



**Western  
Environmental  
Law Center**

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### **Montana Climate Youth Announce New Dates for Historic Trial**

HELENA, Mont.—Today, the 16 youth plaintiffs and their attorneys in the constitutional climate case *Held v. State of Montana* announced [newly scheduled](#) dates for their trial in 2023. This first children's climate trial in U.S. history will begin on **Monday, June 12, 2023**, at the First Judicial District Court in Helena, Montana, and will conclude Friday, June 23, 2023.

“Trial preparations have been ongoing for months and we are very excited to have new trial dates confirmed for next June,” said Nate Bellinger, Senior Staff Attorney at Our Children's Trust and co-counsel for the youth plaintiffs. “This trial will be an historic opportunity for these 16 young Montanans, and their experts, to testify in open court about how the state of Montana's historic and ongoing promotion of fossil fuels is causing plaintiffs grave injuries, and the urgent need for judicial intervention. As climate destructions mount with each passing month, it has never been more important for youth-led constitutional climate cases, such as this one, to have their day in court.”

He concluded, “Next June, the eyes of the world will be on Montana.”

The youth plaintiffs in *Held v. State of Montana* assert that by supporting and promoting a fossil fuel-driven energy system that contributes to the climate crisis, Montana is violating the constitutional rights of the youth plaintiffs. Those rights include a clean and healthful environment; the ability to seek safety, health, and happiness; and individual dignity and equal protection of the law. The suit, filed in March 2020, alleges that Montana's fossil fuel energy system degrades and depletes constitutionally-protected public trust resources, including the atmosphere, rivers, lakes, fish, and wildlife.

“I am eager to have our day in court so all of the plaintiffs’ voices can be heard,” said Mica, one of the youth plaintiffs. “Young people will be the ones to suffer the most if Montana continues the promotion of fossil fuels and I hope our trial will help turn our future for the better.”

Counsel for the Montana youth plaintiffs include Nate Bellinger of Our Children’s Trust, Roger Sullivan and Dustin Leftridge of McGarvey Law, and Melissa Hornbein and Barbara Chillcott of the Western Environmental Law Center.

In addition to *Held v. State of Montana*, Our Children’s Trust represents young people in the landmark federal constitutional climate lawsuit, *Juliana v. United States*, as well as represents and/or supports youth in global and U.S. state climate litigation such as *Layla H. v. Commonwealth of Virginia*, *Natalie R. v. State of Utah*, and *Navahine F. v. Hawai’i Department of Transportation*.

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*Our Children’s Trust is the world’s only nonprofit public interest law firm that exclusively 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 safe climate, based on the best available science. [www.ourchildrenstrust.org](http://www.ourchildrenstrust.org)*

*The Western Environmental Law Center uses the power of the law to safeguard the wildlife, wildlands, and communities of the western U.S. in the face of a changing climate. As a public interest law firm, WELC does not charge clients and partners for services, but relies instead on charitable gifts from individuals, families, and foundations to accomplish our mission. [www.westernlaw.org](http://www.westernlaw.org)*