



505 W. Northern Lights; Suite 205, Anchorage, AK 99503  
Phone: (907) 222-7714; Fax: (907) 222-7715;  
info@akaction.org | [www.akaction.org](http://www.akaction.org) | [Twitter @ak\\_action](https://twitter.com/ak_action)

**For Immediate Release:** 2/18/14 for SB 151 Hearing in Senate Health & Social Services Committee Wednesday, February 19<sup>th</sup> at 1:30 pm, in the Capitol (Butrovich 205), through Legislative Information Offices and teleconference

**Contact:** Pamela Miller, Executive Director, Alaska Community Action on Toxics, 907-222-7714, 907-242-9991, [pamela@akaction.org](mailto:pamela@akaction.org)

**Alaskan moms, nurses, fire fighters testify to the Health and Social Services Committee hearing supporting the Toxic-Free Children's Act (SB 151):  
to protect children from toxic flame retardant chemicals found in children's products in Alaska.**

February 19<sup>th</sup>, 2014 – Juneau, AK Legislators will hear strong support from Alaskan mothers, nurses, and firefighters at the legislative hearing of the Senate Health and Social Services Committee for Senator Donny Olson's Toxic-Free Children's Act (SB 151). SB 151 will protect children from exposure to toxic flame retardant chemicals in products. This bill focuses on phasing out carcinogenic and neurotoxic flame retardants in children's products and requires the state to create a list of chemicals of concern to children's health.

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 addresses 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 mutagenicity.

"I'm concerned about the harms that toxic chemicals cause in my community of Savoonga, Saint 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 children and baby products. Known cancer-causing flame retardants like 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 Alaska 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 Alaska Community Action on Toxics, 907-984-2126, [alaskan\\_girl\\_16@yahoo.com](mailto:alaskan_girl_16@yahoo.com)

"Flame retardant chemicals are the prime example of how our chemicals laws have failed to protect our health. Previous cancer-causing flame retardants such as PCBs and PBDEs—which are found in dangerously high levels in many Arctic Indigenous peoples—have been replaced with known cancer-causing chemicals such as Tris. Exposure to these chemicals is associated with cancer, learning disabilities, and reproductive problems, all of which are alarmingly common in Alaska. We must do whatever we can to protect vulnerable populations, especially children, from toxic chemicals. Legislation such as the Toxic-Free Children's Act is long overdue in Alaska"- Maricarmen Cruz Guilloty, Environmental Health and Justice Coordinator, Alaska Community Action on Toxics, 907-222-7714, [Maricarmen@akaction.org](mailto:Maricarmen@akaction.org)

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 other toxic chemicals in children's products.

"We support the Toxic-Free Children's Act because we believe that people, especially children, should be protected from toxic chemicals. Fire fighters have a higher risk of cancer because of exposure to toxic chemicals such as flame retardants. These harmful chemicals should not be used in common everyday products, much less in baby products. There are many ways to achieve fire safety without toxic chemicals, including the use of smoke alarms, sprinkler

systems, fire building codes, and fire safety education.” - Jeff Tucker, Alaska Fire Chiefs Association, 907-488-3400, [JTucker@northstarfire.org](mailto:JTucker@northstarfire.org).

"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](#)

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**Available for Interviews:**

**Pamela K. Miller**, Executive Director, [Alaska Community Action on Toxics](#), 907-222-7714, or 907-242-9991, [pamela@akaction.org](mailto:pamela@akaction.org)

**Maricarmen Cruz Guilloty**, Environmental Health and Justice Coordinator, [Alaska Community Action on Toxics](#), 787-934-2733, [maricarmen@akaction.org](mailto:maricarmen@akaction.org)

**Vi Waghyyi**, Environmental Health and Justice Director, [Alaska Community Action on Toxics](#), [vi@akaction.org](mailto:vi@akaction.org), 907-222-7714 or 907-444-9194

**Tiffany Immingan**, St. Lawrence Island Yupik youth from Savoonga and volunteer with [Alaska Community Action on Toxics](#), 907-984-2126, [alaskan\\_girl\\_16@yahoo.com](mailto:alaskan_girl_16@yahoo.com)

**Susan Walsh**, recent past president, [Alaska Nurses Association](#), 907-617-8155, [alaskancelt@hotmail.com](mailto:alaskancelt@hotmail.com)

**Tom Wescott**, President, [Alaska Professional Fire Fighters Association](#), 907-748-6444, [tomwescott@gmail.com](mailto:tomwescott@gmail.com)

**Jeff Tucker**, [Alaska Fire Chiefs Association](#), 907-488-3400, [JTucker@northstarfire.org](mailto:JTucker@northstarfire.org)

**David Scott**, Legislative Aide to Senator Olson, 907-465-3707, [david.scott@akleg.gov](mailto:david.scott@akleg.gov)

For media assistance, contact Heather McCausland, 907-355-0446, [heather@akaction.org](mailto:heather@akaction.org).

**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).

Fact sheets on flame retardants can be found at <http://www.akaction.org/toxic-free-childrens-act.html>.

Scientific studies Alaska Community Action on Toxics participated in testing children's products for flame retardants:

*Playing on Poisons-Harmful Flame Retardants in Children's Furniture* available at <http://www.ceh.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Kids-Furniture-Report-Press.pdf>

*Naptime Nightmares? Toxic Flame Retardants in Child Care Nap Mats* available at [http://www.akaction.org/Just the Facts/Press Releases/2013-02-15 Toxic Nap Report.pdf](http://www.akaction.org/Just%20the%20Facts/Press%20Releases/2013-02-15%20Toxic%20Nap%20Report.pdf)