

12.SAWSAB-2/12.24

From: "Steven Weiss" <[redacted]>
To: "Tyhileka madubela" <tmadubela@parliament.gov.za>
Date: 2012/01/11 03:00 PM
Subject: Re: South African Weather Service Bill of 2011

Dear Tyhileka,

Thanks for taking my call this morning. I would like to submit my comments re the new weatherbill that is coming before parliament.

I provide weather forecast services and data on a commercial basis. All data comes from a US based governmental agency which is a member of the WMO much like that of our SA Weather Service. I also understand that SA Weather Service get some of their data from the same US agency.

I have some areas of concern regarding the weather bill. These mainly stem from the fact that the SA Weather Service is both a public entity funded by our taxes and a commercial entity selling services (public, media, agriculture, aviation etc.).

I support the idea of the SA Weather service being the only authoritative voice (as per WMO membership obligation) in terms of issuing "severe weather" warnings however the term "severe weather" needs to be clearly defined in the act in order to:

- a) define clearly what is penalizable in terms of contravening the law.
- b) clearly distinguish the difference between a advisory service such as a weather forecast indicating bad weather and a "severe weather"
- c) ensure that the lines between the Weather Service public good service and the commercial service are not blurred.

As such, I would like to make special mention on some of the clauses in the bill.

- Insertion of section 30A in Act of 2001
- 30A (1)b: This clause is too vague. It does not refer to "Severe weather warning". The weather service can bully commercial clients by way of fine if they use any other forecast/weather services other than theirs and thereby creating a monopoly.
- 30A (1)b: What would be considered "false" information? This needs to be clearly defined. Due to the nature of weather and forecasting services, there is no 100% accurate forecast.
- 30A (1)c: Here again, this clause is too vague. This does not refer to "Severe weather warning"
- 28A A conflict of interest would be created whereby the minister could change legislation without giving a voice to other interested parties. This would effectively allow the Weather Service to become a monopoly.

Should you or the committee require any clarification to my submission, please feel free to contact me.

Regards
Steven Weiss

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1/11/2012
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