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North Carolina Youth File Petition Demanding State Address Carbon Dioxide Emissions

Raleigh, NC - Today, in Raleigh, three North Carolina youth have filed a petition for rulemaking with the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality urging the state to take action on climate change. Arya Pontula, a UNC-Chapel Hill student; Hallie Turner, a student at Enloe High School in Raleigh; and Emily Liu, a Stanford University student propose a new state rule that would require the state to inventory, budget, and regulate carbon dioxide emissions. The petitioners argue that the proposed rule is required in order for the state to fulfill its constitutional and statutory obligations to protect North Carolina’s essential natural resources and the future of the youth petitioners. This is the third petition for rulemaking that North Carolina youth have filed and reflects changes made based on feedback from the Environmental Management Commission on the previous petitions.

According to the petition: “The window of opportunity for preventing long-term climate disasters is quickly closing. Now or never, North Carolina has the opportunity to claim its ascendancy in turning the tide against an impending global crisis. . . . North Carolina has both a moral and legal obligation to act and the economic resources to do so, all while claiming a bright and prosperous future for North Carolinians. The time to act is now.”

Hallie Turner, 17, stated: "I care about regulating carbon emissions in North Carolina because I believe my generation and generations to come deserve a healthy, habitable planet to grow up on. By adopting a rule to limit carbon emissions and transitioning to renewable energy, North Carolina can play a key role in mitigating the climate crisis and protecting our natural resources for future generations."

Emily Liu, 18, said: “I’m passionate about this project because as the youth, we’re responsible for our planet and the generations to come. It’s our responsibility to ensure that living on the earth is sustainable. We need to take matters into our own hands and have our voices heard.”

Arya Pontula, 19, said: “I am a part of this case because climate change is having real, tangible impacts on the health of North Carolinians every day. The longer we wait to take action, the further we endanger the health of our loved ones, as well as the unique ecosystems and landscapes of our state. Working to regulate carbon dioxide emissions through this case is a vital first step in securing the future for our state and its citizens.”

The youth petitioners are supported by the nonprofit law firm, Our Children’s Trust, and represented by the Duke Environmental Law and Policy Clinic. All three youth petitioners are long-time climate advocates.

**Our Children’s Trust** is a non-profit public interest law firm that provides strategic, campaign-based legal services to youth from diverse backgrounds to secure their legal rights to a safe climate. We work to protect the Earth’s climate system for present and future generations by representing young people in global legal efforts to secure their binding and enforceable legal rights to a healthy atmosphere and stable climate, based on the best available science. We support our youth clients and amplify their voices before the third branch of government in a highly strategic legal campaign that includes targeted media, education, and public engagement work to support the youths’ legal actions. Our legal work – guided by constitutional, public trust, human rights laws and the laws of nature – aims to ensure systemic and science-based climate recovery planning and remedies at federal, state, and global levels. [www.ourchildrenstrust.org/](http://www.ourchildrenstrust.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. [www.law.duke.edu/envlawpolicy/](http://www.law.duke.edu/envlawpolicy/)

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