

PRESS RELEASE: Japan's Env. Minister Disapproves Plan for Coal-Fired Plant in Aichi: Zero-Based Review Inevitable

August 17th, 2015

Kiko Network

On August 14th, Japan's Ministry of Environment released the Minister of Environment's statement on the planning stages of the Environmental Impact Assessment for a planned coal-fired power plant located in Taketoyo-cho in Aichi prefecture. The Minister expressed that he "can't endorse the project" by Chubu Electric. Kiko Network echoes the Minister's objection to the construction of the coal-fired power plant.

The Minister stands by his objection against the Nishiokinoyama Power Plant, which is set to be built in Ube City, Yamaguchi by Yamaguchi Ube Power. The minister said this project is "difficult to endorse" on June 12th of this year and urged the power industry to make an industry framework as soon as possible. Following this on July 2nd, Japanese utilities' federation (The Federation of Electric Power Companies of Japan) and 23 PPS (power producers and suppliers) announced their voluntary framework, and the "Electric Utilities' Commitment for a Low-Carbon Society" through which they are decided to aim for a CO₂ emission intensity target of 0.37kg-CO₂/kWh by FY 2030. This is the first statement released by the Minister of Environment after this move by Japanese electric utility groups. The minister stated that the voluntary target's effectiveness is questionable and needs to be reconsidered as concrete mechanisms and rules are essential. The Minister also made it clear that he will continue to question new plans for coal-fired power plants.

Chubu Electric's planned Taketoyo coal-fired power plant has a potential capacity of 1070MW making it a large-scale power plant. The plant will replace existing oil plants with coal-fired thermal plants. Construction on the facility is slated for FY 2018 with operations aimed to start in FY 2021. If the coal plant begins operations as planned, potentially 6.4 Mt-CO₂ per year would be discharged. Even if the framework by the electric utilities is formed, this project would have vast, long-term CO₂ emissions, which goes against the very aim of a low-carbon society. It also deviates substantially from the national target, which aims to reduce emissions by 80% by 2050 in order to keep the average global temperatures below 2 degrees Celsius compared to pre-industrial levels and stabilize the climate.

Based on the Minister's statement, the Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) has to make a clear statement to urge Chubu Electric to reconsider the project. In addition, Chubu Electric has to seriously review the project and switch to clean renewable energy instead of using coal, which harms the environment. Also, we strongly request all relevant industries to re-think all current plans for new coal power plants (there are current plans for over 48 coal-fired power plants in Japan) as they put a heavy burden on future generations. Instead, Japan needs to make the leap towards sustainable energy projects.

Related links:

The Minister of Environment submits statement on the planning stages of the environmental impact assessment for the replacement of the Taketoyo thermal power plant (Japanese)
 The Ministry of Environment, August 14th, 2015

About the development of "the Commitment to a Low-Carbon Society" by the 10 Federation of Electric Power Companies of Japan and 23 PPS (Japanese)
 The Federation of Electric Power Companies of Japan, July 17th, 2015

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