

## Media Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **OUR gets \$1.57 million compensation for utility consumers**

**(KINGSTON, Jamaica; 2015 October 7):** Through the actions of the Office of Utilities Regulation's (OUR) Consumer Affairs Unit, over \$1.5 million was secured for utility customers as a result of investigations into their appeals for the period April to June 2015. Of this amount, 51% was compensated to JPS customers and 49% to NWC customers. This was reported in the OUR's Quarterly Performance Report which measures the quality of service provided by utility companies to consumers.

The Consumer Affairs Unit received 672 new contacts, up from 410 during the January-March 2015 period. This represents a 64% percent increase in the number of complaints made to the Unit between April and June 2015, compared to the preceding quarter.

The increase has been attributed mainly to an uptick in the number of consumers contacting the OUR regarding billing related and service interruption issues, which saw an over 60% increase over the first quarter.

The Jamaica Public Service Company Ltd. (JPS) accounted for the greatest increase in billing related issues with a 69% surge in the number of contacts in this category, while LIME (now FLOW) accounted for the highest movement in service interruption contacts with a 74% increase.

There was also an increase in the number of complaints regarding disconnection, breaches of the Guaranteed Standards, equipment damage and poor service quality.

The NWC reported a 39% decline in breaches of the Guaranteed Standards compared to the previous quarter. However there continues to be a huge disparity between the potential pay-out and the amount actually paid to customers as a result of these breaches. The 518 breaches committed by the NWC during the period would have attracted a potential pay-out of approximately \$1.6 million. However, only \$641,420.28, or 40% of total potential payments, was actually credited to customers' accounts. These payments were by way of automatic credits to the affected accounts.

The JPS says it continues to have difficulty generating statistics following its Customer Information System upgrade in August 2014. However, the company was able to generate a report for the month of June which indicates that it committed 9,989 Guaranteed Standards breaches which should have attracted a potential pay-out of approximately \$20 million. However, actual JPS payments totaled \$6,233,330 or 31% of the potential payments, with 99% of the payments arising from automatic compensation. The full copy of the OUR's Quarterly Performance Report can be accessed on our website: [www.our.org.jm](http://www.our.org.jm)

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