

## **Governor Asks METI to Help Dispel Harmful Rumors after Earthquake Damage**

**On July 24, Governor Hirohiko Izumida of Niigata Prefecture visited Minister Akira Amari at the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) offices in Tokyo, presenting him with a list of emergency requests in the wake of the Niigata-Chuetsu Offshore Earthquake one week earlier, on July 16.**

The Governor requested the enhancement of support for the reconstruction of people's livelihoods in the area, as well as its designation as a serious disaster zone. As far as the Kashiwazaki Kariwa Nuclear Power Station was concerned, he pointed out, "The accidents that occurred this time, such as the fire and release of radioactive waste materials, have caused great anxiety and distrust among the local residents on account of the poor system and framework of initial response and information provision. I am afraid that unless some measures are taken, that will pose problems for the overall energy policy of our country, which relies on nuclear power."

In addition, Gov. Izumida said, "From the perspective of preventing harmful rumors, measures ought to be implemented immediately that will allow the residents of nuclear siting areas to live at ease, with a thorough revision made of safety measures and disaster-prevention functions, such as amendments to related laws and statutes, including the Nuclear Disaster Special Measures Law, and a reexamination of related organizations and frameworks." Also, he called for a fundamental strengthening of the new aseismic design screening criteria that were formulated in September 2006, as well as an enhancement and reinforcement of the disaster-management framework for power-generating facilities.

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