



Greens Target Pro-Life Evangelicals with EPA Propaganda Blitz

An environmental group claiming to represent the stewardship concerns of evangelical Christians handed pro-abortion politicians and the Obama administration's Environmental Protection Agency a huge present just before Christmas. On December 21, as EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson (left) announced the agency's long-awaited stringent new regulations on mercury, the Rev. Mitchell C. Hescox, President and CEO of the Evangelical Environmental Network (EEN), was standing alongside her to show his organization's support.



Moreover, EEN announced it had just completed a quarter-million-dollar radio, television, and billboard advertising campaign in nine states and the District of Columbia aimed at convincing evangelical and Catholic voters that supporting the new EPA regulations is the "pro-life" position they should be urging their Senators and Congressmen to take. Incredibly, the EEN ads bestow a "pro-life" label on politicians with a voting record 100 percent in favor of abortion — because they support the new mercury regulations.

Rev. Hescox [explained](#) his presence at the EPA press gathering:

For many it might seem highly unusual for an evangelical Christian to stand alongside EPA Administrator Jackson this morning. I am standing with her today because we agree on the need to protect children from mercury. Christians are called to protect life, it's sacred, and evangelicals take very seriously the Biblical belief that life begins at conception.

"It's for the Children"

"It's for the children." "It's for the handicapped." "It's for the elderly." "It's for the asthmatics and respiratory patients." "It's for the environment." "It's for the polar bears." "It's for the planet." Whenever politicians and bureaucrats get ready to usurp vast new and costly powers, they can be counted on to find a justification calculated to resonate with their targeted constituency. Children are one of the most frequent props exploited by the political class to promote their programs, knowing that few people wish to go on record opposing something that will, ostensibly, benefit or protect children. In presenting his pro-EPA position, EEN's Rev. Hescox grabbed with gusto for the "It's for the children" prop. Hescox continued at the EPA press conference:

The unborn are the weakest members of our society. We must protect them and insure their right to an abundant life. Currently 1 in 6 babies are born with harmful levels of mercury in their blood. The largest source of domestic mercury emissions are coal-fired electric utilities and the Mercury and Air Toxics Standards promulgated today will provide significant reductions, over 90%, of the mercury contained in the coal that is burned.

Leaving aside for a moment EEN's statistical claims regarding mercury pollution — which are wildly off



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base, according to a number of scientific studies — the organization’s redefinition of what constitutes an authentic “pro-life” position is something quite astounding.

E. Calvin Beisner, Ph.D., founder and national spokesman of the Cornwall Alliance for the Stewardship of Creation, takes serious issue with the EEN position, [calling](#) it “Machiavellian” and “Orwellian.”

“If the Evangelical Environmental Network (EEN) has its way, some members of Congress with 100% pro-abortion records will be able to boast that they’re pro-life, and others with 100% pro-life voting records won’t,” warns Dr. Beisner, a theologian, ethicist, and economist.

Beisner continues:

Senators Debbie Stabenow and Carl Levin (both D-MI) both had 100% pro-abortion voting records in the 110th Congress (2007–2008). Senators Susan Collins and Olympia Snowe (both R-Maine) and David Pryor (D-Ark.) all had 78% pro-abortion voting records. Yet EEN’s ads give voters the impression that all are pro-life or “sensitive to pro-life concerns” because they support EPA’s proposed new mercury limits.

In EEN’s one-minute radio spots, Tracey Bianchi, a Chicago-area pastor, says, “I expect members of Congress who say they are pro-life to use their power to protect that life, especially the unborn. ... The EPA’s mercury regulations were created specifically to protect the unborn from the devastating impacts of mercury which causes permanent brain damage in the unborn and infants.” In the Michigan ads she says, “That’s why I’m counting on Senators Levin and Stabenow to defend the EPA’s ability to protect the unborn from mercury pollution. ... Please thank Senators Levin and Stabenow for their leadership, and let them know you support continued efforts to keep the unborn safe from mercury pollution.” Ads mentioning supporters of EPA’s mercury limits in other states contain similar language.

“Pro-life,” as defined by opposition to abortion, would unequivocally describe just 2 out of the 13 politicians mentioned in the ads — Sen. John Boozman (R-Ark.), and Cong. Bob Latta (R-Ohio), both of whom had 100% pro-life voting records. (Maybe we could throw in Sen. Lamar Alexander [R-Tenn.], with his 88% pro-life voting record.) Yet the ad targeting Ohio states, “I’m grateful that Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur voted to defend the EPA’s ability [to] clean up dangerous mercury pollution. But I’m disappointed that Congressman Bob Latta voted against protecting the unborn from this poison.... Please contact Congresswoman Kaptur to thank her, but tell Congressman Latta that being pro-life means protecting the unborn from mercury pollution.”

The EEN ads say, “I expect members of Congress who say they are pro-life to use their power to protect that life, especially the unborn. ... The EPA’s mercury regulations were created specifically to protect the unborn from the devastating impacts of mercury which causes permanent brain damage in the unborn and infants.”

Dr. Beisner points out that the statistical claims of EEN and the EPA do not stand up to scrutiny: “The truth, as documented in [The Cost of Good Intentions: The Ethics and Economics of the War Against Conventional Energy](#), is that not 1 in 6 but about 1 in 1,000 American babies is exposed to mercury at a level above the EPA’s ‘reference dose’ of 5.8 parts per billion,” he notes. “Further, no harm has been detected at any level below 85 parts per billion (over 14 times higher than the ‘reference dose’) — a level studies indicate is not found in any American babies. Even at that level, the observable harm is not death or even grave impairment but a temporary, almost undetectable delay in neurological development — one so small it’s overshadowed by normal variation, one that disappears in nearly all by age 7.”



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Further, the path from power-plant emissions to baby's blood is obscure at best, Beisner notes. Most of the mercury in infants' blood comes from natural sources, meaning reducing power-plant emissions would have little or no effect on infants' health.

First, Do No Harm

"Ironically," says Beisner and the Cornwall Alliance, "EPA's new mercury restrictions not only won't save any lives, they'll cost lives. Lots of them. How many? About 2,500 to 4,250 every year."

How would the EPA regulations cause these deaths? Beisner notes that economic studies indicate that every additional \$10 million to \$17 million in annual regulatory costs accounts for one extra death in the United States. EPA's mercury plan will force an increase in electricity prices of about 11.5%. Since the average price per megawatt-hour for electricity in 2009 was \$99.80, and the nation used about 3.7 billion megawatt-hours, and so we spent about \$369.26 billion on electricity, that 11.5% increase means EPA's plan will cost the U.S. economy about \$42.5 billion. Divide that by \$10 million or \$17 million per life, and you get 2,500 to 4,250 extra deaths per year.

In short, EEN says it's pro-life to support a policy that will cause about 2,500 to 4,250 extra deaths per year, but not pro-life to oppose it.

There is another very big problem with EEN's new "pro-life" definition that should be obvious, but which Beisner explicitly exposes. "The risk from mercury and the risk from abortion aren't in the same ballpark," he says. "They're not even in the same universe." He continues:

Abortion doesn't cause a minor reduction in brain development; it stops it — dead. It doesn't cause temporary, almost undetectable reduction in neurological development. It kills 1.2 million every year in America. Not 1 in 1,000 but over 1 in 5 pregnancies in America end in abortion (22%). Since 1973, because of abortion, over 54 million babies in this country have been dead on arrival.

Nevertheless, Beisner notes, "EEN insists that politicians who support the continued intentional massacre of over a million babies a year can proudly wear the pro-life label — and pro-life voters can conscientiously vote for them — so long as they support EPA's plan to impose new restrictions on mercury emissions. The audacity of EEN's campaign is breathtaking."

Breathtaking yes, but not surprising. EEN seems to have been launched precisely to divide, confuse, and neutralize as many pro-life activists and churches as possible, by, among other things, playing upon the environmental concerns and fears people have and by conflating environmental issues with traditional pro-life issues.

Thus, EEN has been in the forefront of promoting fears of catastrophic anthropogenic (human-caused) global warming, or AGW, among evangelical Protestant schools and congregations. *Global Warming and the Risen LORD: Christian Discipleship and Climate Change*, a book by Rev. Jim Ball, EEN's executive vice president, is highly touted by EEN, which says it "shows us that global warming is one of the major challenges of our time, but one that can be overcome by following the Risen LORD."

The book carries an endorsement blurb by none other than Al Gore, who writes: "My friend Rev. Jim Ball has written an important new book that explores the connection between solving the climate crisis and evangelical Christianity."

EEN is also a major promoter of the controversial new [Green Bible](#) — endorsed by the Sierra Club — that purports to provide a scriptural basis for Christian environmental activism under the rubric of



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“creation care.”

Where is EEN getting the funding for its media campaigns and other activities? EEN did not return calls from *The New American* regarding this matter, and their website does not provide any funding details. However, Dr. Beisner notes that “EEN received a \$50,000 grant last July from the Rockefeller Brothers Fund ‘to elevate the voice of the evangelical community in its efforts to protect the Environmental Protection Agency.’ And Rockefeller Brothers (which gave EEN \$200,000 in 2009 to support its global warming campaign) is a long-time supporter of abortion on demand as a means of population control.”

EEN’s political bedfellows, financial sources, and duplicitous campaigns should cause all concerned to question both its pro-life *bona fides* and its integrity as a Christian ministry.

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