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## **NELSON KANUK AND OTHER ALASKA YOUTH FILE FINAL BRIEF IN CLIMATE CASE**

Anchorage, Alaska – Today, six young appellants and their guardians filed the final brief asking the Alaska Supreme Court to allow their public trust case to proceed. The appeal was filed after Superior Court Judge Sen K. Tan dismissed their constitutional climate change lawsuit against the Alaska Department of Natural Resources. The lawsuit was brought to force Alaska, which is on the front line of the climate crisis, to reduce carbon dioxide emissions in order to protect the state's natural resources as required by the Alaska Constitution.

“The changes taking place in Alaska as a result of global warming are among the most dramatic on Earth,” wrote the Alaska Inter-Tribal Council in a brief supporting the youth’s case. “The dramatic destruction of the Arctic provides an early warning for the rest of the world of the devastation that is likely to occur if governments and industries that drive them fail to significantly curb their emissions of greenhouse gases.”

Climate change is undeniably wreaking havoc on Alaska’s lands, coastlines, water sources, infrastructure, and its people. Alaska Natives are particularly impacted from a warming climate, which threatens everything from their subsistence lifestyle, to their homes and food storage, to their water supplies and their physical wellbeing. If the State continues to allow greenhouse gas emissions to go unchecked, the results will be catastrophic and disproportionately affect Tribal communities.

For the past two years, Nelson Kanuk, a high school senior and plaintiff in the case, has been speaking out about the impacts to his native community of Kipnuk, and to his own home, which is threatened by an eroding riverbank from melting permafrost. Kanuk has spoken across the country as a witness of climate impacts and a young representative of native and indigenous communities. Just last week, his story aired on NPR’s All Things Considered.

“The time is now. This is our chance to get the Alaska Supreme Court to take action, not only on climate change, but for the future wellbeing of all Alaskans,” explains Kanuk. “I can’t stand to continue to watch my home and the village I grew up in deteriorate due to our warming planet.”

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

***iMatter*** 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](http://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. In partnership with the 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 Stories of TRUST: Calling for Climate Recovery told by our youth plaintiffs, go to [www.ourchildrenstrust.org](http://www.ourchildrenstrust.org).

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