

## **Chubu Electric May Apply to Government by Year-end to Use MOX Fuel at Hamaoka-4**

**On September 13, Chubu Electric Power Co. announced that it would implement a program to use mixed-oxide (MOX) fuel at its Hamaoka-4 NPS (BWR, 1,137MW) by FY2010 (April 1, 2010 to March 31, 2011). The same day, details of the plan were conveyed to Shizuoka Prefecture and Omaezaki City, where the Hamaoka station is located. Before the year is out, at the earliest, the power company intends to file an application with the national government for permission to change a reactor installation.**

Under existing safety agreements with local municipalities, the company is not required to submit any petitions for preliminary consent. Seeking the understanding of local authorities, however, Chubu Electric Pres. Fumio Kawaguchi visited the Shizuoka Prefectural Offices on September 13 to explain the company's intention to use MOX fuel at Hamaoka-4. On the same day, Director Ryosuke Mizutani of the Hamaoka NPS visited the Omaezaki City Hall to explain the program to Mayor Shigeo Ishihara.

At a press conference, Pres. Kawaguchi, emphasizing the significance of the MOX-use program, said, "Competition for uranium resources is becoming increasingly fierce, and we would like to strive to use those resources most effectively." He expressed his intention to work further to conduct a dialogue with local residents. Referring to the filing of the application with the central government, he said, "Everything is premised on the understanding of the citizens of the prefecture and their feelings of safety. We put the local residents before anyone else."

According to the plan, Chubu Electric will load 48 MOX-fuel assemblies along with other new fuel during a periodic inspection scheduled at Hamaoka-4 in FY2010. Thereafter, it will gradually load MOX fuel as part of newly loaded fuel, eventually to the level of about one-third of the total of 764 fuel assemblies in the reactor.

Chubu Electric explained that it had selected Unit 4 as the first of its facilities to use MOX fuel because of the following points:

- ◆ The supply/demand balance between plutonium recovered from spent fuel from the five Hamaoka units (numbers 1-5), and the MOX fuel to be used at Unit 4.
- ◆ It will be structurally easier to inspect the reactor core at Unit 4 after loading fuel.

Over a one-month period starting September 14, company representatives will visit all 72,000 households in Omaezaki, Kakegawa and Kikukawa Cities, and Sagara Town, all of which lie in the vicinity of the Hamaoka NPS. Area meetings will also be held. Using each of those opportunities, the company will ask people for their understanding on the MOX-use program. It will then submit the abovementioned application, possibly by the end of the year, though another report may be made to the prefecture and the city before it is filed.

On September 12, another power company, the Chugoku Electric Power Co., submitted petitions for preliminary consent to its MOX-use program to local municipalities. With Chubu Electric similarly making concrete progress, it appears that the drive for MOX use at 16-18 reactors by FY2010 – the goal of the Federation of Electric Power Companies (FEPC) – is gaining momentum.

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