

Tohoku Elec. cancelling new nuclear power plant plans

The Associated Press

TOKYO, March 28 (Kyodo) — Tohoku Electric Power Co. said Thursday it has decided to cancel its plan to build a new nuclear power station in Fukushima Prefecture, where antinuclear sentiment gained ground in the aftermath of the nuclear disaster at the Fukushima Daiichi power plant.

Tohoku Electric had been preparing to build the Namie-Odaka nuclear power plant on a tract of land straddling the city of Minamisoma and the town of Namie, both in Fukushima Prefecture, on the Pacific coast.

This is the first cancellation by a Japanese utility firm of a plan to build a new nuclear power plant following the onset of the March 2011 nuclear disaster at the Fukushima Daiichi power plant operated by Tokyo Electric Power Co.

Tohoku Electric, which is based in Sendai, the biggest city in northeastern Japan's Tohoku region and the capital of Miyagi Prefecture, is expected to remove the Namie-Odaka plant construction project from its management program for fiscal 2013 starting April 1.

Tohoku Electric, which first unveiled the plan for the new plant in 1968, had been making efforts to acquire some 150 hectares, or 1.5 million square meters, of land in the two municipalities to build the Namie-Odaka plant, but faced difficulties.

The planned site was flooded by the huge tsunami following the magnitude 9.0 earthquake on March 11, 2011, that devastated many parts of northeastern Japan and has been designated an evacuation zone.

It is located some 10 kilometers north of the disaster-stricken Fukushima Daiichi plant, which is located in the towns of Okuma and Futaba, Fukushima Prefecture.

Following the disaster at the Fukushima Daiichi plant, the Fukushima prefectural government declared it was pulling out of nuclear power generation. The Minamisoma and Namie municipal assemblies have passed resolutions urging Tohoku Electric to call off its plan to build the Namie-Odaka nuclear power plant.

Tohoku Electric had planned to start construction in fiscal 2016, starting April 1 that year, of the plant's No. 1 reactor, which would be a boiling water-type reactor with an output capacity of 825,000 kilowatts.

Tohoku Electric is expected to retain a separate plan to build the No. 2 reactor at its Higashidori nuclear power plant in the village of Higashidori, Aomori Prefecture, on the northern tip of Japan's largest main island of Honshu.

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Currently, Tohoku Electric operates two reactors -- one at the Onagawa nuclear power plant in the town of Onagawa, Miyagi Prefecture, and the other at the Higashidori plant, but they have been shut down in the aftermath of the Fukushima disaster.

Tokyo Electric, known as TEPCO, is also building a reactor at the Higashidori plant.

Tohoku Electric supplies electricity to six prefectures in northeastern Japan -- Aomori, Iwate, Akita, Yamagata, Miyagi and Fukushima -- plus Niigata Prefecture on the Sea of Japan coast.

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