

Media Release

Contacts to the OUR Increased by Six Percent in 2024 Q2

(KINGSTON, Jamaica; 2024 October 2): Contacts to the Office of Utilities Regulation (OUR) increased by 6% in the 2024 April – 2024 June period, compared to the previous quarter.

The OUR's Consumer Affairs Unit (CAU) received 778 contacts with the most significant increases being in the categories of Irregular Supply (120%), Poor Service Quality (71%), and Disconnection (10%).

The National Water Commission (NWC) with 296 or 38% of these contacts and the Jamaica Public Service Company Ltd. (JPS) with 265 or 34% were the utilities generating the highest number of contacts. They were followed by Columbus Communications Jamaica Ltd. (Columbus-Flow) – 78 (10%); Cable & Wireless Jamaica Ltd. (C&WJ-Flow) – 80 (10%); Digicel Jamaica Ltd (Digicel) – 20 (3%) and Private Water & Sewerage Service Providers and Other (Not Utility Provider Related, e.g. cable service) – 39 (5%).

Billing matters, at 47%, remained the main reason utility consumers contacted the CAU, although there was a seven-percentage point decrease compared to the preceding period. Billing matters included those pertaining to high consumption, disputed charges, adjustments to customers' accounts, and estimated billing. NWC and JPS accounted for the highest number of billing-related matters with 193 (25%) and 122 (16%), respectively. Columbus-Flow, C&WJ-Flow, Digicel, Small Water/Sewerage Service Providers, and Other/Not Utility Related (e.g. cable service) accounted for the remaining 50 (6%).

JPS and NWC continue to pay huge sums for breaches of the Guaranteed Standards (GS), with over \$48M paid out by both providers during the quarter.

JPS's compliance report on its GS performance for the review period indicated that 18,234 breaches were committed, a 16% decrease when compared with the preceding period. These breaches attracted compensatory payments of \$40.1M, all of which were applied automatically to the affected customers' accounts.

The NWC's Guaranteed Standards compliance report revealed that 2,852 breaches were committed, a 7% decrease when compared with the preceding period. These breaches had potential payouts totalling \$15M while actual payments amounted to \$8.1M, or 54% of the total potential payments, and were made by way of automatic credits to the affected accounts. The remaining 46% of total potential payments not made include those breaches for which the required claim forms were not submitted for validation by the affected customers.

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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.

ISO 9001:2015 certified

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In addition, through the OUR's direct intervention, \$1,446,118 was secured for utility consumers. Of this amount, JPS and NWC accounted for \$689,784 (48%) and \$654,026 (45%), respectively. The remaining \$102,308 (7%) was shared between Columbus-Flow – 6% - and C&WJ-Flow – 1%.

While \$534,259 (37%) of the total credits secured were recorded during the reporting period, they were applied to customers' accounts by the service providers in previous periods.

The OUR's Quarterly Performance Report for 2024 April - 2024 June 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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