



## Public Utilities Commission

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### **Press Release**

The Public Utilities Commission (PUC) confirms that the frequent and persistent outages presently being experienced by the Belize Electricity Limited's (BEL) customers are primarily attributable to abnormal Transmission and Distribution (T&D) faults and not a capacity deficiency in most instances.

BEL earlier this year received approval from the PUC to rent 13 megawatts of standby generators from Gentrac in anticipation of potential capacity shortages and currently have these rentals on standby.

The T&D faults have been exacerbated by the intense dry season that has produced very dusty conditions and countrywide fires. The dust and soot from the fires accumulate on the T&D infrastructure causing shorts that precipitate the outages.

Chief meteorological officer, Mr. Carlos Fuller has informed the PUC that Belize is experiencing a drier than normal season and that these conditions are expected to persist for the near future.

The outages seem to have the majority of occurrences in the early morning hours as the conductivity from the accumulated dust and soot is further enhanced by dew formation on the porcelain insulators.

The PUC has requested BEL to increase their vigilance and manpower in the sensitive areas to more effectively respond to the outages.

Considering that the outages may cause damage to consumer equipment, the PUC has set out a procedure with a BEL for addressing any claims for compensation from affected consumers.

Consumers must first take their claim to BEL. If BEL determines that the claim is authentic then BEL will either pay (1) for the repair of the damaged equipment or (2) the replacement value (**the condition immediately prior to the time of the damage**).

If BEL does not accept that the claim is authentic the customer can then take the claim to the PUC. The PUC will establish a team to investigate the claim and determine its validity. If the PUC determines that the claim is authentic then BEL will compensate the consumer as set out above and also pay the cost of the investigation. If the claim is not valid the claimant will be requested to pay the cost of the investigation.

The PUC is presently holding discussions with the Association of Professional Engineers of Belize (APEB) for their assistance in the independent investigation of consumer claims.

The PUC asks all consumers to please take all measures to conserve electricity until normalcy is once again attained.

**END**