
Report: Fault at nuclear plant may be active

A panel of the Nuclear Regulation Authority says 2 faults under the Higashidori nuclear power plant in Aomori Prefecture, northeastern Japan, may be active.

The finding could keep the plant in northern Japan offline if the operator, Tohoku Electric Power Company, is required to review its anti-quake measures.

The panel debated a draft report on Monday that evaluated the results of a survey of the plant.

The report says an analysis of volcanic ash around the 2 faults under the plant suggests that they have become active on several occasions in the past.

It says they are likely to be defined as active faults that require quake resistance measures.

The report dismissed Tohoku Electric's claim that a gap formed in the strata after the soil absorbed water, and that it was not the result of seismic activity.

It said the operator's survey was inadequate, and that a more extensive survey of the size and activity of the faults, is needed.

After hearing the views of other experts, the panel will submit its final report to the Nuclear Regulation Authority.

If the faults are found to be active, the Higashidori facility would be the 2nd nuclear plant discovered sitting in a potentially dangerous location. The first was the Tsuruga plant on the Sea of Japan coast.

The panel is conducting a similar survey at 3 other nuclear plants, including the Ohi Plant, which is Japan's only nuclear power plant still in operation. It is also planning to extend its surveys to 3 other nuclear power stations.

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