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Environmental Racism: A Look at Flint, Michigan

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ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM: A LOOK AT FLINT, MICHIGAN



ALEXIS LEWIS

FLINT, MICHIGAN

- Flint is 53.9% black, 39.9% white, and 6.2% Latino and mixed race.
- Flint is the poorest city of its size in the nation.
- Nearly 39% of the city's residents and 60% of its children are living in poverty.
- It took nearly four years to restore quality drinking water.



ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM

Discrimination of low-income or minority communities forced to live in environmentally hazardous or degraded environments.

WAS FLINT AN EXAMPLE OF ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM?

TIMELINE

- 2014** - The city turned to the Flint River as a water source.
- 2016** - The federal court ordered Michigan state officials and the City of Flint to ensure that every Flint home had access to safe drinking water.
- 2018** - Governor Snyder announced the end of a free bottled water program in Flint, claiming the water quality had been restored.



THE PEOPLE OF FLINT? YES.

"Would more have been done, and at a much faster pace, if nearly 40% of Flint residents were not living below the poverty line? The answer is unequivocally yes," the NAACP said in a statement.

"While it might not be intentional, there's this implicit bias against older cities -- particularly older cities with poverty (and) majority-minority communities," said Democratic U.S. Rep. Dan Kildee, who represents the Flint area.

POLICY: SAFE WATER DRINKING ACT

- Drafted in 1974
- Amended in 1986 and 1996
- National health-based standards for drinking water
- The US Environmental Protection Agency is responsible for regulation and enforcement by setting national standards for drinking water.



MICHIGAN GOVERNOR? NO.

"These are very technical issues, we took immediate action, need to do more, did more."

"In terms of saying it happened because of the nature of the community here? Absolutely not."