

Again on Japan and the “Nuclear Money”

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2.5 trillion yen in nuclear money doled out to local governments since 1966

Local governments have received at least 2.5 trillion yen in “nuclear money” in the form of subsidies, fixed property taxes and other payments since the start of nuclear power generation in Japan in 1966, a tally by the Mainichi shows.

But the total is certain to be much higher because many local governments are not releasing data on nuclear power-related fixed property taxes and donations.

The Mainichi compiled the tally based on data from the Agency for Natural Resources and Energy, which operates under the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, and interviews with local governments.

Of the 2.5 trillion yen, about 915 billion yen came from subsidies based on the nation’s three power source-related laws, enacted in 1974, while 892 billion yen came from fixed property taxes that cities, towns and villages have slapped on operators of nuclear power plants.

Hokkaido and 12 other prefectures have also collected roughly 675 billion yen in nuclear fuel tax from electric companies that have built nuclear power stations in those prefectures. In addition, these utilities have donated some 53 billion yen to local governments concerned, the Mainichi found.

Under the financial capability index, which gauges each local government’s fiscal health in accordance with its own sources of revenue, local governments hosting nuclear power plants enjoy high ratings. If the index is more than 1, that local government is self-sufficient and is not eligible for subsidies.

According to the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, the index’s national average stood at 0.55 in fiscal 2009, although there were many towns and villages whose indexes were in the 0.1 range.

Of 21 cities, towns and villages, where nuclear power plants are located, 11 posted more than 1 and many others were also close to 1.

These nuclear power-hosting cities, towns and villages used nuclear money to build and renovate infrastructure and public facilities and more recently for welfare, education and other purposes closely associated with daily life.

The village of Tomari in Hokkaido, host to the Tomari Nuclear Power Plant, collects 50 percent of its revenue from nuclear money, and other local governments hosting nuclear power plants are also heavily reliant on nuclear money. If Japan pursues a campaign to quit nuclear power, these local governments will suffer tremendous financial damage.

Mainichi Shimbun , August 19, 2011

<http://mdn.mainichi.jp/mdnnews/national/archive/news/2011/08/19/20110819p2a00m0na007000c.html>

Saga Pref. Assembly members demanded donations, perks from Kyushu Electric

SAGA — Kyushu Electric Power Co. documents ordered destroyed by a company executive included records of Saga Prefectural Assembly members demanding monetary donations, jobs for acquaintances and free car rides from the utility, sources with knowledge of the matter have revealed.

The documents regarding the pluthermal reactor at Kyushu Electric's Genkai Nuclear Power Plant refer not just to Saga Gov. Yasushi Furukawa — already known to have accepted a steady stream of donations from utility executives — but furthermore show that prefectural assembly members forming policy on the pluthermal reactor and nuclear power were also dependent on the power company.

According to the sources, in mid-July this year and then again on Aug. 5 the deputy head of Kyushu Electric's nuclear power division told staff at the company's Saga branch office to destroy the documents in question, saying, "Get rid of memos that could cause trouble for certain individuals." Among the documents were messages from prefectural assembly members such as, "We're having a get-together. Send a car," and others demanding donations for local festivals.

The Mainichi has further learned that orders to destroy embarrassing documents were also issued to staff at the Genkai nuclear plant. However, there was apparently nothing at the plant covered by the order.

Kyushu Electric and the Saga governor have already been rocked by revelations of collusion to manipulate public opinion in favor of nuclear power through staged e-mail questions to a TV program on the issue.

Mainichi Shimbun , August 17, 2011

<http://mdn.mainichi.jp/mdnnews/national/archive/news/2011/08/17/20110817p2a00m0na014000c.html>
