

12.SAWSAB -22/12.11

From: Sheldon Strydom <sheldon_strydom@parliament.gov.za>
To: "tmdubela@parliament.gov.za" <tmdubela@parliament.gov.za>
Date: 2012/01/06 09:45 AM
Subject: Weather Bill

Dear sir

I am writing in regards to the proposed Bill that states that only the South African Weather Service may issue weather warnings to the public.

I am a storm chaser, I actively chase storms and if a storm is heading towards a town where any of my friends or family live I would generally post a warning about dangerous storms via Facebook or Twitter in the hope that perhaps damage to a car or person can be avoided.

I understand that panic can be caused when saying "tornado heading to..." which is why it is avoided by the general public.

Having weather observers on the ground and sending in reports only helps in saving lives and property. Weather observers send in real time reports about the weather at their location.

SAWS unfortunately charges to view their radar imagery and the only way to be aware about weather is to have real time weather observations coming in from the public.

SAWS has no true early warning system. No tornado sirens or hail sirens are active over South Africa. SAWS sends out a "storm warning" SMS bit again at a fee.

Storm chasers can save lives! The Duduza tornado cost lives and that could have been avoided if SAWS worked hand in hand with chasers and observers instead of isolating themselves and so making themselves a pariah in the weather community.

Top class weather data is available freely around the world yet we as South Africans have to pay for composite radar imagery which doesn't help much as all the important storm structures occur in the lower levels of the storm. SAWS refuses to make this data available to the public as well as the wind velocity data.

Preventing the public from sending in warnings and reports will put the lives of our people at great risk. SAWS and the community need to work together but this proposed bill will prevent any partnership and put SAWS at the bottom of the list of Nation's weather services.

Regards
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Sent from my iPhone