



**Media Advisory**  
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**New Mexico Judge To Decide Whether State Has Violated Its  
Public Trust Duty To Protect The Atmosphere**

**WHAT:** Oral arguments in New Mexico Atmospheric Trust Litigation (ATL) case

**WHEN:** Wednesday, June 26<sup>th</sup>, 1:30 pm Mountain Standard Time

**WHERE:** First Judicial District Court, 100 Catron St, Santa Fe, New Mexico 87504

**WHY:** In July 2012, nineteen-year-old Akilah Sanders-Reed's climate change lawsuit against the state of New Mexico proceeded on the merits after Judge Sarah Singleton denied the state defendants' motion to dismiss. Judge Singleton's order recognized that "Plaintiffs have made a substantive allegation that...the state is ignoring the atmosphere with respect to greenhouse gas emissions."

On Wednesday, nearly one year later, Judge Singleton will hear arguments from attorneys for the plaintiffs and the state on whether the state has violated its public trust duty to protect the atmosphere, specifically relating to whether the New Mexico's Environmental Improvement Board's (EIB) repeal of greenhouse gas regulations absolved the state of its duty as trustee of the atmosphere.

This is the first ATL case in the United States to be heard on the merits. The plaintiffs, Sanders-Reed and WildEarth Guardians, filed their case on May 4, 2011 against Governor Susana Martinez and the State of New Mexico. It relies upon the long established principle of the public trust doctrine, which requires all branches of government to protect and maintain certain shared resources fundamental for human health and survival.

The New Mexico ATL case is part of one of the most remarkable legal strategies on the climate crisis to date. The strategy was launched in May of 2011, as part of the TRUST Campaign, in which youth filed legal actions in 49 states and against the federal government. To learn more about the TRUST Campaign, visit [www.ourchildrenstrust.org](http://www.ourchildrenstrust.org).

*WildEarth Guardians is a nonprofit environmental conservation and advocacy organization based in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Guardians works to replace fossil fuels with clean, renewable energy in order to safeguard public health, the environment, and the Earth's climate for future generations. <http://www.wildearthguardians.org>.*

*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/](http://www.ourchildrenstrust.org/)*

**iMatter Campaign** is a youth-led campaign of the nonprofit group, Kids vs. Global Warming, a movement of empowered youth leaders who compel action on the climate crisis. These are the leaders of a generation who may be too young to vote and have little political clout, but who exercise their civil rights to lead the way to a society that lives and governs as if their future matters. [www.imattermarch.org/](http://www.imattermarch.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. In partnership with the iMatter TRUST Campaign we seek to bring visibility to the challenges our youth already face because of the changing climate and call for a massive assault on fossil fuel emissions. Without an all-out assault, effects will range from drought to disease; from food shortages to tainted water supplies; from the loss of homes due to floods, erosion and fire to massive relocations. The human rights challenge is most succinctly summarized by Mary Robinson, "Climate change will, in short, have immense human consequences." WITNESS partnered on this campaign in hopes that predictions will not become realities. To view the stories from our youth included in the TRUST Series go to [www.witness.org/campaigns/all-campaigns/imatter](http://www.witness.org/campaigns/all-campaigns/imatter) or [www.ourchildrenstrust.org](http://www.ourchildrenstrust.org).

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