WEST virginia legislature

2022 regular session

Committee Substitute

for

Senate Bill 648

By Senators Nelson and Phillips

[Originating in the Committee on Government Organization; reported on February 23, 2022]

A BILL to amend and reenact §24D-1-14 and §24D-1-17 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, all relating to the Public Service Commission and the Cable Television Systems Act; requiring paper bill to be provided to subscriber at no charge; mandating cable operator to prorate charges for canceled services; adopting Federal Communications Commission customer service and technical standards; and requiring certain cable operators to operate an in-state customer call center.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 1. CABLE TELEVISION SYSTEMS ACT.

§24D-1-14. Requirement for adequate service; terms and conditions of service.

(a) Every cable operator shall provide safe, adequate, and reliable service in accordance with applicable laws, rules, franchise requirements, and its filed schedule of terms and conditions of service.

(b) The commission shall require each cable operator to submit a schedule of all terms and conditions of service in the form and with the notice that the commission may prescribe. The schedule shall be submitted with the annual report referenced in §24D-1-24 of this code.

(c) The commission shall ensure that the terms and conditions upon which cable service is provided are fair both to the public and to the cable operator, taking into account the geographic, topographic, and economic characteristics of the service area and the economics of providing cable service to subscribers in the service area.

(d) To the extent a subscriber elects to receive a paper bill, a cable operator shall provide a paper copy of the subscriber’s monthly bill at no charge. A cable operator shall prorate any charge for service or services that are cancelled by a subscriber rather than charging for the full term.

(e) A cable operator shall comply with all customer service and technical standards established by the Federal Communications Commission. These standards, as amended, are adopted for use and application in regulating cable operators.

§24D-1-17. Office operating requirements; office hours.

(a) Each cable operator shall operate a business office in or near its area of operation as approved by the franchise authority or the commission that shall be open during normal business hours ~~and each~~.

(b) Each cable operator shall operate sufficient telephone lines, including a toll-free number or any other free calling option, as approved by the commission, staffed by a company customer service representative during normal business hours.

(c) In addition to the requirements of subsection (a) and (b) of this section, each cable operator that has been subject to a compliance order issued by the Public Service Commission in a show cause or general investigation proceeding in which the commission concluded that the provider’s customer service communications were not safe, adequate, or reliable shall maintain a call center within the boundaries of the state to serve its subscribers. The foregoing requirement shall be in effect for a minimum period of five years commencing 90 days from the commission compliance order or on the effective date of this subsection, whichever occurs later. After five years of operations under this subsection, a cable operator may petition the commission for, and the commission has authority to grant or deny, a release of the cable operator from the requirements of this subsection. The commission may grant a release only upon proper showing that the cable operator is in compliance with this chapter, commission rules, and the commission compliance order.