

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OUR Clarifies Its role in Solar Panel Installation

(KINGSTON, Jamaica; August 20, 2013): The Office of Utilities Regulation (OUR) wishes to state that it does not grant permission for the installation of solar panels. However, if there is intent on the part of the solar panel owner to supply electricity to the public grid, a licence is required.

The OUR is clarifying its role, with reference to an article in the **Jamaica Observer** of August 13, 2013 in which a representative of the Jamaica Licensed Electricians Association (JLEA) is quoted as warning Jamaicans who plan to install solar panels on their premises that approval must first be granted by regulatory bodies, saying: "Firstly, you must get approval from the OUR (Office of Utilities Regulation)."

The Electric Lighting Act requires persons wishing to supply electricity to other persons to obtain a licence to do so from the responsible Ministry, which is currently the Ministry of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining. The OUR is mandated under its Act to process all licence applications and submit a recommendation to the Minister. Persons wishing to supply electricity to the grid would also need to enter into contractual arrangements with the grid operator. Therefore customers who want to connect their solar panel systems in such a way as to supply energy to the national grid, will first need to apply to the OUR and the grid operator – the Jamaica Public Service Company Limited (JPS) – before doing so.

Our Solar panel (Cont'd)


The OUR, after examining the application and supporting documentation and receiving comments from JPS, makes a recommendation to the Energy Minister as to whether or not a licence should be granted. The Minister issues the licence based on the recommendation of the OUR.

If persons do not intend to connect their solar panels to the national grid, no permission is required from the OUR to install. However, it is strongly recommended that such persons use the services of qualified professionals such as licenced electricians, electrical engineers and/or contact the Government Electrical Inspector (GEI) to ensure that installations are done properly and, safely and conform to standards.

It is also to be noted that to the extent that persons installing solar panels for their own purposes, are also supplied with electricity from the public grid, the JPS will have its own specific requirement with respect to the safety and separation of supplies.

-30-

Elizabeth Bennett Marsh

 Public Education Specialist
Office of Utilities Regulation
36 Trafalgar Road
3rd Floor PCJ Resource Center
Kingston 10
Phone: 968-6053-4 / Fax: 929-3635
Mobile: 322-7539

email: ebennett@our.org.jm
website: www.our.org.jm