MEDIA STATEMENT

TRANSPORT COMMITTEE REQUESTS DEPARTMENT TO FINALISE FUNDING FOR AVIATION SAFETY INVESTIGATION BOARD

Parliament, Thursday, 18 November 2021 – The Select Committee on Transport, Public Service and Administration and Public Works and Infrastructure today considered the written submissions on the Civil Aviation Amendment Bill [B 44B-2018] from Mr Rennie Van Zyl, an independent aviation consultant; Mr Herman Widenboer, a legal aviation consultant; and Mr Kev Storie, who is the Chief Operations Officer of the Commercial Aviation Association of South Africa.

The committee also heard the responses to the submissions from the Department of Transport and the legal teams of both Parliament and the State Law Advisor.

The Bill seeks to provide for the investigation of aircraft accidents and incidents, and to establish the Aviation Safety Investigation Board. The objective of the Bill is the advancement of aviation transportation safety. It strives to achieve this by providing the means to conduct independent investigations including, when necessary, public inquiries into selected aircraft accidents and incidents in order to make findings as to their causes and contributing factors.

Moreover, the Bill seeks to identify safety deficiencies, as evidenced by aircraft accidents and incidents, and make recommendations designed to eliminate or reduce any such deficiencies and report publicly on its investigations and findings.

The Civil Aviation Amendment Bill seeks to amend the Civil Aviation Act (No. 13 of 2009) ("the Act"), which provides for the establishment of the Aviation Safety Investigation Board. The Aviation Safety Investigation Board is a juristic body vested with the powers to investigate aircraft accidents and incidents in South Africa. In addition, the Act establishes the South African Civil Aviation Authority that is vested with the powers to promote civil aviation safety and security.

The committee heard differing views on the proposed amendments, including that the Act must clearly define what an aerodrome is versus an airport. The committee also heard that the proposal to amend the name of the Director of Civil Aviation to Commissioner is to bring the Act in line with international standards. However, some felt that the cost of the name change would fall on the operators, who have already been hard hit by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The committee raised its concerns about the provision of a budget for the establishment of the Aviation Safety Investigation Board. It urged the Department of Transport to report back to the committee on the availability of the required resources for the establishment of the board, in order for the Bill to be effective.

ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT, PUBLIC SERVICE AND ADMINISTRATION AND PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE, MR KENNY MMOIEMANG.

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