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Contact: Joel Finkelstein, 202-789-7762 | joel@fenton.com
Lindsay Moore, 202-789-7753 | lmoore@fenton.com

Youth Sue The Government To Preserve The Future And Halt Climate Change

Lawsuits and administrative actions filed against the federal government and all 50 States to ensure reduction of carbon emissions and prevent climate catastrophe

“These unprecedented cases are being prosecuted by some of the most prominent trial attorneys in the country.” – Pete McCloskey, former U.S. Republican Congressman and Purple Heart Winner

San Francisco, CA — Youth filed legal and administrative actions today against all 50 states and the federal government to force action on climate change. “This is something new – no climate litigation in the past has ever gone back to the first principal that the government must protect the public trust,” said former Republican congressman Pete McCloskey. “The large body of litigation brought under environmental statutes is too narrow for the crisis at hand. Science, not politics, defines the fiduciary obligation that trustees must fulfill – it’s the most common sense, fundamental legal footing for the protection of our planet.”

The team of top legal experts, including McCloskey’s firm Cotchett, Pitre & McCarthy, has been assembled by Our Children’s Trust to represent the youth, who alongside their parents, are taking legal action out of fear of hitting a tipping point wherein global climate change cannot be stopped.

“Young people will be affected most by climate change and by our government’s inaction. We can’t vote, and we don’t have money to compete with lobbyists,” said Alec Looz, the 16-year-old founder of iMatter, who has been tirelessly working on the issue of climate change and global sustainability for the past three years. “We do, however, have the moral authority and the legal right to insist that our future be protected.”

The legal actions rely on the long established legal principle of the Public Trust Doctrine that requires the government to protect and maintain certain shared resources fundamental for human health and survival.

“The public trust law in our country and around the world says that common resources like water and air are held in trust by the government for the people and for future generations,” said Julia Olson, Our Children’s Trust executive director. “Lawyers around the nation are providing legal assistance to young people to help them protect their future, since the government has abdicated that responsibility.”

The goal of the legal and administrative actions is to force reductions in carbon dioxide emissions and implementation of reforestation programs that will counter the negative impacts of climate change. The youth plaintiffs in the cases are receiving legal support from Our Children's Trust, an organization dedicated to protecting the Earth for current and future generations.

"I am a father and a grandfather and am working with lawyers around the country and the world to hold our government to its job — protecting those resources that are essential for our youth and future generations," said Tom Beers, an attorney from Montana. "Our children deserve a livable world, like the one we have enjoyed. Alec Looz inspires me to act on behalf of my own children and children everywhere."

The announcement of the lawsuits and administrative actions come just days before young people take to the streets in over a hundred planned marches around the globe, including over 70 cities across the United States, to demand the government act to halt climate change.

Fed-up with inaction to curb climate change, youth leaders led by Alec have announced plans for the iMatter March, the largest-ever mobilization of youth against climate change. Youth leaders across the globe are preparing to march in the streets May 7 - 14. Many of the same youth have joined as plaintiffs and petitioners in the legal and administrative actions that were filed today.

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. <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.imattermarch.org/

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