Perhaps everything in the world might be related in some way to climate change. Perhaps not. I'm having a hard time seeing how this topic in particular relates to climate change. But it does relate to our blog, in that the decision illustrates well the importance and relevance of law school-based academic research centers — such as the UCLA Environmental Law Center and Emmett Center and our blog partner, Berkeley Law's Center on Law, Energy, and the Environment — to cutting-edge real-world legal developments.

In his opinion overturning Proposition 8 — a voter initiative that banned same-sex marriage in California — U.S. District Court Judge Vaughn Walker relied heavily on the testimony of Lee Badgett, research director of the UCLA School of Law's Williams Institute on Sexual Orientation, about the impacts of Proposition 8 on families and on the state's economy. Environmental scholars' research from UCLA Law and Berkeley Law has found its way into court decisions as well as policy documents too (as just one example, a landmark Federal District Court decision in Vermont, the first to uphold the legality of the California-initiated "Pavley" state automobile greenhouse gas emissions regulations, cited a law review article by my UCLA colleague Ann Carlson).

We're expecting that our research centers at UCLA Law and U.C. Berkeley will continue to contribute to important decisions affecting public policy. In the meantime, congratulations are due to Dr. Badgett, to the Williams Institute and its Executive Director Brad Sears, and to the advocates that contributed to this important decision.