

Utility Customers get over \$2-million Compensation through OUR's actions

(KINGSTON, Jamaica; 2016 December 1): Aggrieved customers of utility companies received over two million dollars in compensation during the July-September 2016 quarter, as a result of actions taken on their behalf by the Office of Utilities Regulation (OUR).

In its latest Quarterly Performance Report, the OUR's Consumer Affairs Unit (CAU) reported that \$2,371,670.12 was secured for utility customers following investigation into their appeals. JPS and NWC accounted for 84% and 16%, respectively, of the credits secured.

The CAU reported that it received 1,163 new contacts representing a 34% increase compared with the preceding quarter. This is the highest number of contacts received since January 2016. The data indicate a general increase in contacts over the previous period, for all major areas of concern.

Of the total number of contacts, JPS accounted for 34%, NWC for 24%, Cable and Wireless (FLOW) 13%, and Columbus Communications (FLOW) 10%. Six percent of the complaints related to Digicel, while small water providers CanCara Development and Dynamic Environmental Management Limited (DEML), telecommunications provider Dekal Wireless and other matters made up the remaining 13%.

Matters relating to billing saw a 28% increase over the preceding quarter and remained the predominant reason for customer contact to the CAU. The billing issues complained about included: adjustments that were applied to customers' accounts, billing punctuality, high consumption, disputed charges and estimated billing.

There were 505 billing-related contacts of which JPS and NWC accounted for 231 (or 46%) and 175 (35%) respectively. Digicel accounted for 25 (or 5%) while C&WJ (FLOW) and Columbus Communications (FLOW) accounted for 33 (or 7%) and 24 or (5%) respectively. Billing contacts for small water providers and contacts that were not utility related represented the remaining two percent. The OUR's latest Quarterly Performance Report can be viewed on our website: www.our.org.jm.

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AUDIO INSERT – “C. Goode on Billing”

IN: Billing matters

OUT: ...and estimated billing

TIME: 21”

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