

# CONSUMER ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON UTILITIES

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## **Comments on LIME's and Digicel's responses to the O.U.R.'s NPA (Area Code) Relief Planning – Phase II Consultation – NPA Relief Plan – Development and Implementation**

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The CACU appreciates the opportunity to participate in the O.U.R.'s consultation process regarding the NPA (Area Code) Relief Planning – Phase II and would like to express our continued interest in the effective and “smart” regulation of the telecommunications industry.

Generally, the CACU supports improvements in the telecommunications sector which will enhance the quality of service to consumers in addition to providing more affordable and competitive charges to customers.

As it pertains to the 876 NPA Relief, the CACU is in agreement with both LIME and Digicel regarding the O.U.R.'s analysis and determination regarding the need for 876 NPA relief, the preferred methodology – Standard Overlay – as well as the recommendation that 10-digit dialing be introduced for all local calls, regardless of the methodology.

We also support LIME's recommendation to implement the overlay method with permissive dialing. We concur that option (b) - transition period with announcement plus cut-through, followed by mandatory announcement – would be the preference. This selection would provide customers with constant reminders of the new dialing pattern and the permissive period, while still allowing for the call connection. Additionally, we think that this approach should facilitate a smoother transition over a shorter period of time.

It is imperative that the proposed public education programme be designed to deliver very clear and comprehensible information on the rationale and implementation of the NPA Relief. Consumers must be notified of these changes within a reasonable period of time and in that regard, issues such as the permissive dialing period, must be clearly explained by the respective carriers. The CACU would like to suggest that the carriers use e-broadcasts systems – SMS/MMS/etc. – and recorded messages when contacting the respective call centres, to assist in achieving a seamless transition to 10-digit dialing in Jamaica.

The CACU agrees with both Digicel and LIME regarding the Relief Implementation Schedule however we share the O.U.R.'s opinion that the Relief Planning Committee (RPC) should actually determine the timeframes for the activities and deliverables associated with relief implementation and introduction.

As the largest stakeholder group in utilities regulation and on behalf of Jamaican telecommunications consumers, the CACU uses this opportunity to state its interest in serving on the RPC, the ad-hoc working group to be established by the O.U.R., opened to broad industry participation with a specific set of guidelines and convened solely for the 876 NPA relief.

**CACU**

**August 16, 2013**