



KAWERAK, INC.

April 3, 2019

REPRESENTING

Brevig Mission

Sitaisaq

Council

Diomede

Injalik

Elim

Niviarcaurluq

Gambell

Sivuqaq

Golovin

Chinik

King Island

Ugiuvak

Koyuk

Kuuyuk

Mary's Igloo

Qawiaraq

Nome Eskimo

Sitnasuak Inuit

Savoonga

Sivungaq

Shaktoolik

Saktuliq

Shishmaref

Qikiqtaq

Solomon

Anjuutaq

St. Michael

Taciq

Stebbins

Tapraq

Teller

Tala

Unalakleet

Unalaqliq

Wales

Kinigin

White Mountain

Igakuik /

Nutchirviq

Dear Co-Chair Representatives Tarr and Josephson and Members of the House Resources Committee:

I support HB 27, the Toxic-Free Children Act, a bill to protect the health of Alaska's children by preventing exposure to toxic flame retardant chemicals. This bill will prevent the manufacture, sale, and distribution of toxic and unnecessary flame retardant chemicals in children's products and home furniture. It will also require the labelling of children's products to inform people whether these products contain toxic flame retardant chemicals.

Chemical flame retardants are widely used in children's products, carpeting, and home furniture. These harmful chemicals are found in toys, nap mats, nursing pillows, changing pads, baby carriers, carpet padding, and upholstered furniture foam. Under current federal law, these toxic chemicals are virtually unregulated for their safety. Yet, these chemicals pose a serious public health threat, are particularly toxic to children, and do not provide a fire safety benefit. They have a range of harmful health effects, including cancer, learning disabilities, developmental impairment, and reproductive harm. Alaska Native people are more highly exposed to persistent, bioaccumulative chemicals, including many toxic flame retardants that contaminate our traditional foods. People of the north are also likely to be more highly exposed to harmful flame retardant chemicals that contaminate our indoor air and household dust. We also call your attention to the Alaska Federation of Natives Resolution 15-17 that passed in support of this legislation at the 2015 AFN Convention, the largest representative annual gathering in the United States of any Native peoples.

Our children are vulnerable to exposure and toxic health effects of these chemicals. We need to enact legislation to phase out harmful flame retardant chemicals from children's products and furniture. Fortunately, fire safety can be achieved without these toxic chemicals because there are safe, economical, and effective alternatives to toxic flame retardants.

Because of the lack of meaningful chemicals policy reform at the federal level, it is the responsibility of our Alaska State Legislature to take action in passing the Toxic-Free Children Act (HB 27) to protect the health of our children and our future generations. I urge you to support passage of HB 27 during this legislative session. Thank you for your consideration and leadership on this important public health issue.

Sincerely,

KAWERAK, INCORPORATED

Melanie Bahnke, President/CEO

KAWERAK, INC.

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Advancing the capacity of our people and tribes for the benefit of the region.