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**Youth Plaintiffs Seek Emergency Court Order to Halt Trump's Fossil Fuel Executive Orders**

*Twenty-two young Americans move to block sweeping federal actions they say threaten their rights, health, and futures*

**Butte, MT—** On No Kings Day, as people across the nation and around the world protest threats to democratic freedoms, the 22 [Lighthiser v. Trump](#) youth plaintiffs are standing up in court to defend their rights, their health, and their futures. They have [filed](#) a motion for a preliminary injunction urging the U.S. District Court for the District of Montana to immediately halt three sweeping Executive Orders that aggressively increase fossil fuel development, block affordable renewable energy, and dismantle critical climate science. Supported by declarations from 11 experts and 13 fact witnesses, the motion highlights the immediate and widespread harm these orders will cause if allowed to proceed.

Filed on behalf of youth from across the country — Montana, Hawaii, Oregon, California, and Florida — the motion argues that Executive Orders 14156, 14154, and 14261 violate their constitutional rights by accelerating climate change, causing irreparable harm, and obstructing access to scientific information needed to stabilize the climate. The youth also argue the President did not have authority to issue the orders and disregarded numerous conflicting laws passed by Congress.

Since the Executive Orders were issued, agencies across the executive branch have been fast-tracking oil, gas, and coal extraction on public lands, ordering fossil fueled-power

plants to remain open, blocking renewable energy projects and EVs, and suppressing public access to critical climate science data and extreme weather warning systems.

“Without immediate intervention, the federal government’s actions will cause irrevocable harm to these young plaintiffs’ lives and to our democracy,” said Julia Olson, Chief Legal Counsel at Our Children’s Trust. “The Constitution guarantees every child the right to life, liberty, and safety. These executive orders not only violate those rights, but they weaponize executive power against the very people it is meant to protect — our nation’s youth.”

The court filing denounces the President’s so-called “National Energy Emergency” as a “fallacy,” supported by expert declarations from leading economists and energy experts, including Dr. Joseph Stiglitz and Dr. Geoffrey Heal of Columbia University and Dr. Mark Jacobson of Stanford. These experts emphasize that wind and solar are not only the most affordable and abundant energy sources but also the fastest to deploy—offering billions in savings for consumers. They also challenge the claim of an energy shortage, pointing to the large volumes of U.S. oil and gas exported abroad.

Without an injunction, plaintiffs warn that they will suffer more harm to their health and safety as fossil fuel pollution worsens and temperatures rise. Sworn declarations reveal the near life-ending experiences and hospitalizations of plaintiffs who suffer from asthma and heat illness who are at even greater risk as fossil fuels are “unleashed.” The youth plaintiffs further describe the deprivation of their rights to engage in cultural traditions and to safely establish families, along with the profound trauma and betrayal inflicted by a government constitutionally bound not to harm them. A pediatrician, Dr. Lori Byron, and a psychiatrist, Dr. Lise Van Susteren, confirm in declarations that climate-related trauma can have severe, long-term impacts on children’s cognitive development, stress and hormone regulation, and overall health.

In Montana, youth plaintiffs detail rising exposure to coal dust, diesel exhaust, and power plant emissions from expanded coal mining, extended coal plant operations, and blocked efforts to introduce electric school buses. A leading pulmonologist, Dr. John Balmes, warns that inhaling these forms of fossil fuel pollutants is harmful to children’s lungs and other organs, decreases their health, and exposes them to a lifetime of disease.

Accompanying the motion are 25 sworn declarations—from youth plaintiffs, former government officials, and top experts in climate science, medicine, public health, energy, and economics—laying bare the harms already taking hold and the catastrophic consequences to come if these executive orders remain in effect.

“More fossil fuel pollution will cause me to experience more fires and more of these smoky days that take from me the enjoyment of life and my ability to live healthfully... I have been personally impacted on almost an annual basis by climate change-induced flooding since at least 2018... I understand that each additional ton of fossil fuel pollution causes further injury to my health and my life and I hope that this Court will provide prompt relief to protect me from the Trump administration’s actions that pollute the air I breathe and endanger my life.” —*Eva Lighthiser, Youth Plaintiff, Livingston, Montana*

“This conservative calculation of the economic costs of fossil fuels demonstrates how shocking it is for the Trump administration to “unleash” more fossil fuels and block the expansion for renewable energy. Such actions make zero economic sense and only exacerbate the climate crisis and the ensuing harms to children, including these Plaintiffs.” —*Dr. Geoffrey M. Heal, Professor Emeritus, Columbia University*

“There really is no other way to ‘treat’ children for the health harms they are experiencing, other than to reduce their exposure to climate change impacts by phasing out fossil fuels.” —*Dr. Lori Byron, Pediatrician and Co-author of the Montana Climate Health Assessment*

“The United States no longer needs fossil fuels for its energy purposes and has not for some time. Given the longevity and expense of expanding fossil fuel extraction and infrastructure, the Executive Orders will lock in continuing fossil fuel use for decades to come, well past today, when it is already technologically and economically feasible for the United States to replace fossil fuels with clean, renewable sources.” —*Dr. Mark Z. Jacobson, Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering, Stanford University*

“With little time remaining to avoid locking in irreversible climate impacts, I believe judicial intervention is essential to protect these youth Plaintiffs and the environment and natural resources they depend on for their well-being and very survival.” —*Dr. Cathy Whitlock, Regents’ Professor Emerita in Earth Sciences, Montana State University*

The motion argues that halting the Executive Orders would cause no harm to the government, while preventing extraordinary harm to youth plaintiffs and the public at large. Transitioning away from fossil fuels toward renewable energy sources such as wind and solar is already more affordable and safer, offering economic and environmental advantages to all Americans. A pause would also benefit thousands of federal employees, scientists, educators, farmers, and others impacted by these policies.

If granted, the preliminary injunction would pause the illegal implementation of the orders, protect the constitutional rights of young people, and safeguard the scientific and legal tools needed to address the climate crisis, while the case moves forward to the merits.

“Our youth plaintiffs are seeking to defend their rights to their health and to their futures — things that should not feel like they are at the mercy of our country’s politics,” said Dan Snyder, Director of the Environmental Enforcement Project for Public Justice. “These executive orders are playing a dangerous game with not only our environment, but also the fate and safety of our future generations, and these brave youth plaintiffs will put an end to President Trump’s unlawful actions.”

The youth are represented by Our Children’s Trust, in partnership with Gregory Law Group, McGarvey Law, and Public Justice.

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Our Children’s Trust was founded in 2010 on the idea that courts are vital to democracy and empowered to protect our children and the planet. Without a stable climate system, every natural resource we rely upon to exercise our basic human rights—life, liberty, home, happiness—is under threat. Our work will be achieved when there is universal recognition of children’s climate rights by courts around the world and children’s fundamental rights to life on this planet are protected. [www.ourchildrenstrust.org](http://www.ourchildrenstrust.org)

Public Justice takes on the most significant systemic threats to justice of our time—abusive corporate power and predatory practices, the assault on civil rights and liberties, and the destruction of the earth’s sustainability. We link high-impact litigation with strategic communications and the strength of our partnerships to combat these abusive and discriminatory systems and achieve social and economic justice. For more information, visit [www.publicjustice.net](http://www.publicjustice.net)