

# **Fukushima, Tepco, and others: who pays how much? and security of N-plants**

Thursday 24 November 2011, by [NOZAKI Tatsuya](#), [TOMITA Tomoaki](#) (Date first published: 18 November 2011).

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## **Anxieties grow about radiation costs / No clear criteria, answers from TEPCO have municipalities fearful for budgets**

A growing number of municipalities are demanding that Tokyo Electric Power Co. compensate them for costs related to the ongoing nuclear crisis at the Fukushima No. 1 nuclear power plant.

TEPCO has specified the terms under which it will compensate companies and other entities, based on guidelines set by the government, but it has revealed no such terms for municipal governments.

On Wednesday afternoon, Mayor Yoshio Kusama of Takahagi, Ibaraki Prefecture, visited TEPCO's headquarters in Tokyo. Takahagi is about 80 kilometers from the plant.

Kusama asked the utility to pay 9.84 million yen for decontamination work conducted from June to October and the purchase of radiation dosimeters. It was the city's second such demand to TEPCO—in June, it became one of the first municipalities to seek compensation from the utility, demanding 2.05 million yen.

"I'll keep making demands until work to deal with the nuclear crisis ends. I mean until there are no more costs [for the work]," Kusama told TEPCO Managing Director Naomi Hirose, who is deputy head of a task force to support people affected by the nuclear crisis.

"I'm telling you this while repressing [my anger] to one-tenth, one-hundredth of its true level," Kusama said.

Hirose responded, "We apologize for causing difficulty," and bowed. However, he did not say whether TEPCO would pay the money.

Municipal governments, particularly in the Tokyo metropolitan area, have increasingly requested compensation from TEPCO. As of Wednesday, at least 18 municipalities had demanded a total of 705.74 million yen.

Hitachi-Ota, Ibaraki Prefecture, is home to the 375-meter-long Ryujin Big Suspension Bridge, the longest bridge on Honshu. About 250,000 tourists usually visit the bridge annually.

However, as bridge toll revenues from April to August declined to less than 30 percent compared

with the same period last year, the city has called on TEPCO to pay 26.72 million yen in compensation.

The city of Nagareyama, Chiba Prefecture, has demanded 287.1 million yen, including 9.6 million yen to pay its employees for special work related to temporarily storing incinerated ash and other contaminated waste.

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### **Costs may hit local finances**

Mayor Shingo Fujii of Toride, Ibaraki Prefecture, expressed concern that the cost of handling the nuclear crisis would weigh on municipal governments' finances.

"Municipalities are implementing numerous fiscal reforms to tackle their fiscal shortage. To secure funds for measures against radiation, we have to spend reserve funds for adjusting public finances [as stipulated in the Local Finance Law]," Fujii said Tuesday when claiming compensation with three other neighboring cities.

"Unless we make up the shortfall in the reserve fund, we'll have trouble with our fiscal management from next fiscal year," Fujii said.

Despite growing demand for compensation from municipalities, however, TEPCO has yet to provide clear responses. The government's Dispute Reconciliation Committee for Nuclear Damage Compensation has drawn up compensation guidelines for the private sector, but no such moves have been made for municipal governments. Due to the lack of specific criteria, more and more municipalities have called for compensation from TEPCO.

Meanwhile, the Shizuoka city government announced in April it would allow TEPCO to use its megafloat, a floating barge, to store radiation-contaminated water from the Fukushima plant. Shizuoka is still negotiating with the company on how much it should pay for use of the barge.

The city government spent about 500 million yen to build a fishing park off Shimizu Port, using the megafloat as its base. The park drew 20,000 visitors a year but is now closed. The city is reportedly asking TEPCO to pay hundreds of millions of yen for providing the megafloat.

On Monday, the government of Yashio, Saitama Prefecture, appropriated about 40.98 million yen in its supplementary budget to cover the cost of such work as decontaminating school grounds and parks. The city is unlikely to be designated a contaminated area entitled to government aid, but Yashio Mayor Shigemi Tada said, "I want TEPCO to pay for everything."

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### **Unclear picture**

The Fukushima prefectural government also reportedly intends to demand TEPCO pay costs related to dealing with the nuclear crisis. The crisis has led the prefecture to conduct a broad array of work, from decontamination over a wide area to health checks. But the prefectural government has yet to figure out the total amount needed to handle the crisis, as well as how much government aid it could receive.

"We don't know to what extent we can seek compensation, so we have no clear prospects," said an official of the prefectural government section handling nuclear damage.

In early September, Kawamatamachi in the prefecture demanded TEPCO pay some of costs for decontaminating soil in school grounds. Part of Kawamatamachi has been designated as an expanded evacuation area.

“We made the demand to express the fact that municipalities are also victims [of the nuclear crisis],” a town government official said.

**Tomoaki Tomita and Tatsuya Nozaki**, Yomiuri Shimbun Staff Writers, November 18, 2011  
<http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/dy/national/T111117005600.htm>

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## **TEPCO gets 559 billion yen in financial aid to pay compensation**

TOKYO (Kyodo) — Tokyo Electric Power Co. said Tuesday it has received 558.7 billion yen from a state-backed funding entity to implement compensation payments through the end of this year to people and others affected by the nuclear crisis at the Fukushima Daiichi power plant.

The plant operator known as TEPCO is expected to continue to pay massive compensation without falling into negative net worth by receiving funds from the Nuclear Damage Liability Facilitation Fund.

The financial assistance is part of about 1.01 trillion yen the government has decided to provide to TEPCO for the meantime, including 120 billion yen in government compensation to be paid for a nuclear accident under the nuclear damage compensation law.

TEPCO, for its part, has promised to cut more than 2.55 trillion yen in costs over 10 years such as by cutting corporate pension payments, and to facilitate the often-criticized payment process under a special business plan crafted by the company and the funding body.

A third-party panel has estimated that compensation payments could reach 4.54 trillion yen by March 2013, while the utility is also expected to face huge expenses stemming from scrapping the crippled nuclear reactors, which could take more than 30 years.

**Kyodo Press**, November 15, 2011

<http://mdn.mainichi.jp/mdnnews/national/archive/news/2011/11/15/20111115p2g00m0dm083000c.html>

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## **Questions remain over tsunami safety measures at Hamaoka nuclear plant**

“I’ve never seen anything this solid,” remarked Tomoya Shibayama, a specialist in coastal engineering at Waseda University as he surveyed a coastal barrier under construction at Chubu Electric Power Co.’s Hamaoka Nuclear Power Plant in Shizuoka Prefecture.

The barrier being built at the plant in the wake of the devastating March 11 earthquake and tsunami that crippled the Fukushima No. 1 nuclear complex has foundations reaching the bedrock as deep as 30 meters below ground. The design, based on steel frames filled with concrete, far surpasses the sturdiness of the barriers destroyed by the March 11 disaster.

Yet Shibayama has his reservations.

"I don't believe any coastal engineering specialists have been involved in the design. I can't see any sensible measures such as designing an offshore structure to reduce the force of a tsunami," he said.

Following the March 11 disaster that triggered the nuclear crisis at the Fukushima plant, it emerged the plant's operator, Tokyo Electric Power Co., had not listened to specialists who had warned about the possibility of a tsunami.

Is Chubu Electric Power Co. now heeding the advice of specialists to avoid a repeat of that disaster?

"We consulted the opinions of university researchers and other specialists, but we have not quoted any research papers," a company representative said. The company has been slow to release the names of the scholars it says it has consulted.

On July 22, Chubu Electric Power Co. announced that its new barrier would reach a height of 18 meters. A company official visited the Shizuoka Prefectural Government Headquarters and stated, "The biggest earthquake we can imagine at the Hamaoka Nuclear Power Plant is a magnitude-9 quake creating a tsunami 10 meters high. We've implement all possible measures."

Prefectural crisis management official Satoshi Kobayashi questioned the basis for the company's conclusions, but power company officials simply answered, "These are internal figures."

Kobayashi then said, "There is no clear basis for them. It would be better not to produce figures so hastily," sending the company a warning about the danger of acting on internal assumptions.

To independently check the reliability of Chubu Electric Power Co.'s tsunami countermeasures, the Shizuoka Prefectural Government formed a tsunami committee within its disaster prevention and nuclear power science council. Committee member Kenji Harada, an associate professor in coastal engineering at Shizuoka University, expressed concern that the wall to protect the water intake pump at the plant is just 1.5 meters high. Even if a tsunami was stopped by the barrier, a rise in the sea level would cause seawater to overflow from the intake chamber on the plant grounds, submerging the cooling water intake pump and possibly resulting in a malfunction.

Meanwhile, a more serious issue has emerged. At a meeting of the Seismological Society of Japan in Shizuoka in mid-October, Yoshinobu Tsuji, an associate professor in seismology at the University of Tokyo, spoke to the Mainichi about the possibility of a tsunami in the vicinity of the Hamaoka nuclear plant reaching an elevation of 15 to 20 meters — far higher than the maximum level predicted by Chubu Electric.

Chubu Electric Power Co. appears to have adhered to "company decisions" so it can quickly move forward with its tsunami countermeasures. But to win the confidence of local residents and local bodies, it must release information and carefully provide explanations that answer the safety issues raised by researchers.

**Mainichi Shimbun** , November 16, 2011

<http://mdn.mainichi.jp/mdnnews/national/archive/news/2011/11/16/20111116p2a00m0na019000c.html>

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## **Gov't not to permit restart of 2 reactors at Genkai plant: Edano**

TOKYO (Kyodo) — Economy, Trade and Industry Minister Yukio Edano said Thursday the government will not allow Kyushu Electric Power Co. to restart two nuclear reactors at its Genkai power plant amid a scandal involving an attempt by the utility to misrepresent public opinion regarding the restart.

Kyushu Electric should not be allowed to resume operation of the No. 2 and 3 reactors, currently idled for regular checks, at its nuclear plant in the town of Genkai in Saga Prefecture “in view of its current governance,” Edano told the Budget Committee of the House of Councillors.

Edano was referring to Kyushu Electric’s campaign to mobilize employees to bombard a government-sponsored television program with e-mails in support of restarting the reactors.

A third-party panel set up by the utility to investigate the scandal concluded in late September that a remark by Saga Gov. Yasushi Furukawa prompted the utility to launch the e-mail campaign.

Kyushu Electric’s Oct. 14 report to the industry ministry did not include the third-party panel’s conclusion. With Edano angered by the report, the utility submitted a revised report on Wednesday that again omitted the panel’s conclusion.

**Kyodo Press**, November 18, 2011

<http://mdn.mainichi.jp/mdnnews/national/news/20111118p2g00m0dm082000c.html>

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