

Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

\$212M Paid to Customers by Utilities for Service Breaches in 2023 35% more than 2022

(KINGSTON, Jamaica; 2024 April 22): Utility providers paid out a significant \$212M to customers in 2023 for service breaches. This is a 35% increase over the \$157M paid out in 2022.

Of the total amount for 2023, the Office of Utilities Regulation (OUR) secured \$1,824,151 for customers through its intervention on utility complaints. The National Water Commission (NWC) accounted for 62% of this sum, the Jamaica Public Service Company Limited (JPS), 37%, while Cable & Wireless Jamaica Limited and Columbus Communications Jamaica Limited (together known as Flow), and Dynamic Environmental Management Limited (DEML) shared the remaining 1%. The amount was applied as a credit to the affected customers' utility accounts.

Guaranteed Standards Breaches

The remaining payout to customers, approximately \$210M, resulted from breaches of the JPS and NWC Guaranteed Standards (GS).

JPS's GS reports for 2023 indicate that it committed 89,187 breaches, a 30% increase over 2022. Compensation associated with these breaches amounted to approximately \$199M, all of which was paid out automatically to the affected customers' accounts.

The NWC's GS reports indicate that 8,229 breaches were committed throughout 2023, representing a 3% decrease over 2022. Potential compensation for these breaches was \$37M, of which only about \$11M (30%) was paid. The remaining 70% of the GS compensation not paid included those for which the affected customers did not submit the required claim forms.

| Utility Compensation to Customers for Breaches | | |
|--|----------------------|----------------------|
| Reasons for Payout | 2023 | 2022 |
| OUR's Intervention | \$1,824,151 | \$515,966 |
| JPS GS Breaches | \$199,400,000 | \$151,200,000 |
| NWC GS Breaches | \$10,500,000 | \$5,300,000 |
| TOTAL | \$211,724,151 | \$157,015,966 |

Unlike the JPS, where compensatory payments for most breaches are automatically applied to the affected customers' accounts, NWC customers need to complete a claim form to be compensated for some breaches.

The data are contained in OUR's latest Quarterly Performance Report for 2023 October to December, which also reported that for the quarter, the OUR's Consumer Affairs Unit (CAU) received 903 contacts, a 7% increase over the preceding period.

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

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The most significant increases in customer concerns were in the categories of Irregular Supply (56%), Guaranteed Standards (31%), and Poor Service Quality (20%). Disconnection was the sole main category, with a decrease in the number of contacts of 24%.

The CAU received 3,076 contacts in 2023, a 35% decrease over the preceding year. Contacts about JPS registered the largest decline, at 48%.

The OUR's Quarterly Performance Report for 2023 October-December can be found on its website: www.our.org.jm.

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

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