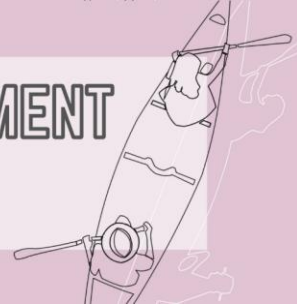


NAVIGATING THE LAW TO PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT

ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM AND THE LAW: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

September 2020



What is Environmental Racism?

- Environmental racism occurs when a law, policy or practice differently affects or disadvantages (whether intended or unintended) individuals, groups or communities based on race or colour, often resulting in a lower quality of life.
- In Canada, environmental racism has been a part of our history from the moment European colonizers entered the lands already occupied by Indigenous peoples.
- Indigenous and minority communities (ex. Africville, NS) have been forced to relocate to undesirable lands and face the most serious environmental consequences of resource development, while often lacking access to the basic amenities most Canadians take for granted such as clean water, electricity, and waste management services.
- Recognizing the negative impacts Indigenous peoples in Canada continue to face because of natural resource development and public utility use is an important part of the Reconciliation process.

Where is it happening?

Environmental racism has and continues to occur in all Canadian jurisdictions. Some Manitoba examples include:

- *Shoal Lake, Manitoba:* Winnipeg's drinking water has come from Shoal Lake for the last century. As a result of the construction of the intake of Winnipeg's water system, members of the now Shoal Lake 40 First Nation were displaced and moved to a human-made island. Since then, the Indigenous peoples of this community have been isolated which has impacted their ability to maintain a water treatment facility, among other things. As a result, the people who live on the shores of Winnipeg's drinking water source have lacked access to clean drinking water and have been under a boil water advisory for the last two decades.
- *Hydro-Impacted Communities in Northern Manitoba:* Most of the hydro-electricity that citizens in southern cities like Winnipeg and Brandon rely upon is produced in northern Manitoba on Indigenous territories. The First Nation communities living in these northern areas have and continue to experience significant environmental changes that impact their health, security, and cultural practices, while also being forced to pay some of the highest electricity prices in the province.

What can I do about it?

- Support communities experiencing environmental racism.
- Learn more about environmental racism and share your knowledge.
- Advocate for environmental justice and more inclusive laws and policies in Canada.

For more information see:

- [Environmental Racism and the Law](#) (webinar)
- [Environmental Racism and the Law: Additional Resources](#)
- [Environmental Racism and the Law: Discussion Questions](#)



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