

The 358<sup>th</sup> Miyagi Prefectural Assembly (November 2016 Regular Session)

1) Session: November 25, 2016 (Fri.) to December 15, 2016 (Thu.), 21 days

2) Outline

The 358<sup>th</sup> Miyagi Prefectural Assembly (November 2016 regular session) was held over a period of 21 days from November 25 to December 15, 2016. 78 bills were approved in their original forms, including the bill to allocate an additional 67.69 billion JPY for the general account supplementary budget, which will help pay for costs related to the consideration of extension of the operating hours of Sendai Airport.

On the first day of the assembly meeting, voting took place among the assembly members and Mr. Motoharu Nakajima was elected chairperson.

The assembly approved by majority rule a bill affirming the Governor's decision to file an appeal in the Ishinomaki City Okawa Elementary School tsunami lawsuit.

Questions were addressed during the general inquiries regarding the prefecture's reasons for appealing the ruling in the Ishinomaki City Okawa Elementary School lawsuit, safety measures for schools, the handling and disposal of polluted waste related to the Tokyo Electric Power Company's Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant accident, etc.

3) Bills Voted On

1. Motions (total): 1

- Motion to amend a part of the ordinance related to Miyagi Prefecture Assembly member remuneration

2. Proposals (total): 7

- Proposal for effective reform of agriculture cooperatives in order to boost local agriculture and economies
- Proposal for preservation of diesel tax exemptions

3. Bills Submitted by the Governor (total): 70

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

4. Petitions (total): 2

- Petition to increase government subsidy amount for private schools (approved)
- Petition to strengthen government subsidy system for private high schools, etc. (approved)

4) Main Content of General Inquiries Made During the Assembly

1. Okawa Elementary School Lawsuit

The prefecture was in a position that required simultaneously respecting the decision made by Ishinomaki City and making an independent judgment on how to proceed with the situation. While respecting the city's decision to file an appeal, the prefecture also decided to appeal, as there were portions of the ruling it could not accept.

## 2. Disposal of Radioactive Waste with Levels below National Standards

The prefecture recommended the disposal of waste with radiation not exceeding national safety standards by incineration along with normal waste. The prefecture held meetings with municipality representatives in charge of waste disposal and visited local governments to support the development of waste disposal plans in order to enable swift disposal at the municipal level. However, the incineration facilities of many local governments do not have extra capacity comparable to the amount of waste in storage, and since many residents still have concerns, there has been no progress in disposal. The prefecture believes that it is necessary to minimize the potential of reputation damage by advancing disposal carried out in concurrence with safety verification efforts.

## 3. Sales Strategy for Miyagi Rice

Promotions that highlight consumer safety and peace of mind in addition to conveying the good taste are essential. Current efforts are forming a branding strategy that would take advantage of the development of the new Tohoku 210 cultivar.

The prefecture will work with related organizations, proactively emphasizing the differences between Miyagi's rice and the rice of other prefectures to create a popular brand.

## 5) Regarding the Committees and Other Matters

In the November 2016 regular session, the assembly-run committees and permanent committees were reorganized, and the five special committees listed below were confirmed.

1. Earthquake Disaster Recovery Special Committee
2. Local Disaster Management Special Committee
3. Local Vitality Special Committee
4. Bullying and School Absence Special Committee
5. Comprehensive Tourism Strategy Special Committee