



Environmental justice in Alaska

The mission of the Justice Center, which publishes the *Alaska Justice Forum*, is to lead Alaskans toward a safer, healthier and more just society. Environmental justice, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, is the “fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementa-

tion, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.” In this issue of the *Forum*, we look at environmental contaminants in Alaska, where they have been found, some of the programs in place to deal with them, and the lasting impact that they are having on Alaska Native communities, particularly the Alaska Native community on St. Lawrence Island.

The articles evolved from a conversation I had with Paula Williams, who served as UAA’s Sustainability Director from 2009 to 2014. Paula, a lawyer and Ph.D. scientist who now works with the Center for Resilient Communities at the University of Idaho, offered to write an article on Alaska rural justice and contaminants. When I read her article, I realized I’d given her an impossible task — to try to keep it under 2,000 words.

The fundamental thread in each article is that we continue to learn more about environmental contaminants in Alaska and work to address them, however the resources, laws, and remedies cannot keep up with what is known of the impact of these contaminants and what is unknown. Those impacts fall most heavily on our Alaska Native communities in rural Alaska who depend upon the environment for their livelihood. As always, you can read *Alaska Justice Forum* articles online at <http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/justice/forum>.

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