



Valholly F.

Youth Plaintiff, Reynolds v. State of Florida

Youth Petitioner, Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Rulemaking Petition

Brief Biography

"The lawsuit has given me a microphone and an opportunity to speak out and have my voice heard. Without it, I would still be a kid who didn't think I could make a difference."

Valholly is a 19-year-old descendant of the Panther Clan of the Seminole Tribe who is strongly connected to her tribal heritage. She lives with her community on the Hollywood Indian Reservation and frequently spends time in the Florida Everglades. Climate change impacts are negatively affecting her ability to engage with the natural areas that are so vital to her way of life. The Everglades ecosystem is a crucial aspect of Valholly's culture, but climate change impacts have limited her ability to partake in traditional cultural practices there. Valholly has had to evacuate her home more than once due to hurricanes, and she is terrified of what will happen to her house as climate change causes hurricanes to become more severe and frequent.

Valholly has spent much of her young life advocating for action on climate change and other environmental issues. She has testified before governments and organizations, expressed herself at protests and in the news media, and sued her state government for operating an energy system that violates her fundamental rights by contributing to climate change. In 2019, Valholly attended the Conference of the Parties ("COP") 25 in Madrid, Spain, where she spoke at the Conference of Youth and participated in actions led by indigenous climate leaders.

"It's exhausting to have to fight for our rights like we are. Why should we have to fight for our basic rights of life, liberty, and property that people have had for centuries while the government is undermining them in the name of greed and corporate interest?"