

Introduced by: Chuck Herman, Council Member

Date: March 8, 2016

Action: Does not Carry

Vote: 3-4

# CITY OF BETHEL

## Resolution # 16-11

### A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF OUR CHILDREN AND FIREFIGHTERS AND ENDORSE THE TOXIC FREE CHILDREN'S ACT

**WHEREAS,** the community of Bethel has recently suffered multiple outbreaks of fires in residential areas, and fire-safety and the men and women who serve as firefighters remain critical components of our community's safety and well-being;

**WHEREAS,** the mission of the Bethel City Council is to enhance and promote the cultural, social, and economic livelihood of the Bethel community;

**WHEREAS,** toxic exposures continue to threaten the health of our community-members, children, and firefighters, due to outdated laws at the State and Federal level;

**WHEREAS,** chemicals intended as fire-retardants and used in manufacturing of household goods are found in our traditional foods, our environment, our subsistence fish and game, our bodies, and our homes, even though these chemicals have never been produced in Alaska or the circumpolar Arctic;

**WHEREAS,** these chemicals are uniquely dangerous in areas where individuals spend a relatively high amount of time indoors in poorly ventilated areas, such as colder regions during the winter;

**WHEREAS,** research has further shown that our firefighters are uniquely at risk because when burned these chemicals are released into the air supply and permeate standard protective gear;

**WHEREAS,** firefighters have especially high rates of several types of cancer, including thyroid, bladder, prostate, testicular, breast, brain, multiple myeloma, and non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, and a recent study found that the rate of breast cancer among female firefighters aged 40-50 is six times the national average;

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**WHEREAS,** the Alaska State Legislature has already passed legislation acknowledging that firefighters with certain types of cancer may be presumed to have contracted that illness as a result of work-related activity and are eligible for significant payouts from the State;

**WHEREAS,** Senate Bill 111 will prevent the manufacture, sale, and distribution of ten toxic and unnecessary flame retardant chemicals in children's products and home furniture. It will also require the labeling 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 when breathed as smoke, and do not provide a fire safety benefit. They have a range of harmful effects, including cancer, learning disabilities, developmental impairment, and reproductive harm.

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Bethel City Council urges the Alaska State Legislature to protect the health of our children and firefighters by passing the Toxic Free Children's Act.