

Miyagi Prefectural Assembly News

The 330th Miyagi Prefectural Assembly (February 2011 Regular Meeting)

1. Overview

1. Session

14th February (Mon.) to 15th March (Tues.) 2011 - 30 days

2. Bills decided upon

The Tohoku Pacific Earthquake Damage Recovery Bill

3. Bills submitted by the Governor

i. 16 items including the 2011 Miyagi Prefecture General Accounting Supplementary Budget

ii. 17 items including the 2010 Miyagi Prefecture General Accounting Supplementary Budget

iii. 58 items including the Special Measures Related to the Remuneration of the Governor and Prefectural Employees Ordinance

iv. 1 human resources item related to the appointment of audit committee members

4. Question Time

2 assembly members asked questions representing their party and 16 assembly members posed general questions regarding the management of the prefectural government in fiscal 2011

5. Bills submitted by assembly members

8 items including:

Miyagi Tourism Creation Prefectural Citizen Ordinance

Ordinance Amending a Part of the Miyagi Prefectural Assembly Committee Ordinance

Ordinance Amending a Part of the Prefectural Assembly Member Remuneration Ordinance

Ordinance Amending a Part of the Ordinance related to the Number of Prefectural Assembly Members and Constituencies and How Many Assembly Members should be elected in each Constituency

6. Petitions: 2 items

7. Decisions:

Bills submitted by the governor: 92 items passed, approved and ratified

Bills decided: 1 item passed

Bills submitted by assembly members: 4 items passed, approved

Bills submitted by committees: 4 items passed

Petitions: 2 items adopted

2. The 330th Miyagi Prefectural Assembly (February 2011 Regular Meeting)

Assembly members took part in the plenary assembly on the 15th March filled with determination towards search and rescue and rebuilding efforts for prefectural citizens who underwent catastrophic damage as a result of the massive earthquake and tsunami that occurred on the 11th March. The session began with a moment of silence for those who lost their lives in the disaster.

The supplementary budget including an additional 20 billion yen to be allocated to emergency rescue efforts brought forward by the governor was passed unanimously. In order to examine and then promote bills such as “working together with citizens of Miyagi to bring back stability to people’s lives as quickly as possible by overcoming this terrible natural disaster and doing everything in our power to restore our home” and “general efforts by the prefectural assembly regarding reconstruction and restoration”, a Great East Japan Earthquake Disaster Measures and Survey Special Committee was established comprising all assembly members. Future efforts by the prefectural assembly towards rebuilding stricken areas after the disaster were put forward and discussed vigorously.

After the closing of the regular meeting, the Miyagi prefectural assembly developed proactive measures to improve the lives of prefectural citizens and restore normality as soon as possible. A list of emergency requests was submitted to the governor, requests aimed towards reconstruction and recovery were made to the national government such as those regarding the maintenance of infrastructure including roads and railways and the securing of emergency temporary housing. Finally, on-site investigations were carried out to ascertain the state of damage and to consider possible countermeasures.

3. A Bill related to Reconstruction of Damage caused by the Tohoku Pacific Earthquake (Great East Japan Earthquake)

Bill: Full Text

Many lives were lost, particularly in coastal areas, and the very foundations of regional societies were destroyed by the biggest earthquake and tsunami in Japanese recorded history. It caused unprecedented damage and had a serious impact on the lives of prefectural citizens and regional industry. We hope that the national government will mobilise all available resources and implement full-scale countermeasures for search and rescue and efforts towards prompt reconstruction and recovery.

The Miyagi prefectural assembly hereby pledges alongside the people of Miyagi, that we will stand up to the challenge of rebuilding our homes and that each and every citizen of Miyagi prefecture will overcome this insurmountable tragedy with the indomitability of the human spirit. We will restore stability to the lives of prefectural residents as quickly as possible by putting all our efforts into rescuing disaster victims and recovering from this disaster. The above bill shall be passed.

4. Requests for General Support from the National Government

After the earthquake, it was judged in the prefectural assembly that swift measures had to be taken against the unimaginable damage caused. The “Tohoku Pacific Earthquake List of Emergency Requests” was compiled by the 3 prefectural assemblies of Miyagi, Iwate and Fukushima. It sets forth requests for leadership and a response from the national government regarding the swift rescue of disaster victims, financial support, daily necessities such as petroleum, healthcare delivery, prompt restoration of utilities and the nuclear disaster. A similar list of requests was drawn up at the meeting of the National Association of Chairpersons of Prefectural Assemblies. Both of these lists were presented to government-related individuals including the Prime Minister and political parties such as the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) and the Liberal Democrat Party (LDP).

Furthermore, 1 month after the earthquake, perceiving it to be time to move away from search and rescue towards reconstruction and recovery efforts, on the 12th/13th April, concrete requests were made to each ministry regarding the implementation of general measures to rebuild disaster victims’ lives, extension and relaxation of existing systems, the enacting of special laws, the establishment of recovery funds, recovery support focusing mainly on the marine produce industry and general support for the rebuilding of schools etc. The Chairperson of the Miyagi prefectural assembly himself made the requests directly to government-related persons including the chief cabinet secretary and political parties including the DPJ and LDP.

5. The Great East Japan Earthquake Disaster Measures and Survey Special Committee

In order to investigate, consider and promote future general recovery countermeasures including rescue measures for disaster victims, and the prompt restoration of public facilities and general residences, the Great East Japan Earthquake Disaster Measures and Survey Special Committee made up of all 60 members of the assembly was established in the March 15th plenary session.

The special committee made requests to the prefectural and national governments’ as well as related industries regarding urgent countermeasures aiming to bring back normal regional economic activities for prefectural residents including those who had no choice but to evacuate. These include requests for care for residents who have lost their local infrastructure have to live as evacuees for an extended period of time, provision of daily necessities and medical products/long-term medical care, prompt construction of temporary residences, reconstruction of the marine produce industry and disposal of disaster waste such as rubble and automobiles. On-site surveys of disaster stricken areas were also carried out.

6. The 330th Miyagi Prefectural Assembly (February 2011 Regular Meeting) Representative and General Questions

1. Regarding management of the prefectural government
2. Regarding prevention of crime against women and children
3. Company attraction and employment
4. Impact of participation in the TPP
5. Use of Miyagi Environmental Tax funds
6. Reduction of children on the waiting list for nursery schools
7. Issues in improving academic ability
8. Others

7. Miscellaneous

1. Hokkaido – Tohoku Assembly Member Seminar

Approximately 130 assembly members and employees took part in the Hokkaido – Tohoku 6 Prefecture Assembly Member Seminar which was held on the 12th December 2012. The previous Minister of Public Management, Home Affairs, Posts and Telecommunications, Mr. Kazuhiro Haraguchi presented the key-note speech and advocated challenging reform focused on regional autonomy and wide-area association. There was also a panel discussion including Mr. Haraguchi and opinions were exchanged regarding the transition of power after the abolition of national government branch offices.