



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on February 18, 2026

Almost 500M Gallons of Sewage Has Poured Into Potomac River. DC Water CEO: Agency Had Too Many White Men.

As bad as diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) is [when it leads](#) to plagiarism at top universities, at least no one gets hurt or killed.

But DEI in municipal government just might kill someone. Or a lot of someones. The sewage spill into the Potomac River that began in January has pumped almost a half-billion gallons of wastewater into the river. It likely resulted from the imposition of DEI at DC Water.

That estimable organization boasts a black chairwoman who knows nothing about wastewater or drinking-water management, and a chief executive officer who thought too many white men were in management.



AP Images

Signs warning of raw-sewage danger in Potomac River, January 2026



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DC Water's Manager David Gadis:
"We had too many white men in charge"
"The executives should reflect the city"

DC just had the largest sewage spill in US history: 240 *million* gallons in one month FLOODING the Potomac



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Get Rid of Whitey

What President Trump has called an “ecological disaster” began on January 19, when “a section of the Potomac Interceptor along the Clara Barton Parkway in Montgomery County, Md., collapsed,” [The Hill explained](#).

Some 60 million gallons of sewage flow through the interceptor to the Blue Plains Advanced Wastewater Treatment Plant in southwest Washington, D.C.

“DC Water, a local water utility, said on Feb. 6 that roughly 194 million gallons overflowed from the collapse site in the first five days after the incident, with about 49 million gallons overflowing in the time since,” the *The Hill* continued:

The utility noted that the estimated peak discharge of wastewater, roughly 40 million



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gallons per day, accounts for about 2 percent of the Potomac’s total flow during the period.

But the Potomac Riverkeeper Network (PRKN), a local environmental advocacy group, estimated on Feb. 5 that the collapse resulted in roughly 300 million gallons discharged into the Potomac to that point. Betsy Nicholas, the president of the PRKN, told The Hill on Monday that estimate was based on data from DC Water regarding how much wastewater flows through the pipe daily.

On Truth Social, Trump announced that federal authorities will step in to help locals stem the tide of wastewater.

“While State and Local Authorities have failed to request needed Emergency Help, I cannot allow incompetent Local ‘Leadership’ to turn the River in the Heart of Washington into a Disaster Zone,” Trump wrote:

As we saw in the Palisades [Fire], the Democrat War on Merit has real consequences. The Federal Government has no choice, but to step in. [The Federal Emergency Management Administration], which is currently being defunded by the Democrats, will play a key role in coordinating the response.



DEI Disaster

DEI certainly appears to be a key cause of the spill.

DC Water’s chairwoman, Unique N. Morris-Hughes, knows nothing about public-utility management. She is the headmistress of Washington, D.C.’s Employment Services department. In that job and others, she has managed hundreds of millions of dollars in tax money. Her “career spans the for-profit and nonprofit sectors,” [her biography says](#), and “she has several years of experience in education, program development, evaluation, and compliance.”



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None of which qualifies her to oversee DC Water.

During an undated interview on X, she said she was “on a mission to make sure black and brown kids have experience in the workplace.”



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DC Water Chair Unique Morris Hughes:

"The disruption work that I'm doing is I am on a mission to make sure black & brown kids" get careers

They just had a historic sewage spill



Watch on X

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Whatever her inexperience with water, Hughes is good at one thing: Spending tax money against regulations, the *Washington City Paper* revealed in December. She “violated several D.C. regulations when she approved tens of thousands of dollars in public funds for food and entertainment for all-staff events, [according to findings](#) from the D.C. Office of the Inspector General [OIG],” the [website revealed](#):

In a report dated June 2025, the OIG found that Morris-Hughes approved \$69,000 in “questionable expenses” for catering and flashy entertainment including go-go bands, DJs, emcees, motivational speakers, and acrobats among other purchases for her annual professional development events in 2022 and 2023. (Food and entertainment are generally not allowable expenses without a waiver under D.C.’s municipal regulations.) ... The OIG



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launched its investigation following [City Paper's reporting on \[her department's\] extravagant 2023 party](#).

DC Water's DEI CEO

DC Water CEO David Gadis — named in a lawsuit about [Flint, Michigan's water crisis](#) — has distributed \$520 million in DEI contracts, the [Daily Caller](#) reported.

“Under Gadis, DC Water also pursued ‘Fair Share Objectives’ to boost participation from disadvantaged, minority, and women-owned business enterprises — an effort originally driven by EPA threats to pull federal funding from authorities that failed to show ‘good faith’ compliance,” the website explained:

To reinforce those goals, DC Water created the Business Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Council and established bidding preferences for disadvantaged and women-owned contractors on projects over \$1 million. Under its 2020 amended Business Development Plan, such contractors cannot be penalized for falling short of project goals if they demonstrate “good faith” effort.

In fiscal year 2024, disadvantaged and women-owned enterprises received 38.65% of total awards — roughly \$520 million of nearly \$1.33 billion, according to January 2025 board minutes.

The EPA suspended its Fair Share objectives in April following Trump administration pressure. Though no longer enforced, DC Water's website still lists three-year goals of awarding 32% of construction contracts and 28% of architectural and engineering services to minority enterprises, with additional carve-outs for women-owned firms.

Yet Gadis didn't just dump more than half a billion dollars into the questionable minority set-asides. He also jettisoned the white executives at DC Water, he bragged in an undated video that's gone viral on X.

“You know, when I arrived at DC Water, this was an organization that looked very similar to our industry,” Gadis complained:

It was predominantly white male at the top. But this was a utility that's — more than 70 percent people of color work at this utility.

And I really believe — and I still believe, and it has been fantastic, the outcomes have been fantastic — [that] the people at the top, the executives, the chiefs in that C-suite, they should look like the employees that they serve and that they work with. And the same thing with the community. And so my executive team looks exactly like the community, it looks like the employees, the staff — be it people of color, women, men. And it's just a fantastic team that has come together to do a lot of great things here at DC Water and in the community for the customers.



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DEI Success

One of those great things, apparently, is dumping almost 500 million gallons of sewage into the Potomac River. Such is the success of DEI at DC Water that it even incorrectly reported how polluted the water is with [E. Coli](#), a dangerous enteric bacteria.



Mark Segraves

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After reporting ecoli rate at sewage spill in Potomac River was going down, [@dcwater](#) now admits they released very incorrect data. It's actually 100 times higher than they reported.

DC Water Reporting Error

Reported: 2,420 MPN/100mL

Actual : 242,000 MPN/100mL

[@nbcwashington](#)



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“After reporting ecoli rate at sewage spill in Potomac River was going down, [@dcwater](#) now admits they



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MPN means “most probable number.” Frighteningly, the recreational limit [is 410 MPN](#) per 100 milliliters.

On February 3, one location on the Potomac measured 1,732,900 MPN.



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