

Senator Bill Wielechowski

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Senate Passes "Safe Homes, Healthy Families" Bill

Senate Bill 27 bans toxic chemicals in mattresses, furniture and electronics

JUNEAU- Today, the Alaska State Senate passed legislation that helps protect Alaskan families from toxic chemicals in their homes. [Senate Bill 27](#), sponsored by Senator Bill Wielechowski (D-Anchorage), would ban the use of polybrominated fire retardants (PBDEs) in mattresses, upholstered furniture and electronics.

Toxins from PBDEs accumulate as they make their way up the food chain, resulting in the highest levels in humans, fish, marine and other large mammals that Alaskans rely on for subsistence. Fetuses and infants are at particular risk as the accumulated toxins are transferred from mother to child in utero and through breast milk. Pre-natal exposure may have lifelong health impacts, including thyroid problems, memory impairment, learning and behavioral issues, as well as infertility.

"Alaskans face a higher risk of exposure to toxic chemicals than other Americans," said Senator Wielechowski. "We spend a lot of time indoors, increasing our exposure to the toxic dust, eat wild foods with high levels of toxins, and live in the Arctic, where these chemicals unfortunately concentrate."

Numerous studies have shown that banning PBDEs does not increase the cost of everyday household goods. "With other states, countries and major companies like Wal-Mart banning these toxic flame retardants, Alaskans can rest assured that their products will be safer and still affordable," said Senator Wielechowski. "The simple truth is these chemicals are typically manufactured abroad, so we can protect our children's health and American jobs from foreign companies that sell us products with these toxic chemicals."

It is also important to note that Senate Bill 27 does not exempt products from meeting existing fire safety standards. It is supported by the Alaska Professional Fire Fighters Association and the Alaska Fire Chiefs Association.

"Alaskans don't have to choose between exposure to toxic chemicals and fire prevention," Senator Wielechowski added. "We can have safe homes *and* healthy families."

Senate Bill 27 now heads to the House for further consideration.

For more information, please call Senator Wielechowski at 242-1558 or Samuel Gottstein at 465-2435.

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