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## Fukushima plant operator to press LDP government for bailout

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### THE ASAHI SHIMBUN

Embattled Tokyo Electric Power Co., operator of the crippled Fukushima No. 1 nuclear power plant, will push for a further financial bailout from the new government taking power next week.

"A change of government does not affect the request in the least," the president of TEPCO, Naomi Hirose, told The Asahi Shimbun on Dec. 19.

The Liberal Democratic Party won a landslide victory in the Dec. 16 Lower House election, ousting the Democratic Party of Japan as the party of power.

In November, TEPCO urged the DPJ to give it additional aid, saying the total cost of the Fukushima disaster would exceed 10 trillion yen (\$119 billion), far above the current 5-trillion-yen limit on government bailouts.

TEPCO cited the cost of compensation, decontamination and the decommissioning of reactors.

Hirose said he hoped the incoming administration would look upon the request favorably.

"I want there to be down-to-earth discussions on energy policy from a broad perspective," Hirose said. "Excluding specific options is never the correct answer strategically."

Hirose also indicated he would continue to press for restarts of idle reactors at the Kashiwazaki-Kariwa nuclear power plant in Niigata Prefecture.

"We will provide careful explanations, on the basis of lessons from the Fukushima disaster, so that people come to believe we can be safely entrusted with the operation of the Kashiwazaki-Kariwa plant," he said.

"We know the Fukushima prefectural assembly adopted a petition to have all reactors in the prefecture decommissioned, but all we can say about the Fukushima No. 2 nuclear plant is: We haven't decided on anything yet."

(This article was written by Kentaro Uechi and Akira Minami.)

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