

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OUR Issues Another Cease and Desist Order to JPS on Widespread Community Outage

(KINGSTON, Jamaica; 2022 January 25): The Office of Utilities Regulation (OUR) has issued a further Directive to the Jamaica Public Service Company Limited (JPS) to “Cease and Desist” the curtailment of service to communities where it has implemented its Transformer Protection Programme pilot project.

This latest Directive took effect on 2022 January 18 and will expire within 180 days. That is, by 2022 July 17.

It follows the expiration of the original Cease and Desist Order on 2022 January 13, which was in effect for ninety (90) days to allow the OUR to conduct its investigation and publish its findings regarding JPS's activities under this pilot project.

The OUR has not been able to complete its investigations as JPS has not complied with a request for data and other information that is critical to the OUR’s examination of the issues.

Therefore, additional time is required for the OUR to complete the investigation and publish its findings.

The OUR has instructed JPS to maintain the suspension of its Transformer Protection Programme pilot project that curtailed electricity services in the affected communities. It is also prohibited from taking similar actions in any other community across the island as outlined in the first Directive issued to the JPS on 2021 October 15.

BACKGROUND

The OUR’s decision to first issue a Cease and Desist Order which first took effect on 2021 October 15, followed consumer complaints since 2021 July about prolonged power outages in several communities, with reports of many occurring daily. The OUR wrote to the JPS requesting information as part of its investigation into the complaints.

On 2021 October 4, JPS responded apprising the OUR for the first time of the implementation of its ‘Transformer Protection Programme’ pilot project. The response also gave an indication of the nature and extent of the curtailment of service that significantly affected JPS’s paying customers in approximately eighty-eight communities. The information suggested that the outages were more widespread in sections of St. Catherine, Kingston and St. Andrew South, Kingston and St. Andrew North, Clarendon and St. James.

The OUR is against all forms of electricity theft which affects the provision of economical and adequate electricity services. The OUR is also mindful of JPS’s obligations to take steps to ensure the reliability, adequacy, safety and efficiency of the service that it provides to the public.

The OUR has not approved any policy or measure that would see the use of outages, imposed on legitimate customers, as a means of controlling electricity losses. -30-

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