

# The TRUST

The Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority

November 29, 2011

Senator Bill Wielechowski  
716 W 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Suite 540  
Anchorage, AK 99501

**RE: CSSB 27 (HSS)– Flame Retardant and Toxic Chemicals**

Dear Senator Wielechowski,

The Alaska Mental Health Trust is writing in support of the Health and Social Services Committee Substitute for Senate Bill 27 (CSSB 27(HSS)), which would ban the manufacture, sale, and distribution of products containing the fire retardant polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs) in the State of Alaska.

The Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority (The Trust) appreciates your leadership efforts to ensure Alaskans, in particular children, will not be exposed to products containing PBDEs in the future. Unfortunately right now, PBDEs are commonly found in electronics, such as televisions and computers, kitchen appliances, some furniture foams, and other textiles. While the use of PBDEs as a fire retardant is important, it is highly toxic to people and the environment. The chemical characteristics of PBDEs are such that they persist in the environment for long periods of time, accumulate in the fatty tissues of exposed organisms, and can act as endocrine disrupters.

Alaskans are particularly exposed to PBDEs in comparison to other locations. For example, the highest known concentrations of PBDEs in human populations in the Arctic were found in Yupik women from the Yukon-Kuskokwim region.<sup>i</sup> The Trust is particularly concerned about this issue because studies have shown that prenatal exposure to PBDEs can cause serious mental and physical development problems. Although some large corporations like Wal-Mart have started to voluntarily require that all of their products are PBDE free, we cannot wait for companies to make the decision on their own time.

The Alaska Mental Health Trust strongly supports CSSB 27 (HSS) in order to help not only the consumers of today, but for the potential consumers of tomorrow. We appreciate your advocacy on behalf of Alaskans in particular those who are Trust beneficiaries.

Sincerely,



Jeff Jessee, CEO

---

<sup>i</sup> Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP). 2009. AMAP Assessment 2009: Human Health in the Arctic, pg.93. Available: [www.amap.no](http://www.amap.no) [Accessed 31 December 2009].