

The 356th Miyagi Prefectural Assembly (June 2016 Regular Session)

1) Session: June 15, 2016 (Wed.) to July 5, 2016 (Tue.), 21 days

2) Outline

The 356th Miyagi Prefectural Assembly (June 2016 regular session) was held over a period of 21 days from June 15 to July 5, 2016. 58 bills were approved in their original forms, including the supplementary budget bill to add an additional 4.164 billion JPY to the FY 2016 general account for projects related to the Great East Japan Earthquake, etc.

The general inquiries included lively discussions around the reasons behind the choice of location for the Wide-Area Disaster Management Base, as well as the expansion of an Infant and Young Child Medical Cost Assistance Program, which Governor Yoshihiro Murai decided would be implemented starting FY 2017 as an element of overall childcare support.

3) Bills Voted On

1. Motions (total): 1

- Motion to amend a part of the ordinance related to the number of prefectural assembly members and constituencies and the number of assembly members to be elected in each constituency

2. Proposals (total): 5

- Proposal for the expansion of at-sea absentee voting to include fisheries trainees and others aged 18 and over, and for the lowering of the age requirement for running for office
- Proposal for securing the budget and improving the system for grants for developing a renewable forestry foundation, etc.

3. Bills Submitted by the Governor (total): 52

- FY 2016 Miyagi Prefecture General Account Supplementary Budget, etc.

4) Main Content of General Inquiries Made During the Assembly

1. Expansion of Infant and Young Child Medical Care Financial Assistance Program

It is the prefecture's view that the national government should be responsible for an Infant and Young Child Medical Care Financial Assistance Program. However, the current efforts of local governments in the prefecture to expand support for this type of assistance as a measure to combat the declining birthrate create a significant fiscal burden. In addition, the Association of Mayors and the Association of Towns and Villages made the same request. Thus, the prefecture determined that some action should be taken, and hopes for a conclusion to the investigations into expansion and to be able to present the findings to the municipalities by fall of this year.

2. Reasons for the Choice of Location for the Wide-Area Disaster Management Base

A base for the transfer of people in need of treatment to institutions in other areas, the securing of land to mobilize and establish base camps for support units, and the establishment of transit bases for transporting supplies have were deemed necessary, and the Miyaginohara District was chosen for its exceptional geographical suitability for these purposes. The Disaster Management Base will be designed for earthquake resistance in a manner that will allow no loss of functionality even in the event of an earthquake occurring in a nearby fault zone. This location will also enable close cooperation in times of use with the primary disaster base hospital, Sendai Medical Center.

3. Disaster Reconstruction Community Development Projects

There have been differences in progress of these projects between disaster-affected municipalities depending on factors such as the extent of damage, garnering of consent from residents, securing of land for construction, and the changing views of residents over time. Each municipality faces its own unique issues, and the prefecture will proactively support them while taking into account the differing states of progress.

4. Support for Tourism Promotion

Having set the goal of 500,000 foreign overnight guests, local authorities, companies, and affiliated parties founded a forum to hold conversations between the public and private sectors to consider effective measures for attracting tourists. The prefecture will also work in cooperation with related organizations to aggressively promote the use of Sendai Airport as the center of an effort to spread positive economic effects throughout the Tohoku region.

5. Overcrowding of Special Education Schools

The prefecture is working toward building satellite campuses with the cooperation of Sendai City and Shiogama City. There is a continuing need for the building of special education schools in the Sendai area, so the prefecture is working toward further improvement.

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

On June 20, the Earthquake Disaster Recovery Special Committee held an opinion exchange with State Minister for Reconstruction Tadayoshi Nagashima and the Miyagi Regional Bureau of Reconstruction regarding reconstruction-related issues the committee has come to understand through investigations conducted both within and outside Miyagi Prefecture.