Toxic-Free Children’s Act: Protect Alaska’s children from toxic exposures

Thanks to voices such as yours—momentum is building for our bill sponsored by Senator Olson, SB 151. At the bill’s first hearing, we had strong testimony from Alaskan moms, nurses, fire fighters, Native communities, sustainable businesses, ACAT members and concerned citizens around Alaska. As a result, SB 151 was passed out of the Health and Social Service Committee—in spite of the chemical industry lobby opposition from the American Chemistry Council.

Next up for the bill is the Alaskan Senate Judicial and Finance Committees. Please add your voice to encourage committee members to pass SB 151. Visit www.akaction.org to learn more, to take action, and to follow SB 151’s progress.

The Toxic-free Children’s Act (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 (genetic changes).

ACAT participated in Nationwide testing that showed tris and other harmful flame retardants are widely found in foam filled products marketed to children.

To Protect Children from Toxics: Take action and call your legislators—ask them to support SB 151 or chemical policy reform legislation in your state.
Visit www.akaction.org to learn more.

- We are exposed to toxic flame retardants through dust when foam covered in flame retardants breaks down in our furniture.
- To reduce your exposure: vacuum often (with a HEPA filter), mop with a wet mop, dust with a damp cloth, and wash hands often.

+ St. Lawrence Island Yupik youth Eli Klein sitting in a chair ACAT purchased from Walmart in Anchorage as part of a independent test of toxic flame retardants in children’s foam furniture.

The Toxic-Free Children’s Act (SB 151) would prevent the sale of children’s furniture in Alaska containing toxic tris flame retardants.

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We Want

Stronger Chemical Laws

We have the right to know which toxic chemicals we are exposed to every day. The primary federal law governing chemicals, the Toxic Substances Control Act of 1976 (TSCA), does not require chemical companies to show that the chemicals used in our products are safe for human health. Our national chemical laws do not even require disclosure of known toxic chemicals, such as flame retardants, in everyday products. Without disclosure laws, how can we know if a product contains harmful carcinogens, hormone disruptors, or other chemicals of concern so that we can make informed choices at the store?

Scientific evidence is increasingly showing that many common chemicals are associated with cancer clusters, asthma, learning disabilities, infertility, and birth defects.

With your support, we will continue to stop the two industry-friendly bills from moving forward. We have slowed the Chemical Safety Improvement Act (CSIA/S. 1009) in the Senate, yet there is a draft House bill—the Chemicals in Commerce Act to keep a close watch on. We do not support these bills because they do not protect vulnerable populations, such as children, and pregnant women from toxic chemicals. Both industry-written bills fail to adequately protect “hot spot” communities such as those on St. Lawrence Island which have been disproportionately harmed by toxic chemicals. In addition, these bills would prevent states from passing their own laws to protect their citizens from harmful chemicals.

At the national stroller brigade (see the photo to the left), members of our delegation met with Senators Lisa Murkowski and Mark Begich to hand deliver hundreds of your petitions plus resolutions from the Native villages of Gambell and Savoonga on St. Lawrence Island in support of strengthening the Chemical Safety Improvement Act. The St. Lawrence Island communities introduced “Resolution 13-23” which passed at the 2013 Alaska Federation of Natives Convention.

Please stay tuned for updates on federal chemicals policy reform, and how you can join our work to ensure that any proposed reform protects public health and the environment. Ask Senators Begich and Murkowski to enact stronger legislation to protect vulnerable people and communities from exposure to harmful chemicals.

These Alaskan women demand stronger chemical reform than the industry-written Chemical Safety Improvement Act (CSIA/S. 1009) co-sponsored by Senators Begich and Murkowski.

The Stroller Brigade for Safer Chemicals was coordinated by the Safer Chemicals Healthy Families Coalition.

In this photo, from left to right is Patrice Lee, Fairbanks mother and Child Advocate; Tiffany Inmingan, St. Lawrence Island; Susan Walsh, Nurse and Ex-President, Alaska Nurses Association; Patti Saunders, Advocate for Autism and Other Learning Disabilities Community (and now the new Development Director at ACAT); Charlotte Jane Kava, mother and Community Health Researcher in St. Lawrence Island, ACAT; and Maricarmen Cruz-Guilloty, Environmental Health and Justice Coordinator at ACAT with Senator Begich. Thank you to these amazing women for making the long journey to speak with our Senators on behalf of all of us.

Our mission is to assure justice by advocating for environmental and community health.
We believe that everyone has the right to clean air, clean water, and toxic-free food
Soft Scrub Recipe
1 cup baking soda
1/4 cup liquid castile soap
2 tsp. vegetable glycerin (a preservative)
2-4 drops lavender or tea tree essential oil (unless you are allergic)

Mix ingredients together and store for up to two years in a sealed glass jar. Perfect to use on stoves, bathtubs, and tiles. For tough jobs, spray with vinegar and let the it sit before cleaning with the soft scrub.

Fabric Softener Sachet
½ cup baking soda
1 tbs. arrowroot powder
1 tbs. cornstarch
1-3 drops your favorite essential oil (unless you are allergic)

Mix and then spoon onto a square piece of fabric and tie tightly. Add sachet to dryer cycle. Refill when fragrance fades.

Use to replace fabric softeners which contain phthalates- carriers for fragrance. Phthalates are linked to adverse effects on male children, reduced sperm count in adult men, and increased allergic symptoms and asthma in children. Check out www.diynatural.com for more non-toxic tips.

“Thank you for a very important workshop regarding our health and environment.

This was an eye-opening workshop for me and I also learned a lot about the food we eat. Also the toxics that we use in our homes which I thought would not exist. During that workshop I was on my second month as the Environmental Coordinator for our community.

I will share what I have learned in your workshop and spread it throughout our community. Again, Thank you” - Roderick Phillip, Environmental Coordinator from Native Village of Kongiganak.

Environmental Health Workshop for Tribal Environmental Leaders
ACAT coordinated this workshop with the Association of Village Council Presidents and UAA Professor Dr. Frank von Hippel to train community leaders from Chevak, Tuntutuliak, Kongiganak, Scammon Bay, Bethel, Nunapitchuk, Tumunak, and Napakiak. Presentations included community based participatory research, children's environmental health, endocrine disruptors, community mapping, and green cleaning.

Visit our website for more green cleaning recipes at www.akaction.org
Introducing Our New Staff

**Shelley Klein Apatiki, Administrative Assistant Organizer**
Shelley is a bilingual St. Lawrence Island Yupik who lives in Anchorage. She joined the ACAT team in October. In addition to her administrative duties she helps with ACAT’s research and advocacy work with the people of St. Lawrence Island. Prior to coming to ACAT, Shelley worked as an administrative assistant at the Alaska Native Medical Center. Before leaving the Native Village of Gambell, St. Lawrence Island, she served as a teacher aide, community health aide, and medic for the Alaska National Guard. Her favorite comfort food is mangtak—bowhead whale skin.

“The best thing about working at ACAT is the opportunity to work with people from St. Lawrence Island, where I’m from. And I love learning new things, which is good because there’s so much to learn about toxic chemicals and contaminated military sites, just to start with.”

**What’s the toughest toxic product for you to give up?** “Cosmetics. My late husband, who was a biology teacher, used to read the labels and tell me what was good to buy and what was not. I’ve tried to buy products that you’d think were safe based on their brand name, but I’m learning from my co-workers that I have to dig deeper to find things that are really free from toxics.”

![Eli and Alana Klein, Shelley’s beautiful grandchildren join our toxic-free campaign!](image)

**Patti Saunders, Development Director**
Patti joined the ACAT board in 2004 and served on the Fundraising Committee and as Board Treasurer until 2013. She joined ACAT’s staff in January. Patti is a European American who came to Anchorage in 1986 to serve as staff attorney for Trustees for Alaska. She was the Development Director at The Arc of Anchorage from 1999 to 2013, where in addition to her development work she helped to raise awareness about the link between environmental contaminants and developmental disabilities. Patti’s favorite comfort food is cinnamon raisin toast with butter.

“I like the way respect is incorporated into everything we do – we respect the earth, we respect the people who seek our help, and we respect each other here at the office. In my experience, that last part is hard to find in a workplace, and it makes ACAT a joyful place to come to work every morning.”

**Toxic product Patti is having the hardest time giving up:** “That would be the polymer clay I use to make beads. As far as I know, there is no suitable alternative. I only bake them when I can open every window in the house to get good ventilation.”

**ACAT’s Green Cleaning Service**
Our Anchorage area green cleaning service is a safe and effective alternative for your home and office. We use 100% non-toxic cleaners and methods to protect people and pets from harmful chemicals in your indoor environment. Call ACAT at 907-222-7714 or email antonio@akaction.org to set up a green cleaning in Anchorage.

**Green Cleaning Workshops**
Bring our green cleaning or environmental health workshops to your community.
We offer our sincere gratitude to all of the individuals and businesses that have assisted us in helping to alleviate the food crisis on St. Lawrence Island this winter.

Every household in Savoonga and Gambell received frozen meat packages right before the holidays. Due to the air freight carrier’s revenue freight during the holidays which took precedence, the remaining food was delivered later and included rice, flour, and other needed staples.

Thank you to the Food Bank of Alaska Co-op Program, Costco, Express Yourself Expeditor, Everts Air Cargo, and to Bering Air for their generous donations of food, expediting, and shipping to St. Lawrence Island.

ACAT would also like to acknowledge the leaders of the communities of Gambell and Savoonga for their guidance and Sivuqaq, Inc. for their generous donation. We honor the many individual donors for their support and Caleb Z. Behn of Ratcliff & Company LLP from North Vancouver BC for spearheading a crowd-source funding campaign on Indiegogo.

We have been humbled to witness how everything fell into place thanks to all of your support and we are grateful that together we had this opportunity to help make a difference in this time of need for our St. Lawrence Island families and friends.

Congratulations to the whaling captains who were able to provide traditional food for their villages with two bowhead whales. The economic crisis for the community from the loss of income from walrus ivory and the food crisis as a result of low walrus harvest continues – but due to your generosity we helped feed our families and friends during their time of need!

Igamsiqayugvikamsi - thank you! We wish you a peaceful and joyful year!

A message from Harriet Penayah, Yupik Elder
Savoonga, St. Lawrence Island, AK and ACAT Board Member

We live in a world in which we need to share responsibility. It’s easy to say it’s not my child, not my community, not my world and not my problem. Then there are those who see the need and respond.

I consider those people my heroes. People who try hard helping other people. When we genuinely connect with people from the earliest days of our lives. Simple acts return big rewards. So I’d like to thank each and every one of you who give their time to other people.

I’d also thank our young people who spend their time at North East Cape leaving their families to work for this summer.

I want to thank each and every one of you who give your time to do your work. So—you are all my heroes.

This is how we try to keep the positive connection between youth and adults to form a powerful foundation for the future.
Together We Are Stronger—please join ACAT today!
Donations doubled with a generous matching grant from Groundswell’s Catalyst Fund.

Name: ______________________________________________
Organization/Business: ________________________________
Address: ____________________________________________
City, State Zip: _______________________________________
Email: ______________________________________________
Phone: ____________________________ □ Please call me
□ $500  □ $250  □ $100  □ $50  □ $35
□ $______  □ Call me I’d like to set up monthly donations.

Send checks payable to ACAT to:
505 West Northern Lights Blvd., Ste. 205; Anchorage, AK 99503
Or donate online at www.akaction.org.

Alaska Community Action on Toxics is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and all contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Generations At Risk:
Toxic Chemicals and Effects on Children, Reproductive Health, and Future Generations, with Dr. Tracey Woodruff

You are invited to a series of free events with pre-eminent scientist and speaker Dr. Tracey Woodruff, Director of University of California at San Francisco’s Program on Reproductive Health and the Environment.

Tuesday, March 25th in Anchorage
• Pediatric Grand Rounds: 8:30-9:30 am at Providence Cancer Center, Conf. Rm 2281.
• Reproductive Health Roundtable Luncheon: Noon-1:00 pm, ANTHC, Conference Room 3.
• CHE-AK Call: 3:00-4:00 pm, sign up at www.akaction.org/?p=2812 or call (907) 222-7714.
• Public Lecture: 7:00-9:00 pm at UAA in Fine ARTS 150. This event is co-sponsored by the University of Alaska Anchorage Departments of Biology and Health Sciences.

Wednesday, March 26th in Juneau
• Lunch & Learn: Noon-1:00 pm at State Capitol Butrovich Room 205.
• Lecture & Toxic Hot Seat film showing: 6:30-9:30 pm at Gold Town Nickelodeon.
  Give Toxics the Boot with Dr. Tracey Woodruff at 6:30 pm and Toxic Hot Seat, the movie at 7:45 pm.

If you can’t make one of these events in person, please join the free CHE-AK call, on 3/25 from 3:00-4:00 pm, for a discussion on evaluating prenatal exposures to environmental chemicals and related adverse pregnancy outcomes, and characterizing developmental risks. Learn how children and pregnant women are especially vulnerable to exposures from harmful chemicals found in everyday products. Learn about the latest scientific evidence linking exposure to environmental chemicals during critical and sensitive windows of development. Sign up at www.akaction.org/?p=2812.
Upcoming Events:

Generations at Risk with Dr. Tracey Woodruff

Soil and Compost Science for the Anchorage Gardener
4/26-27, 10:00 am – 3:00 pm both days at the Russian Jack Chalet, Anchorage; bring a sack lunch. Hands-on activities, local professional speakers, learn to test your soil, use the right additives (such as compost tea), and design a compost system that works for you! Email garden@akaction.org

Honoring Minamata disease victims in Japan— with an International Mercury Treaty

We joined our friends from the International POPs elimination Network (IPEN) in Japan to honor the Minamata disease victims and to advocate for prompt and effective ratification of the Minamata Convention on Mercury (“Mercury Treaty”). The treaty is named after the place where thousands of people were poisoned by mercury in the 1950s. While not as strong as we had hoped for, the Mercury Treaty shows international recognition that mercury pollution is a serious threat to human health and the environment. On November 6, 2013 the United States became the first nation to ratify the Mercury Treaty.

Ms. Shinobu Sakamoto with ACAT Environmental Health and Justice Coordinator Maricarmen Cruz-Guilloty. Ms. Sakamoto is one of the first people diagnosed with Minamata disease and is an environmental health and justice activist. Read more at Maricarmen’s Vermont Law School blog post at http://ow.ly/uGwsH.