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UA scientists part of Supreme Court case on carbon dioxide emissions

Four faculty members from The University of Arizona in Tucson were part of an amicus curiae brief supporting the plaintiff in today's historic U.S. Supreme Court decision on carbon dioxide emissions and climate change.

In the case, Commonwealth of Massachusetts, et al. v. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, several states sued the EPA for failure to regulate carbon dioxide emissions from motor vehicles as required by the Clean Air Act.

Today the court decided in favor of Massachusetts, et al.

"This ruling is a victory for climate science," said UA ecologist Scott Saleska, the scientist who organized the scientists' collaboration on the brief. "EPA ignored what is perhaps the most important finding in climate science in the last decade, which is that the rise of global temperature and the anthropogenic increase in atmospheric CO2 are causally linked.

"The opening paragraph of the Court majority opinion cited that specific scientific finding."

UA scientists were leaders in the climate scientists' amicus curiae brief in support of the plaintiff. Scott Saleska, a UA assistant professor of ecology and evolutionary biology, organized the group of climate scientists to file the brief. Kirsten Engel, a UA professor of law, was one of only four lawyers on the amicus brief.

The other UA professors on the amicus curiae brief are Jonathan T. Overpeck, director of UA's Institute for the Study of Planet Earth and a professor of geosciences, and Joellen L. Russell, a UA assistant professor of geosciences. The University of Arizona has more professors involved in the brief than any other university.

The other scientists on the brief are: David Battisti of the University of Washington in Seattle; William E. Easterling of Pennsylvania State University in State College; Christopher Field of the Carnegie Institution of Washington and Stanford University; Inez Fung of the University of California, Berkeley; James E. Hansen of the NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies in New York City; John Harte of UC-Berkeley; Eugenia Kalnay of the University of Maryland in College Park; Daniel Kirk-Davidoff of the University of Maryland in College Park; Pamela Matson of Stanford University; James C. McWilliams of the University of California, Los Angeles; Mario J. Molina of the University of California, San Diego; F. Sherwood Rowland of the University of California, Irvine; Edward Sarachik of the University of Washington in Seattle; John M. Wallace of the University of Washington in Seattle; and Steven C. Wofsy of Harvard University.

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