



INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE FIGHTERS®

EDWARD A. KELLY
General President

FRANK V. LÍMA
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March 29, 2023

Senator Jeff Merkley
U.S. Senate
531 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Representative Suzanne Bonamici
U.S. House of Representatives
2231 Rayburn House of Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Senator Merkley and Representative Bonamici,

On behalf of the 335,000 professional fire fighters and emergency medical responders of the International Association of Fire Fighters, I write in full support of the Alan Reinstein Ban Asbestos Now Act of 2022 (ARBAN Act). This important bill would end the importation, commercial use, and distribution of the widely known carcinogen which is directly responsible for asbestosis, mesothelioma, and other forms of cancer experienced by our nation's federal fire fighters.

As you know, the ARBAN Act is the most comprehensive asbestos ban legislation in over 30 years, and this critically needed legislation would

- Prohibit all six asbestos fibers plus Libby Amphibole, winchite, and richierite.
- Advance the asbestos utilizing industries' transition to non-asbestos technology.
- Establish mandatory asbestos reporting under EPA's *Chemical Data Reporting* rule, critical to informing fire fighters of the locations of these toxic fibers.
- Publicize the information to those who may be subject to the prohibition.

In recognition of the detrimental health impact of this toxic material, over seventy nations have an importation and use ban in place. However, the United States continues to import nearly 400 metric tons of harmful raw asbestos annually. Manufacturers continue to produce and sell asbestos holding products that end up in homes and businesses in every community. Fire fighters are repeatedly exposed to airborne asbestos fibers released when responding to fires and other hazardous conditions. Fire fighters experiencing exposure to airborne asbestos are 200 percent more likely to suffer from an asbestos related disease than the general public. As occupational cancers have risen to become the leading cause of death among fire fighters, the IAFF is committed to combatting this deadly disease on all fronts including strongly supporting the ARBAN Act which establishes a nationwide ban on asbestos.

The IAFF stands proudly alongside you as you introduce the ARBAN Act in the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives. I am confident the ARBAN Act will significantly reduce or nearly eliminate the 40,000 asbestos related deaths occurring in the country each year, including dozens of fire fighters. We owe it to this generation and all future generations of fire fighters to take steps to protect their lives. I thank you for partnering with the IAFF to craft this measure and for your bold leadership and commitment to bring forward this sensible legislation.

Sincerely,

Edward A. Kelly
General President