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Fukushima Fishermen to Tepco: Stop the Dumping

Tokyo Electric Power Co., the utility company that operates the troubled Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant, began to [dump water contaminated with low levels of radioactive material into the sea this week.](#)



Yoshikazu Tsuno/AFP/Getty Images

Various kind of fish are displayed at a fish shop in Tokyo April 5.

The decision was seen as an affront to the northeastern fishing industry, already severely afflicted by the March 11 tsunami. Some 10 fishing ports along the Fukushima Prefecture coastline sustained "catastrophic damage," which has reached nearly 81 billion yen, roughly \$950 million, in damage costs, according to Japan's Fisheries Agency Wednesday.

Since the discharge began, the fisheries' worries have become compounded. [Japanese authorities said Tuesday they found the first cases of fish off the north Pacific coast swimming with high levels of radioactive materials](#), raising consumer fears over the safety of Japanese marine products.

Yoshihiro Nitsuma, senior director at the Fukushima Prefectural Federation of Fisheries Cooperative Associations, said the fax message from Tepco came in at 17:09 JST Monday. He said his office was receiving calls from Tepco earlier Monday, but he was too busy to respond to it. Prior to Monday, there were no discussion between Tepco and the Fukushima fisheries group regarding the discharge of contaminated water, Mr. Nitsuma said.

In response, the Fukushima fisheries group sent a letter protesting the decision to pour the irradiated water into the sea on Monday night. The English translation of the letter, which was obtained and reviewed by JRT, is published in full below.

Precious lives were lost among fishermen in our prefecture in the east Japan earthquake and ensuing disaster. Fishing boats, quays, cooperative associations' facilities were severely damaged, and we are suffering from Tokyo Electric Power Co. Inc. Fukushima Daiichi's effects on marine and fishery products.

In such a time, your company informed us unilaterally via fax of the dumping of stagnant water with low level radioactive substances. We strongly protest against the action and steadfastly urge your company to halt the sea dumping in our prefecture.

Fishermen are increasingly worried that the fishing may not be resumed ever again in our prefecture. We want your company to stop

the dumping. Even if the levels of radioactive substances are low in the water, it is contaminated.

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