

Environmental Racism

Environmental racism, a form of systemic racism, refers to the greater impact of environmental hazards on (and fewer environmental benefits for) people of color. It is no accident that communities of color experience more environmental harm and fewer environmental benefits. These outcomes are the direct result of policies and decisions by governments and corporations that have targeted certain communities, forcing them to live in proximity to sources of toxic waste such as sewage works, mines, landfills, power stations and more, while protecting other communities from such impacts.

People of color are **3X** more likely than whites to live in areas with restricted access to nature. For example, **70%** percent of low-income communities live in areas lacking green spaces.

61% of drinking water systems on Native American reservations had health violations, compared with **27%** of all public systems in the United States.

The Environmental Protection Agency has denied **95%** of the civil-rights claims brought by communities of color against polluters.

Black Americans breathe **56%** more pollution than they produce, and Latinos breathe **63%** more — while whites breathe **17%** less.



The Environmental Justice movement resists environmental racism and works to ensure that all people live in safe, healthy and prosperous communities.

As people of faith, we are called to seek well-being for all communities on a thriving, bountiful earth. We can do this by:

- Learning about environmental racism in your local context and globally
- Doing your own research to understand how environmental racism is a part of systemic racism
- Listening to and learning from people with firsthand experiences
- Connecting with organizations that advocate for environmental justice.

Learn more at www.pcusa.org/environmentaljustice

SOURCES:

- www.thenation.com/article/archive/race-best-predicts-whether-you-live-near-pollution
- www.pacinst.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/water_and_environmental_justice_ch3.pdf
- www.discovermagazine.com/health/green-spaces-are-a-necessity-not-an-amenity-how-can-cities-make-them
- www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/07/what-is-environmental-racism-pollution-covid-systemic/