

Media Release

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“OUR approves revised Back-Billing Policy & Procedures for JPS”

The Office of Utilities Regulation (OUR) has approved a new back-billing policy and procedures for JPS, which will allow the electricity provider to recover amounts that were not billed to its customer’s account under specific circumstances. The new policy, which is now in effect, replaces any similar previous Directive issued to JPS.

In November of last year, the OUR directed JPS to revise its back billing policy and procedures in accordance with recommendations contained in a Report entitled: “INVESTIGATION OF THE JAMAICA PUBLIC SERVICE COMPANY LTD. (JPS) BILLING AND METERING SYSTEM FOR ELECTRICITY CONSUMPTION” which was submitted to the OUR in October 2011.

With respect to JPS’ back billing policy and practices, the Independent Investigator and former OUR Director General J. Paul Morgan concluded that JPS’ back-billing policies did not accord with “best practices”. It further concluded, (as exemplified by how they were being applied) that they were vague in certain specified areas which lent itself to inconsistency and did not sufficiently protect the rights of customers. It was therefore determined that JPS’ back-billing policies were in need of review and amendment.

Under the revised policy, there is now a reduction in the maximum period (from four to two) for which an account can be back-billed in several instances. Additionally, the revised policy includes the maximum period for which an account can be back-billed where there is alleged illegal extraction of electricity. This was not provided for in the former policy.

The company is now required to issue the Revised Back Billing Policy as a Code of Practice and make it publicly available in accordance with Condition 16 of the Amended and Restated All-Island Electric Licence, 2011.

The full document is available on the OUR website at www.our.org.jm.

- 30 -

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