

# Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Over \$51 Million Compensation Due to Utility Consumers for Breaches

(KINGSTON, Jamaica; 2024 January 26): Over \$51 million dollars was due for payment to utility customers between 2023 July and September as a result of breaches of the Guaranteed Standards (GS) by the Jamaica Public Service Company Limited (JPS) and the National Water Commission (NWC).

This information is contained in the latest Quarterly Performance Report (QPR) prepared by the Office of Utilities Regulation's (OUR's) Consumer Affairs Unit which spans the 2023 July-September quarter.

### Utilities' Performance on Guaranteed Standards

JPS's compliance report on its GS performance for the review period indicated that 18,453 breaches were committed, representing a 12% decrease when compared with the preceding period. These breaches attracted compensatory payments of approximately \$41.6 million, all of which were applied automatically to the affected customers' accounts. Guaranteed Standards related to *Estimated Bills* (which restricts JPS from sending more than two consecutive estimates 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) continued to account for the most frequent GS breaches. These Standards accounted for 99% of breaches and 98% of compensatory payments.

The NWC's Guaranteed Standards compliance report for the review period indicates that 2,151 breaches were committed during the review period, representing a 20% increase when compared with the preceding period. These breaches had a potential payout of approximately \$9.52 million while actual payments amounted to approximately \$3.56 million, or 37% of total potential payments, and were made by way of automatic credits to the affected accounts. The remaining 63% of potential payments not made included those breaches for which the required claim forms were not submitted by the affected customers for validation.

The OUR continues to encourage customers to be vigilant in holding their utility providers accountable for basic service standards. One way is to get familiar with the Guaranteed Standards which are accessible at all JPS and NWC customer service centres, on their websites, or on the OUR's website at [www.our.org.jm](http://www.our.org.jm).

### Nature of Contacts to the OUR

During the 2023 July-September period, the OUR received 844 contacts. This is a 29% increase over the prior period. The most significant increases were in the categories of Disconnection (increasing from 9 complaints in the prior quarter to 33), Interruption of Service (from 96 complaints to 152), Poor Service Quality (an increase from 21 to 30 complaints) and, Irregular Supply (an increase from 25 complaints to 32).

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### 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.

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JPS accounted for 41% of the contacts, followed by the NWC with 32% and Flow (Columbus Communications Jamaica Ltd. and Cable and Wireless Jamaica Ltd.) at 19%. Digicel Jamaica Ltd., small service providers, and non-utility related matters made up the remaining 8%.

The OUR's Quarterly Performance Report (QPR) covering the 2023 July-September quarter can be examined on its website: [www.our.org.jm](http://www.our.org.jm).

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#### **QUALITY POLICY STATEMENT**

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