

AEC Officially Approves Draft of Fundamental Principles for the Nuclear Policy Program

On October 11, the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) held an extraordinary meeting and officially approved a draft of the Fundamental Principles for the Nuclear Policy Program, prepared by its New Long-term Program Council. The council had included the opinions of its anti-nuclear members in the form of an attachment to the draft, but the AEC decided to omit them. The draft is expected to be approved by the Cabinet as early as October 14.

At the extraordinary meeting, the AEC discussed how to deal with the attached opinions of Hideyuki Ban and Hitoshi Yoshioka, the two anti-nuclear council members. Concerning that issue, AEC members made such comments as follows: "Deliberations at the council meetings have been made available to the public, and people can see what the anti-nuclear opinions were;" and, "With attachment of the objections, the text of the fundamental principles, which were approved by a majority of the council members, become unclear, and does not match the intention of the principles." In the end, the AEC decided not to include the minority opinions, which will remain in the minutes of the council's deliberations.

Following the official decision, the AEC will report the principles to Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, and they are expected to be approved by the Cabinet as early as October 14. Thereafter, the relevant ministries and agencies will begin issuing specific measures to implement various policies in the fundamental principles, including those dealing with (1) the significance of nuclear power, (2) the nuclear fuel cycle based on fuel reprocessing, (3) the development of FBRs, and (4) efforts to implement radioactive waste disposal.

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