



NATIVE VILLAGE OF SAVOONGA • P.O. BOX 120, SAVOONGA, AK 99769 • PHONE 984-6414 • FAX 984-6027

March 11, 2010

To: Honorable Senators and Representatives of the Alaska Legislature

From: Native Village of Savoonga

Regarding: Support of HB 385 and SB 295

Dear Legislator:

The Native Village of Savoonga is submitting this letter in support of HB 385 and SB 295, legislation to phase out the manufacturing, sale, and distribution of products that contain polybrominated biphenyl ethers (PBDEs). We believe that action on this class of persistent toxic chemicals is necessary to protect the health and well-being of our people and future generations. We must do everything we can to protect the health of our children who are especially vulnerable because exposure to these chemicals can harm their developing brain and their ability to learn. We know that there is also increasing evidence that links exposure to PBDEs with other serious health problems such as permanent developmental disorders, reproductive harm, thyroid disease, and certain types of cancer.

We are aware that PBDEs are transported on wind and ocean currents into our region and are accumulating in the north/Arctic at an alarming rate. PBDEs are now found in our traditional foods, including fish, seabird eggs, and marine mammals. Our people are also at risk because of the presence of PBDEs in products that we use in our homes and that we may be experiencing higher exposures because our homes are closed in for a greater part of the year than in lower latitudes. We are concerned that in a recent study of the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program, Yupik women from the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta had the highest levels of PBDEs of any human population of the circumpolar Arctic. It is necessary to take action to prevent exposures to PBDEs and other persistent, bioaccumulative and toxic chemicals.

We urge you to take this opportunity to pass this important piece of legislation in order to protect our health and the health of all Alaskans. Thank you for your attention to our

concerns.

Sincerely, *Verna Immerson Vice President*
For Kenneth Kingeekuk

President, IRA Council, Native Village of Savoonga

From: Roxanne Chan [mailto:chan.rox@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, March 17, 2010 12:46 AM
To: chan.rox@gmail.com
Subject: support for SB 295

Senator Bettye Davis and Members of the Committee
Senate Health and Social Services Committee
State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

March 16, 2010

Dear Chair Davis and Members of the Senate Health and Social Services Committee:

Thank you for taking the opportunity to hear testimony on SB 295, an important bill to phase out octa-, penta-, and decaBDE from certain uses, for which safer, effective alternatives are in widespread, successful use. I am unable to attend the hearing scheduled on Wednesday, March 17, 2010 but appreciate the opportunity to submit written support of this bill. I urge that the Committee support this bill.

My name is Roxanne Chan and I am a Registered Nurse and Licensed Acupuncturist currently residing in Anchorage. Since moving to Alaska in 2005, I have had the opportunity to practice nursing in communities such as Barrow, Nome, and Anchorage. I also recently had the opportunity to participate in a biomonitoring study where my blood was tested for PBDEs.

In October of 2009, the report *Hazardous Chemicals in Health Care: A Snapshot of Chemicals in Doctors and Nurses* (

<http://www.psr-la.org/files/hazardous-chemicals-in-health-care.pdf>), was released documenting the levels of different chemicals of twelve doctors and eight nurses from around the country including myself and a physician from Alaska. My results showed that I have at least 19 different PBDEs in my body including the ones this bill aims to phase out.

As someone who is generally aware of chemical exposure from consumer products, I was alarmed to see my results showing that these chemicals were found in my blood. PBDEs have been linked to a wide range of health problems and it made me wonder if my exposure to chronic low levels due to consumer products could result in adverse health in the future.

As I am sure you are aware, a central tenant of health care is "put simply" first, do not harm. Allowing chemicals on the market which are correlated to adverse health effects is contrary to this principle. Reducing chemical exposures, through policy measures such as SB 295, is an important primary prevention measure to help improve the health of our state overall.

I hope that you will join me and others in supporting SB 295, an important step in reducing Alaskans exposure to toxic chemicals and creating an environment where people can be healthier.

Sincerely,

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Roxanne Chan, RN, LAc

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From: Karen McLane [mailto:gusskimo@yahoo.com]
Sent: Saturday, March 20, 2010 9:17 AM
To: Senator_Bettye_Davis@legis.state.ak.us; Senator_Joe_Paskvan@legis.state.ak.us;
Senator_Fred_Dyson@legis.state.ak.us; Senator_Johnny_Ellis@legis.state.ak.us;
Senator_Joe_Thomas@legis.state.ak.us; Senator_Bill_Wielechowski@legis.state.ak.us
Subject: Senate Bill 295 support

Dear Senators,

I am writing regarding this important piece of legislation that Sen Wielechowski has submitted for approval. I live in Nome and have for most of my life. My family moved here when I was 4 years old and I graduated from Nome Beltz High School in 1984. I continued my education to the Masters level in Nursing Science and am now back in Nome teaching Community Health Aides so we can have medical services in our remotest villages. As health care providers we are acutely aware of the health hazards that toxins have in our environment and how they get there.

We have the highest rates of cancers in Alaska. I have seen many, many thyroid cancers and gastrointestinal types of cancers as well. It is my belief that toxins in our Native people's environment play a part in these high rates as does tobacco use.

SB 295 would require the phase out of polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs). PBDEs are toxic flame retardant chemicals added to plastics, foam products, and textiles to make them difficult to burn. The EPA is concerned that certain PBDEs are persistent, bioaccumulative, and toxic to both humans and the environment. The American Public Health Association and International Association of Fire Fighters have urged the phase out of PBDEs. Safer and economically viable alternatives are available and are already being used by some manufacturers of computers and other products.

Please think about the affects this particular toxin has on the health of our people and vote to phase it out of use.

Thank you for your help,

Karen McLane FNP-BC
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Nome, AK 99762
(907) 304-3768
gusskimo@yahoo.com

From: Simon, Clover [mailto:Clover.Simon@ppgnw.org]
Sent: Friday, March 19, 2010 5:46 PM
To: Senator_Bettye_Davis@legis.state.ak.us; Senator_Joe_Paskvan@legis.state.ak.us;
Senator_Fred_Dyson@legis.state.ak.us; Senator_Johnny_Ellis@legis.state.ak.us;
Senator_Joe_Thomas@legis.state.ak.us
Subject: Senate Bill 295

Senators:

On behalf of Planned Parenthood of the Great Northwest, our thousands of supporters in Alaska and the more than 9,000 women and men we provide services to I am writing to urge you to support and pass SB 295. Providing Alaskans with a safe environment in which to raise their children is paramount to our mission and will help ensure that when families do plan to have children they will be the healthiest possible. With safe alternatives that still provide excellent fire protection there is no reason not to pass this important legislation. PPGNW is a proud member of the Healthy Families Alliance with many other agencies across Alaska, formed to promote fundamental reform to current chemical laws to protect children, workers, communities and the environment. As PPGNW 'goes green' in our health centers we hope that we can help promote cleaner, toxic free environments for everyone in the State. This bill is the first step.

PBDEs are toxic, endocrine-disrupting flame retardant chemicals added to plastics, foam products, and textiles. They leach from household products and we are exposed through foods, indoor air, and household dust.

A brand new study conducted by researchers at Columbia University showed that prenatal exposure to PBDEs at levels commonly found in households is associated with adverse neurodevelopmental effects in young children. The researchers found that "children with higher concentrations of PBDEs in their umbilical cord blood at birth scored lower on tests of mental and physical development between the ages of one and six. Developmental effects were particularly evident at four years of age, when verbal and full IQ scores were reduced 5.5 to 8.0 points for those with the highest prenatal exposures."

Thank you for hearing this important legislation and please do not hesitate to contact me directly if you would like further information on our position.

Clover

Clover Simon, MSW
Planned Parenthood of the Great Northwest
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Please note the Anchorage administrative offices have moved, find our new address above*

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