



OFFICE OF UTILITIES REGULATION

Regulating Utilities for the Benefit of All

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OUR Requests Additional Information from Digicel and LIME in VoIP Matter

(Kingston, Jamaica; July 18, 2014): The Office of Utilities Regulation (OUR) has requested additional information from telecommunications providers LIME and Digicel on their decision to block certain providers of Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) services on their network.

VoIP is a technology used for the delivery of voice communications over Internet Protocol (IP) networks.

The request by OUR follows meetings with the two companies, representatives of the Consumer Affairs Commission and other persons representing consumer interests. Among the information requested from the two companies are data showing the nature of the alleged bypass of their networks by VoIP providers and its impact. The OUR expects to receive the information before the end of the month.


Chief among the considerations for the OUR is whether these VoIP providers are engaging in bypass operations. The Telecommunications Act defines bypass operations as “operations that circumvent the international network of a licensed international voice carrier in the provision of international voice services”.

Digicel and LIME have complained that providers of VoIP services such as Viber facilitate calls that bypass their networks without paying the requisite fees and taxes applicable to calls originated and terminated on their networks. However, customers say this block is unfair as the telecommunications companies are restricting their use of their internet service. There are also concerns that such action sets a bad precedent and may be applied in future to other services.

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