

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Customers get millions for utilities' service breaches**

**(KINGSTON, Jamaica; 2019 July 12):** Utilities' customers received over \$39 million in 2019 January to March from utility providers for service breaches.

The Office of Utilities Regulation's (OUR) latest Quarterly Performance Report for 2019 January – March, reported that \$39,409,921.36 was paid out to utility customers over the period because of breaches of the Guaranteed Standards and as a result of intervention by the OUR's Consumer Affairs Unit.

JPS' compliance report on its Guaranteed Standards performance indicated that 17,910 breaches were committed, representing a 4% increase compared to the preceding quarter. These breaches attracted compensatory payments of approximately \$37.31 million, which were made through automatic compensation.

Estimated bills accounted for approximately 93% of compensatory payments. This Guaranteed Standard restricts JPS from sending more than two consecutive estimates without attracting a penalty.

The NWC's Guaranteed Standards compliance report indicates that 530 breaches were committed by the utility, a 12% decrease, compared with the preceding quarter. These breaches had a potential pay-out of approximately \$1.84 million. However, actual payments were \$1 million and were made via automatic credits. The remaining unpaid amount of \$0.84 million were for breaches requiring claim forms but which were not submitted by customers for validation.

The Guaranteed Standards with the highest incidents of breaches for the NWC were: Meter Repair/Replacement, which stipulates that meter repairs or replacements are to be completed within 20 working days; Access, which requires that new service connections are to be made within 10 working days; Meter Reading, which restricts the NWC to sending no more than two consecutive estimates, where it has access to its meter; and Meter Installation, which stipulates that meters should be install within 30 working days upon request. These four standards represented 83% of potential payments.

In addition to the payouts for Guaranteed Standards breaches, the OUR's Consumer Affairs Unit, secured \$1,099,921.36 for utility customers. Of this amount, JPS, NWC, Columbus Communications (Flow) and the small water provider, Can-Cara accounted for 86%, 9%, 4% and 1% respectively.

The OUR's Quarterly Performance Report for 2019 January – March can be accessed on the OUR's website: [www.our.org.jm](http://www.our.org.jm).