

Media Release

OUR to conduct in-depth post-Beryl assessment of the electricity sector's resilience

(KINGSTON, Jamaica; 2024 August 22): The Office of Utilities Regulation (OUR) is committed to spearheading an in-depth post-Beryl evaluation of the resilience of the electricity sector. This will span preparation for the hurricane, its impact, and restoration activities.

The assessment will seek to identify culpability (if, or where it exists), gaps, areas for improvement, policy and legislative recommendations to ensure the resilience of the utility infrastructure, improved communication with stakeholders, and enhanced disaster recovery. This should provide a basis for further policy and legislative recommendations as deemed necessary.

In the meantime, the OUR is continuing to engage with the Jamaica Public Service Company Limited (JPS) to ensure that the restoration activities in St. Elizabeth are expedited and that all customers are restored to the grid.

JPS's latest report to the OUR – dated 2024 August 21 – indicates that between 2024 August 19-20, 34,549 (91.4%) of its St. Elizabeth customers now have their electricity supply, with 3,247 unrestored. There are still 37 customers in pockets of communities in Westmoreland, Manchester, Clarendon, Portland, and St. Thomas who JPS claims are awaiting the resolution of specific obstructions to have their supplies restored.

The JPS has maintained that it is "...still on track to complete full restoration by August 31st..." even while asserting that they are challenged by adverse weather conditions. While not taking up the OUR's recommendation to provide specific restoration dates for each location, the company said that it has integrated an external liaison within its incident command structure to engage daily with key stakeholders including Members of Parliament, Mayors, Community Leaders, and Disaster Planning Coordinators in the parish, ensuring customers are updated on the restoration progress in their respective communities.

Regarding JPS's discretionary measures considered and/or already available for the relief of customers in St. Elizabeth and elsewhere, it will be contributing \$50 million to customers in St. Elizabeth without power after August 12, and providing discounts on building supplies, extending payment plans, suspending disconnections, providing bill credits and other community support.

JPS had also assured the OUR at a meeting on 2024 August 13 that customers still without electricity supply on 2024 August 13 would receive a zero bill for the next cycle. The OUR has requested JPS to confirm that this has been being executed.

JPS has reported that the redesign and reconstruction efforts in St. Elizabeth are ongoing, with affected areas currently identified to include Southfield, Great Bay, Newcombe Valley, Old Wharf Road, Blunters, Beacon, and Short Hill, with more locations being added.

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

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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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