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Students Suing Federal Government in Landmark Climate Lawsuit to Share Their Standpoint at Higher Education Sustainability Conference

Plaintiffs and lawyers from Juliana v. United States will demonstrate using constitutional rights to force climate recovery at the University of Washington, Feb. 25-27.

February 1, 2019 (Seattle, WA) – Two student activists who have recently filed a constitutional climate lawsuit against the federal government are set to take the stage at the 2019 Washington & Oregon Higher Education Sustainability Conference (WOHESC), taking place February 25-27 and hosted by the University of Washington.

The case, known as Juliana vs. the United States, was filed by 21 youths ages 11-22 in the U.S. District Court for the District of Oregon in 2015. The claim asserts that, through the government's affirmative actions that cause climate change, it has violated the youngest generation's right to life, liberty, and property and failed to protect essential public trust resources.

Plaintiffs Kiran Oommen and Aji Piper will participate in the WOHESC Closing Plenary with other key players in the case, including Our Children's Trust Senior Attorney Andrea Rodgers. They will discuss the case built around fundamental constitutional rights. "One important part of our case is to make the connection between constitutional and fundamental rights and the effects of climate change," said plaintiff Kiran Oommen. "Without a stable climate, our rights to life, liberty and property cannot be upheld, and while that seems obvious, our case is a chance to bring that knowledge into law."

Juliana vs US is also centered around the Atmospheric Trust Theory developed by University of Oregon Law Professor Mary Wood, who will also be on the panel. "People need to know the monumental urgency the case embodies, and the government's obligation to them," said Mary Wood. "Legally, the government has an obligation to all of us and that has been ignored. This case tries to invoke the third branch of government to step

up to its role of enforcing these fundamental rights of citizens, which are in both the constitution and the public trust principle.”

The WOHESC Closing Plenary “Juliana v. United States: Using Constitutional Rights to Force Climate Recovery” will take an in-depth look the issues at stake, and inspire attendees with the power of legal activism that has gained traction in the courts.

About WOHESC

The Washington & Oregon Higher Education Sustainability Conference (WOHESC), produced by Social Enterprises, Inc., is a platform for inspiring change, facilitating action, and promoting collaboration related to sustainability within the region's higher education institutions. Conversation, workshops, and networking opportunities will empower participants to advance environmental performance at Washington and Oregon State institutions of higher education. More at wohesc.org.

Event Details

2019 Washington and Oregon Higher Education Sustainability Conference (WOHESC)

Monday, February 25 – Wednesday, February 27, 2019

University of Washington | Husky Union Building

Discounted registration options are available for university faculty, staff and students, and students may be eligible for a Conference Scholarship. Tickets range from \$50-\$250, and are available at wohesc.org/register or at 206-459-0595.

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