

The 355th Miyagi Prefectural Assembly (February 2016 Regular Session)

1) Session: February 16, 2016 (Thu.) to March 15, 2016 (Wed.), 29 days

2) Outline

The 355th Miyagi Prefectural Assembly (February 2016 regular session) was held over a period of 29 days from February 16 to March 15, 2016. 176 bills were approved in their original forms, including the preliminary budget bill to allocate 1.3744 trillion JPY for the FY 2016 general account. FY 2016 is the first of five years of the second half of the Miyagi Prefecture Disaster Recovery Plan. During his statement, Governor Yoshihiro Murai emphasized, “We will continue to push toward the realization of a ‘prosperous Miyagi’, making focused efforts to achieve local revitalization, create a disaster-resistant prefecture, and support those who are faced with continuing difficulties such as economic hardship and disability.”

The representative and general inquiries included discussions regarding an overview of the past five years of creative recovery, the current state of the Disaster Prevention Collective Relocation Promotion Project, and the operating hours of Sendai Airport under private management.

3) Bills Voted On

1. Resolutions (total): 1
 - Resolution to denounce North Korea’s 4th nuclear weapons test and ballistic missile launch
2. Proposals (total): 8
 - Proposal regarding the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP)
 - Proposal for drastic measures to solve problems concerning consumption tax on medical treatment, etc.
3. Bills Submitted by the Governor (total): 167
 - FY 2016 Miyagi Prefecture General Account Budget, etc.
4. Petitions (total): 1
 - Petition regarding flood damage from torrential rains of September 11 (approved)

4) Main Content of Representative and General Inquiries Asked during the Assembly

1. Current State and Prospects of Creative Recovery

In order to become a model for Japan, the prefecture will develop concrete recovery measures to display to the world along with the current recovery status. From this point forward, it will be increasingly important to address mental health care for disaster victims due to long-term evacuation and transfer into disaster public housing. The prefecture will continue to support efforts for all disaster victims to rebuild their lives as quickly as possible.

2. Disaster Prevention Collective Relocation Promotion Project

At the end of FY 2015, 164 of the planned 195 residential zones designated for private homes were ready for construction, and projects were progressing steadily. Departments within the prefectural government will continue to work in conjunction to support municipalities in consolidating and securing land for these projects, in accordance each municipality's plans and current progress and based on the Reconstruction Agency's support measures.

3. Promotion of Use of Sendai Airport

The prefecture worked toward the privatization of Sendai Airport with the goal of serving six million passengers and handling 50 thousand tons of freight. In order to promote the addition of new routes, the extension of operating hours is an important issue. If the extension of operating hours is deemed necessary, the government will take necessary steps, such as coordinating with the municipalities in the area and holding explanatory meetings for residents.

4. Disposal of Designated Waste

Through reexamination, two thirds of designated waste in the prefecture was confirmed to have radioactive material concentration below the designated safety standard of 8,000 becquerels per kilogram. Waste with levels below the designated standard value was authorized for disposal by local governments as normal waste, per the national government's Guidelines for Designated Waste.

Deliberations concerning the disposal of designated waste in the prefecture will take place at meetings of the mayors of Miyagi municipalities.

5. Exemption of Medical Fees for Disaster Victims

Exemptions of individuals' partial liability for medical care costs in accordance with the National Health Insurance program are comprehensively determined by municipal governments, and the prefecture does not offer support for medical cost exemption. However, the prefecture will look into the possibility of support through the utilization of subsidies for municipalities in which the effects of the disaster and other factors have led to financial difficulty with regard to National Health Insurance.

6. Childcare Support Measures

The prefecture believes that the national government bears the responsibility for an Infant and Young Child Medical Care Financial Assistance Program. The prefecture will, along with the National Governors' Association, firmly request that the national government create and implement a new system for providing assistance for infant medical care.

5) Activities of the Prefectural Assembly in Relation to Restoration and Reconstruction Efforts

From January to early February, prefectural assembly members went to eight disaster-affected coastal municipalities and Marumori Town to engage in opinion exchanges with municipal assembly members regarding the issues related to recovery and reconstruction. In addition, they carried out on-site examination in Tome City and other locations.