Press Release

People Power Again!
Following Soga, proponents canceled their coal-fired power plant project in Sodegaura. The JERA's project in Yokosuka is the only coal-fired power plant project left in the Tokyo Bay area.

February 1, 2019
FoE Japan

On January 31, Idemitsu Kosan Co., Ltd., Kyushu Electric Power Co. Inc and Tokyo Gas Co., Ltd. announced that they had canceled their coal-fired power plant project, namely “Chiba Sodegaura Coal-fired Power Plant I and II Construction Project” (Plant I: 1,000 MW, operation from 2025, Plant II: 1,000 MW, operation from 2026). They are now considering of liquid natural gas (LNG) as the alternative source for power generation. They explained the reason of cancellation on their website as that “the project cannot yield initially expected investment returns.” Friends of the Earth Japan joins the collaborating local groups and environmental groups in welcoming this decision.

Due to possible health and environmental impacts that the project might cause, civil society had been protesting against the project with a number of activities, such as distributing flyers at stations, organizing study sessions for the public as well as submitting a written statement to the mayor of Chiba Prefecture and the Ministry of the Environment since 2016.

Furthermore, residents in the Tokyo Bay area formed an anti-coal power group in 2017 to take collective actions, including demonstrations in front of Tokyo Gas and Idemitsu Kosan, a campaign to send post cards to the president of Tokyo Gas requesting to cancel the project, and a demonstration during the general shareholders meeting in front of the Tokyo Gas headquarters.

Tokyo Gas stated in 2017 that they would consider shifting from coal to LNG, but their final decision had not been made. Later they explained they are not in a position to make that decision but Idemitsu Kosan is, as Idemitsu Kosan possesses the land title to the construction site. Reacting to this, we started sending letters to the president of Idemitsu Kosan and also a number of the factories that they own, to encourage them to cancel the project. We also organized demonstrations in front of Idemitsu Kosan headquarters during the rush hour.

The problems of the project as identified by community groups included:
1. There are kindergartens, middle school and hospitals within 5 km from the planned construction site; this may greatly affect the health of local residents
2. The estimated yearly CO2 emission from the project will be around 12 million tons, and this will go against the global trend of reducing greenhouse gasses and ending coal dependency.

3. There is Banzu Tideland about 3 km away from the project site, and it is designated as one of the important wetlands in Japan by the Ministry of Environment; thermal discharges from the plant may affect the biodiversity of this tideland.

This decision by the proponents to shifting from coal is a direct outcome of vociferous opposition from the local community and environmental organizations like Kiko Network and Friends of the Earth Japan.

Friends of the Earth Japan interviewed some of the local community members in November 2018:

- Video “The story behind everyday life: Sodegaura, Chiba Prefecture
  [http://www.foejapan.org/climate/nocoal/sodegaura.html](http://www.foejapan.org/climate/nocoal/sodegaura.html)
  (Links to interviews and articles are at the bottom of this post)

- Interviews and articles (in Japanese)
  “【The story behind everyday life vol.4】 Members of Citizen Group in Sodegaura

There are still 39 coal-fired power plant projects that are planned after 2012 (10 already in operation, 29 under consideration/construction)\(^i\), and there is one project left in the Tokyo Bay area - the coal-fired power plant project by JERA Co., Inc. In Yokosuka, Tokyo.

Friends of the Earth Japan will continue to advocate for cancellation of all the coal-fired power plants in Japan, together with local communities.

LINKS

- No Coal Tokyo Bay Network: News about the coal fired-power plant project in Sodegaura (in Japanese)
  [https://nocoal-tokyobay.net/tag/sodegaura/](https://nocoal-tokyobay.net/tag/sodegaura/)

- FoE Japan: Negative side of electrical market liberalization – The rush for new coal-fired power plants! (in Japanese)

CONTACT:
FoE Japan
1-21-9 Komone, Itabashi-ku, Tokyo 173-0037, Japan
TEL: (+81) 3-6909-5983, e-mail: info@foejapan.org
“Changes in the Thermal Power Plant Project in Sodegaura City, Chiba Prefecture”
https://www.tokyo-gas.co.jp/Press_e/20190131-02e.pdf

Kiko Network (Updated in 2019) Coal-fired power plant watch (in Japanese)
https://sekitan.jp/plant-map/