Yale Law School Climate Change and Animal Agriculture Litigation Initiative

Seeking Summer 2024 Legal Research Assistants

The Climate Change & Animal Agriculture Litigation Initiative (CCAALI)—a project of the Law, Ethics, and Animals Program (LEAP) at Yale Law School—invites applications for full-time summer 2024 research assistant positions. CCAALI is focused on exploring the potential for litigation to help address the climate harms of animal agriculture. See more detail on the initiative below.

The summer research assistants will work on a range of legal issues at the intersection of climate change and industrial animal agriculture. These are full-time positions with a salary of $6,700 for 10 weeks of full-time work ($16.75/hour). These positions are open to students at U.S. law schools who will have completed at least one year of law school. Students graduating from law school prior to the summer of 2024 are also eligible to apply, as are LLM students. This position could be remote or in New Haven.

Interested applicants should email a cover letter, resume, writing sample, unofficial transcript, and contact information for two references to dajna.bray@yale.edu, with a cc to caroline.zhang.cz443@yale.edu. (Transcripts, if not immediately available, can be sent after the initial application.) The priority deadline is December 18, 2023. Applications received after the priority deadline will be reviewed on a rolling basis.

General Information

The research assistants can expect to have a range of challenging and rewarding experiences. Projects may include legal research in support of potential litigation relating to environmental statutes (both federal and state); environmental justice; tort claims; administrative challenges; and consumer protection theories. Research assistant work will be overseen by Daina Bray, Senior Litigation Fellow and Project Manager, and Graham Provost and Caroline Zhang, Litigation Fellows. Doug Kysar, Jon Lovvorn, and Viveca Morris of LEAP will also advise on the initiative.

Background on the Climate Change & Animal Agriculture Litigation Initiative:

Even if emissions from electricity production and transportation ended immediately, global emissions related to food production alone could preclude limiting warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius or less above pre-industrial levels, a goal of the Paris Climate Agreement. The vast majority of U.S. agriculture emissions are related to the production of livestock animals and their
feed. The livestock industry’s emissions are particularly concerning because livestock and their manure are the United States’ top source of methane, a climate super-pollutant.

Yet, agribusinesses have received little legal or political scrutiny for their climate pollution, and the industry’s greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions remain effectively unregulated in the United States. Given the urgency of the climate crisis and the current lack of political will to address GHG pollution from the livestock industry, climate advocates may turn to litigation as a potential leverage point for holding livestock corporations responsible for their greenhouse gas emissions. CCAALI seeks to understand the nature, likelihood, and potential impacts of such strategies.

The CCAALI team includes Project Manager and Senior Litigation Fellow Daina Bray, LEAP Faculty Co-Director Doug Kysar, LEAP Faculty Co-Director Jonathan Lovvorn, LEAP Executive Director Viveca Morris, Litigation Fellow Graham Provost, Litigation Fellow Caroline Zhang, and LEAP Postgraduate Fellow Laurie Sellars.

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