

COAI appreciates initiative taken by Government of Maharashtra to resolve industry issues, leading to the speedy roll-out of telecom infrastructure

Mumbai, December 15, 2021: COAI, the leading representative body for the Indian telecommunications industry appreciates the government of Maharashtra for setting up a committee under the chairmanship of the principal secretary, urban development department. The committee has been formed with the objective of resolving Right of Way related issues by submitting its report within 15 days to the government, encouraging the speedy roll-out of telecom infrastructure in the state.

COAI has been raising the issues faced by the telecom service providers and telecom infrastructure providers with the government of Maharashtra. The key issues hindering the roll-out of robust telecom infrastructure across Maharashtra are non-uniform implementation of state RoW policy across municipalities and self-governing bodies; exorbitant RoW charges, access charges, restoration charges levied by various municipalities for laying of the OFC; the need for a structured aerial fibre laying policy aligned with the RoW amendment issued by DoT dated 21 Oct 2021 rationalization of property tax on telecom Towers etc.

A meeting was held on 13th December 2021 Chaired by Deputy Chief Minister Sh. Ajit Pawar and attended by Sh. Eknath Shinde, Hon'ble Minister (Urban Development), Pr. Secretary (UDH), Pr. Secretary (IT), Commissioners of MCGM, Thane Municipal Corporation, Pune Municipal Corporation, NMMC & Shri. Lt Gen Dr. S P Kochhar, Director General, COAI other senior officials to discuss the issues raised by COAI and its member TSPs regarding the deployment of fiber and Towers.

It was agreed in the meeting that a committee to be chaired by Sh. Mahesh Pathak, Principal secretary, urban development department, Maharashtra will look into the issues of High Restoration Charges taken for deployment of the underground fibre, Access Charges being levied in Mumbai for laying of fibre cables, Regularizations of Towers and Property Tax being levied on Towers. The Committee to give its Recommendations on the issue within 15 days' time.

"We appreciate the initiatives taken by Maharashtra Govt. and the Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister Sh. Ajit Pawar ji to resolve the industry issues that will lead to the speedy roll-out of telecom infrastructure. We are hopeful that the committee formed under the chairmanship of Principal Secretary, Urban Development will help in the resolution of industry issues. This is a very progressive step towards the realization of the 'Gati Shakti Mission' of the Government of India. It will help in making Maharashtra Digitally advanced"
- said **Lt. Gen. Dr. SP Kochhar, Director General, COAI.**

Today, as the country creates pathways for 5G and the following digital revolution, it is important to understand that seamless connectivity is the roadmap to our vision of 'Digital India.' The Government recognizes these efforts and has highlighted that in their policies, amendments of Indian Telegraph Right of Way Rules 2016 and Settlement Agreement dated 30-01-2017.