



INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE FIGHTERS

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**SCHEDULE 1 TO THE MINUTES OF
THE COMMUNITY SAFETY
COMMITTEE MEETING OF TUESDAY,
JUNE 12, 2007.**

PHONE: 613-567-8988

May 22, 2007

The Hon. Peter Julian, MP
House of Commons
Ottawa ON K1A 0A6

Dear Mr. Julian:

This letter on behalf of Canada's professional fire fighters is in strong support of your private member's motion, M-38, that calls on the federal government to completely phase out the production and import of items containing Polybrominated Diphenylethers (PBDEs).

The International Association of Fire Fighters, headquartered in Ottawa, Ontario and Washington, DC, represents more than 280,000 full-time professional fire fighters across North America, including 20,000 in Canada. Our union is concerned about health and safety of our members as well as the health and safety of all citizens. Accordingly, the IAFF believes that the passage of legislation banning brominated flame retardants, including Penta-, Octa-, and Deca-BDEs), is a step in the right direction for improving the health and safety of our fire fighters and the citizens we are sworn to protect.

One of the primary applications of PBDEs is as a flame retardant applied inside or onto many common household goods (furniture foam; plastic cabinets; computers and small appliance; consumer electronics; wire insulation; and back coatings for draperies and upholstery) to reduce and retard the amount of flame spread. While these chemicals inhibit the formation and spread of flames, they do not completely prevent fires. Unlike other flame retardants, when PBDEs burn they release dense fumes and black smoke that reduce visibility and a highly corrosive gas known as hydrogen bromide.

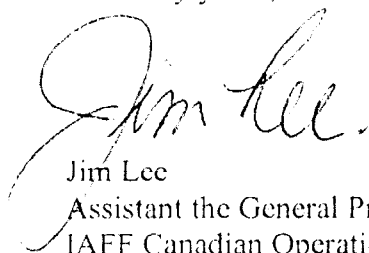
In addition, PBDEs produce highly toxic byproducts of incomplete combustion. Although use of flame retardants saves lives and property, there have been unintended consequences. There is evidence that PBDEs persist in the environment and accumulate in living organisms, as well as toxicological testing that indicates these chemicals may cause liver toxicity, thyroid toxicity, and neurodevelopmental toxicity.

Many studies involving fire fighters exposed to these and other toxic gases during active fire fighting, overhaul, and long term exposure from these chemicals penetrating protective gear, have found that fire fighters have a much greater risk of contracting cancer, heart and lung disease, and other debilitating diseases. While we support the concept of flame retardant chemicals, there are alternatives that do not contain bromine or chlorine and are much safer for fire fighters and the public than PBDEs.

The IAFF salutes those companies that have stopped using brominated flame retardants (such as Dell, Hewlett-Packard and Ikea) and are now using safer alternative fire retardants. These companies demonstrate that alternative flame-retardant technologies for achieving fire safety standards do exist and are readily available for other manufactured products.

For these reasons, the International Association of Fire Fighters fully supports your initiative in motion M-38 to completely phase out the production and import of items containing PBDEs in Canada.

Sincerely yours,



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Assistant the General President
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Gerry Huget, President, Saskatchewan Professional Fire Fighters Association
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Michael Hurley, President, IAFF Local 323 Burnaby