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It is difficult to ignore the many ways the climate crisis affects every aspect of our lives. Though climate change harms us all, its negative effects are disproportionately felt by historically marginalized groups: specifically low-income communities and people of color.

This is especially true in housing, as historically racist urban planning policies mean that underprivileged communities experience something known as environmental racism.
WHAT IS ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM?
A phenomenon where communities of color are disproportionately burdened by environment-related harms because centuries of systemic oppression mean they live near environmental pollutants and have less resources to ensure they live in a clean environment.
The government poured money, capital, and mortgage investments into areas deemed “safe” for investment and avoided “risky” ones. It is no coincidence that areas classified as “risky” were made up of communities of color. So, while white areas gained affluence, communities of color were deprived of these essential resources, including adequate infrastructure, which makes areas more vulnerable to environmental threats.

This question requires a much longer answer, but, essentially, environmental racism was put in place through a practice called redlining: a New Deal-era system where the government classified areas of cities according to their risk level for potential investments.
HOW ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM IMPACTS FAIR HOUSING ACCESS
Within the same city, formerly redlined areas experience higher temperatures than non-redlined areas.

This means that communities living in heat islands are more susceptible to extreme heat, higher air conditioning costs, and health problems that arise from experiencing poor air quality.
Across cities nationwide, race and class affect the likelihood that an individual will be exposed to lead because of the legacies of redlining. In fact, children who are Black and/or low-income face the greatest risk of lead exposure.
In NYC, landlords *may* be responsible for addressing lead poisoning concerns.

Building owners **MUST** repair lead paint hazards if a child aged 5 or younger regularly spends more than 10 hours a week in the home. Tenants may also be entitled to home assessments if:

- The building was built before 1960 or between 1960-1978 and the owner is aware there is lead paint in the building
- A child aged 5 or younger lives in the building or regularly spends more than 10 hours a week there
Abandoned toxic waste sites. Spending prolonged periods of time near one has been linked to side-effects like infant mortality, cancer, and water/food-related illnesses.

Studies have shown that areas surrounding superfund sites are, generally, disproportionately made up of Black residents.
As climate change continues to pose a threat globally, and increase the number of natural disasters that occur, communities must prepare to mitigate this problem.

However, historic disempowerment through redlining means that formerly redlined communities are generally less capable of financially dealing with and preparing for inevitable natural disasters.
THANK YOU!