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## **Youth Plaintiffs File Urgent Motion for an Injunction to Stop the U.S. Government From Causing Irreparable Climate Harm During Appeal Process**

San Francisco, California - Late last night, youth plaintiffs in *Juliana v. United States* sought a court order preventing the federal government from issuing leases and mining permits for extracting coal on federal public lands, leases for offshore oil and gas exploration and extraction activities, and federal approvals for new fossil fuel infrastructure. To obtain the order, the youth plaintiffs filed a [motion](#) with the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals for a preliminary injunction while the government's early appeal of the youths' case is being heard. The constitutional climate lawsuit was brought by 21 young Americans against the United States government for knowingly causing climate change.

In their urgent motion, the youth ask the court to issue the injunction before the March 20 lease sale for new oil and gas drilling in the Gulf of Mexico. The Department of Interior seeks to sell approximately 78.5 million acres of offshore federal public lands for new fossil fuel development. The motion also points to 60 new oil and gas pipelines, 32 new liquefied natural gas and coal terminals, and one new deepwater port oil export facility awaiting federal approvals. The youth say those federal approvals would lock in even more CO2 pollution and more dangerous climate change.

The youths' motion is supported by numerous declarations prepared by international expert witnesses working pro bono on the case. In one declaration filed with the Court, economist and Nobel Laureate Joseph Stiglitz, explains that it is fiscally irresponsible not to grant this injunction:

“An injunction on future leases and mining permits for extracting coal on federal public lands and on future leases for offshore oil and gas exploration and extraction activities, alongside enjoining new fossil fuel infrastructure requiring federal approval will prevent, not cause, economic harm.”

In another declaration filed with the Court, one of our nation's leading retired military officers and expert on energy, climate, and security, Vice Admiral Lee Gunn, USN (Ret.) says:

“Our government must protect the security and futures of our young people. Stewardship of our planet is a profound responsibility. The American people have every right to expect and demand more leadership from our public servants and elected officials in the face of the most serious threat to our national security—climate change.”

All of the expert declarations can be found [here](#).

**Julia Olson**, executive director and chief legal counsel of **Our Children’s Trust** and co-counsel for youth plaintiffs, commented:

“Our experts have told the court that the government’s development of more fossil fuels is extremely reckless and is harming these plaintiffs. It is up to the courts to preserve plaintiffs’ rights, and minimize further irreparable harm to these young people, during the pendency of this interlocutory appeal.”

**Philip Gregory**, of Gregory Law Group and co-counsel for the youth plaintiffs, said:

“Our expert witnesses clearly show that, based on science *and* economics, our Nation will greatly benefit in delaying further fossil fuel extraction and infrastructure during the pendency of this appeal. If these projects are allowed to go forward, the environmental damage could be irreparable, especially to the youth plaintiffs in this case and the children of America. Given the uncontroverted evidence in this case, selling off more public fossil fuel resources and permitting more investment in fossil fuel infrastructure would be a mistake. There is real urgency to stop the climate crisis. Our case gives our courts the chance to protect these young people’s constitutional rights.”

**Journey Zephier**, 19-year-old plaintiff from Hawaii, said in a declaration filed with the Court:

“I used to be able to swim at Kapa‘a Beach near my old house, but there is no beach left due to sea level rise. It’s just a small strip of sand; the rest of the beach has eroded away. It is so upsetting to see such an important place in my life just be washed into the sea. Watching the beaches erode away and disappear brings me deep emotional pain.”

**Aji Piper**, 18-year-old plaintiff from Washington, said in a declaration filed with the Court:

“If we had started the trial on October 29, the trial would be done by now. Instead, our case is in limbo and no court has told us why our trial has been stayed or why it is OK that the federal government keeps emitting huge amounts of greenhouse gas emissions even though everyone agrees that its actions are harming us. I watch this happen and it seems that my government, including the courts, are not following the rules.”

**Levi Draheim**, 11-year-old plaintiff from Florida, said in a declaration filed with the Court:

“I desperately need my federal government to stop making the climate crisis worse so that I have a chance to stay on our barrier island and protect what I love. I know that there is a small amount of time left to act to protect our barrier island and my home.”

**Nick Venner**, 17-year-old plaintiff from Colorado, details climate change caused health problems he faces in a declaration filed with the Court:

“The increasing wildfires where I live harms my health and well-being...I have asthma. The wildfire smoke makes it impossible for me to exercise and sometimes I can’t even go outside at all on particularly poor air quality days. Whenever I exercise when there is poor air quality I have coughing fits and I have difficulty breathing due to my asthma. My asthma is worse when I am outside. I have to use my inhaler when I exercise, but that is usually not enough to stop my asthma from recurring...With particularly bad asthma attacks, I develop bronchitis-like coughs, which regularly cause me to miss multiple weeks of school at a time, each school year.”

All of the plaintiff declarations can be found [here](#).

*Juliana v. United States* is *not* about the government’s failure to act on climate. Instead, these young plaintiffs between the ages of 11 and 22, assert that the U.S. government, through its *affirmative actions* in creating a national energy system that causes climate change, is depriving them of their constitutional rights to life, liberty, and property, and has failed to protect essential public trust resources. The case is one of many related legal actions brought by youth in several states and countries, all supported by Our Children’s Trust, and all seeking science-based action by governments to stabilize the climate system.

*Counsel for Plaintiffs are Julia Olson, Esq. of Eugene, OR, Philip L. Gregory, Esq. of Gregory Law Group of Redwood City, CA, and Andrea Rodgers, Esq. of Seattle, WA.*

**Our Children’s Trust** is a nonprofit organization, leading a coordinated global human rights and environmental justice campaign to implement enforceable science-based Climate Recovery Plans that will return atmospheric carbon dioxide concentrations to below 350 ppm by the year 2100. We elevate the voice of youth, those with most to lose in the climate crisis, to secure the legal right to a healthy atmosphere and stable climate on behalf of all present and future generations. [www.ourchildrenstrust.org/](http://www.ourchildrenstrust.org/)

**Earth Guardians** is a Colorado-based nonprofit organization with youth chapters on five continents, and multiple groups in the United States with thousands of members working together to protect the Earth, the water, the air, and the atmosphere, creating healthy sustainable communities globally. We inspire and empower young leaders, families, schools, organizations, cities, and government officials to make positive change locally, nationally, and globally to address the critical state of the Earth. [www.earthguardians.org](http://www.earthguardians.org)

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