

Miyagi Prefectural Assembly News

The 332nd Miyagi Prefectural Assembly (August 2011 Extraordinary Meeting)

1. Overview

1. Session
19th August (Fri.) – 23rd August (Tues.) 2011 – 5 days
2. Bills submitted by the Governor
 - i. 2011 Miyagi Prefecture General Accounting Supplementary Budget
 - ii. 3 items including the Great East Japan Earthquake Recovery Fund Ordinance
3. Petitions: 1 item
4. Decisions: Bills submitted by the governor: 3 items passed
Petitions: 1 item adopted

The 333rd Miyagi Prefectural Assembly (September 2011 Regular Meeting)

1. Overview

1. Session
15th September (Thurs.) – 19th October (Wed.) 2011 – 35 days
2. Decisions
 - i. A Bill Regarding the Commemoration and Recovery of those that Lost their Lives in the Great East Japan Earthquake
 - ii. A Bill to show Gratitude for Support Efforts for Search and Rescue Activities related to the Great East Japan Earthquake
3. Bills submitted by the Governor
 - i. 22 items including the 2011 Miyagi Prefecture General Accounting Supplementary Budget
 - ii. 17 items including the Condolence Money Provision Board of Review Ordinance
 - iii. 2 items authorised including A Bill Regarding the Settlement of the 2010 Miyagi Prefecture General Account and the Settlement Approval of the Special Account
 - iv. 1 item: the appointment of members to the Board of Education
4. Question Time
2 assembly members posed questions representing their parties and 17 assembly members posed general questions regarding prefectural administration such as earthquake disaster reconstruction and recovery.
5. Bills Submitted by Assembly Members:
Proposal Seeking Countermeasures to Protect the Region's Economy from the Heightening Yen and Deflation
Proposal Seeking the Creation of a Public School Teaching Staff Dispatch System which Plans for a Large-Scale Disaster

Proposal Seeking the Immediate Stoppage of Screening Procedures regarding the Waiving of Tuition Fees at Korean Schools

6. Petitions: 1 item adopted and 1 item not adopted (2 items)

i. Adopted Petition

Collecting together advice for organisations related to the publication, sharing and education of information and considerations towards the environment, in order to ensure that children can live safely in Miyagi prefecture after the disaster at the Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant.

ii. Rejected Petition

Petition regarding suspending the creation of marine produce industry special areas

7. Decisions: Bills submitted by the governor: 42 items passed, approved, ratified

Bills submitted by assembly members: 2 items passed

Proposals : 3 items passed

Petitions: 2 items: 1 adopted, 1 rejected

2. The 333rd Miyagi Prefectural Assembly (September 2011 Regular Meeting)

The 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake Countermeasures and Survey Special Committee reviewed the final draft of the Miyagi Prefecture Earthquake Disaster Recovery plan and it was passed at the plenary session on the 18th October. Discussions were developed from the viewpoints of town development effective against natural disasters, prefectural residents being at the centre of recovery efforts and progressive regional development that deals with issues in modern society. The effectiveness and reality of policies such as high ground relocation, multiple defences, revitalisation of agricultural, forestry and fisheries industry and radioactive pollution countermeasures were pursued, paving the way towards the rejuvenation of our homeland.

1. The Miyagi Prefecture Earthquake Disaster Recovery Plan

Miyagi Prefecture experienced severe damage as a result of the Great East Japan Earthquake disaster which struck the prefecture on 11th March 2011. This plan shows planned recovery efforts for the next 10 years.

Basic Principles

- i. Town development that is effective against disasters and can provide a sense of well being
- ii. Recovery centred on prefectural residents
- iii. Drastic rebuilding which doesn't just stop at reconstruction
- iv. Progressive regional planning which deals with issues in modern society
- v. Creation of a model for recovery from catastrophic natural disasters

Duration of plan/Year of completion

10 years (until 2021)

Separated into: restoration period: 3 years, reconstruction period: 4 years, development period: 3 years

3. Texts of Passed Bills

1. A Bill Regarding the Commemoration of those that Lost their Lives in the Great East Japan Earthquake and Recovery

Even now, 7 months after the Great East Japan Earthquake caused unprecedented damage to our prefecture, we still don't have the full picture. In disaster stricken areas, the traces of the destruction are easily visible and they are still in a very difficult situation. Furthermore, the number of fatalities from our prefecture is continuing to rise. On the 12th October they had risen to 9,488 and the number of missing to 2,082. The Miyagi Prefectural Assembly hereby extends its condolences to the families of those that lost their loved ones and the wish that their souls are now resting peacefully. Now in Miyagi prefecture, people are forging forward with all their might, working towards the rebuilding of our prefecture with those that lost their lives in our thoughts. Efforts towards reconstruction and recovery will be put into action under the remit of the prefectural and municipal recovery plans. Surely those that lost their lives would also want the prompt recovery of their region to be realised and we hereby pledge to do our utmost and succeed in the recovery of Miyagi Prefecture.

2. A Bill to Show Gratitude for Support Efforts for Search and Rescue Activities Related to the Great East Japan Earthquake

The Great East Japan Earthquake Disaster which occurred on the 11th March 2011 saw an unprecedentedly large earthquake and tsunami strike, causing many fatalities and unimaginably catastrophic damage to utilities, public transport, communication infrastructure and the total destruction of administrative and disaster prevention capabilities in some municipalities. In the midst of this terrible situation, the Self Defense Forces centred on the North Eastern Army, Emergency Fire Response Teams, the Interprefectural Emergency Rescue Unit, the Coast Guard and medical care related organisations such as DMAT etc., were the first to enter disaster areas and carry out extremely difficult tasks such as search and rescue work, body retrieval, emergency transport of the wounded, road clearing and life support for disaster victims. Furthermore, local governments all over Japan offered their support (including the dispatch of employees) in helping with the restoration of administrative capabilities in disaster stricken towns and cities and the US Army helped by clearing rubble. Because of this truly heart-warming support prefectural citizens who have lost everything were given hope and could move forward with reconstruction and recovery efforts. The Miyagi Prefecture Assembly hereby offers its deep respect and gratitude for the significant support received from all over Japan and the world.

DMAT

An abbreviation of Disaster Medical Assistance Team. These are medical teams are mobile teams trained in disaster first-response. These teams are made up of doctors, nurses, administrative staff and other staff members. DMAT teams have received specialist training in first response (roughly within 48 hours or the initial disaster) at large-scale disasters or accidents with a lot of casualties. DMAT was launched in April 2005 in Japan.

4. Main Details of the Assembly Question Time

1. High Ground Relocation to Avoid Flooding from Tsunami Damage and Land Subsidence

Question: Regarding the reduction of personal financial burden of high ground relocation for disaster victims

Response: We are making requests to the national government for extra interest subsidies. Regarding the evaluation of prices for the purchase of housing land, the national government is carrying out checks so that there will be no difference in treatment by the national, prefectural and municipal governments. These checks should conclude at the end of the year. The pre-disaster rates will probably be used as a base, with the effects of the disaster also taken into account.

2. Measures Against the Cold at Temporary Housing Facilities

Question: Regarding the prompt implementation of measures against the cold at temporary housing facilities

Response: We have asked municipal governments to take measures against the cold based on their situation and using local businesses where possible. Our grasp of the situation was lacking before. We will make regular efforts to understand the situation from now on.

3. Restoration Housing

Question: Regarding public housing to be built to for disaster victims

Response: It is important that we move forward after understanding the wishes of disaster victims. We will find out the number of houses necessary when we draft the Restoration Housing Plan alongside municipalities which will also take into account local citizens feelings and Town Development Plans.

4. Radioactive Pollution

Question: Regarding health surveys of prefectural residents related to the accident at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant

Response: In order to examine the necessity of health surveys, the prefectural government will establish an advisory council. At this council we would like to see them discuss increasing public awareness of accurate knowledge and how to ease people's anxiety.

5. Employment Issues

Question: Regarding the increase in unemployment and the mismatch between companies and those seeking work

Response: We are aiming to use the employment fund to create jobs for 11,000 people. It is also necessary to recommence operations at companies in stricken areas so we will support the restoration and upgrading of shops and factories. We will also work on understanding the needs of job seekers, provide matching opportunities such as joint employment interviews, enhance work training and utilise the national government subsidy system to develop job opportunities.

6. Recovery of the Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Industries

Question: Regarding the structural reform of the marine produce industry

Response: We have carried out the reconstruction of piers at fishing ports and transport roads as a priority. Measures are needed to raise the ground in processing areas and to dispose of water. We are discussing the state of reconstruction with the national government, municipalities and business organisations. We are strongly requesting that the national government create a support system for the raising of land.

5. Reviews and Surveys Carried out by Standing Committees

1. Overview of Standing Committees

Bills and petitions were reviewed in the August extraordinary meeting and the September regular meeting

August Extraordinary Meeting

i. General Affairs and Policy Planning Committee

Bills including the Great East Japan Earthquake Disaster Recovery Fund Ordinance reviewed and voted on

ii. Education and Public Safety Committee

Bills including A Bill Regarding the Conclusion of Construction Contracts (Miyagi Stadium repair work) reviewed and voted on

September Regular Meeting

i. General Affairs and Policy Planning Committee

Bills reviewed and voted on including the Ordinance Amending a part of the Employee's Special Duties Allowance Ordinance

ii. Environment and Lifestyle Committee

Bills reviewed and voted on including A Bill Regarding Subcontracted Construction Contracts Ordered by Miyagi Prefecture (disaster waste disposal projects including the construction of disaster waste disposal facilities in the Watari-Natori Area, Natori City)

iii. Health and Welfare Committee

Bills reviewed and voted on including the Condolence Money Provision Board of Review Ordinance

iv. Industry and Economy Committee

Bills reviewed and voted on including the Ordinance Amending part of the Livestock Contagious Disease Prevention Measures Implementation Ordinance

v. Construction Enterprise Committee

Bills reviewed and voted on including the Ordinance Amending a Part of the Construction Industry Act Implementation Ordinance

vi. Education and Public Safety Committee

Bills reviewed and voted on including the Sports Promotion Review Council Ordinance

6. Miscellaneous

1. Prefectural and Municipal Requests to Miyagi Prefecture Economic Associations (2.8.2011)

Requests have been made by the prefectural and municipal assemblies to economic associations within Miyagi Prefecture such as the Miyagi Prefecture Chamber of Commerce and Industry Joint Association. The Miyagi Prefectural Assembly stated "This current disaster was a national crisis comprised of an earthquake, tsunami and nuclear incident. It wasn't just limited to one region like previous disasters and the national government must be prompt in its support. We ask you to understand the severe situation we are in and that you offer us your support."

2. Opinion exchange between the Great East Japan Earthquake Measures and Survey Special Committee and disaster stricken municipal assemblies (30.8.2011 - 9.9. 2011)

The objectives of the opinion exchange were two-fold: 1) To establish a system of cooperation with the assemblies of disaster stricken cities and towns with a view to understanding the state of damage, increasing mutual awareness of issues faced and ultimately realising reconstruction and recovery measures. 2) To contribute to regional assembly (prefectural assembly included) policy suggestions. On-site surveys were conducted to find out which regions are progressing with recovery and which regions are not and opinion exchanges were carried out freely regarding high priority items. The actual survey, guidance and explanations at on-site surveys were carried out by elected assembly members of disaster stricken areas.