

Japan: the future of N-plants in question

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Tohoku Electric Shareholders Say No More Nuclear Power

TOKYO (Nikkei)—Tohoku Electric Power Co. (9506) revealed Monday that 232 shareholders have filed resolutions that would pull the plug on the utility's nuclear energy business, among other proposals.

The disclosure was made in the notification for Tohoku Electric's June 29 general shareholders meeting. In all, six of the 11 listed electric companies have received shareholder resolutions this year calling for abandoning nuclear power and other charter amendments.

Besides withdrawing from nuclear power, the three resolutions put forward by Tohoku Electric shareholders would halt investment in nuclear fuel recycling and end compensation for executives. The utility's board of directors opposes all three motions.

Nikkei, June 13, 2011

<http://e.nikkei.com/e/fr/tnks/Nni20110613D13JFN05.htm>

Osaka People Must Weigh N-Plant in Vicinity: Hashimoto

Osaka, June 13 (Jiji Press)—Osaka Governor Toru Hashimoto said Monday that if people in the western Japan prefecture of Osaka support construction of new nuclear power plants, they must discuss building one in the prefecture.

If nuclear power plants are truly needed, the government of the prefecture, a major place of power consumption, should ask residents whether a nuclear plant can be constructed there, Hashimoto told reporters. Following the accidents at Tokyo Electric Power Co.

Fukushima No. 1 plant in northeastern Japan, Hashimoto said that no new nuclear plants should be built in Japan and that reactor operations should not last longer than scheduled.

Rather than the state and power firms, it is residents that should consider seriously whether nuclear power generation is needed, he said. Beneficiaries of nuclear power generation and those bearing its risks should be the same, he said.

If Osaka residents agree to introduce a nuclear power plant and one

is constructed in a coastal area of Osaka Bay, they would have to assume risks, Hashimoto said.

Jiji Press, June 13, 2011

<http://jen.jiji.com/jc/eng?g=eco&k=2011061300785>

** Note from ESSF: Osaka prefectural governor Toru Hashimoto was elected to the prefectural governor with the support of Osaka local LDP and Komei in 2008, and now he has his own local right-wing party. He is a much right-wing and extremely populist politician, a kind of US "Tea-Party"-type: he represents a forerunner of a new-right current in the near-future national politics, as a much possible aftermath of the bankrupt LDP-DSP parliamentary politics. Before he was elected to the Osaka governor, he stood for the Japanese nuclear armament! He seems to be backed very much by the big business firms of Osaka.*

Nuclear Power Utilization Rate Hit 32-Year Low In May

TOKYO (Nikkei)—The overall utilization rate for Japan's nuclear power plants slipped to 40.9% in May, the lowest since 34.2% in May 1979, the Federation of Electric Power Companies of Japan reported Monday.

The latest figure translates to a 10 percentage point drop from 50.9% in April. The utilization rate normally falls between 60-80%, with the average figure for fiscal 2010 at 67.3%.

Nuclear power plants accounted for 27.5% of total power output from the country's nine electric utilities in fiscal 2010. The figure for May fell 3.4 points from April to 21.3%. In fiscal 2009, nuclear facilities generated 29.3% of the electricity.

Japan's 54 nuclear reactors have a combined output capacity of 48.84 million kilowatts. Following the disaster at the Fukushima nuclear power station, growing local opposition has been preventing reactors idled for regular inspections from being restarted.

Nikkei, June 14, 2011

<http://e.nikkei.com/e/fr/tnks/Nni20110613D13JFN06.htm>

Utilities see summer power shortages: poll

Ten regional power utilities surveyed said they are expecting power shortages this summer because of the damage suffered by nuclear reactors in northeastern Japan after March 11.

The March 11 earthquake and tsunami has also made it difficult for utilities to restart reactors in other areas that were shut down for regular maintenance checks, the survey released by Kyodo News said Monday.

The survey found that the utilities' margin for power demand this summer is expected to stand at 6.2 percent, compared with the standard margin of 8 percent needed to ensure uninterrupted supply.

Power is expected to be short because the crisis at the Fukushima No. 1 power plant severely cut the generation capacity of Tokyo Electric Power Co.

Tepco and other utilities have been unable to restart other reactors because local municipalities are refusing to give approval amid concerns about safety.

The 10 utilities' power capacity this summer is expected to total 172.94 million kilowatts. Projected demand is expected to peak at 162.8 million kw.

The twin disasters also forced the suspension of other nuclear plants in Tohoku. It also led to a government request for Chubu Electric Power Co. to shut down its Hamaoka nuclear power plant in Shizuoka Prefecture until safety measures are implemented.

Thirty of the 54 reactors across Japan have been suspended for checks, according to the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry.

Kyodo, June 14, 2011

<http://search.japantimes.co.jp/cgi-bin/nn20110614a2.html>
