

## Media Release

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

#### **OUR Invites Public Input on Survey Examining Relief for Utility Customers After a Disaster**

The Office of Utilities Regulation (OUR) is reaching out to utility customers to get their input about the kind of relief that can be applied in the event of a natural disaster.

The OUR wants to know what actions customers think utility providers should take to offer assistance following force majeure events. Force majeure events are acts, events, or circumstances beyond the parties' control, including natural disasters such as hurricanes, epidemics, or the outbreak of hostilities. Such conditions may impact customers' and utility providers' obligations under their mutual agreement for service, payment of bills as per contract, and quality of service agreements, such as the Guaranteed Standards.

OUR's Director of Consumer and Public Affairs, Yvonne Nicholson, pointed out that, "Currently, there are provisions for the utility providers to be able to request relief from some of their obligations under force majeure conditions. However, there are no provisions for electricity, water, or telecoms customers when such events occur. In the past, following a natural disaster such as a hurricane, some utility providers have extended discretionary relief measures such as a moratorium on collections and disconnection processes and compliance, bill discounts, credits or top-ups, direct cash in the form of care packages or flexible payment arrangements, to their customers. We want to get customers' views about this, as this will help us make some crucial decisions." The survey aims to gather utility customers' feedback on whether they should be given special consideration under such conditions.

The OUR will also examine the Terms and Conditions of Service and other regulatory documentation that act as contracts for providing services to customers of the four major utility providers. This is in order to identify whether there are any force majeure provisions for customers, assess, where such conditions exist, if they are sufficient and where none exist, whether reliefs are needed.

Persons can go on the OUR's website at [www.our.org.jm](http://www.our.org.jm) and click on the link on the homepage to complete the survey. The questionnaire should be completed by 2025 April 30.

Direct survey link: <https://bit.ly/ConsumerQuestionnaire2025>.

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Contact: OUR's Public Affairs Unit – [publicaffairs@our.org.jm](mailto:publicaffairs@our.org.jm) or 876-968-6053

#### 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**