

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OUR Grants three Month Suspension of two NWC Guaranteed Standards

(KINGSTON, Jamaica; 2019 April 11): The Office of Utilities Regulation (OUR) has granted permission for the National Water Commission (NWC) to suspend for three months, two (2) Guaranteed Standards pertaining to meter installation and meter repair or replacement.

The two Guaranteed Standards are WGS7 which states that NWC should install a meter on a customer's request, within thirty (30) days; and WGS8 which holds the NWC to a maximum of twenty (20) working days to verify, repair or replace a meter after being notified of a defect.

The suspension of these two standards takes effect on 2019 April 15 and will end on 2019 July 15.

The OUR has asked the NWC to ensure that its customers are adequately notified of the suspension, prior to the effective date.

In a letter to the OUR on 2019 March 26, the NWC said the request was being made because of delays in the scheduling of meter testing dates with the Bureau of Standards Jamaica (BSJ). The NWC said these delays have impacted the implementation of its meter procurement as well as its testing and deployment schedule, and affected its ability to adequately comply with the requirements of these Guaranteed Standards.

The OUR, in granting its permission, said that the BSJ had notified the regulator in 2018 January, that its water meter testing facilities have been taken out of service to facilitate renovation and upgrade works in order to satisfy the requirements of the Meter Testing Administrative and Operational Protocol, 2017 (the Protocol). This caused delays in conducting the water meter testing necessary to inform the authorization process for meter installations.

The OUR has also implored the NWC to fast track the process to obtain accreditation for its water meter testing facilities as stipulated in the Protocol, as this would assist in mitigating some of the reported effects of the BSJ's delay. The NWC's meter testing facilities should have received accreditation by 2018 October 17, but this was not achieved. The OUR has extended the deadline for accreditation to 2019 May 31 and has urged the NWC to urgently put the required resources in place to ensure that accreditation is achieved within the revised timeline.

BACKGROUND

The Guaranteed Standards are performance measures which hold the National Water Commission, Jamaica Public Service Company Limited and private water providers accountable to basic service standards to their customers. If any of these standards are breached, the affected customer is to be compensated on their next bill.

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The compensation amount is equivalent to four (4) times the applicable service charge or six (6) times the service charge for those in the special compensation category. All Guaranteed Standards can be accessed on the OUR's website: www.our.org.jm

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