

THE OUR'S ROLE AFTER HURRICANE MELISSA

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We thank Mr. Javon Moatt for his letter published on November 12, 2025, and welcome the opportunity to clarify the Office of Utilities Regulation's (OUR) role and actions following Hurricane Melissa.

Preparedness Before the Hurricane

Our work began well before the hurricane's impact. At the OUR-organized Director General's Stakeholders event in March this year, disaster preparedness and resilience were the main focus, with all major utilities given the opportunity to share lessons learned from Hurricane Beryl and their preparations for the 2025 season. Notably, the OUR also underscored the need to mitigate the risk of single points of failure and emphasized the importance of cooperation and collaboration among utilities to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of recovery. At the start of the hurricane season, all major utility providers submitted Business Continuity Plans outlining measures to maintain operations during severe weather events. The OUR reviewed these plans and raised queries to ensure their adequacy and readiness.



OUR's Mandate in the Event of a Hurricane

The OUR considers its responsibilities to include:

- *Overseeing utility preparedness and monitoring restoration efforts.*
- *Safeguarding consumer interests, including the provision of adequate and timely information, adherence to prudent and consumer-sensitive billing practices, and the facilitation of measures to assist affected customers in recovery.*
- *Making recommendations as necessary that will aid in timely recovery of utility services and treatment of consumer matters.*
- *Advising the Government.*
- *Acting as arbitrator in disputes among utilities.*
- *Addressing consumer complaints.*

As you can see, the OUR's role is multi-faceted and includes not just customer matters but also utility and national considerations.

Some Actions Taken Post-Hurricane Melissa

Electricity Disaster Fund: The OUR approved JPS's withdrawal from the Electricity Disaster Fund (EDF) to accelerate restoration. An independent assessor will monitor and account for these funds in accordance with EDF rules.

Daily Monitoring: We receive daily updates from major utilities on restoration progress and related issues.

Field Visits: OUR teams, headed by our Director-General, Ansord Hewitt, toured all the severely affected parishes to get a first view of the damage and the restoration activities of the utilities.



Billing Concerns

We note Mr. Moatt's concern regarding billing. Anticipating such issues, the OUR proactively engaged utilities on bill treatment especially for customers in the hardest-hit areas. Written responses have been requested, and relief measures will be communicated publicly by the utilities and the OUR. While no force majeure provisions currently exist for customers in the event of a disaster, the OUR is committed, within the limits of its authority, to ensuring fairness and considerate treatment to customers during this recovery period.

Consumers with billing concerns should contact their utility provider or OUR's Consumer Affairs Unit at consumer@our.org.jm. Your feedback helps us address issues effectively.

Stay Informed

We encourage Mr. Moatt and all customers to visit our social media pages and our Hurricane Melissa webpage at <http://www.our.org.jm> for daily updates, including an interactive map showing restoration progress by parish.

The OUR remains steadfast in its mandate to protect consumers and ensure accountability. We appreciate the public's vigilance and invite continued engagement as we work toward full utilities restoration, while ensuring fair billing for our customers.