

Protest against the appointment of Tokyo University's Professor Tanaka Satoru to the Nuclear Regulation Authority (NRA) Committee

On July 12 2014, Mayors for a Nuclear Power Free Japan and representatives from the German state of Rheinland--Pfalz co-hosted a symposium in Tokyo. On the same day, the Japanese network of mayors decided to issue the below emergency statement.

The Japanese Government has appointed Professor Tanaka Satoru of the Tokyo University School of Engineering to a committee member position in the Nuclear Regulation Authority (NRA), attempting to have Professor Tanaka take up this position effective from September of this year.

However, this appointment infringes on the conditions for disqualification of eligibility as determined by the Japanese Government, and contravenes Article 1 (aims) of the Act for Establishment of the Nuclear Regulation Authority: "The Nuclear Regulation Authority Chairman and Committee Members will exercise their authority from from a position of neutrality and fairness, based on expert knowledge." We must strongly point out that there is a threat that the Committee will lose a great deal of its credibility as a result of this decision.

Upon the establishment of the Nuclear Regulation Authority, the Japanese Government on July 3, 2012 issued a set of guidelines entitled "Requisites for the Nuclear Regulation Authority Chairman and Committee Members." Within the legal particulars of these guidelines are included the following: "Any person who has held a position in or been employed in the nuclear industry or an associated organisation within the three years immediately before their appointment to the board", or "any person who has received financial remunerations above a certain amount in a personal capacity from members of the nuclear industry within the three years immediately before their appointment to the board" are disqualified from eligibility for appointment to the board.

Professor Tanaka held a position at the Japan Atomic Industrial Forum Inc. from 2011-2012, which is listed by the NRA as a nuclear energy-related organisation. Furthermore, Professor Tanaka received in excess of the 500,000 yen limit in financial remunerations within one year from the Tokyo Electric Power Company Foundation (2011) as well as donations from Hitachi GE New Nuclear Energy (2011, 600,000 yen) and Taiheiyo Consultant (2011, 500,000 yen). These documented cases are a clear infringement of the guidelines mentioned above.

Recent reporting on July 5 by the Asahi Shimbun also uncovered that Professor Tanaka was receiving remunerations up until the first half of this year from Japan Nuclear Fuel Limited (JNFL), a company responsible for the nuclear fuel cycle, and nuclear power plant maker Mitsubishi FBR Systems.

Terms for immediate disqualification from eligibility as listed in the guidelines were determined in accordance with Diet proceedings, and the appointment process of an advisory committee member was outlined to the Joint House Steering Committee. The revision or modification of such guidelines would necessitate a reasonable justification, yet the Japanese Government has been unable to rationalize Professor Tanaka's exemption from these terms.

As heads of local governments responsible for the wellbeing of our residents' livelihood and safety, we cannot in good conscience condone the commission of a candidate who violates the terms of appointment without losing considerable confidence in the credibility of the Nuclear Regulation Authority. As such, we express to the Japanese Government our firm opposition to the commission of Professor Tanaka.

July 12, 2014
Mayors for a Nuclear Power Free Japan