

Miyagi Prefectural Assembly News

The 363rd Miyagi Prefectural Assembly (February 2018 Regular Session)

1. Session

February 15, 2018 (Thu.) to March 16, 2018 (Fri.), 30 days

2. Outline

The 363rd Miyagi Prefectural Assembly (February regular session) was held over a period of 30 days from February 15 to March 16, 2018. A total of 157 bills were approved in their original forms, including the preliminary budget bill to allocate 1.1206 trillion JPY for the FY 2018 general account. FY 2018 is the first year of the three-year “development stage” of the Miyagi Prefecture Disaster Recovery Plan. During his statement, Governor MURAI Yoshihiro strongly emphasized, “This is an extremely important year that will take the first step towards a conclusion of recovery. We will continue to work arduously towards achieving recovery by FY 2020.” The representative and general inquiries included a lively exchange of questions and answers about support for disaster victims, tourism, health care, education policies and other topics.

3. Bills Voted On

(1) Motions: 1

“Miyagi forest and greenery prefectural citizen ordinance”

(2) Proposals: 6

“Proposal requesting the use of land which has unknown ownership”

“Proposal requesting the planned amendment of the fixed number of teaching staff in order to help implement work-style reform in schools”

(3) Bills Submitted by the Governor: 150

FY 2018 Miyagi Prefecture General Account Budget, etc.

(4) Petitions: 1

“Petition regarding the submission of requests for national compensation for victims of forced sterilization under the old Eugenic Protection Act” (approved)

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

(1) Regarding mental healthcare and the period extension for operations using recovery funding and for multiple support systems

While the deadline for repaying the prefecture’s recovery funds established by local municipalities is approaching in FY 2020, in light of the long-term support requested in mental healthcare and community developments, we will consider necessary changes, including a period extension.

(2) Regarding the introduction of accommodation tax for further tourism promotion

Since much of the funding for tourism policies comes from national grants and funds such as the Earthquake Disaster Reconstruction Fund, there is an issue of guaranteeing a stable income. An

investigative organization made up of experts will proceed with this discussion.

(3) Regarding the improvement in the number of truancy cases

Due to various policies including creating a comprehensive consultation framework, early detection and response have led to positive results in the rates of bullying cases being resolved and rates of re-attendance. It is important to make a school that students will want to attend so from next year we will tackle this issue with the “promotional program to make schools more appealing”

(4) Regarding the disposal of waste which fails to meet national regulations, contaminated by Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster-related radioactive substances

Explanatory meetings were held in the three areas, Sennan (Southern area of Miyagi), Osaki and Ishinomaki, in response to concerns regarding radioactive diffusion from incineration and damage caused by misinformation. It was explained that bag filters and other such equipment dealing with exhaust fumes can be operated normally and a layer of soil can be used to absorb the cesium. At the very least, the sites are checked more than once a month to ensure that it is in line with the national standard. In order to prevent misinformation, we will share the results of our monitoring of the environment in an easy to understand format.

(5) Regarding the improvement of home medical care

To improve outdated home medical care support hospitals and home health care offices, obtaining doctors and nurses is an issue preventing progress according to plan. We aim to secure more personnel and strengthen initiatives regarding home treatment.

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

Working towards the promotion of restoration and reconstruction efforts and finding out what issues affect disaster areas, an inquiry was conducted from early to mid-February over a four day period in cities and towns affected by disaster. During this inquiry, along with investigating restoration/reconstruction progress, municipal assembly members discussed and shared knowledge with prefectural assembly members regarding challenges in ushering in the “development stage” of the prefectural earthquake disaster recovery plan.