

## **Chugoku Electric Submits Petition for Preliminary Consent for MOX Use at Shimane-2**

**On September 12, Chugoku Electric Power Co. submitted petitions to Shimane Prefecture and Matsue City, under existing safety agreements, for their preliminary consent to its program to use mixed-oxide (MOX) fuel at its Shimane-2 NPS (BWR, 820MW). Upon receipt of the consent of those local governments, the company will then file an application for permission to change a reactor installation with the central government. Chugoku Electric hopes to begin MOX-use by FY2010.**

That day, Pres. Shigeo Shirakura of the company separately visited Matsue Mayor Masataka Matsuura and Shimane Gov. Nobuyoshi Sumita to personally present each of them with the petition, asking them to understand and accept the program.

“Ensuring safety is the most important consideration,” the mayor said. “We will have to discuss the petition among ourselves, and listen to our citizens and assembly members. We do not have sufficient information yet on which to make a decision. We expect the company and the central government to provide us with more information later.”



**Shimane NPS**

Gov. Sumita expressed similar thoughts: “The most important thing is ensuring safety. The prefecture will properly consider the necessity of a MOX-use program and its safety, keeping the people of the prefecture informed as to the progress of our discussions. And we will hear the views of our citizens through prefectural assembly meetings and other opportunities. Based on all of that, we will make a careful decision.”

The company selected Shimane-2 because the reactor core is larger and easier to work with than that of Unit 1. According to the program, MOX fuel will be loaded together with uranium fuel, as the existing fuel in the unit is replaced. Of the total of 560 fuel assemblies at Unit 2, up to 228 will comprise MOX fuel.

MOX fuel is useful toward providing a more stable energy supply, in that it makes more effective use of existing uranium resources. In addition, Japan's electric power companies already possess considerable amounts of plutonium recovered through reprocessing, and it is essential that that the substance be used for peaceful purposes – one way in which would be in the form of MOX fuel.

Earlier, on September 7, the Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency (NISA) already approved changing a reactor installation for MOX use at Genkai-3 NPS of the Kyushu Electric Power Co. Now that Chugoku Electric has made concrete progress with its program – joining the Kansai Electric Power Co., the Tokyo Electric Power Co., the Kyushu Electric Power Co. and the Shikoku Electric Power Co. – the chances seem good that the Federation of Electric Power Companies (FEPC) will be able to realize MOX-use throughout the industry by FY2010, as intended.

*Editor: Noriyuki Ishii, JAIF*