

For immediate release Wednesday, May 13,
2021



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Judge Orders Settlement Conference in Landmark Youth Climate Case, *Juliana v. United States*; Schedules Oral Arguments for June

EUGENE, Ore. -- Today, U.S. District Court Judge Ann Aiken ordered attorneys for the 21 youth plaintiffs in the landmark youth climate suit [*Juliana v. United States*](#) and attorneys with the Department of Justice to convene for a settlement conference with Magistrate Judge Thomas M. Coffin, who is recalled from retirement and assigned to the matter due to his familiarity with the case.

The court also scheduled oral arguments on the youth plaintiffs' motion to file an amended complaint in response to the January 2020 9th Circuit ruling. The hearing on that motion will be held telephonically on Friday, June 25, 2021 at 10 a.m. PDT. The public will be able to listen in.

Noting that complex issues like the climate crisis will take all three branches of government to resolve, Judge Aiken told the parties that they should take advantage of the opportunity to work with the highly experienced settlement judge. The court emphasized that this was not a "ministerial step," but an expectation that the parties bring decision-makers and their best efforts forward to see if there can be a court-supported resolution of the case.

Plaintiffs' counsel said they welcome the opportunity to work with defendants and Judge Coffin in settlement negotiations.

"We are very encouraged by Judge Aiken's order today and we look forward to meeting with the Biden administration in settlement negotiations to discuss a durable and science-based pathway to address the climate crisis and protect these young people's lives. This provides the Biden Administration with an unprecedented opportunity to back up their commitment to protect the climate system for young people and future generations to come. And if they won't, we will push for trial," said Julia Olson, chief legal counsel of Our Children's Trust, which represents the youth plaintiffs.

"As someone who has been a plaintiff in this lawsuit since I was 14 years old -- now 20 -- the urgency to stop global warming and its damaging effects on the planet, my home, my future and the futures of future generations is more important than ever," said Miko, a youth plaintiff. "We have gone through two administrations; they have refused to acknowledge what is at stake. Now with a new administration in office, I am hoping for some change. I am asking them to please hold up their promises to stick up for youth and our planet."

After the 9th Circuit ruled that courts lack the power to order the executive branch to prepare a climate recovery plan, attorneys for the *Juliana* youth plaintiffs filed a motion in March to amend their complaint against the federal government and adjust the remedy they seek. The plaintiffs' amended complaint seeks a declaratory judgment that the nation's fossil fuel-based energy system is unconstitutional -- much like the relief the civil rights plaintiffs in [Brown v. Board of Education](#) sought that the public school system of segregation was unconstitutional.

"Settlement talks in *Juliana* present a tremendous opportunity. As Judge Aiken stated clearly during the status conference, this is the moment in time both to galvanize the government and to negotiate a binding, science-based approach to combat the climate crisis," said Philip Gregory, co-lead counsel for the youth plaintiffs. "We believe working together to resolve this complex litigation aligns with the new administration's directives on the climate crisis."

The *Juliana* constitutional rights lawsuit, filed in 2015, argues that actions taken by the federal government directly contributed to the climate crisis -- including creating a national fossil fuel-based energy system that is a substantial factor in causing the plaintiffs' injuries. By doing so, the plaintiffs argue, the government has knowingly violated their constitutional rights to life, liberty and property, the public trust, and equal protection of the law.

The youth plaintiffs are now between the ages of 13 and 25.

Attorneys for both parties will now schedule a settlement conference with Magistrate Judge Thomas M. Coffin before June 25. Oral arguments on the motion to amend the youth plaintiffs' complaint will be held by telephone on June 25 at 10 a.m. PDT.

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Our Children's Trust is the world's only nonprofit 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. Our Children's Trust represents the youth plaintiffs behind the landmark federal constitutional climate lawsuit, [Juliana v. United States](#), which was brought by 21 young Americans and the youth-led climate organization, Earth Guardians, and represents and/or supports youth in state cases like [Held v. State of Montana](#), [Sagoonick v. State of Alaska](#), [Aji P. v. State of Washington](#) and [Reynolds v. State of Florida](#), as well as global cases like [La Rose v. Her Majesty the Queen](#) (Canada) and [Jóvenes v. Gobierno de México](#).