



ALASKA INTER-TRIBAL COUNCIL
Advocating for Tribal Governments Across Alaska

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Representative Kurt Olson and Members of the Committee
House Labor and Commerce Committee
State Capitol
Juneau AK, 99801

March 10, 2011

Dear Chair Olson and Members of the House Labor and Commerce Committee:

The Alaska Inter-Tribal Council is writing in support of HB 63, a bill that would prohibit the manufacture and sale of toxic flame retardants in common consumer products. The Alaska Inter-Tribal Council is a tribally-governed organization advocating on behalf of 232 Federally Recognized tribal governments throughout Alaska. We recognize increasing evidence that flame retardants, such as polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs) named in HB 63, are being found in the Arctic. We are concerned about PBDEs leaving a lasting toxic legacy in people and the environment.

PBDEs are potent toxins that persist in the environment and bioaccumulate in the food chain and in human tissues. They can travel long distances and move readily between the water, soil and air. PBDEs are associated with a variety of negative toxic effects including memory impairment, learning and behavioral problems, the disruption of thyroid hormone balance and reproductive health issues. In Alaska, PBDEs have been detected in seabird eggs, marine mammals, otters, and polar bears. The presence of such chemicals in wildlife is cause of concern, not only for the survival and well-being of wildlife, but for the human consequences of bioaccumulative exposure through the food we eat.

We need to enact legislation to phase out PBDEs from consumer products. Fortunately, fire safety can be achieved without the use of toxic chemicals because there are safe, economical, and effective alternatives to PBDEs currently in widespread use.

Eliminating most uses of PBDE flame retardants is possible and an important step to protecting public health.

Thank you,

David Harrison
David Harrison
Executive Director
Alaska Inter-Tribal Council