

## Deliberations Begin on Reserving Funds for Second Reprocessing Plant

On November 30, the third meeting was held of the working committee looking into the investment climate for nuclear power (under the Advisory Committee for Natural Resources and Energy's Electric Utility Industry Subcommittee). Members began discussions on means to reserve funds for Japan's second reprocessing plant.

As a tentative measure, until the specifics of the second plant are finalized, a new system to reserve such funds will be introduced during the current fiscal year (ending March 31, 2007). At the latest meeting, the Federation of Electric Power Companies (FEPC) presented its views on how to compute costs and how to reserve the funds appropriately.

Because it is difficult to foresee technological changes, costs for reprocessing spent fuel beyond the capacity of the Rokkasho Reprocessing Plant were calculated on a trial basis, based on the results at the Rokkasho Reprocessing Plant and the expected amount of spent fuel to be generated in the future. With operations to start in 2048, and continuing for 42 years thereafter, the second reprocessing plant should be capable of handling the approximately 32,000 tons of spent fuel expected by FY2043 – the same reprocessing quantity as at the Rokkasho Reprocessing Plant.

As for the methods to be used, the working committee proposed that a unit cost for the spent fuel be determined, to be multiplied by the generated amount, with the result to be reserved annually. The two proposed ways to calculate the amount to be reserved by each company are as follows: (1) calculating the cost and amount of spent fuel generated at the time of reserving, converted to present value, to which interest would be added; or (2) converting costs to the future value at the end of FY2043, and dividing that by the relevant amount of spent fuel.

The committee members then voiced their opinions, with one person saying that it ought to be recognized that the costs for the Rokkasho plant were higher than expected. Someone else said that costs to develop new reprocessing technology should be included in the cost of the second plant, while another member urged that consideration also be made of reprocessing the spent fuel produced by the program to use MOX fuel and that by FBRs.

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