



OFFICE OF UTILITIES REGULATION

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TO: ALL NEWS EDITORS

MEDIA RELEASE

"OUR issues Directive regarding non-disconnection of supplies for JPS customers"

The Office of Utilities Regulation (OUR) has begun an investigation into allegations made by some customers of the Jamaica Public Service Company (JPS) that their service was disconnected, despite a Directive to JPS not to disconnect those customers who received bills for a billing period in excess of 35 days.

The OUR directed JPS to place a hold on those accounts – numbering some fifty thousand – which were billed for a period in excess of 35 days. These customers were advised, however, that they should make their usual monthly payments.

The OUR's Directive to JPS, issued on Thursday, September 11, 2008, was specifically related to those customers who received bills for July – August 2008 with a billing period in excess of thirty-five (35) days.

JPS is barred – between now and December 31, 2008 – from disconnecting the services of those 50 thousand customers who have outstanding balances arising **directly** from the issue of those bills.

The Office also notes that JPS must provide the OUR with a list of all the affected customers and their geographical locations by Friday, September 19, 2008 and, in the interim, must also ensure that there is no disconnection of these specific accounts.

With that exception, where the bills are not disputed, JPS may choose to exercise its contractual right to disconnect any of its other remaining five hundred thousand customers for outstanding bills.

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The OUR is encouraging all utility customers to insist on their right to speak to a senior person or supervisor at the respective companies should they have a problem that is not being resolved by the frontline staff.

The OUR also reminds utility customers that it's Consumer Relations Unit is available to handle all appeals arising from complaints which have run their course at the utility companies.

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