



APCEL Seminar Series

Public Interest in the Management of (Emerging) Natural Resources: A Case Study of Weather Modification Regulations in China

by Associate Professor Chen Jianlin
Melbourne Law School

Friday, 9 February 2018
1.00pm – 2.00pm (Registration begins at 12.30pm)

Lee Sheridan Conference Room, Eu Tong Sen Building,
Faculty of Law, NUS Bukit Timah Campus

ABOUT THE SEMINAR

From inducing rain during periods of drought to forestalling rain to ensure a sunny day for major events, China is by far the largest operator of weather modification activities in the world today. This seminar presents a comprehensive survey of how weather modification activities are regulated at the central and provincial level in China. Drawing on the surprising finding that weather modification activities are conceptualized in the Chinese regulations as activities for public interest rather than utilization of natural resources, this seminar critically unpacks the role and implications of “public interest” in managing emerging natural resources. Specifically, this seminar makes two arguments. First, there will be significant popular resistance over any expansion of state intervention in spheres of conduct that are traditionally not regulated, such that the state will unilaterally forgo a more potent and flexible regulatory premise (e.g., managing state-owned natural resources). This is so even where the constitutional and political arrangement might ostensibly indicate otherwise. Second, while “public interest” may serve as a useful clutch to advance regulation over popular resistance, the divergence in how weather modifications activities for private benefit is accommodated among the different Chinese provincial regulations reveals the fluidity and ambiguity of the concept. More concerted examination is required before “public interest” can serve as a meaningful foundational principle of natural resources management.

ABOUT THE SPEAKER



Associate Professor Chen Jianlin grew up in Singapore and Taiwan. He obtained his LLB from National University of Singapore, and his LLM and JSD from the University of Chicago. He is qualified to practice in Singapore and New York. He joined the Melbourne Law School in 2017 after starting his academic career at the University of Hong Kong in 2011. His primary research interests are in the areas of natural resources law and property law, with a particular focus in emerging natural resources (e.g., wind, sunlight, atmospheric moisture) and through a combination of comparative perspectives and economic analysis. Together with other previous and current research projects that traverse diverse subject matters (e.g., law & religion, corporate law, government procurement, securities regulations, culture war, tax law), his underlying research agenda is to develop an overarching theoretical inquiry that 1) explores how the different forms of state actions—ranging from law, regulation, tax, state ownership, public contract, government speech—have surprisingly similar capacity and propensity (or the lack thereof) to achieve public interest objectives; and 2) critically evaluates the prevailing approach of prescribing distinct legal constraints and normative considerations for each category of state interventions.

REGISTRATION

There is no registration fee for this seminar but seats are limited.

Closing Date: Tuesday, 6 February 2018
(by 5pm Singapore Time)

For enquiries, please contact Shirley Mak at
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To Register, click [Here](#)
or scan the QR code register.

