

## Two Local Governments Give Preliminary Consent to Shikoku Electric's MOX-use Program at Ikata-3

On October 13, Shikoku Electric Power Co. received preliminary consent from both Ehime Prefecture and Ikata Town for the program to use MOX fuel at its Ikata-3 NPS (PWR, 890MW). Company Pres. Momoki Tokiwa received the consent from Ehime Gov. Moriuyuki Kato at the prefectural office, and from Ikata Mayor Kazuhiko Yamashita at the Ikata town hall. Pres. Tokiwa said, "Our company will do its utmost to secure safety, responding to the trust of those citizens in Ehime Prefecture who support the program."

Concerning the decision itself, Gov. Kato said, "The prefectural government considers safety to have been secured, thanks to the safety examinations conducted by the government, as well as according to the opinion presented by the Ehime prefectural committee for environmental safety management at the Ikata NPS." As for public understanding of the project, he added, "I am well aware that some still oppose the program, but I think we have gained the understanding of most of our citizens."

In giving its preliminary consent, the prefectural government called upon Shikoku Electric again to take certain steps, as follows: (1) Ensuring safety appropriately at each stage of the program. (2) Enhancing and reinforcing the quality-assurance and safety-management systems at the Ikata NPS. (3) Confirming the results of a seismic reevaluation under the new Examination Guide for the Seismic Design of Nuclear Power Plants before the program is implemented. (4) Making efforts to gain further understanding from the citizens and to alleviate their concerns.

Regarding seismic-related problems, the prefectural government said that while the issue was not unique to the MOX-use program, it was true that some concerns did exist, and that the national government and the prefecture would review the results of the reevaluation in an effort to alleviate them. In addition, it said, "The prefecture and Shikoku Electric have taken the position that they share a 'common destiny' when it comes to nuclear generation and the Ikata NPS," thus displaying the recognition that the prefecture bears a heavy responsibility for the project.

Shikoku Electric had originally submitted its petitions to the prefecture and the town for their preliminary consent in May 2004. Together with the two local governments, the power utility agreed in November of the same year that it would submit an application to the national government for permission to change a reactor installation, which was approved in March 2006.

With the preliminary consent of both the prefecture and the town in hand, Shikoku Electric will now begin the real work, including making arrangements for the MOX fuel. The aim is to start using the fuel before FY2010, which starts on April 1, 2010. A total of 40 MOX assemblies will be loaded at Ikata-3, out of a total of 157 fuel assemblies.

### Comment from FEPC:

On October 13, Pres. Tsunehisa Katsumata of the Federation of Electric Power Companies (FEPC) released a comment on the preliminary consent from Ehime Prefecture and Ikata Town, as follows: "I believe that this is a very significant step toward the realization of the MOX-use program. At present, all of Japan's power utilities are carrying out various activities to introduce MOX fuel, and I am sure that progress will be seen at other sites. All the companies are determined to continue our unified, cooperative efforts."

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