

**Alaskan Senator Donny Olson introduces *Toxic-Free Children's Act (SB 151)*:  
 *moms, nurses, fire fighters all support state action to protect children  
from toxic flame retardants found in children's products in Alaska.***

*February 3rd, 2014 – Juneau, AK* On Friday, Senator Donny Olson, representing the Bering Straits/Interior villages, introduced the Toxic-Free Children's Act (SB 151) to protect children from toxic flame retardants in products. Toxic flame retardants are found in baby and children's products including foam-filled furniture, nap mats, nursing pillows, car seats, and play tents. The bill focuses on a class of chemicals known as tris flame retardants which are known to cause cancer, as well as neurological and reproductive harm. In the 1970's, chlorinated tris was discontinued for use in baby sleepwear due to its carcinogenicity.

"I'm concerned about the harms that toxic chemicals cause in my community of Savoonga, St. Lawrence Island, where we see health disparities such as high cancer rates. We have military and global pollution that are contaminating our environment, our traditional foods, our homes, and our own bodies. In addition, we need to address toxic chemicals in the products we purchase for our homes, including products for children and babies. Known cancer-causing flame retardants such as tris flame retardants are harming us. The current federal law does not protect children, pregnant women, or communities like mine. I support the Toxic-Free Children's Act because I want to protect my two baby nephews and all Alaskan children from unnecessary toxic exposures. Thank you to Senator Olson for introducing this important legislation." - Tiffany Immingan, St. Lawrence Island Yupik youth from Savoonga and volunteer with [ACAT](#)

"As a St. Lawrence Island Yupik mother and grandmother, I am grateful to Senator Olson for taking the lead to protect our children from harmful exposures to toxic chemicals. Our leaders and the communities of Gambell and Savoonga have been working to achieve chemicals policy reform for many years. We have been harmed from toxic chemicals associated with two former military bases where the military abandoned contamination on our Island. Also, we are facing health disparities associated with global contaminants from distant sources, as well as from the products we purchase for our homes. We cannot control the air and ocean currents, however we can make safer products which will reduce and eliminate the release of toxic chemicals into our environment and homes. The Toxic-Free Children's Act is a great step in that direction." - Vi Waghiyi, Environmental Health and Justice Program Director, [ACAT](#)

With the introduction of the Toxic-Free Children's Act, Alaska joins other states in taking the lead to protect children from toxic chemicals. Under federal law, chemicals are virtually unregulated for their safety. Unsafe chemicals associated with cancer, learning disabilities, and reproductive problems are commonly used in children's products. If passed, the bill would create a list of chemicals of high concern for children's health and phase out toxic tris flame retardant chemicals from children's products and lead to the phase out of these toxic chemicals in children's products.

"As a nurse, I empathize with the need to find cures for illnesses such as cancer, infertility, and learning and developmental disabilities—all are at epidemic proportions. However, preventing these medical problems is as important as finding a cure. Peer-reviewed science links harmful chemical exposures to many medical problems, including the illnesses mentioned above. Under current federal law, chemicals are virtually unregulated with little to no information on long-term health effects. I support the Toxic-Free Children's Act which follows other states' lead in protecting children and families from the harmful effects of known toxic chemicals through legislation." - **Susan Walsh**, recent past president, [Alaska Nurses Association](#)

"We know that children and firefighters are at a greater risk from harmful exposure to toxic flame retardants. These chemicals don't offer much fire protection, but make fires more toxic by releasing more dioxins, furans and soot. Accordingly, we believe that a ban on Tris flame retardant chemicals is a step in the right direction to protect the health and safety of our members and the people we serve." - **Tom Wescott**, President, [Alaska Professional Fire Fighters Association](#)

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**Available for Interviews:**

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[Alaska Community Action on Toxics \(ACAT\)](#) is a statewide non-profit public interest environmental health research and advocacy organization dedicated to protecting environmental health and achieving environmental justice. The mission of Alaska Community Action on Toxics is: *to assure justice by advocating for environmental and community health. We believe that everyone has a right to clean air, clean water and toxic-free food.* We work to stop the production, proliferation, and release of toxic chemicals that may harm human health or the environment. For more information, please call 907-222-7714 or visit [www.akaction.org](http://www.akaction.org).

Please join our free teleconference call on Wednesday, February 5<sup>th</sup>, 9 am

**Fire Safety without Harm:**

**How new flammability standards in California will protect the health and environment of Alaskans**

A number of studies have linked flame retardant chemicals used in home furniture and baby products to human health concerns such as cancer, neurological impairments and fertility problems. In response, California Governor Jerry Brown announced changes to the state's furniture flammability standards in November that would increase fire safety without the use of harmful chemicals. California's standard had become the *de facto* standard for manufacturers across the US and Canada. Will the new standard succeed in shifting manufacturers to safer ways to achieve fire safety? Why is this an important public health concern in Alaska? Join Arlene Blum Ph.D., author, mountaineer, and founder of the Green Science Policy Institute, for a discussion of the health effects of flame retardant chemicals and the likely impacts of California's new standard.

This call is presented by [ACAT's Alaska Collaborative on Health and the Environment \(CHE-AK\)](#).

For more information and to sign up visit: <http://www.akaction.org/?p=2608>