

Media Release

Utilities Pay Out Over \$45 Million to Customers For Breaches

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(KINGSTON, Jamaica; 2023 October 31): Over \$45 million dollars was paid out to utility customers between 2023 April and June as a result of breaches of the Guaranteed Standards (GS), as well as through the Office of Utilities Regulation's (OUR's) direct intervention on behalf of consumers.

This information is contained in the latest Quarterly Performance Report (QPR) which covers the 2023 April – June quarter and which is prepared by OUR's Consumer Affairs Unit.

Through the OUR's intervention, \$468,781.66 was secured for utility consumers. Of this sum, NWC and JPS accounted for \$440,032.09 (94%) and \$21,028.99 (4%), respectively. The remaining 2% was shared between Cable & Wireless Jamaica (C&WJ) ('Flow') and Columbus Communications ('Flow').

Guaranteed Standards (GS) Breaches

The Jamaica Public Service Company Limited's (JPS's) compliance report on its GS performance for the review period indicated that 20,894 breaches were committed, representing a 29% decrease when compared with the preceding period. These breaches attracted compensatory payments of approximately \$43.55 million, all of which were applied automatically to the affected customers' accounts. These Guaranteed Standards payments related to breaches for Estimated Bills (which restricts JPS to only sending two consecutive bills based on estimated readings without a penalty), Reconnection (which requires that JPS restores supply within 24 hours of payment of overdue amounts) and Connection to Supply (which prescribes the time within which JPS is to make a simple connection).

The National Water Commission's (NWC's) Guaranteed Standards compliance report for the review period indicated that 1,786 breaches were committed during the review period, representing an 11% decrease when compared with the preceding period. These breaches had a potential payout of approximately \$8 million, while actual payments amounted to approximately \$1.46 million, or 18% of total potential payments, and were made by way of automatic credits to the affected accounts. The remaining 82% of potential payments not made represented those breaches for which the required claim forms were not submitted for validation. The Standards with the highest incidents of breaches for the NWC were: Complaint Investigations (which require that the NWC completes investigations and responds or provides an update within 30 working days of receipt of a complaint), Meter Repair/Replacement (which stipulates that defective meters are to be verified, repaired/replaced within 20 working days); and Access/New Service Connection (which requires NWC to connect a new supply within 10 working days).

The OUR's Quarterly Performance Report covering the 2023 April-June quarter can be found on its website: www.our.org.jm. -30-

Contact: OUR's Public Affairs Unit - 876-968-6053 or publicaffairs@our.org.jm

QUALITY POLICY STATEMENT

OUR RULES: The management and staff of the OUR are committed to Regulating Utility services in accordance with our Legislative powers and to the Enhancement of customer Satisfaction through continual improvement of our quality management system.

ISO 9001:2015 certified