

## **Aomori Governor Meets AEC Chairman and STP Minister on Interim Storage Issues**

**On October 13, Governor Shingo Mimura of Aomori Prefecture met separately with Chairman Shunsuke Kondo of the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) and Minister of State for Science and Technology Policy Yasufumi Tanahashi to reconfirm the policy of the national government concerning the siting of a spent fuel interim storage facility in the prefecture, including the position of nuclear fuel cycle policy within overall national policy.**

The two meetings followed similar ones held by the governor with Chief Cabinet Secretary Hiroyuki Hosoda, Shoichi Nakagawa, head of the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI), and Chairman Tsunehisa Katsumata of the Federation of Electric Power Companies (FEPC), both on October 7. (See the October 7 article entitled "Aomori Governor Gets Confirmation of National and Industry Attitudes on Interim Storage Facility.")



The governor asked Chairman Kondo about three points: (1) the position of the nuclear fuel cycle in national policy, (2) transparency in plutonium use, and (3) R&D toward the construction of a second reprocessing plant. Kondo explained that the AEC would steadily promote the nuclear fuel cycle, based on the policy described in the Fundamental Principles for the Nuclear Policy Program. He also said that transparency in plutonium use would be further ensured, and that R&D toward the construction of the second reprocessing plant would be carried out as a "state project," as part of the R&D activities of the Japan Atomic Energy Agency (JAEA), with "priority given to the project based on the entire situation of nuclear technology."

The chairman asked the governor to render an appropriate judgment, saying, "Aomori Prefecture plays a pivotal role in the nuclear fuel cycle, and its decision could determine whether it succeeds or not."

In his next meeting, with Science & Technology Policy Minister Tanahashi, Gov. Mimura asked about (1) the position of the nuclear fuel cycle in national policy, and (2) R&D on the second reprocessing plant. The minister emphasized that the national government would pursue the nuclear fuel cycle, making concerted efforts to that end, and with a sense of responsibility. As to the second plant, he said, "For the next generation, the government will work on the development of competitive technology."

The two meetings on October 13 concluded a series of meetings between Gov. Mimura and various representatives of the national government, including relevant cabinet members, and representatives of the electric power companies. Afterward, he said, "I have heard what they had to say about the points that I needed to have confirmed, and I will take what I learned back home with me to reflect on them further." He thus indicated his intention to make a final decision only after carefully analyzing what happened at the meetings.

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