



MONDAY
Politics

TUESDAY
Build the Change

WEDNESDAY
Sport

THURSDAY
Science

FRIDAY
Culture

THE DAY
Build a better world



NEWS DETECTIVES

TODAY'S BIG STORY

Teenagers take lawmakers to court over climate

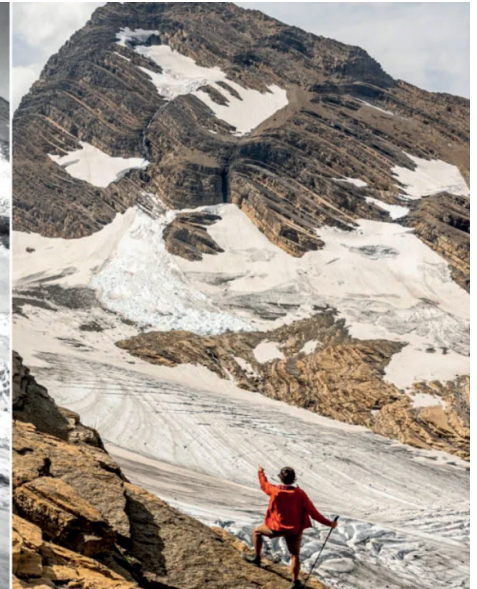
Should climate change be a crime? In Montana, USA, young people are taking their state to court, arguing that its climate policies rob them of their rights and their future.

Grace Gibson-Snyder is afraid for her future. Sitting in a courtroom filled with other young people, the 19-year-old explained why **climate change** could wreck her beloved home state of Montana, USA.

The rivers are drying up. Wildfires are more common. And the state's **iconic** Glacier National Park might not have any **glaciers** soon.

Grace's story was at the heart of a **lawsuit**, filed by young people from Montana, against their state's environmental policies.

The 16 young people argue that Montana law, which forbids the state



Gone tomorrow: Glacier National Park in Montana has lost more than 100 glaciers.

THE STORY SO FAR

A boom in suing governments to act on climate change has seen worldwide lawsuits double since 2017. Many legal arguments are based on the 2015 Paris agreement to cap global warming at 1.5°C.

government from taking climate change into account in its policy, goes against their rights.

This **constitutional** case is the first of its kind to go to trial in a US state. But it is part of a wave of action being taken in the courts around the world,

from Pakistan to the UK.

In 2015, an action by Dutch young people resulted in the court **mandating** a 25% cut on emissions by 2020.

Montana's defence says the small state's actions are "**miniscule**" compared to total global emissions, so they are not the cause of the problem.

But critics call this claim "**whataboutism**", and say Montana should take responsibility.

"As most people know who work in this space, every ton of carbon matters and that's no different in Montana," said Barbara Chillcott, the lawyer for the young plaintiffs.

KEY WORDS

Climate change: The warming up of the planet

Iconic: Very famous

Glaciers: Slow-moving rivers of ice

Lawsuit: A disagreement between groups brought to a court to decide on

Constitutional: To do with your basic rights

Mandating: Ordering

Miniscule: Tiny

Whataboutism: Justifying bad behaviour by saying others do it



YOU DECIDE

Should climate change be a crime?

YES. Climate change is a violation of people's human rights. It is already a crime; it just needs a law.

NO. Climate change is a political problem. You can't use the law to bypass winning people over.



THE DETECTIVE ZONE

Build THE Change



CREATE YOUR DESIGN

One solution to melting sea glaciers involves building a wall to keep warm water away from the edge. Can you design a shield to protect mountain glaciers from the Sun?

STEP 1:

Think about your design! Would it be in place the whole time, or able to move? What kind of shape would it be?

STEP 2:

Build the change! Draw a model of your glacier shield. If you have time, why not build it out of LEGO® bricks or bits of recycling?

Share your genius
Show your work to your class!



Upload a photo of your work to the **Build the Change** gallery by scanning the QR code and have your work displayed to inspire real-world change.



BUILDER OF THE WEEK

We've had so many brilliant ideas sent into our Build the Change Gallery so far this year we wanted to share them with you all. Every week we'll handpick one of the most inspirational designs to be our **BUILDER OF THE WEEK**.



If your photo is used, you'll be entered into a prize draw to win a huge box of LEGO® bricks. To be in with a chance of winning, get your grown up to photograph your creation and upload it to our Build the Change gallery, using the QR code above.

Well done to St Marys Primary STEM club for your underwater habitats. We loved all the features of this one!

"GREAT WORK!"



Farming affects climate change, what gas do cows release that causes damage?



- A) Carbon
- B) Oxygen
- C) Methane
- D) Hydrogen

Talking point

Do you think people should be able to elect judges, as well as politicians?

Amaze someone

In the Netherlands, a 2015 lawsuit resulted in the Dutch having to cut emissions by 25% by 2020.

If all the world's glaciers and sea ice melted, then the sea level would rise by over 60 metres!

THE EXTRA PAGE

Drama in Montana over climate lawsuit

Grace Gibson-Snyder, 19, loves her home state of Montana, USA. Thinking about its future fills her with fear.

She's seen the lands she loves change since she was a child, she told the first judicial district court of Montana this week. The rivers she grew up rafting are getting lower. The air she breathes in during soccer practice more frequently fills with wildfire smoke. And in Glacier national park in Montana's Rocky Mountains, the glaciers are melting.

"I have hopefully 80 years left of living in Montana and living on this Earth," she said on the stand. "Knowing that my health will be in danger for those 80 years, my livelihood, my home? That's a long time to live with that."

Gibson-Snyder is one of the 16 youth plaintiffs in the 2020 lawsuit *Held v Montana*. It's being heard in the state capital, Helena, this week and next, marking the first constitutional climate trial in US history.

The 16 young challengers argue that pro-fossil fuel state policies have violated their constitutional rights to a healthy environment.

Similar youth-led constitutional lawsuits are pending in four other states; one federal suit, *Juliana v United States*, was recently announced to be



Burning issue: Wildfires have torn through Montana in recent years.

headed to trial.

But *Held v Montana* is the first to reach that crucial stage. The case, which will be decided by Judge Kathy Seeley, could have reverberations around the country, experts say.

"I think that a favourable decision in this case would be very energising to potential plaintiffs around the country and indeed, around the world," Michael Gerrard, founder of the Sabin Center for Climate Change Law at Columbia Law School, said.

Held v Montana specifically targets part of the Montana Environmental Policy Act which prevents the state from considering how its energy economy may contribute to climate change.

At the trial, attorneys for the states argued that the plaintiffs' allegations are absurd.

"Montana's emissions are simply too minuscule to make any difference," Michael Russell, the state's assistant attorney general, said in his opening statement.

The climate crisis is, indeed, a global problem — one that Montana can't take on alone.

But as an expert witness invited by the plaintiffs testified on Thursday, Montana emits more greenhouse gas pollution than Ireland, which has a population six times larger than Montana's.

"As most people know who work in this space, every ton of carbon matters and that's no different in Montana," said Barbara Chillcott, the attorney representing the plaintiffs. ■

This is an edited version of a story from
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Read more on this topic



Melt by
Ele Fountain

Pushkin



Where the World
Turns Wild by
Nicola Penfold

Little Tiger

Answer to the puzzle

Climate change question
C) Methane

**Build
THE Change**

This week's challenge is part of the LEGO® Build the Change programme. It can be done at school or as homework, and parents can help upload photos of pupils' work to the online gallery.



Visit the gallery at
<https://bit.ly/btcgallery> and feel free
to use it as discussion point in class.