



## SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

# German Farmer Sues Volkswagen over Effects of Climate Change

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A German farmer is **suing** automaker Volkswagen (VW) for being partly responsible for the effects of climate change.

The man, Ulf Allhoff-Cramer, claims drier soil and heavier rains linked to climate change have affected his fields, cows and forest operations. He said these effects have harmed his family business.

In the case, Allhoff-Cramer calls on VW to end its production of gasoline powered vehicles by 2030. German automakers rejected a similar demand from environmental groups last year.

“Farmers are already being hit harder and faster by climate change than expected,” Allhoff-Cramer recently told reporters. He has argued that since VW is the second-largest automaker, it should take responsibility for environmental damage linked to climate change.

During a recent hearing, a court in the western town of Detmold asked Allhoff-Cramer and his lawyers to provide additional details to support their legal arguments, Germany’s dpa news agency reported.

The judge also asked whether the farmer had already suffered climate-related damages or is still expecting them. The next court hearing will take place on September 9.

The case is supported by the environmental group Greenpeace. The organization has supported similar legal efforts in Germany that sought to hold companies and the government responsible for the effects of climate change.

Such cases have had mixed success. Some have been dismissed, while one made it to Germany's top court. Last year, the high court in that case ordered the government to increase efforts to reduce carbon **emissions**.

Volkswagen said in a statement that it aims to reduce its emissions "as quickly as the business **allows**." VW has set a 2050 goal to cut carbon dioxide emissions to **net-zero**.

"Volkswagen stands for climate protection and **rapid** decarbonization of the transport **sector**, but cannot meet this **challenge** alone," the company said. It added that such progress also depends on government rules, technological development and buyer behaviors.

VW said lawmakers should be the ones to decide on climate change measures. The company said it would "defend this position and ask for the lawsuit to be dismissed."

In 2015, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency discovered VW was using software that let diesel cars pass emissions tests, but then turned off pollution controls during normal driving. The company apologized for its actions and paid tens of billions of dollars in fines, business costs and damages to car owners.

I'm Bryan Lynn.

*The Associated Press reported this story. Bryan Lynn adapted the report for VOA Learning English.*

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## Words in This Story

**sue** – *v.* to take legal action against a person or organization and seek to get money from them because they have harmed you

**emission** – *n.* the act of producing or sending out something (such as energy or gas) from a source

**allow** – *v.* to permit

net-zero – *adj.* when a country, city, etc. removes as many emissions as it produces

**rapid** – *adj.* happening or moving very quickly

sector – *n.* one part of a country's economy

**challenge** – *n.* a difficult task or problem; something that is hard to do

