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YOUTH APPEALS CLIMATE CASE

Iowa's Supreme Court Is Asked To Combat The Climate Crisis

Des Moines, IA – Glori Dei Filippone, a 14-year-old Iowan, filed her final brief today with the Iowa Supreme Court on the issue of whether the State of Iowa has an obligation to protect the atmosphere under the Iowa Constitution and the Public Trust Doctrine. Both Glori and the defendant, Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR), have requested oral argument before the Supreme Court in this critical case about whether the people of Iowa have a right to a healthy atmosphere. Glori appealed a lower court decision that affirmed the Iowa DNR denial of a petition for rulemaking to reduce statewide carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions from fossil fuels consistent with what current scientific analysis deems necessary to avoid catastrophic climate change.

“A [Judge in Texas has ruled](#) that the atmosphere is protected under the Public Trust Doctrine and the Texas Constitution,” says Julia Olson, Executive Director of Our Children’s Trust, an organization dedicated to fighting climate change. “We are hopeful that Iowa’s Supreme Court will also recognize that the atmosphere is imperiled and must be protected by State officials.”

In [TRUST Iowa](#), a documentary film about Glori, from the series [Stories of TRUST: Calling for Climate Recovery](#), Glori, a member of Kids vs. Global Warming’s iMatter Campaign, asks judges to “think about their children or their children’s children and about how this decision is going to affect them.”

“Iowa has a moral obligation to provide my generation, and future generations, with a livable state,” says Glori, “The ruling in Texas energizes me. Climate change is the most important moral issue of our time and I hope our Court will also protect our rights.”

Glori’s drive for entering the lawsuit comes from the alarming research of our nation’s top scientists. According to leading climate scientist, Dr. James Hansen, “the science is crystal clear—we must rapidly reduce fossil fuel carbon dioxide emissions if we are to have a chance of protecting Earth’s natural systems for these young people.” Dr. Hansen released [a new paper](#) last week showing that weather events, like the [current drought in Iowa](#), are linked to climate change.

Current climate science calls for a return to 350 parts per million (ppm) CO₂ in the atmosphere by the end of the century. To get there, Iowa must reduce its CO₂ emissions by six percent each year or risk our climate reaching tipping points beyond which there is no return. Each year Iowa delays making the necessary reductions, makes it harder to reach 350 ppm in time to save our atmosphere and protect the Iowa way of life.

“Historically, the courts have been called upon to protect people’s rights, including civil rights and property rights,” said Glori’s attorney, Channing Dutton. “Today, we are asking the court to protect a right so fundamental to every Iowan, and that is the right to our life-sustaining atmosphere, for today’s children and tomorrow’s.”

Note to Media: Recent press coverage of other Atmospheric Trust Litigation by Youth can be found here: <http://ourchildrenstrust.org/page/247/media-coverage-youth-atmospheric-trust-legal-actions-july-2-2012-current>

Our Children's Trust is a nonprofit focused on protecting earth’s natural systems for current and future generations. We are working with lawyers, scientists, and youth to support atmospheric trust legal efforts around the world. We are here to empower and support youth as they stand up for their lawful inheritance: a healthy planet. We are mothers, fathers, grandparents, aunts, uncles, teachers. We are adults, part of the ruling generation, and we care about the future of our children--and their children's children. www.ourchildrenstrust.org/

iMatter is a youth-led campaign of the nonprofit group, Kids vs Global Warming, that is focused on mobilizing and empowering youth to lead the way to a sustainable and just world. We are teens and moms and young activists committed to raising the voices of the youngest generation to issue a wake-up call to live, lead and govern as if our future matters. www.imattercampaign.org/

WITNESS is the global pioneer in the use of video to promote human rights. We empower people to transform personal stories of abuse into powerful tools for justice, promoting public engagement and policy change. In partnership with the iMatter TRUST Campaign we seek to bring visibility to the challenges our youth already face because of the changing climate and call for a massive assault on fossil fuel emissions. Without an all out assault effects will range from drought to disease, from food shortages to tainted water supplies, from the loss of homes due to floods, erosion and fire to massive relocations. The human rights challenge is most succinctly summarized by Mary Robinson, “Climate change will, in short, have immense human consequences.” WITNESS partnered on this campaign in hopes that predictions will not become realities. To view Stories of TRUST: Calling for Climate Recovery told by our youth plaintiffs, go to www.witness.org/campaigns/all-campaigns/imatter or www.ourchildrenstrust.org.

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