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Five Young People in Washington D.C. Court To Force Government to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Washington, D.C. – Yesterday, attorneys for five youth plaintiffs and two non-profit organizations filed their [opening brief](#) in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia to force the federal government to implement a comprehensive Climate Recovery Plan.

Unable to vote and unable to hold elected office; these five young people continue their fight to protect their climate and their constitutional rights by appealing the district court's dismissal of their case.

Two years ago, the young plaintiffs sought immediate court intervention to compel U.S. government action on climate change. Atmospheric Trust Litigation (ATL) is based on a government's constitutional public trust obligation to protect the fundamental rights of children and future generations.

In the last month, youth in Texas and Alaska had their ATL lawsuits heard before the Third Court of Appeals in Austin and before the [Alaska Supreme Court at Barrow High School](#). Both courts have yet to rule on the lawsuits. In August 2012, a district court in Austin issued a historic final judgment in the youths' case finding that *all* natural resources, including the atmosphere, are protected under the Public Trust Doctrine and the Texas Constitution.

“The U.S. government has an obligation to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in line with what science says is needed to protect our future and prevent catastrophic climate change,” said 19-year-old Alec Loorz, lead plaintiff on the federal case and co-founder of iMatter. “We need the courts to tell the executive and legislative branches to do their job and meet their obligations. I’m hopeful our team of attorneys can take this all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court.”

“Averting a human-made climate crisis should be a matter of carbon science, not carbon politics,” observed Phil Gregory, a partner with Cotchett, Pitre & McCarthy, counsel for the plaintiffs. “Neither Congress nor the President are taking the steps necessary to avert a human-made climate disaster. It is up to our courts to put politics aside and protect our essential natural resources for our youth and future generations.”

Many legal scholars, and even the federal judge who dismissed the case, have said the lawsuit raises fundamental questions about the nature of our democracy and our Constitution. The case has been supported by more than twenty prominent environmental and Constitutional law scholars from across the country and noted international climate scientists.

To learn more about the plaintiffs in this case and the international TRUST Campaign, visit: <http://ourchildrenstrust.org>, where you can also watch the 10-part documentary series: *Stories of TRUST: Calling for Climate Recovery*, including the newest film *Climate of TRUST*.

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 to 350 ppm. www.OurChildrensTrust.org/

iMatter Campaign is a youth-led campaign of the nonprofit group, *Kids vs Global Warming*, that is focused on mobilizing and empowering youth to lead the way to a sustainable and just world. We are teens and moms and young activists committed to raising the voices of the youngest generation to issue a wake-up call to live, lead and govern as if our future matters. www.imatteryouth.org/

WITNESS is the global pioneer in the use of video to promote human rights. We empower people to transform personal stories of abuse into powerful tools for justice, promoting public engagement and policy change. To view *Stories of TRUST: Calling for Climate Recovery* told by our youth plaintiffs, go to www.witness.org/campaigns/all-campaigns/imatter

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