

Miyagi Prefectural Assembly News

The 361th Miyagi Prefectural Assembly (September 2017 Regular Session)

1) Session: September 1, 2017 (Wed.) to September 29, 2017 (Fri.), 29 days

2) Outline

The 361th Miyagi Prefectural Assembly (September 2017 regular session) was held over a period of 29 days from September 1 to September 29, 2017. 32 bills were approved, including the bill to add an additional 7.99 billion JPY to the general account supplementary budget, and the settlement of the FY 2016 general and special accounts were authorized.

The representative and general inquiries included lively discussions on the issues associated with transitioning into the Development Stage of the Miyagi Earthquake Disaster Recovery Plan, and prefectural issues such as disaster and risk management related to the North Korea missile issue, new agricultural policies such as changes to the acreage reduction policy, and tourism promotion policies.

3) Bills Voted On

1. Motions (total): 1

- Motion to amend a part of the ordinance related to the issuance of political activity costs for the Miyagi Prefectural Assembly

2. Resolutions (total): 1

- Resolution to denounce North Korea's ballistic missile launches

3. Proposals (total): 3

- Proposal to reinforce subsidization of private schools
- Proposal to extend period of Great East Japan Earthquake special rent reduction
- Proposal to stop release of tritium-contaminated water from Fukushima No. 1 nuclear plant into the ocean, etc.

4. Bills Submitted by the Governor (total): 30

- FY 2017 Miyagi Prefecture General Account Supplementary Budget
- Authorization of settlement of FY 2016 Miyagi Prefecture General Account and Special Account Budget, etc.

5. Petitions (total): 1

- Petition to submit proposal regarding private school subsidization to national government and Diet (approved)

4) Summary of Representative and General Inquiries Made During the Assembly

1. Issues Regarding Transition from Reconstruction Stage to Development Stage of Recovery Plan

The prefecture will accelerate reconstruction community development. The focus will be on industrial revitalization and resolving the labor shortage issue. The prefecture will also put an emphasis on supporting the development of new communities created from reconstruction, providing mental care,

supporting industrial accumulation and SMEs while considering post-recovery demands, etc.

2. Attracting Foreign Visitors to Japan

The prefecture has been engaged in wide-area tourism promotion of the entire Tohoku region, establishment of support desks in Beijing/Shanghai/Taipei, expansion of the quality and amount of information being spread, and creation of a tourist-accommodating environment. As a result, the number of foreign overnight tourists from January to June of this year exceeded 98,000, 30% more than the same timeframe last year. The cultural properties of our prefecture are important assets for attracting tourists. The prefecture is striving for more comprehensive tourist guide information and promotion of Miyagi's history and culture.

3. Disaster and Risk Management Initiatives

The designation of areas at risk of sediment disaster due to heavy rain is scheduled to finish by FY 2022. The prefecture will designate areas ahead of schedule as much as possible. In municipalities related to nuclear disasters, the prefecture has requested and received consent for the wide-area evacuation plans to include evacuee acceptance numbers that take multiple disasters into consideration. However, the prefecture has learned that municipalities with higher acceptance numbers are dealing with new issues and will make efforts to resolve those issues by holding discussions.

Regarding the North Korea missile issue, progress is being made on arrangements for residents' evacuation drills held jointly by the national, prefectural, and local governments.

4. Next-Generation Prefectural High School Future Concept Plan

The prefecture aims to incorporate an emphasis on regional revitalization and fostering members of society who can support recovery efforts. The prefecture will proceed by asking for a wide range of opinions. It is also necessary to have new initiatives in prefectural high schools such as the International Baccalaureate (IB), an international education program.

5. Rice Policies After FY 2018

For rice production to meet demands, the Miyagi Council for the Regeneration of Agriculture will act as the primary organizer again and set production estimates based on supply forecasts from the national government. The council has made leaflets and held four orientations so far, and the prefecture will make efforts to facilitate production levels that smoothly meet supply demands.

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

On August 23rd, the prefecture visited TEPCO's Fukushima Revitalization Headquarters and submitted the "Request for Rapid, Appropriate Action for Damages and Swift, Complete Resolution from the Fukushima No. 1 Nuclear Power Plant Incident." On September 27th, the prefecture received a response from TEPCO, and out of the tritium-contaminated water disposal methods, the prefecture strongly requested that the release of water into the ocean be stopped.