

China adopts revised surveying and mapping law

China's top legislature Thursday passed a revised surveying and mapping law, protecting geographic information security and raising public awareness of national territory.

The legislation was adopted after a second reading at the bimonthly session of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress.

Revisions deal with the use of safe, reliable technology and equipment, managing navigation and positioning reference stations and supervision of Internet mapping services.

The law will help protect the security of important national geographic information and boost the sound development of geographic information industry, said Zhang Dejiang, chairman of the NPC Standing Committee, at the closing meeting.

Raising awareness of national territory should be included in the curricula for primary and middle schools as it is an important part of patriotic education, according to the law.

In order to enable everyone to use maps that represent China's territory correctly, the law states that regulations should be followed in formulating, publishing or exhibiting maps.

"The omission of sensitive information in maps breaks the integrity of national territory and harms national security and interests to some extent," legislator Yue Zhongming told reporters at a press conference Thursday.

The law stipulates that Internet map providers should use maps that are legally authorized and protect the integrity of mapping data.

The revision has become more pressing as some extant clauses do not address current problems, such as the leakage of information of Internet map service users, due to new business models including bike-sharing services.

The bike-sharing system allows riders to locate the nearest bicycle through an interactive map in a mobile app, rent them by scanning a QR code on the bike, and leave them wherever they end their trip, with no need to return them to a fixed station.

According to the law, those responsible for the production and use of geographic information, as well as Internet mapping service providers, should abide by laws and regulations on personal information protection when they gather or use personal information.

Lawmakers called for intensified military-civilian integration in surveying and mapping activities to make better use of resources

Violators could face fines up to 1 million yuan (over 145,000 U.S. dollars) or have their business licenses revoked, and could face criminal charges. Foreign offenders may be deported.

The fine for those who release geological data without authorization about territory administered by the government will face fines of up to 500,000 yuan, compared with the current ceiling of 100,000 yuan.

The law was formulated in 1992 and amended for the first time 10 years later. The latest version will come into force on July 1.