



Cannabis for Private Purposes Bill: Public Hearings

Doctors for Life International (DFL) submitted their stance to the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Justice and Correctional Services, expressing their opposition to the inclusion of hemp commercialisation in the contentious cannabis bill. Despite receiving resistance from some stakeholders who dismissed DFL's right to be heard, Dr WL Sieling delivered an outstanding presentation, grounded in medical science.

During the discussion, Dr Sieling warned that the passage of the United States Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 legalised hemp cultivation for commercial purposes. However, this legalisation inadvertently created a legal loophole that certain American businesses exploited to market and sell Delta-8 THC. Delta-8 THC is an isomer of Delta-9 THC with comparable adverse effects.

In addition to newly discovered THC isomers like delta-8 THC, there is an increasing concern surrounding hemp derived CBD. Consumer products containing CBD are being falsely marketed, making claims about their supposed health benefits and overall wellness effects. A recent article authored by researchers from the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) provides insight into the potential risks of CBD, including developmental and reproductive toxicity, hepatotoxicity, and interference with essential metabolic pathways and liver enzyme functions. The toxicological profile of CBD raises concerns regarding its safety, particularly when consumed by the general population over an extended period.

The South African Government's optimism about hemp as a source of job creation and revenue may also be misguided. The United States Department of Agriculture's latest National Hemp Report indicates significant declines in the value and cultivation of hemp crops across various metrics. The report states that the value of hemp production in the United States decreased by 71 percent compared to 2021. This decline reflects a market correction, as the exaggerated publicity surrounding hemp as a miraculous cure-all substance begins to fade away.

The video to DFL's submission before the committee can be viewed here:

<https://youtu.be/aoiGf4xuD5Q?t=14526>