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Senator Bill Wielechowski
State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Senator Wielechowski:

The Arc of Anchorage would like to thank you for introducing SB 27, *"An Act relating to flame retardants and to the manufacture, sale, and distribution of products containing flame retardants; relating to bioaccumulative toxic chemicals; and providing for an effective date."* The Arc of Anchorage is a private not-for-profit organization that serves people with developmental disabilities and mental health issues so they can lead rich and productive lives. The Arc looks forward to a day when it is no longer needed because all preventable disabilities have been prevented, but we need legislative help to address prevention.

Learning and developmental disabilities influence the quality of life for affected children and their families, and also impose a heavy financial burden on the state through required Special Education, increased health care costs, lost work time for parents, and a lifelong loss of work productivity for severely affected children. Scientific evidence has demonstrated that some chemicals, including decaBDE, can cause learning and developmental disorders. We must not expose our children to toxicants that we know or suspect can harm their developing brains and bodies. We know safe alternatives can replace the need for these toxic chemicals without compromising fire safety.

Developing children are more susceptible to toxic exposures than adults. When certain exposures occur at certain times, sometimes even at very low doses, the development of children's brains, other organs, and reproductive, hormonal, and immune systems can be permanently altered. Recent evidence has shown children who had higher cord blood concentrations of polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs) scored lower on tests of mental and motor development at 1–4 and 6 years of age. This work was initiated based on a large body of research indicating that prenatal PBDE exposure has the potential to disrupt neurodevelopment.

PBDE residues, particularly highly brominated PBDEs such as deca-BDE, have been found consistently in tissue samples of both new mothers and their newborn infants, as well as in mothers' breast milk. Ingestion of contaminated milk is one of the two major routes of PBDE exposure in children, and there are concerns about the high concentrations ingested, given the

susceptibility of newborns. This trend has been found to occur around the globe. Yupik women from the Yukon Kuskokwim Delta of Alaska have the highest known concentrations of PBDEs in human populations in the Arctic.

Children rely on adults to keep them safe from harm. Therefore, it is up to us to do everything we can to keep them safe and to minimize their exposures to toxics. SB 27 is important legislation that will help protect children from needless exposures to this persistent, toxic chemical.

Thank you,



Patti Saunders
Director of Development
The Arc of Anchorage