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People vs. Fossil Fuels, 255+ orgs, and 50,000+ Individuals Deliver Petition to U.S. Department of Justice: End Opposition to Youth Climate Case!

WASHINGTON, DC—Today, the People vs. Fossil Fuels coalition digitally delivered an online [petition](#) to the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) and Attorney General Merrick Garland, demanding that Attorney General Garland end the DOJ's opposition to the children's climate lawsuit, [Juliana v. United States](#), proceeding to trial. John Beard, Founder and CEO of the Port Arthur Community Action Network and member of the People vs. Fossil Fuels Steering Committee, and youth leader Zanagee Artis, Founder and Executive Director of Zero Hour, co-delivered this petition on behalf of the coalition, more than 255 organizational sponsors, and more than 50,000 individuals across the United States and around the world who signed the petition.

The petition was delivered shortly after Federal Judge Ann Aiken, of the U.S. District Court in Oregon, on June 1, 2023, [granted](#) the young plaintiffs' motion to amend their complaint, putting their case back on track to trial. After eight years, evidence that indisputably proves the federal government's knowing perpetuation of the climate crisis will come to light, in open court, and Judge Aiken will rule whether the U.S. energy system violates the youth's constitutional rights.

[People vs. Fossil Fuels](#), a coalition of over 1,200 climate justice, Indigenous, Black, Latino, social justice, economic justice, progressive, youth, faith, and other organizations, spearheaded this petition effort in support of the *Juliana* youth plaintiffs and their landmark constitutional climate case. This petition is led by climate, public health, children's, legal, labor, minority, business, faith, human rights, and environmental justice organizations - including Amnesty International USA, Center for Biological Diversity, Food & Water Watch, Friends of the Earth, GreenFaith, Greenpeace USA, Hip Hop Caucus, Physicians for Social Responsibility, Sunrise Movement, and 350.org. The petition was launched last June with over 160 tweets in just a few hours from individual supporters and key organizations, including the Indigenous Environmental Network and Center for International Environmental Law, that rallied via a tweetstorm standing in solidarity with the youth plaintiffs and urging individuals to sign the petition.

The petition notes that "For seven years, these 21 young people, from across the United States and including 11 Black, Brown, and Indigenous youth, have waited for their day in court, delayed again and again by tactics employed by the Department of Justice to impede or dismiss their case. And for almost seven years, young people like these 21 young Americans have suffered from increasingly severe climate harms."

“Judge Aiken’s ruling has affirmed what we’ve long known: that these children are bringing constitutional claims that deserve to be heard and the evidence of how their own government has knowingly caused and worsened the climate crisis, harming these young people and violating their rights, should be considered by a judge in open court,” stated **Julia Olson, Executive Director and Chief Legal Counsel of Our Children’s Trust**. “However, for several long years, these 21 youth plaintiffs have experienced delay tactics from the Department of Justice under three different presidential administrations. This is a moment for the DOJ under President Biden to change course and end its opposition to this case proceeding to trial. These children deserve their day in court.”

Olson concluded, “Today, we are grateful for the support of people around the world who have signed this petition to urge Attorney General Garland to end the DOJ’s opposition to this case proceeding to trial. As these thousands of people across the United States and around the globe have demanded, their voices loud and clear: Let the Youth Be Heard!”

“Today, I am proud to deliver a petition to the U.S. Department of Justice in support of the 21 young plaintiffs in *Juliana v. U.S.* On June 1st, Judge Aiken issued a long-awaited ruling that finally puts their case back on track to trial! Frontline Gulf Coastal communities of color in my own part of the country, and young people across the nation, especially youth living within environmental justice communities, continue to suffer the impacts from the climate crisis, including pollution, and social and environmental injustice. Today, we send a message to the Biden DOJ - These young Americans have the right to be heard by their nation’s courts. Justice deferred, regardless of age, is justice DENIED. End the DOJ’s campaign to deny these youth access to justice,” stated **John Beard, Founder and CEO of Port Arthur Community Action Network, on behalf of the People vs. Fossil Fuels coalition**.

[Here](#) is a brief video statement from John:



“While our government continues to take actions that worsen and accelerate climate change, the youngest generations of Americans continue to endure record-breaking climate disasters at an increasing rate. Young people fear when the next devastating flood, wildfire, drought, heatwave, or other climate disaster will be. It’s long past time for the Department of Justice to end its opposition to the *Juliana* plaintiffs and youth climate justice. Young Americans have the right to be heard by our nation’s courts, the

branch of our government that has a duty to protect our constitutional right to a livable planet,” said **Zanagee Artis, Founder and Executive Director of Zero Hour.**

And [here](#) is Zanagee sharing why he signed and co-delivered this petition to Attorney General Garland and DOJ:



With the ruling released, the People vs. Fossil Fuels coalition, in coordination with Our Children's Trust, has launched a new [action](#) urging Attorney General Merrick Garland and the DOJ to not use an extreme legal tool - a petition for writ of mandamus - to try to further delay justice. The coalition and supporters from across the world continue to join the *Juliana 21* in solidarity by also [calling and tweeting](#) the DOJ.

Represented by attorneys at the nonprofit public interest law firm, Our Children's Trust, *Juliana v. United States* was originally filed in 2015. The *Juliana* plaintiffs argue in their complaint that their federal government has directly contributed to the climate crisis more than any other government on the planet -- including creating a fossil fuel energy system that causes and worsens climate change -- and thus is harming the youth plaintiffs, violating their constitutional rights to life, liberty, and property, as well as failing to protect essential public trust resources and the children's rights of equal protection of the law. The youth plaintiffs are now between the ages of 15 and 26.

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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. Globally, we support youth-led climate cases in front of national courts, regional human rights courts, and UN bodies. www.ourchildrenstrust.org



People vs. Fossil Fuels is a coalition of over 1,200 climate justice, Indigenous, Black, Latino, social justice, economic justice, progressive, youth, faith, and other organizations working together towards a common goal of ending the era of fossil fuels. Together, we represent millions of people across the United States and are allied with millions more around the world. www.peoplevsfossilfuels.org