September Newsletter

Upcoming Webinar

TOMORROW, Sept 18, CHE-Alaska will host a webinar on *Chemicals and Children's Health: The Need for Action*. Children are uniquely vulnerable to harmful chemicals in air, food, water, and everyday products. Scientists Dr. Philip Landrigan and Dr. Tracey Woodruff, with moderator Nsedu Obot Witherspoon, will share the latest science and solutions to protect children's health and future.

Register

Check Out CHE's New Science Snippets

These videos are short clips of past CHE-Alaska webinars to give you a preview of the webinar's content.

Dr. Jennifer Orme-Zavaleta, former Principal Deputy Assistant Administrator for Science in ORD and Agency Science Advisor, discusses what it means to cut EPA's Office of Research and Development (ORD) and how it

Kate Tasker, Director of the UCSF Industry Documents Library, provides a quick overview of the Industry Documents Library and how to use it.

💻 **Kate Tasker on Industry Documents Library**

could affect environmental health research and agency decisions.

💻 **Dr. Jennifer Orme-Zavaleta on EPA's Office of Research and Development (ORD)**

Honoring Suicide Prevention Month

This September, we join in honoring Suicide Prevention Month and in recognizing the urgent need to protect mental health and well-being in our communities. Mental health is deeply connected to our environment and community health—our climate, the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the lands we depend on for sustenance and cultural connection.

Communities harmed by toxic pollution often face disproportionate mental health challenges, including stress, anxiety, and despair that might lead to higher suicide risk. These challenges are compounded for Indigenous peoples and those living in rural Alaska, where access to mental health care can be limited.

Researchers are finding growing evidence of the linkage between chemical exposures and children's mental health. For example, exposures to chemicals such as lead, PFAS, and BPA are known to increase child mental health symptoms like anxiety and depression. There is also a growing body of research showing that childhood exposure to air pollution can negatively impact mental health. In addition, there is increasing research and awareness regarding the emotional toll of climate change on youth.

At ACAT, we believe that prevention of harmful exposures to toxic chemicals is a critical part of creating a healthier environment, body, mind, and spirit. Together with our partners, we continue to advocate for safer, healthier communities where everyone can thrive — physically, emotionally, and culturally. Please remember, together we are stronger, and never hesitate to ask for help.

We are in the process of preparing an informational fact sheet and workshops about the evidence concerning links between harmful chemical exposures and mental health. Please contact us if you're interested in further conversations on this topic or if you have information to share.

ACAT Updates

Toward Achieving a New International Treaty on Plastics

ACAT is working from the local to global level to address the plastics crisis. From our Plastics-Free 907 campaign, our statewide legislative initiatives, and work on the new international treaty on plastics, we are committed to protecting our environment and health from these dangerous materials and associated chemicals. ACAT staff members Vi Waghiyi and Pamela Miller participated in the resumed fifth session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC-5.2) that took place in Geneva, Switzerland, from August 5 to 15, 2025, with over 2,600 participants, including delegates from 183 countries and nearly 1,000 observers. The mandate was to finalize a legally binding international treaty to end plastic pollution across its full life cycle —from design and production to disposal. Our purpose there, alongside our partners with the International Pollutants Elimination Network (IPEN), was to ensure negotiation of a strong health-protective treaty that includes:

Globally binding controls on products and hazardous plastic chemicals (chemicals of concern) through the life cycle.

Global controls on plastic overproduction, including toxic emissions from primary plastic production.

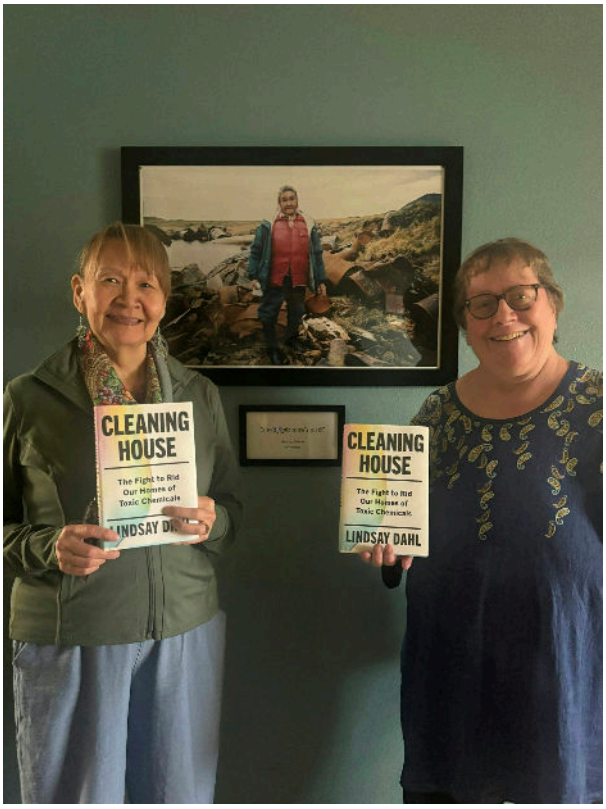
Provisions to protect human health and to monitor the impacts on human health.

We were there to educate delegates about the hazards posed by plastics in the Arctic and threats to health. The Arctic is warming at a rate four times faster than the rest of the planet, intensifying the mobilization and transport of chemicals and microplastics into the Arctic and releasing them at an alarming rate as sea ice, glaciers, and permafrost melt. The concentrations of microplastics in the Arctic Ocean basin are higher than in any other ocean basin in the world. The Arctic is both a source and sink for toxic chemicals produced throughout the cycle of plastics. Microplastics carry toxic chemicals, additives, and absorbents into remote regions such as the Arctic.

Vi Waghiyi informed delegates: “Microplastics and chemicals threaten our food security, our lands, air and waters and the health of Indigenous peoples and our future generations. The chemicals and microplastics present in our bodies are passed on to our Indigenous children and harm their ability to learn our languages, songs, stories, and knowledge.”

As stated by ACAT Executive Director and IPEN Co-Chair Pamela Miller: “Decades of science shows that hazardous plastic chemicals are fueling a global health crisis, causing cancers, disrupting hormones, impairing fertility, harming brain development, and damaging ecosystems. We cannot continue to favor oil industry profits over the health of our children and grandchildren. Going forward, the world needs international cooperation to resolve the global plastics crisis and promote the healthy environments all children and families deserve.”

Although the negotiating session in Geneva did not result in a final treaty because oil and plastics producing countries, including the U.S., blocked critical measures necessary for an effective treaty, we will stand strong in holding the nations of the world and industry accountable for a finalizing a legally-binding and health-protective treaty,



Cleaning House by Lindsay Dahl

We're excited to share that a new book, *Cleaning House* by Lindsay Dahl, features stories from ACAT's own Executive Director, Pam Miller, and Vi Waghiyi, Environmental Health and Justice Program Director and an Indigenous Yupik advocate, mother and grandmother from Sivuqaq.

This powerful book highlights the fight for safer products and environmental justice, while uplifting frontline leaders like Pam and Vi, and other policy experts and scientists.

Order Here

Consider Donating

Every Alaskan deserves clean water to drink, clean air to breathe, and food that's safe to eat. You can help ensure this future for all Alaskans with a donation of just $5 or $10 a month, the cost of one or two cups of coffee!

Will you join ACAT in our mission to protect Alaskan families for future generations by becoming a monthly donor?

It's easy! Just select YES when asked "would you like to make it a recurring donation?" on ACAT's DONATE page.

For more information or other ways to give, please call Anne Gore at 907-222-7714 x113.

We're Hiring!

ACAT is currently hiring, open until filled:

➤ Protecting Future Generations Coordinator

Job-Announcement-PFG-Coordinator.pdf

Learn more and apply

Thank you for joining us!

Farm Stand with Yarducopia by ACAT

Various tabling events including Subsistence is Resistance, AK Voter Hub, Wild Salmon Day, Blue Market Harvest Fest and more

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ACAT
Alaska Community Action on Toxics

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