

OUR asks DEML for water quality reports

(KINGSTON, Jamaica; 2018 January 17): The Office of Utilities Regulation (OUR) is in discussions with Dynamic Environmental Management Limited (DEML) following a recent media report of customers' concerns in Vineyards Estates, St. Catherine, about the quality of the water received from that company.

The newspaper article titled: ***"No one drinks the water"*** published in the Jamaica Observer on 2018 January 1, highlighted DEML's customers' concerns in Vineyards Estates about the quality of the water specifically stating that: *"Residents of Vineyards Estate in St. Catherine are demanding assurance from the health authorities that the water supplied to their homes is safe for consumption."*

As per its licence obligations, DEML is required to conduct water quality tests and submit the results of same to the OUR.

The OUR in a letter to DEML's management, requested that they provide a response to the issue, which should include: all outstanding water quality test reports; information as to the frequency with which water quality tests are conducted in Vineyards Estates; information as to the source of the "massive solid matter resembling hard water" described in the newspaper article; and information as to whether the level of residual chlorine is tested for potable water. The OUR also requested information on any customers' complaints lodged about this issue and measures that have been taken to address same.

DEML responded to the OUR on 2018 January 16, addressing some of the queries. DEML indicated that it is still awaiting the water quality test results for 2017 December. However, based on the test results for 2017 October and November and research conducted, the water at Vineyards Estates is safe for consumption. Further, it says that it has not received any complaints from residents about this problem. The company also said that it is not able to provide information as to the source of the "massive solid matter resembling hard water" described in the newspaper report as it would need to see the specimen and have it analyzed. The company however noted that the water at Vineyards Estates contains a high level of dissolved calcium due to limestone deposit, which is typical throughout the parish of St. Catherine.

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The OUR noted that DEML, in its response, did not indicate that water quality tests have been carried out since the publication of the article on 2018 January 1. The OUR will continue to have further dialogue with DEML on this issue as it awaits the water quality test results for 2018 January.

Background:

DEML provides water and sewerage services to over two-thousand residents in Vineyards Estate in Bushy Park St. Catherine as well as Caribbean Estates, Portmore Country Club and Morris Meadows located in Portmore, St. Catherine. The company provides over 54-million litres of water per month through a network of pipelines in the various housing developments and provides sewerage services to approximately 97% of its customers.

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