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ANGIE SPARKS, Clerk of District Court
By  Deputy Clerk

Attorneys for Plaintiffs

MONTANA FIRST JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT
LEWIS AND CLARK COUNTY

RIKKI HELD, et al., Plaintiffs, v. STATE OF MONTANA, et al., Defendants.	Cause No. CDV-2020-307 Hon. Kathy Seeley DECLARATION OF TALEAH ROSE SONRIE HERNÁNDEZ IN SUPPORT OF PLAINTIFFS' RESPONSE BRIEF IN OPPOSITION TO DEFENDANTS' MOTION FOR SUMMARY JUDGMENT
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Pursuant to MCA §1-6-105, Taleah Rose Sonrie Hernández hereby declares as follows:

1. I am a Plaintiff in the above-entitled action. I am making this declaration in support of Plaintiffs' Response Brief in Opposition to Defendants' Motion for Summary Judgment. I have personal knowledge of the facts I state herein and if called to testify, I would and could testify competently thereto.
2. I am a nineteen-year-old U.S. citizen of Taíno ancestry and a resident of Polson, Montana. I am deeply concerned about climate change and how it will alter my future. I have already felt the adverse effects of climate change on a personal level. It has impacted my life by disrupting my enjoyment of the land around me, exposing me to dangers previous generations of Montanans were not exposed to, and by threatening people I care about and important means of livelihood. I know that the effects of climate change will only become more harmful and disruptive as I get older, unless my state changes its policies and works to reduce fossil fuel reliance and greenhouse gas emissions.
3. I grew up in Polson, Montana, and I currently attend college at Montana State University in Bozeman. I return to Polson on school breaks. As a result of climate change, I have seen changes in Polson and the surrounding areas, and I am no longer able to do some of the activities I used to enjoy the most growing up, for example, ice skating on Flathead Lake in the winter, or hiking as much in the summer.
4. During the summer, I enjoy paddleboarding with my friends and sailing with my family on Flathead Lake. However, thick smoke from the more frequent wildfires prevents me from participating in these activities safely. Growing up in Montana, I have witnessed wildfires becoming more intense and the wildfire season lasts longer. These fires produce thick smoke that is damaging to my health and well-being. It is disheartening and disruptive to my life and

my ability to connect with others when I have to spend hours inside during the summer because of dangerous smoke. Previous generations of Montanans were not required to stay inside in order to be safe during the summer months, but this has become common in the last few years.

5. In the summer of 2021, wildfires burned thousands of acres near where I live and recreate, and came within miles of my house, off Highway 35. We had to pass a checkpoint to get home each time we traveled anywhere, which is something I have never had to do before in my lifetime. Each day we were unsure whether we were going to be required to evacuate last minute and lose our home forever due to the proximity of the fire. Our power was cut off for around a day, making it hard to keep updated on the fire conditions, which was terrifying knowing the fires were so close. The experience really made it hit home that there will be more and more threats to my home from wildfires as climate change gets worse. When I was younger, I didn't worry about wildfires impacting my home, so it was shocking to realize how real the threats now are. Living in fear about whether you will need to evacuate and not knowing if a fire will destroy your home is very scary and is not something I should have to experience. It did not used to be like this when I was younger. I know that not everyone's home is threatened like mine.

6. In addition to the dangers of the wildfire to my home, wildfires in 2021 also dramatically changed my summer plans, preventing me from being able to work as much as I planned. I worked on the ranch of one of my family friends the summer of 2021 and, instead of being able to work full-time like I expected, many weeks I went three or four days without working because all of the smoke and poor air quality made it unsafe to work outside. Smoke became the new normal that summer. I remember being amazed one day when there was a storm that cleared the air, allowing me to actually see the mountains. I almost forgot how the sky looked

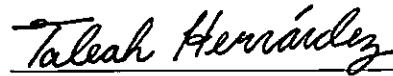
without smoke that summer. Summer in Montana did not used to be like this and shouldn't be like this.

7. With increasing winter temperatures, there has been less ice on Flathead Lake and the Pablo Reservoir, and when there is ice, it's thinner. This limits the opportunities I have for ice skating in the open air, which is one of my favorite winter activities. In the past, I enjoyed ice skating on Flathead Lake, just a few minutes from my home in Polson. But in 2019, for example, there wasn't enough ice to skate. Then, in 2021, the fluctuations between rain and snow affected where and how I could skate because they led to freezing and refreezing, which makes for dangerous ice conditions and poor quality ice.
8. One of my favorite places to spend time is Glacier National Park, just two hours north of me, where I used to go on an annual Mother's Day bike ride on the Going-to-the-Sun Road. It's sad to think that receding glaciers define my future experiences in the park. If the glaciers continue receding, and especially if they disappear, this would decrease my enjoyment of recreating in the park and make for a very different experience for me overall than it has been in the past. As a young person, it is hard to witness the loss and destruction of natural resources in Montana that served as such an important part of my childhood and interaction with my family and friends.
9. I also really enjoy going huckleberry picking in Jewel Basin, which is half an hour away, and hiking near Kalispell and North Crow Falls. But I am worried about the ways that climate change is already affecting these areas too. Near Kalispell where I was hiking there are a lot of trees that were dead, and I am pretty sure that this was because of pine beetles that had entered the area. I am also unable to participate in these activities when there is wildfire smoke because doing so would be harmful to my health.

10. At times I feel stressed and powerless when thinking about climate change and my future. I do what I can to minimize my contributions to climate change, but I know that what I do matters little compared to what the state of Montana does. It's devastating to be seeing and experiencing the impacts of climate change and also knowing that my state continues to promote fossil fuels. This upsets me. I don't want to have to fight my government for a livable future. But it's clear I must. While climate change is something I am extremely worried and concerned about, winning this lawsuit would give me hope for a better future and for a Montana that isn't destroyed by climate impacts. I am relying on the courts to hold the political branches accountable for their actions that cause climate change, and to protect my constitutional rights.

Pursuant to MCA §1-6-105, I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed this 10th day of February, 2023 in Bozeman, Montana.



Taleah Rose Sonrie Hernández