

MORE PROACTIVE ROLE IN DEALING WITH CONTAMINATED WATER AT DAMAGED NUCLEAR PLANT

At its Nuclear Emergency Response Headquarters, on September 3, 2013, Japan's Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) announced its new "Basic Policy on Contaminated Water Issues at the Tokyo Electric Power Company's (TEPCO) Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station," seeking more fundamental solutions to the problem of contaminated, which has grown increasingly serious since the accident associated with the earthquake and tsunami on March 11, 2011.

Beyond the follow-up measures already required of TEPCO in the past, the Government of Japan has vowed it will undertake multi-layered preventive measures, starting with a thorough identification of risks.

In order to ensure a strong organizational structure to implement these measures, Japan also established the multi-pronged "Inter-Ministerial Council for Contaminated Water and Decommissioning Issues," the "Intergovernmental Liaison Office for Contaminated Water Issues," and the "Council for the Decommissioning of TEPCO's Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station."

The overall aim of these is: to enhance cooperation between TEPCO-related parties, properly respond to local needs, strictly control the process, provide

financial support for the implementation of measures, and monitor the surrounding marine areas. In addition, it plans to base any concrete countermeasures to address contaminated water and decommissioning issues on the following three principles:

(1) Removing the source of contamination. This means removing the highly-contaminated water in the trenches (underground tunnels for passing through pipes and electrical cables) in the basements of the reactor buildings; installing advanced, multi-nuclide removal equipment, funded by the government, to accelerate the decontamination of highly-contaminated water.

(2) Isolating surrounding groundwater from the contamination source. This involves installing land-side impermeable walls, using a frozen-soil method, to encircle the reactor buildings, again at national expense, in order to lower the amount of groundwater inflow as much as possible.

(3) Preventing leakage of contaminated water to the sea. This will see the installation of soluble glass walls and sea-side impermeable walls as multiple measures, strengthening of the tank control system, and replacing all bolted-joint tanks with welded-joint tanks.

Japan's government says its aim is to proceed towards the speedy resolution of these contaminated water issues by implementing this package of measures.

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