

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OUR Invites Comments on information transparency in the Telecoms Sector

(KINGSTON, Jamaica; 2019 June 13): The Office of Utilities Regulation (OUR) is inviting public comments on proposals to improve transparency in the information provided on service offerings and packages in the telecommunications sector.

The OUR recently published a Consultation Document on its website titled, **‘Improving Information Transparency in Telecommunication Markets’**, to receive comments from the public.

This comes against the background of increased complaints from customers about unexpectedly high bills for post-paid subscribers and credit depletion in the case of pre-paid subscribers. Specifically, consumers have complained about the:

- High call charges;
- Non-receipt of notification when data credit is nearly exhausted, or has been exhausted;
- Incidents of rapid credit depletion when credit is applied for data use; and
- Exhaustion of data plan/credit when ‘mobile data’ was disabled on their devices.

The OUR notes that the sector has seen the introduction of various new product and service offerings providing more options for consumers, which if not properly understood, can result in both pre- and post-purchase challenges.

To obtain better insights into these and other issues that consumers face, the OUR formally brought these to the attention of the telecommunications service providers. They requested information regarding the actions taken by the service providers to address the complaints, as well as the measures taken or that they intend to take to address the underlying factors that may have led to the issues experienced by consumers. A short online survey was also done to obtain information on the level of transparency of billing practices in the sector, and the factors that may contribute to billing issues.

Although measures have been taken by service providers to reduce the instances of unexpectedly high billing and rapid credit depletion, there are still complaints to the OUR, albeit at a reduced level.

The OUR’s Consultation Document proposes measures that the OUR is considering.

Persons who wish to express opinions on this Consultation Document are invited to submit their comments in writing to the OUR by post to: The Office of Utilities Regulation, 36 Trafalgar Road, 3rd Floor, PCJ Building, Kingston 10. Emails should be addressed to: marsha.minott@our.org.jm. Responses are requested by 2019 June 28.

OUR Invites Comments .../2

Any confidential information should be submitted separately and clearly identified as such. Responses which are not confidential, pursuant to sections 7(6) and 7A of the Telecommunications Act, will be posted to the OUR's website. Respondents are therefore requested to supply their responses in electronic form to facilitate such postings.

The full document can be accessed on the OUR's website: www.our.org.jm.

-30-

Contact: Elizabeth Bennett Marsh – Public Education Specialist; 876-968-6053