



Alaska Nurses Association
3701 E. Tudor Road, Suite 208
Anchorage, Alaska 99507
(907) 274-0827
www.aknurse.org

March 29, 2019

Dear Members of the Alaska State Legislature:

We are writing on behalf of the Alaska Nurses Association in strong support of HB 27, the Toxic-Free Firefighters and Children Act (TFFCA), which will protect the health of Alaskans by prohibiting the manufacture, sale, and distribution of children's products and furniture containing chemical flame retardants. If passed, the Toxic-Free Firefighters and Children Act will phase out a class of harmful organohalogen, organophosphorous, nitrogen-based, and nanoscale chemicals and protect our children's futures and their potential to grow up safe and healthy.

The ill-health effects of exposure to chemical flame retardants are well-documented and researched. Yet, they are found widely in our homes and environment, commonly used in children's products, carpeting, and home furniture. Harmful impacts include developmental disabilities, thyroid function impairment, miscarriages, birth defects, and cancer. The national biomonitoring program conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that 97 percent of people living in the United States have measurable quantities of flame retardants in their blood. This persistent exposure contaminates fish, wildlife, and people. Simply put, these flame retardants are harmful to the health of our environment, our community, our neighbors, and our children.

Alaskan children's health is already vulnerable and we should be doing everything that we can to ensure a healthy future. Birth defects in our state are twice as high as in the United States as a whole, and Alaska Native infants have a doubled risk. HB 27 will protect children's health by preventing exposure to known toxic chemicals.

This is a tremendous opportunity to make a difference to future generations in our community. The more scientists look, the more they are finding negative impacts even at very low levels of exposure to toxic chemicals. Prenatal exposures to these toxic chemicals at levels commonly found in households have been shown to be associated with adverse neurodevelopmental effects in young children.

Fortunately, there are safer, economically viable alternatives available. This means Alaskans won't have to sacrifice their health – and will help make our state a healthier, less toxic place to live and raise a family for generations to come.

As nurses, we must protect the health of our children, friends, and neighbors. The Alaska Nurses Association strongly supports HB 27 and we urge you to pass the TFFCA during this legislative session for a healthy Alaska, free of toxic flame retardants.

Sincerely,

Karen Morton, RN
Legislative Chair
Alaska Nurses Association

Jane Erickson, RN, CCRN
President, Board of Directors
Alaska Nurses Association

Donna Phillips, BSN, RN
Chair, Labor Council
Alaska Nurses Association