TEPCO launches tender for thermal power despite call for postponement

The Associated Press

TOKYO, Feb. 15 (Kyodo) — Tokyo Electric Power Co. launched a tender Friday to choose new suppliers of electricity generated by coal-fired thermal plants, despite a call by the government to postpone it due to concerns about global warming.

The utility launched the tender and held an orientation session on the project as it seeks to make up for the nuclear power output that has been lost since the March 2011 disaster at its Fukushima Daiichi atomic plant.

"We hope to see as many competitive bids as possible for our tender," TEPCO Managing Executive Officer Kazuhisa Kataoka said at the beginning of the orientation meeting.

The number of companies participating in Friday's session was around 50, down from the approximately 100 that attended the previous session in November.

The Environment Ministry called on the utility to postpone the tender amid concerns that coal-fired thermal power is said to produce more carbon dioxide than other forms of thermal power generation and cause global warming.

TEPCO is scheduled to close the tender on May 24 and announce the results by the end of July.

Successful bidders will build new coal-fired thermal power plants that can produce 2.6 million kilowatts of power -- equivalent to two large nuclear reactors. TEPCO plans to buy power from them, rather than building a power plant of its own.

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