

# *Japan's industry ministry says dumping Fukushima plant water into ocean best option*

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Japan's Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) on Friday said that releasing radioactive water from the disaster-hit Fukushima nuclear plant into the Pacific Ocean would be a preferable option than releasing it into the atmosphere.

According to Xinhua, Tokyo Electric Power Company Holdings Inc., the operator of the crippled nuclear plant that underwent core meltdowns after being pummeled by a devastating earthquake-triggered tsunami in 2011, has said that it is running out of storage tanks to hold water used to cool the melted-down cores.

The government has been looking into ways to dispose of more than 1 million tons of water used to cool the cores, with the plant struggling to store the water, the amount of which is rising by around 150 tons per day.

After cooling the melted-down cores, the radioactive water is treated before being stored in the tanks by an Advanced Liquid Processing System (ALPS). This process, however, does not remove tritium and some other radioactive materials.

METI has said that among other options, including injecting the toxic water deep into the ground, releasing it into the atmosphere after extracting hydrogen, or making it into a solid state and burying it underground, dumping it into the Pacific Ocean or vaporizing it and releasing it into the atmosphere remain the best options.

Both are "realistic options," METI told a government subcommittee on Friday.

The industry ministry also said that releasing the radioactive water into the ocean would make it easier to monitor radiation levels.

Previously, however, subcommittee members have voiced their concerns over how different factors could affect the impact of the release of the contaminated water into the ocean, such as the weather and the currents of the ocean.

In addition, concerns have been voiced over the actual amount of radiation that humans could be internally exposed to when factoring in their consumption of contaminated fish and seaweed.

The ministry said that gaining the understanding of local residents would be important before a final decision is made, although there has already been strong resistance to the idea from local fishermen whose livelihoods would be threatened if not wreaked.

They have said that their businesses could be wiped out as consumers would be too scared to eat the seafood from Japan's northeastern Fukushima Prefecture in the event radioactive water was to be dumped into the ocean where they operate.

Some neighboring countries have also voiced their opposition to the idea of discharging the water into the ocean or atmosphere, citing environmental concerns.

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