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[Press Release] Small scale power plant in Ofunato announced switching from coal to biomass; 43 proposed plants remaining (June 21, 2017)

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<Press Release>

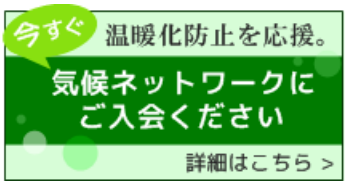
Small scale power plant in Ofunato announced switching from coal to biomass; 43 proposed plants remaining

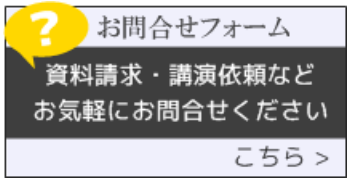
21 June 2017
Kiko Network

On June 15th, Maeda Corporation announced in the environmental impact assess (EIA) document of Iwate-prefecture's legal procedure that its proposed Maeda-Ofunato combustion plant (tentative name) will switch its fuel from coal-biomass mix-fuel to biomass mono-fuel combustion. This fuel change means the remaining proposed domestic coal-fired plant becomes 43 (There have been 49 plans since 2012. Among them, 2 had already been started operations and 4 (2 units at Ako, 1 at Ichihara, and 1 at Ofunato this time) had been canceled/changed fuel.

Maeda Corporation explains the reasons for this fuel change as considering effect of Paris Agreement, governmental commitment of 80% GHG reduction target by 2050 as the fifth biggest emitters in the world, rapidly increased number of coal-fired power plants, and excessing CO2 emission associate with huge environmental impact. We welcome their "reconsideration of the plan to reduce environmental impact under current Japanese energy conditions".

On the other hand, however, wood-biomass combustion which burn imported wood from oversea in many cases has various problems from the aspect of sustainability. In this Ofunato case, there are also several unanswered questions remaining. For instance, the suppliers of biomass are not clearly indicated though it should require certain amount of biomass considering its large scale as mono-fuel power plant. In addition, they hasn't revised CO2 emission amount of this plant even after its fuel change, and SOx and NOx emissions are as large as the coal-biomass combustion plant. We hope the Maeda Corporation, as a business operator of this plant, is going to willingly disclose EIA information and well communicate with local residences, environmental NGOs and citizens, about those unclear issues.





This fuel change is one of the success cases following to the cases of Ako, Hyogo and Ichihara, Chiba. But it is a first time the developer mentioned the Paris Agreement as one of the reasons of their reconsideration. Most of the coal-fired power plant developers and business operators use both state-of-the-art technology and energy sector's voluntary program as excuses to keep their coal projects but they fail to explain how to ensure consistency with the Paris Agreement. We request other developers to reconsider the projects in order to be consistent with to the Paris Agreement and follow the Maeda Corporation to make a decision to cancel coal projects.

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tag： Coal, Coal Plant Tracker, Power Plant, 発電所, 石炭, 石炭発電所ウォッチ

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