



Representative Geran Tarr
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99801

February 21, 2019

Dear Representative Tarr:

On behalf of the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN), I would like to thank you for your dedication to protecting the health of Alaska citizens through your work on HB 27 regarding toxic flame-retardant chemicals.

Cancer prevention is a critical element of the mission of ACS CAN. Primary prevention, which has traditionally focused on factors such as tobacco use, nutrition and physical activity, and sun exposure, also includes understanding and minimizing cancers related to human exposure to toxic substances and pollutants. Relative to your HB 27, exposure to various flame-retardant chemicals has been found to have serious health effects. According to the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, exposure to many of these chemicals has been associated with adverse health effects including cancer, endocrine and thyroid disruption, impacts to the immune system, reproductive toxicity, adverse effects on fetal and child development and neurologic function.

Exposure occurs because flame retardant chemicals are often added or applied to upholstered furniture, foam, mattresses, carpets, curtains, electronics, construction materials and transportation products. The chemicals migrate out and into air and dust where they are inhaled, ingested, and absorbed into our bodies. Many toxic flame retardants have been removed from the market or are no longer produced. However, because they do not easily break down, they can remain persistent in the environment for years. They can also build up in people and animals over time.

In addition to firefighters, children may be particularly vulnerable to the toxic effects of these chemicals, because their brain and other organs are still developing. Hand-to-mouth behavior and proximity to the floor increases the potential of children to be exposed to flame retardants. Researchers have found that children have higher concentrations of flame retardants in their bodies than adults. ACS CAN supports this ordinance. I look forward to Alaska joining other states that have taken action on flame retardant chemicals to protect the public.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Emily Nenon", is written over a horizontal line.

Emily Nenon
Alaska Government Relations Director
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network