Promotion of the Ohma Nuclear Power Plant Project, with Safety as a Major Prerequisite

Nuclear power is a quasi-domestically sourced energy source with excellent supply stability, as its fuel, uranium, can be stably procured, and only a small quantity is necessary to fuel a long period of power generation, while spent fuel can be reprocessed and reused as fuel. It thus plays an important part in Japan’s power supply. Moreover, as nuclear power emits no CO₂ during power generation, it is an excellent method of power generation in terms of combatting climate change.

J-POWER began construction of the Ohma Nuclear Power Plant in 2008. Later, to confirm compliance with the New Safety Standard for Nuclear Power Stations formulated in light of the accident at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant, in December 2014 J-POWER submitted an application for permission for alteration of the reactor installment license as well as an application for construction plan approval to the Nuclear Regulation Authority summarizing the details of measures to reinforce the safety of the Ohma Nuclear Power Plant.

We aim to quickly pass this review and are constantly working to further improve safety as we steadily advance the Ohma Nuclear Power Plant Project.
Ohma Nuclear Power Plant Safety Reinforcement Measures and Review Status

Akihito Urashima
Department Director of Nuclear Power Business

Japan is a nation with few energy resources. For Japan to achieve power supply stability, it is vital to use its available resources as effectively as possible and utilize a balance of diverse power sources. The excellent supply stability of nuclear power makes it an important baseload power source for Japan, and because it emits no CO2 during power generation, it can contribute to the realization of a zero-emission society. In particular, the Ohma Nuclear Power Plant that J-POWER is working on is notable because it will be able to use entirely MOX fuel, which is produced by reprocessing spent fuel from other plants. By stably using MOX fuel, the Ohma Nuclear Power Plant will improve Japan’s plutonium balance and help foster understanding of the peaceful use of plutonium internationally. Taking seriously our role in carrying out Japan’s energy policy, the entire Company is working as one to advance this project.

At the same time, it goes without saying that safety is our utmost priority. The New Safety Standards for Nuclear Power Stations, formulated by the Nuclear Regulation Authority in light of the accident at Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant, are said to be the strictest safety standards in the world. The Ohma Nuclear Power Plant will incorporate safety reinforcement measures based on lessons learned from Fukushima Daiichi and the New Safety Standards for Nuclear Power Stations. Such measures include the reinforcement of design standards to protect the functionality of plant safety facilities in the event of a tsunami, earthquake or other natural disaster; measures to facilitate rapid response in the event of a serious accident; and countermeasures to major accidents caused by acts of terrorism. In addition to such measures, by implementing voluntary, ongoing activities to further enhance safety based on the latest data and insights, we will make Ohma Nuclear Power Plant one of the safest power plants in the world in order to contribute to the local community and Japan.

The Nuclear Regulation Authority is currently reviewing the Ohma Nuclear Power Plant’s compliance with the New Safety Standards for Nuclear Power Stations. As of March 31, 2020, 36 review meetings have been held, and the impact of earthquakes and tsunamis is the main matter being reviewed. The review process is steadily moving forward, with on-site inspections by the Nuclear Regulation Authority beginning in 2018. After the project clears the review, we will begin construction reflecting the review results. Once construction is completed, we will load the fuel into the reactors, perform test operations, then commence operation of the plant.

We will continue to engage fully with the review process to ensure that the Ohma Nuclear Power Plant achieves world-class safety.