

Tyhileka madubela - 'Strengthening the work of the Weather Service through the South African Weather Service Amendment Bill, 2011'

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**From:** Emma Archer van Garderen  
**To:**  
**Date:** 2012/01/12 10:35 AM  
**Subject:** 'Strengthening the work of the Weather Service through the South African Weather Service Amendment Bill, 2011'

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**Attention:** Mrs Tyhileka Madubela  
Committee Section  
Parliament of the Republic of South Africa

Acting in my private capacity as a climate scientist with over a decade of experience in science and policy in Africa, I would like to register my strongest objection regarding the proposed South African Weather Service (SAWS) Amendment Bill.

A number of colleagues in the climate community have also commented.

My comments are based on the following points:

Firstly, the Bill is extremely vague and thus effectively seeks to quash any forecasting or advisory/information on weather, climate and air quality not undertaken within SAWS;

Secondly, SAWS currently relies heavily on other partners to aid in forecasting and applications R & D and training. This bill will greatly damage those partnerships;

Most importantly, the Bill will, and, I would argue, is *intended* to inhibit valuable competition and innovation in the area of climate science. No country, and certainly not South Africa, can afford to inhibit innovation in this manner.

I would rather recommend that Environmental Affairs reconsider the business model proposed for SAWS, in a careful and considered manner, since it is clear that this, rather than the issue of 'spurious warnings', is at the heart of the matter, and of the proposal.

Finally, the period allowed for comment on the document is completely insufficient. Many of the key people who would wish to comment on the document would have been on Christmas leave during this period. The extent to which the process has been participatory is thus open to challenge.

We value our Weather Service, and many of us have been proud to collaborate and to help train students who continue as professionals at the Weather Service; as well as engaging in R&D partnerships to improve forecasting and applications. We further face an environment where weather and climate are likely to become more, not less critical as a national challenge.

In this regard, I thus strongly object to the proposed Bill.

Yours sincerely,

Emma Archer van Garderen

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