



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 2, 2012

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YOUTH APPEAL CLIMATE CASE

Oregon's Supreme Court Is Asked To Combat The Climate Crisis

Eugene, Oregon — Today, two Oregon youth and their mothers announced their decision to appeal a ruling dismissing their climate change lawsuit against Governor Kitzhaber and the State of Oregon for failing to protect essential natural resources, including the atmosphere, as required under the Public Trust Doctrine. At the same time, they are asking the Court of Appeals to send the case straight on to the Oregon Supreme Court through a rare certification process.

“A Judge in Texas has ruled that the atmosphere is protected under the Public Trust Doctrine,” says Meg Ward with Our Children’s Trust, an organization dedicated to fighting climate change. “We are hopeful that Oregon’s higher courts will also recognize that our atmosphere is in imperil and must be protected by State officials.”

The lawsuit was brought to compel the Oregon State government to create a viable plan for reducing carbon dioxide emissions in order to protect Oregon’s natural resources as required by the Public Trust Doctrine. “Everyone’s future is at stake, and we’re hoping that the courts will recognize the need to protect the atmosphere on behalf of all of us, to help ensure a livable future,” said Kelsey Juliana, a 16-year-old plaintiff in the lawsuit and one of the youth associated with the iMatter Movement.

Current climate science calls for a return to 350 parts per million of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere by the middle of the century. To get there, Oregon must reduce its carbon dioxide emissions by six percent each year or risk our climate reaching tipping points – like the defrosting of the tundra and resulting release of methane gas – beyond which there is no return. Each year Oregon delays making the necessary reductions, makes it harder to reach 350 in time to save our atmosphere and protect the Oregon way of life.

“Historically, the courts, have been called upon to bring about holistic changes to government programs in order to combat injustice,” says Tanya Sanerib a lawyer for the families. “The civil rights cases are a good example and we hope that Oregon’s higher courts will seize the opportunity to right injustice and get our State on track to combat the climate crisis while we still can.”

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To learn more about the Oregon Climate Case visit:

<http://crag.org/2011/05/05/oregon-youth-go-to-court-to-halt-climate-disruption/>
<http://ourchildrenstrust.org/state/oregon>

To learn more about the amazing young people pursuing the climate cases and the international effort visit: <http://ourchildrenstrust.org/trust-films>

*The Plaintiffs are represented by the **Crag Law Center** a non-profit law firm that supports community efforts to protect and sustain the Pacific Northwest's natural legacy and by the law firm of **Hutchinson, Cox, Coons, DuPriest, Orr & Sherlock, P.C.***

***Our Children's Trust** is a nonprofit focused on protecting earth's natural systems for current and future generations. We are supporting youth in the coordinated Atmospheric Trust Litigation effort. We are here to empower youth as they stand up for their lawful inheritance: a healthy planet. We are mothers, fathers, grandparents, aunts, uncles, teachers. We are adults, part of the ruling generation, and we care about the future of our children—and their children's children. 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. Using multiple platforms at the local, state, and national level, we are 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.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 or www.ourchildrenstrust.org.*

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