

## **Uranium Testing at Rokkasho Reprocessing Plant Ready for Final Stage**

**On November 10, the working committee on nuclear fuel cycle safety, part of the Nuclear and Industrial Safety Subcommittee under the Advisory Committee for Natural Resources and Energy, held its eighth meeting to discuss and approve the results of a review by the Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency (NISA) on a uranium testing report for Japan Nuclear Fuel Ltd.'s Rokkasho Reprocessing Plant. It also received a status report on a safety examination being carried out for an application by JNFL for permission to engage in business at its MOX Fuel Fabrication Plant (J-MOX).**

The report on uranium testing consolidates the results through the stage of comprehensive building testing, submitted to NISA by JNFL on November 1. NISA examined the report, which was also checked by the working committee's reprocessing working group, confirming such items as the safety functions of key facilities, criticality safety, the prevention of fire and explosions, confinement, the management of waste emissions, etc., determining that the initial safety-related abilities at each facility are functioning. As for 210 "inadequacies" identified previously, the state of implementation of corrective measures and implementation plans was deemed as appropriate. Consequently, NISA concluded that nothing existed that would hinder a move to comprehensive confirmation testing – the final step in uranium testing – and that was approved by the working committee.

Last April, JNFL filed its application for a business permit for the MOX fuel fabrication facility. At the November 10 meeting, NISA explained the status of the hearings, on-site investigations, protective designs, the geological foundation, and earthquake resistance. Key points of the safety examination included the confining function, quake-resistant design, criticality safety for each piece of equipment, and protective designs matching the training zone of the nearby Misawa Air Base. In the safety examination, the MOX guidelines decided by the Nuclear Safety Commission in 2002 were applicable for the first time.

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