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NORTH CAROLINA YOUTH FILE CLIMATE PETITION TO PROTECT THEIR FUTURES

Raleigh, North Carolina - Today, three teenagers filed a climate change petition for rulemaking with the North Carolina Environmental Management Commission. The [petition](#) calls on the Commission to reduce North Carolina's CO₂ emissions to zero by 2050, in accordance with the best available science.

Youth petitioners argue that the Commission has statutory, public trust and constitutional obligations to protect North Carolina's essential natural resources, including the atmosphere, for present and future generations. As detailed in the petition, the proposed rule could create jobs, reduce energy costs and avoid billions in climate damages.

With the support of Our Children's Trust, Alliance for Climate Education (ACE), and represented by Duke's Environmental Law & Policy Clinic, the petitioners are the latest group of young people from across the country to file legal action seeking science-based action by governments to secure a safe climate and healthy future.

Arya Pontula, 17-year-old petitioner and ACE fellow from Raleigh, said:

“With a family history of lung disease and a love for hiking, I have personally experienced both the negative health impacts of pollution and the steady destruction of our most important natural resources, our national and state parks, due to climate change and higher CO₂ emissions.

I hope this petition pushes our state to take concrete steps to reduce CO₂ emissions, thus ensuring cleaner air for all generations. The bottom line is that, when it comes to our health, we have no other choice but to set our differences aside and work towards a common goal for cleaner, breathable air and preservation of our natural resources.”

Hallie Turner, 15-year-old petitioner from Raleigh, said:

“I took this action because I believe clean air and water are fundamental human rights that should be accessible for everyone, including future generations. One way our state can help protect these fundamental rights is by taking immediate steps to reduce the amount of CO₂ we are emitting into the atmosphere. The decisions our leaders make today will have a lasting impact on generations to come, which is why it is important that they take action on behalf of people like us, who can’t vote yet. Ideally, reducing emissions in our state will set an example that other states can do the same.”

Emily Liu, 16-year-old petitioner and ACE Fellow from Chapel Hill, said:

“I am filing this petition because I want to ensure a safe, healthy, and clean environment for future generations. In the years to come, I want everyone to live in a world where the beaches aren’t under meters of seawater and people can breathe good quality air. The future of my state depends on my leaders and what they’re willing to do to protect our future.”

Ryke Longest, Duke Environmental Law and Policy Clinic Director, said:

“North Carolina’s laws declare that the Environmental Management Commission must protect water and air resources for the benefit of all, not shield polluters through delaying tactics. It is long past time for the Commission to act on the best available science and commit to reducing carbon dioxide emissions to zero in time for the climate to stabilize.”

The North Carolina petition is one of many related legal actions supported by Our Children’s Trust and brought by youth in several states and countries, including [*Juliana v. United States*](#), seeking science-based action by governments to secure a safe climate and healthy atmosphere for present and future generations. #youthgov

Counsel for Petitioners include Ryke Longest and Shannon Arata of the Duke Environmental Law and Policy Clinic and student attorneys working under Clinic supervision.

***Our Children's Trust** is a nonprofit organization, elevating the voice of youth, those with most to lose, to secure the legal right to a healthy atmosphere and stable climate on behalf of present and future generations. We lead a coordinated global human rights and environmental justice campaign to implement enforceable science-based Climate Recovery Plans that will return atmospheric carbon dioxide concentration to below 350 ppm by the year 2100.*

www.ourchildrenstrust.org/

***Alliance for Climate Education (ACE)**, and national leader in youth climate science education and advocacy, has a mission to educate young people about the science of climate change and empower them to take action. Since 2009, their innovative climate education and youth advocacy training programs have engaged more than 2.25 million youth across the United States and generated more than 750,000 climate actions led by young people. Learn more at acespace.org.*

***The Duke Environmental Law and Policy Clinic** is a joint enterprise of Duke University's Law School and Nicholas School of the Environment. The Clinic trains the next generation of environmental leaders while providing support to nonprofit organizations and clients involved in environmental conflicts. Its activities are conducted as part of the schools' academic mission and do not represent an official endorsement or policy of Duke University.*

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