

17 April, 2016

Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry Mr. Motoo Hayashi  
Chairman of the Nuclear Regulation Authority Mr. Shunichi Tanaka

Mayors for a Nuclear Power Free Japan  
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MIKAMI Hajime (Mayor Kosai City, Shizuoka Prefecture)  
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## A request to approve a consent right on resumption of nuclear reactors to be granted to the neighbouring municipalities that may become victims of potential nuclear accidents

On a document dated 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2015, we, members of the “Mayors for a Nuclear Power Free Japan” network, requested the Japanese Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry Mr. Yoichi Miyazawa (as of date) to “urgently take measures such as either a revision of the law, or a Cabinet approval, to ensure that neighbouring municipalities that have been mandated to draw up evacuation plans have consent rights and allow them sign a safety treaty so be part of the agreement procedures.”

However, despite our request, the government, which remains to show no initiatives to seriously address this issue, approved the restart of nuclear reactors No. 3 and No. 4 of Kansai Electric Power Co. Inc. (KEPCO)'s Takahama Nuclear Power Plant located at Fukui Prefecture. This approval was made despite the opposition by leaders of Kyoto and Shiga Prefectures which are both located 30km within the nuclear power plant.

As is widely known, Nuclear Emergency Response Guidance drawn after the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear accident mandated that not only the municipality hosting the nuclear power plant but also neighbouring municipalities within 30km are required to draw “Nuclear Emergency Response Plan (an evacuation plan). Many of those surrounding municipalities have been bearing significant financial and human resource burdens for preparations such as contingency planning, mechanism building and training. The Otsu District Court that issued an injunction to halt Takahama reactors No.3 and No. 4 on 9 May this year also expressed in its statement that “it is necessary to urgently draw a visible and detailed evacuation plan led by the state rather than individual public authorities”, criticising the central government for leaving local municipalities to come up with their own evacuation plans.

According to the Cabinet's decision approved on 10 September 2004, nuclear power plants can only be constructed under the condition that the host municipalities (cities, towns, villages and prefectures) approve it. However, this principle is considered disadvantageous for the host municipalities since they must bear the risks of nuclear disasters as well as the responsibilities of designing disaster prevention measures.

If this principle is to be followed, we strongly believe that those neighbouring municipalities, which are also mandated to come up with a Nuclear Emergency Response Plan and bear significant financial and human resource burdens, should also be granted consent rights regarding the site and operation of nuclear power plants. Engaging not only the host municipality that benefits from the operation of the power plant but also the neighboring municipalities into the restart procedures will keep an vigilant eye, from multiple perspectives, on the safety of the power plant, contributing to a higher level of safety.

We believe that the government should clearly stipulate a law that grants not only the host municipality but also neighbouring municipalities the consent right regarding restarting a the reactor. A safety agreement between nuclear operators and municipalities based on the consent right should be signed.

While the implementation such frameworks is lacking, we cannot approve resumption of nuclear power plants. In addition, we believe that the government cannot gain support from many of the Japanese citizens. We urge the central government to address this issue seriously and to establish a legal consent right for neighbouring municipalities.