

EGU25-8468, updated on 21 May 2025

<https://doi.org/10.5194/egusphere-egu25-8468>

EGU General Assembly 2025

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Attribution in action: Causal chains in climate litigation

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Climate change attribution science describes with increasing precision how anthropogenic activities are affecting environments around the world. In legal disputes over corporations' and governments' responsibility for climate change, attribution science plays a key role in evaluating defendants' contribution to climate change impacts. This paper examines how attribution science is used to establish causal chains in climate litigation. While scientific methodologies are advancing rapidly, questions remain over how legal standards of proof should be applied to the evidence. If ongoing cases are successful in using attribution science to establish legal causation, they could set significant precedents for holding major greenhouse gas emitters to account.