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Groundbreaking Report Shows the United States Can Lead the Way Toward Climate Recovery Without Economic Hardship

*The Report Details the Technically and Economically Feasible Pathways for a
U.S. Transition Off of Fossil Fuels*

San Francisco, California -- Today, a team of energy experts at Evolved Energy Research and the Deep Decarbonization Pathways Project released a groundbreaking report on a rapid transition off of fossil fuels. It is the first analysis completed in the United States to provide a detailed roadmap for placing all sectors of the U.S. energy system on an emissions path consistent with returning global atmospheric CO₂ to 350 ppm by 2100, which means global heating of 1 degree Celsius, not 2.

The [report](#) is co-authored by Ben Haley, Ryan Jones, and Jim Williams. Williams is one of the nearly two-dozen pro bono experts supporting the 21 young Americans who brought the landmark constitutional climate lawsuit *Juliana v. United States*. The youth plaintiffs 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 plaintiffs are asking the Court to order the federal government to develop and implement a national plan that will place the United States on an emissions cutting pathway consistent with a 1 degree Celsius and a 350 ppm CO₂ target. The report illustrates that the remedy sought by the *Juliana* plaintiffs is undeniably feasible and that the scale and speed of emissions reductions being sought is entirely possible. The report also provides critical analysis to inform Green New Deal strategies.

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

“I represent children. The only climate targets I can conscientiously advocate for are targets that give them a shot at safeguarding a livable planet, temperature and CO₂ targets that just might protect Levi's island in Florida and Jacob's farm in Oregon. Allowing governments to heat our

planet above where we are now, at 1 degree Celsius, is a complete abdication of responsibility. This new 350 ppm report shows that it is technically feasible at the lower end of what energy has cost us over the past 20 years to stop using deadly fossil fuels and still fully power the U.S. economy. The adults in charge have no more excuses. The time for the great energy transition is now.”

Jim Williams, Associate Professor of Energy Systems Management, University of San Francisco and Director of the Deep Decarbonization Pathways Project for the Sustainable Development Solutions Network, commented:

“We can limit the risks of climate change and build a clean energy system that meets all our needs. We know what needs to be done. The U.S. can still lead the way. It will not disrupt our economy or way of life. It is a big task but not a foolhardy one. What is foolhardy is to stand by while the world burns.”

Key findings of the report include:

- It is entirely possible to transition the U.S. off of fossil fuels at a pace consistent with returning global atmospheric CO₂ to 350 ppm by 2100.
- Placing the U.S. energy system on a pathway to 350 ppm is affordable and would increase the total cost of the energy system in the U.S. by 2-3% of GDP. This level of cost increase is modest in comparison to recent (2005-2012) spikes in energy prices ([see graph](#)). Eliminating fossil fuel dependence will also eliminate the potential for economic disruption caused by volatile oil prices.
- Rapidly falling prices for renewable energy technologies and conservative assumptions used in this research mean the transition off of fossil fuels may well cost *less* than the estimates found in this report.
- Any further delay in beginning the transition will result in dramatically increasing costs. The U.S. must act now.
- There are multiple technical strategies for achieving this scale and pace of reductions. Even if one of the strategies is not pursued, for example expanding nuclear power or increasing biomass use, the necessary emissions reductions can still be achieved.
- Final research results provide detailed timelines for uptake of electric vehicle technology, electrification of buildings, build out of solar, wind, and other low carbon generation, and much more.
- Achieving this level of decarbonization creates an increase in demand for electricity. Deep decarbonization relies on investments in energy efficient technologies, electrification of everything that is practical to electrify, generating electricity from renewable sources, and some measure of carbon capture for utilization and/or storage. Electrifying and integrating energy systems across all sectors is essential and requires systemic planning at the national level.
- These research results will be submitted for peer review in 2019.

Nick Venner, 17-year-old *Juliana v. United States* plaintiff and resident of Denver, Colorado, said:

“This study shows that the remedy we’re asking for in *Juliana* can be done. It’s technically and economically possible to limit global warming to 1 degree Celsius by 2100. Thanks to James Hansen and other climate scientists, we’ve known what needs to happen for climate recovery, and for the first time ever, this study shows us in detail how we can do it.”

Juliana was supposed to begin trial on October 29, 2018 in Eugene, Oregon, is now pending before the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. The Court, in a 2-1 decision, granted the Trump administration’s petition for permission to bring an early (interlocutory) appeal in the case. Chief Judge Sidney Thomas and Circuit Judge Marsha Berzon decided in favor of the petition, while Circuit Judge Michelle Friedland dissented. In January, the three-judge panel granted plaintiffs’ request to expedite the briefing schedule in *Juliana*, which put the appeal on a fast-track. The Court will hear oral arguments on the interlocutory appeal on June 4, in Portland, Oregon. Learn more about the hearing [here](#).

Learn more about the report [here](#).

Juliana v. United States 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/

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

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