

Miyagi Prefectural Assembly News

The 334th Miyagi Prefectural Assembly (November 2011 Regular Meeting)

1. Overview

The Miyagi Prefectural Assembly elections were conducted on the 13th November 2011 and 59 assembly members, including 6 newly elected members were welcomed. This regular meeting took place on the 28th November and was the first since the elections. On the opening day Mr. Isao Nakamura was elected as the 37th Miyagi Prefectural Assembly Chairperson and Mr. Seiji Sasaki was elected as the 34th Miyagi Prefectural Assembly Vice-chairperson. Discussions were held about the rejuvenation of the region and each assembly member announced his/her opinions, closely mirroring those of prefectural residents, regarding the many issues faced by the prefecture such as development of recovery housing, measures against radiation and the enhancement of disaster preparedness education etc.

1. Session

28th November (Mon.) – 15th March (Wed.) 2011 – 24 days

2. Bills submitted by the Governor

- i. 8 items including the 2011 Miyagi Prefecture General Accounting Supplementary Budget
- ii. 17 items including the Ordinance Amending a Part of the Employee Remuneration Ordinance
- iii. 25 items including A Bill Related to the Appointment of a Designated Administrator
- iv. 7 items related to the acceptance of work such as that of the Condolence Money Provision Board of Review Ordinance
- v. 4 items including A Bill Related to the Conclusion of Construction Contracts
- vi. 2 items including A Bill Related to Consensus Regarding the Appointment of an Audit Commissioner
- vii. 1 item: A Bill Regarding the Acknowledgement of Matters being Executively Decided by the Assembly Chairperson

3. Question Time

17 assembly members posed general questions related to the prefectural government including those regarding earthquake disaster reconstruction and recovery efforts

4. Bills Submitted by Assembly Members

Ordinance Amending a Part of the Prefectural Assembly Member Remuneration Ordinance

Proposal Seeking the Extension of the Period for Partial Fee Exemption at Medical Institutions for Great East Japan Earthquake Disaster Victims

Proposal Seeking the Design of a Sustainable Nursing Insurance System which can Respond to New Issues

Proposal Seeking the Prompt Enactment of the Disabled Persons General Welfare Act (provisional name)

Proposal Seeking the Continuance of the Various Fund Projects Aiming to Improve the Lives of Japanese Citizens

Proposal Protesting Against Participation in the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) Agreement Negotiations

Proposal Regarding Security at Nuclear Power Plants

Proposal Regarding Information Protection Countermeasures against the Threat of Cyber Attack

Proposal Regarding the State of Emergency

5. Petitions: 2 items

6. Decisions: Bills submitted by the governor: 64 items passed, approved, ratified
Bills submitted by assembly members: 9 items passed
Petitions: 2 items adopted

2. Main Details of the Assembly Question Time

1. Disaster Public Housing

Question: Regarding the development plan for disaster public housing

Response: We are considering supporting the construction of 5000 houses, of which 1000 would be run by the prefectural government. We will use many means to procure housing including municipal governments building houses themselves and homes being bought and rented from private companies. According to prefectural estimates, 12,000 houses will be bought and rented from private companies but the situation will be closely monitored by municipal polls of disaster victims and other means. We will reevaluate as necessary.

2. Reconstruction of Railways

Question: Regarding the fact that there is no forecast for the completion of railway reconstruction and this could lead to a decrease in the population.

Response: We have made requests to the national government but they haven't yet been realised. We will continue trying. Talks with related organisations and municipal governments regarding route changes are progressing smoothly and we hope to fulfil our role as a prefectural government to complete restoration as soon as possible. Recovery subsidies, as newly established in the Recovery Special Zone Act and effective promotion projects can be utilised flexibly so we will request that the national government take into account the special situation of Miyagi Prefecture and allow them to be used for railway reconstruction.

3. Disaster Preparedness Education in Schools

Question: Regarding emergency management during natural disasters

Response: We would like to show in concreteness what kind of information should be included in Disaster Response Manuals. For example, details regarding suitable and safe actions during a natural disaster, evacuation areas which are suitable for the situation and evacuation routes.

4. Measures Against Radiation

Question: Regarding health inspections made necessary because of an increase in radiation

Response: Thyroid examinations were carried out on children at primary school age and under in two areas of Marumori where radiation exposure was comparatively high to ease the anxiety of prefectural residents after hearing a comment made by the advisory council stating that health examinations weren't necessary. We will have the advisory council discuss our future response to ease the anxiety of Miyagi residents, taking into account the results of the tests.

5. Participation in TPP Negotiations

Question: Regarding participation in TPP negotiations

Response: We sought satisfactory measures to strengthen domestic industry including the agricultural industry and that national consensus be formed. Recovery is the priority issue. We must seek responsible action from the national government which considers the situation in disaster stricken areas so that the will towards recovery doesn't weaken.

3. Standing Committees

All 6 standing committees were partially revised. What were up until now know as the "Environment and Lifestyle Committee" and the "Industry and Economy Committee" were changed to the "Environment, Lifestyle and Agricultural, Forestry, and Fisheries Industry Committee" and the "Commerce, Industry and Tourism Committee". Their jurisdiction was also partially altered. The committees were held for 2 – 4 days and 57 bills and petitions were reviewed.

- i. General Affairs and Policy Planning Committee
Bills were reviewed and voted on including the Ordinance Amending a Part of the Regional Base City Area Prefectural Tax Special Case Ordinance
- ii. Environment, Lifestyle and Agricultural, Forestry, and Fisheries Industry Committee
Bills were reviewed and voted on including the Ordinance Amending a Part of the Agricultural University Ordinance
- iii. Health and Welfare Committee
Bills were reviewed and voted on including the Ordinance Amending a Part of the Disabled Persons Facilities Promotion Group Ordinance
- iv. Commerce, Industry and Tourism Committee
Bills were reviewed and voted on including the Ordinance Amending a Part of the Emergency Employment Creation Project Special Fund Ordinance
- v. Construction Enterprise Committee
Bills were reviewed and voted on including the Ordinance Amending a Part of the Road Exclusive Use Ordinance
- vi. Education and Public Safety Committee
Bills were reviewed and voted on including the Ordinance Amending a Part of the Prefectural Schools Ordinance

4. Great East Japan Earthquake Reconstruction/Recovery Measures and Survey Special Committee

In order to investigate, consider and promote general reconstruction/recovery measures and policies, the Great East Japan Earthquake Reconstruction/Recovery Measures and Survey Special Committee made up of all 59 members of the assembly was established in the December 21st plenary session.

In order to ensure that investigations progress smoothly, a further 6 specialist sub-committees were also established within the Great East Japan Earthquake Reconstruction/Recovery Measures and Survey Special

Committee.

*The Great East Japan Earthquake Disaster Measures and Survey Special Committee which was set up after the disaster was dissolved as per a vote by assembly members

- i. Life Relief Support Sub-Committee
Various policies related to helping disaster victims rebuild their lives
- ii. Local Authority Consolidation Sub-Committee
Various policies related to the consolidation of local authorities in preparation for reconstruction and recovery
- iii. Disaster Preparedness Network Sub-Committee
Various policies related to the restructuring of the disaster preparedness network
- iv. Regional Industry Recovery Sub-Committee
Various policies related to the recovery of regional industry and employment measures
- v. Renewable Energy Sub-Committee
Various policies related to renewable energy and regional development

5. Miscellaneous

1. Sendai City Assembly, Miyagi Prefectural Assembly Forum (22.12.2011)
This forum was conducted to encourage information sharing and promote collaboration between the two assemblies through the establishment of a system of cooperation aimed at problem solving. Opinions were exchanged regarding the various issues faced by both assemblies including assembly efforts towards reconstruction and recovery and the state of autonomous and independent efforts.
2. Requests in preparation for the promotion of extensive disposal of disaster waste material (16.1.2012 – 14.2.2012)
Because of the increase in radioactive pollution, it has become very difficult to dispose of disaster waste material in facilities outside the prefecture. Disposal of this waste is key to reconstruction and recovery efforts. Therefore, requests for cooperation were made to the assemblies of cities and prefectures and government organisations with a view to promoting the extensive disposal of disaster waste material to realise reconstruction and recovery.