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Youth Plaintiffs in Oregon State Climate Lawsuit Amass Huge Support as Their Case Goes to the Oregon Supreme Court

Salem, Oregon -- Yesterday, more than 175 individuals and groups filed [amicus briefs](#) with the Oregon Supreme Court, voicing their support of the youth plaintiffs behind the climate lawsuit against the State of Oregon, *Chernaik v. Brown*. The filed briefs represent a wide variety of interests and include government, law professors, communities of color, public health, youth, faith, business, conservation, and education groups.

On May 23, the Oregon Supreme Court granted youth plaintiffs' request to review the January 2019 Oregon Court of Appeals decision in their climate lawsuit. For the second time in this case, the hearing will be held outside of the normal Salem courtroom setting. The Court will hold oral arguments at David Douglas High School in Portland on November 13, 2019 (previously the Court of Appeals held oral argument at the University of Oregon School of Law).

Kelsey Juliana, 23-year-old plaintiff from Eugene and also one of the 21 youth plaintiffs in the constitutional climate lawsuit, *Juliana v. United States*, said:

“Today I am humbled by the act of courage taken by these groups in recognizing the threat of climate change and choosing to act on this crisis that disproportionately affects young people and

future generations. Thank you for joining Ollie and me in holding the State of Oregon accountable to protecting its youngest citizens.”

Oregon State Senator Floyd Prozanski, amici for plaintiffs said:

“I am proud to sign on to an amicus brief supporting young people in Oregon who are asking for the State to comply with its public trust duty to protect Oregon's natural resources from climate change. These young Oregonians are fighting for a livable future for all of us, and I am grateful they are helping lead the climate movement.”

Prozanski was one of 15 elected officials to file an amicus in support of the plaintiffs. The elected officials write in their brief:

“Oregon would not be one of the nation’s leading states for environmental protection if not for the active role its judiciary has played. The judiciary must continue in its role as an independent interpreter of the law, correct the erroneous decision by the Court of Appeals, and make clear that the State of Oregon has a fiduciary obligation to protect Oregon’s public trust resources. Absent such a ruling, the natural resources that Oregon has done so much to protect over the years, which are already being impaired by climate change, will be lost to future generations.”

Multnomah County Chair, Deborah Kafoury, representing the County as amici in support of plaintiffs, said:

“When a child speaks on this issue, we should listen. They have the clear moral authority and are pushing for real solutions that will actually make an impact and help us recover the climate. I am with the kids.”

Damon Motz-Storey, Healthy Climate Program Director at **Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility**, said:

“We support the plaintiffs of this case in calling for the elected leaders of our state to do more to address the already present impacts of climate change. Our natural resources are vital to public health and there is more that needs to be done to protect our communities from present and future harm.”

Michael Blumm, Jeffrey Bain Faculty Scholar and Professor of Law at Lewis and Clark Law School and one of the 107 law professors who signed an amicus brief in support of *Chernaik*, said:

“We believe that the state's public trust doctrine does not allow the state to “sleepwalk” into a climate disaster through its reckless inaction, and that the Court of Appeals ruling that the state has no obligation to protect trust resources like waterways, ocean waters, fish and wildlife, and the atmosphere from greenhouse gas pollution was in error and should be reversed.”

The President of the **League of Women Voters of Oregon**, amici for plaintiffs, said:

“As we approach the 100th anniversary of the League of Women Voters of Oregon, we stand firm to our position of justice for the sake of Oregon’s children. We and our forebears have worked to protect our environment, now to address the urgent alarms of climate chaos. We are proud to stand as friends of the court, signers to this *Chernaik v. Brown* amicus brief.”

The case is one of many related legal actions brought by youth in several states and countries, all supported by Our Children’s Trust, and all seeking science-based action by governments to stabilize the climate system. Our Children’s Trust also supports the climate lawsuit, *Juliana v. United States*, which was brought by 21 youth plaintiffs, including *Chernaik v. Brown* plaintiff Kelsey Juliana.

Youth plaintiffs are represented by Crag Law Center and Liam Sherlock at Hutchinson, Cox, Coons, Orr & Sherlock, P.C. Kelsey and Ollie’s lawsuit was filed with the help of Our Children’s Trust.

Our Children’s Trust is a nonprofit organization, leading a coordinated global human rights and environmental justice campaign to implement enforceable science-based Climate Recovery Plans that will return atmospheric carbon dioxide concentrations to below 350 ppm by the year 2100. We elevate the voice of youth, those with most to lose in the climate crisis, to secure the legal right to a healthy atmosphere and stable climate on behalf of all present and future generations.

www.ourchildrenstrust.org/

Crag Law Center is a community-based public interest law firm that provides legal aid for the environment, protecting and sustaining the natural legacy of the Pacific Northwest. www.crag.org

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