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Eugene City Council Supports Young People's Ask for a Climate Recovery Ordinance Based on Science

Eugene, Oregon – Last night, Eugene's City Council, with a vote of 7-1, passed a motion to have City staff draft a Climate Recovery Ordinance to be considered at a public hearing on July 21, 2014. This is the first step the City has taken toward adopting the Climate Recovery Ordinance that Eugene youth delivered to City Council in December 2013.

"I am so proud of my City government for recognizing the importance and urgency in taking climate action," said Kelsey Juliana, a graduating South Eugene High School senior and plaintiff in the Oregon Atmospheric Trust [lawsuit](#) against Governor Kitzhaber. "I am happy and hopeful the Councilors passed the motion to put the Climate Recovery Ordinance to a public hearing and a vote this summer. I look forward to other cities following our example."

Last fall, young people from around the City came together to create the Youth Climate Action Now (YouCAN) Campaign to advocate for their right to a safe and stable climate system. In December, the young people hand-delivered the proposed Climate Recovery Ordinance to City Council and asked their local leaders to take science-based action to combat climate disruption. Youth and their supporters have attended City Council meetings for the last nine months to present testimony to Councilors, voicing their concerns about the negative effects of climate change in Eugene and the need for urgent action. The young people understand that Eugene alone cannot stop climate disruption, but neither can the global crisis be addressed without every community and every level of government taking action, for their sake and the sake of future generations.

Eugene's Mayor, Kitty Piercy applauded the efforts of YouCAN and Our Children's Trust during the work session, commenting that "for months, children of our community have come to us to speak about their future, to ask for us to put into ordinance the very goals we have already adopted to reduce our impact on climate change and to measure our success in meeting these goals. I support this ordinance, knowing it will take hard work for us to achieve these goals." The Mayor added that she is "optimistic that our community can achieve these goals and more. Just as we are working together on economic development, we can work together on reducing our impact on climate change and how to address the challenges we face together."

City Council held an earlier work session on March 10th of this year to discuss the proposal put forth by the youth. In response to the proposed Ordinance, Councilor Alan Zelenka proposed a motion to consider the Ordinance brought forth by the young people. Last night, the Councilors

took initiative to draft an official Ordinance, supporting the voices of Eugene’s youngest generations.

If Eugene adopts a science-based Climate Recovery Ordinance, it would become a national leader on climate action and in passing meaningful laws to protect young people and future generations.

“Pollution, global warming, climate change, and all of those things, are like fire, and fire needs to be stopped before it causes destruction that can’t be mended. Building a trench can stop wildfires. So, if we build a trench for climate change, we can stop it. We are building a trench by passing the motion to draft a Climate Recovery Ordinance. It seems small in the big picture, but it can have a domino effect,” said nine-year-old Hazel Van Ummersen, from Edgewood Elementary School, and one of the YouCAN kids who has testified before City Council.

***Our Children’s Trust** is a nonprofit advocating for urgent emissions reductions on behalf of youth and future generations, who have the most to lose. 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 atmospheric CO₂ concentration to 350 ppm. www.OurChildrensTrust.org/*

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