

Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OUR Urges JPS to Ensure Proper Billing Following Hurricane Melissa

(KINGSTON, Jamaica; 2025 October 31): The Office of Utilities Regulation (OUR) has urged the Jamaica Public Service Company Limited (JPS) to ensure the observation of good practice and application of reasonable consideration in its billing to its customers in the aftermath of Hurricane Melissa.

The OUR has emphasised that the billing concerns that emerged following Hurricane Beryl in 2024 should be avoided whenever possible. The OUR will be engaging with JPS in a collaborative approach to ensure that any risk of bill shock to customers can be mitigated.

While remaining cognisant that additional cost may be unavoidable, we remain committed to ensuring that in any such eventuality they will be spread out over time to avoid rate shock.

JPS customers are reminded that electricity rates are not arbitrarily increased as the Electricity Licence, 2016 (JPS Licence), provides clear guidelines on how and when such matters are considered including the applicable formulas and cost elements, and the review of tariff application submissions by the JPS, which are due annually or every five years. Notwithstanding, changes in some of the input costs for electricity supply may impact the rates charged in any given month. For example, JPS may have to rely on a more expensive fuel due to the unavailability of natural gas. Any adjustment to electricity prices resulting from the use of the more expensive fuel will be in accordance with the JPS Licence.

OUR is also mindful that, depending on the severity of the hurricane's effects, JPS may need to send more consecutive estimated bills than normal to some customers. The regulator, intends, however, to maintain close scrutiny of this process to guard against adverse effect on customers.

Following Hurricane Beryl last year, the OUR initiated an exercise to assess the *force majeure* relief that can be afforded to customers in the event of a natural disaster. Currently, there are no provisions for this. Although this project is not yet complete, we will work with the utilities to determine what relief can be provided to the most severely affected customers.

The OUR urges Jamaicans to continue to remain safe, to utilise the main contact points for their provider in reporting outages, and to monitor only official sources for credible information and to continue to operate with care for the public welfare throughout this crisis.

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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