by North Carolina's Environmental Management Commission rejecting her climate change petition for rulemaking. Last December, Hallie submitted her petition to the Environmental Management Commission in an attempt to get the State to protect North Carolina's constitutionally protected water and air resources. Hallie's petition asked the Commission to promulgate a rule, based on the best available climate science, that would require North Carolina to reduce its carbon dioxide emissions by at least four percent each year.

Displeased with the Commission's decision, Hallie hopes the Superior Court will understand the importance of protecting the State's climate system, and call upon government leaders to take meaningful action. "It was disappointing when the petition got denied because we trusted our leaders to take initiative on this issue and they didn't," Hallie says. "They should be making the right decisions to protect our planet. When they don't, they are letting us down, as well as future generations. My generation is ready and willing to take action and we will continue to pressure our leaders to do the same."

Commissioner Benne Hutson rejected Hallie's petition, arguing that the Commission doesn't have the statutory authority to promulgate the proposed rule because North Carolina law prohibits environmental agencies from enacting environmental laws stricter than federal law. Hutson's denial of the petition ignores the fact that North Carolina's Constitution (Article XIV, Section 5) and the public trust doctrine require the State to control and limit air and water pollution and preserve the State's natural resources and places of beauty.

As Hallie's attorney, Gayle Goldsmith Tuch, explains, "by continuing to allow dangerous levels of greenhouse gas emissions, the State is failing to meet its constitutional and public trust obligations to protect North Carolina's air and other natural resources from climate change and ocean acidification. We are asking the Court to send the Environmental Management

Commission a message that doing nothing is not an option. This State has an opportunity to become a leader on renewable energy.”

Also troubling is that Commissioner Hutson has close ties with the industries that would be impacted by Hallie’s petition, creating a clear conflict of interest for the Commissioner. The law firm Hutson works for, McGuireWoods LLP has represented Duke Energy, and its subsidiary, McGuireWoods Consulting, is a registered lobbyist for the Koch Brothers, Halliburton, and others. As a result of this conflict of interest, the Commissioner should have recused himself from any involvement in Hallie’s petition.

Hallie has been involved in climate activism since the fourth grade. She has attended rallies and marches in Washington D.C., and has spoken at several events, including the Climate Convergence on Raleigh in 2013. Hallie is determined to leave behind a small carbon footprint and voices her climate concerns in her classroom, and at rallies and marches. She’s especially passionate about engaging other youth, recognizing that they are the ones who will inherit the Earth created by today’s decision makers.

Hallie hopes that by appealing the denial of her petition, the Superior Court will ensure the integrity of North Carolina’s climate system and recognize that the atmosphere is in peril and must be protected by government leaders. The best climate scientists, led by Dr. James Hansen, say that atmospheric CO₂ concentrations must return to 350 parts per million by the end of this century. According to North Carolina’s emissions data, the State’s CO₂ emissions must be reduced by 4% per year in order for the State to do its part to achieve safe atmospheric CO₂ concentration by the end of the century.

Hallie’s lawsuit was filed with the help of Our Children’s Trust, an Oregon-based non-profit orchestrating a game-changing, youth-driven legal campaign in the United States and across the world. She is being represented by the Law Office of Gayle Goldsmith Tuch.

***Our Children's Trust** is a nonprofit organization advocating for urgent emissions reductions on behalf of youth and future generations, who have the most to lose if emissions are not reduced. OCT is spearheading the international human rights and environmental TRUST Campaign to compel governments to safeguard the atmosphere as a "public trust" resource. We use law, film, and media to elevate their compelling voices. Our ultimate goal is for governments to adopt and implement enforceable science-based Climate Recovery Plans with annual emissions reductions to return to an atmospheric carbon dioxide concentration of 350 ppm. www.ourchildrenstrust.org/*

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