

**Advisory Board on Alcoholism
and Drug Abuse**



Alaska Mental Health Board

ALASKA MENTAL HEALTH BOARD
ADVISORY BOARD ON ALCOHOLISM AND DRUG ABUSE
431 NORTH FRANKLIN STREET, SUITE 200
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99801
(907) 465-8920

January 24, 2012

Senator Kevin Meyer
Alaska State Capitol, Room 103
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Re: Letter of Support for SB 140

Dear Senator Meyer,

The Advisory Board on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse appreciates your recognition of the need to regulate cathinone and similar substances marketed as “bath salts.” These substances pose a serious risk to the health and welfare of Alaskans and should be Schedule IIA controlled substances.

Cathinone, methcathinone, and methylenedioxypropylamphetamine (MDPV) produce amphetamine-like effects. Commonly marketed as “bath salts,” these drugs can be inhaled, ingested, injected, or smoked. The expected effect is a sort of euphoria, but these chemicals also have dangerous effects. “Bath salts” substances have been reported to cause extreme anxiety and paranoia, delusional thinking, visual and auditory hallucinations leading to violent outbursts, self-mutilation, and suicidal thoughts and actions.

Nationwide, there were 6,072 calls to poison centers about designer drugs labeled as “bath salts” in 2011.¹ In 2010, that number was 303 calls.² This reflects the rapid increase in use of these synthetic drugs in the United States. In response, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration invoked its emergency scheduling powers in September 2011 to make possession and sale of mephedrone, MDPV, and methylone (common “bath salts” substances”) illegal. This emergency regulation will expire in September 2012. State and city governments across the country are taking similar action through emergency powers, ordinances, and legislation in an effort to protect health and safety.³

The Advisory Board on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse supports SB 140 and we appreciate your work on behalf of Alaskans.

Sincerely,

Robert Coghill, Jr. Chairman
Advisory Board on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse

¹ American Association of Poison Control Centers report on “closed human exposures calls to poison centers about exposures to bath salts as of December 31, 2011,” updated January 5, 2012. Available online at <http://www.aapcc.org/dnn/Portals/0/Bath%20Salts%20Data%20for%20Website%201.5.2012.pdf>.

² *Id.*

³ Nevada’s Board of Pharmacy just restricted “bath salts” substances through its emergency powers in January, 2012. Maine, Louisiana, Kentucky, Ohio, Delaware, and nearly three-quarters of U.S. states have acted to prohibit sale and/or possession of these substances. The Municipality of Anchorage passed an ordinance in October 2011 to prohibit manufacture, sale, and possession of these substances.