WEST VIRGINIA CODE: §31G-3-4

§31G-3-4. Compatible use.

(a) A broadband operator shall be authorized to construct or operate a broadband system:

(1) Over public rights-of-way; and

(2) Through easements, which are within the area to be served by the broadband system and which have been dedicated for compatible uses.

(b) In installing, operating, and maintaining facilities, the broadband operator shall avoid all unnecessary damage and injury to any trees, structures, and improvements in and along the routes utilized for the system.

(c) The broadband operator shall indemnify and hold the state, county and municipality harmless at all times from any and all claims for injury and damage to persons or property, both real and personal, caused by the installation, operation, or maintenance of its broadband system, notwithstanding any negligence on the part of the state, county, and/or municipality, their employees, or agents. Upon receipt of notice in writing from the state, county, and/or municipality, the broadband operator shall, at its own expense, defend any action or proceeding against the state, county and/or municipality in which it is claimed that personal injury or property damage was caused by activities of the broadband operator in the installation, operation or maintenance of its broadband system.

(d) The use of public highways and other public places shall be subject to:

(1) All applicable state statutes, municipal ordinances and all applicable rules governing the construction, maintenance, and removal of overhead and underground facilities of public utilities;

(2) For county highways, all applicable rules adopted by the governing body of the county in which the county highways are situated;

(3) For state or federal-aid highways, all public welfare rules adopted by the Commissioner of the Division of Highways; and

(4) With respect to the use of any public highway that crosses the trackway of any railroad, nothing in this article shall be construed to provide for any greater or any lesser compliance with any safety policy or procedure established by the railroad with respect to the construction of utility crossings across the railroad’s trackway that is applicable to any other similarly situated utility, whether utilizing aerial or buried lines.

(e) In the use of easements dedicated for compatible uses, the broadband operator shall ensure:

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(1) That the safety, functioning, and appearance of the property and the convenience and safety of other persons is not adversely affected by the installation or construction of facilities necessary for a broadband system; and

(2) That the owner of the property is justly compensated by the broadband operator for any damages caused by the installation, construction, operation, or removal of facilities by the broadband operator.

(f) An “easement dedicated for compatible uses” is a public or private easement for electric, gas, telephone, or other utility transmission

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