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**Youth Demand Government Action NOW to
Preserve Their Future and Prevent Climate Catastrophe**

***Preliminary Relief Sought in San Francisco Federal Court in Climate Change Suit Against
Federal Agencies***

Eugene, OR — In an unprecedented court filing today, seven youth plaintiffs seek immediate court intervention to compel government action on climate change in a lawsuit against six federal agencies. A motion for a preliminary injunction was filed in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California to compel federal agencies to develop a comprehensive plan to prevent further increases in U.S. carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions and to force government action in reducing CO₂ emissions consistent with what current scientific analysis deems necessary to halt catastrophic climate change.

As part of the international iMatter Campaign, youth plaintiffs filed legal actions in 49 states and the District of Columbia, as well as this federal suit, to require the federal government to develop a plan to implement CO₂ reductions that will counter the negative impacts of climate change. These legal actions are based on the Public Trust Doctrine, an ancient legal principle still in use in modern times, which requires governments to manage vital natural resources for the common benefit of everyone, including youth and future generations. “Science, not politics, defines the obligation that our government, as trustee, must fulfill on behalf of the beneficiary—the public,” said Julia Olson, Executive Director of Our Children’s Trust, and co-counsel for the federal case.

The motion for preliminary injunction coincides with the launch of a monthly series of videos from 10 youth plaintiffs across the country. Today is the release of the first of the 10 short films, entitled *Trust*, highlighting young people who are suing their government to take action on climate change and sharing their personal stories of how climate change is already affecting their lives.

The first video profiles Alec Loorz, a 17-year-old from Oak View, California. As a lead plaintiff on the federal lawsuit and co-founder of the non-profit Kids vs. Global Warming and iMatter Campaign, Alec shares what the future will hold for his and future generations if the U.S. government does not take drastic measures to stop climate change from worsening.

“The United States government has failed to live up to its responsibility to protect my future and take the urgent action needed to halt climate change,” said Alec Loorz. “My generation will be hurt the most by climate change, but instead of taking action, our government is putting short-term profits for corporations above a livable planet for me and future generations.”

Alec represents numerous young people who understand and are prepared to confront this atmospheric emergency. As the preliminary injunction motion argues, the necessary balance of our Nation's atmosphere is close to a "tipping point" and increasingly getting worse. The plaintiffs have submitted numerous declarations from eminent scientists and energy experts establishing that this acceleration has been caused primarily by human activity and, if continued, will result in a changed world that threatens our Nation's existence. To protect Earth's natural systems, the best available science shows that average global surface heating must not exceed 1° C and concentrations of atmospheric CO₂ must decline to less than 350 ppm this century. We are currently at around 390 ppm. To accomplish this reduction, Dr. James Hansen and other renowned scientists conclude that carbon dioxide emissions need to peak in 2012 and decline by 6% per year starting in 2013. The lawsuit seeks a climate recovery plan that would require a reduction of U.S. CO₂ emissions consistent with these levels. Dr. Hansen's recent paper is available at: www.ourchildrenstrust.org/sites/default/files/20110505_CaseForYoungPeople.pdf.

As one of the largest historical emitters on the planet, the United States has a responsibility to take the lead in reducing CO₂ emissions. Reductions in the U.S. can make a significant difference in overall global CO₂ levels. The world is waiting for us to show leadership, and we must rise to the occasion.

"Historically there have been statute-based lawsuits, where you find a particular problem and you go after that problem. But labeling the polar bear an endangered species is not going to solve the human-made climate crisis," said Phil Gregory, Principal Attorney with Cotchett, Pitre & McCarthy, and co-counsel for the federal lawsuit. "We have to approach it at the macro level. We have to say to the courts, you need to declare there's a problem here, and order our government to do what is necessary to protect the trust."

"Right now there's absolutely no certainty that my children and my children's children will inherit a livable planet. The United States government must take action and set an example for other countries to follow. We need to act NOW because our future matters," said Zoe Johnson, a 16-year-old from San Francisco, and plaintiff on the federal lawsuit.

***Our Children's Trust** is a nonprofit focused on protecting earth's natural systems for current and future generations. We are here to empower and support 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. 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.imattermarch.org/

***WITNESS** is the global pioneer in the use of video to expose human rights abuses. We empower people to transform personal stories of abuse into powerful tools for justice, promoting public engagement and policy change. Founded in 1992, WITNESS has partnered with more than 300 human rights groups in over 80 countries, trained over 3,000 human rights defenders, developed widely-used training materials and tools, and supported the inclusion of video in more than 100 campaigns, increasing their visibility and impact.* www.witness.org

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