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Guaranteed Standards Breaches by JPS and NWC in 2021 attract \$157 million in Potential Payouts

(Kingston, Jamaica: 2022 April 14): Customers of the Jamaica Public Service Company Limited (JPS) and the National Water Commission (NWC) were entitled to approximately \$157.3 million in compensation arising from Guaranteed Standards breaches committed in 2021 by the two utility companies.

This information is reported in the latest Quarterly Performance Report published by the Office of Utilities Regulation (OUR), which covers the 2021 October-December quarter. The report also contains information regarding the performance of the OUR's Consumer Affairs Unit, as well as data relating to the utilities' quality of service delivery for the 2021 calendar year.

Information received from JPS indicates that in 2021, the electricity provider committed 64,456 breaches which attracted consumer compensation of \$141.7 million. During the period, \$66.6 million (47%) was credited to the affected customers' accounts. The remaining 53%, was scheduled for payment in 2022 March and 2022 April as per the OUR-approved payment schedule for JPS.

The NWC Guaranteed Standards reports indicate that throughout 2021, potential compensation for breaches amounted to \$15.5 million, of which approximately \$4.5 million (29%) was paid. The remaining 71% of the amount was not paid as the required claim forms were not submitted by the affected customers. A total of 3,945 breaches were committed during 2021, a 65% increase in the number of breaches committed when compared with 2020 data.

OUR's Consumer Affairs Unit (CAU) secured \$1.1 million on behalf of utility consumers through its intervention in 2021. Of this sum, the NWC and JPS accounted for 73% and 15%, respectively. Columbus Communications (Flow) and C&WJ (Flow) accounted for 7% and 5%, respectively.

A total of 5,771 contacts were received by the CAU throughout the year, a 9% decrease over the prior year. Billing matters – at approximately 48% of total contacts – were the main reason utility consumers contacted the CAU, followed by interruption of service at 14%.

Specific to the 2021 October-December quarter, the OUR saw a 29% increase in customer contacts over the previous quarter. This pertained mainly to billing matters, interruption of service, disconnection, and poor quality service.

The OUR's Quarterly Performance Report (2021 October-December), can be found on its website: www.our.org.jm.