

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 26, 2006

Ambassador Ryozo Kato
Embassy of Japan
2520 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Washington DC 20008

Dear Ambassador Kato:

We are writing to you to convey our concerns about Japanese plans to move ahead with the commissioning of the Rokkasho spent fuel reprocessing plant. We firmly believe that the continued extraction of weapons-usable plutonium poses significant and unnecessary threats to international security and non-proliferation. To that end, we are writing to encourage you to suspend plans to conduct active testing of Rokkasho in 2006 as part of a broader agreement to postpone operation of the Rokkasho reprocessing plant.

We encourage Japan to take this step as part of a global initiative to reduce worldwide stockpiles of weapons-usable fissile materials—highly enriched uranium (HEU) and separated plutonium. We firmly believe that this should be a high priority for the international community as such action would promote nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation and help prevent terrorists from acquiring nuclear weapons.

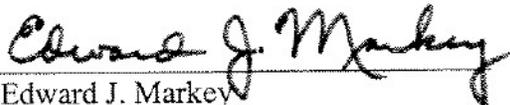
We note with great appreciation the December 1997 statement by Japan to the IAEA which pledged Japan to "the principle of no surplus plutonium." However, we understand that by the end of 2003, Japan's total plutonium stockpile had grown to more than 40.6 metric tons. With no commercial breeder reactor program, and given the significant problems in the mixed-oxide (MOX) use program, it is clear that the separation and stockpiling of further plutonium at a new reprocessing plant would not comply with Japanese policy.

In suggesting that Japan take leadership in prohibiting the further separation and stockpiling of plutonium, we do not mean to single out Japan for such a commitment. We remain firmly committed to stopping any attempts at renewing reprocessing in the US and believe that all countries should renounce this technology and practice. Ultimately, we believe that a comprehensive, verifiable regime should be created which will prohibit the separation and use of all weapons-usable plutonium.

We fully appreciate that the suspension of such an expensive program is a difficult decision to make, but such concerns clearly pale in comparison to the needs of creating a sustainable and effective nuclear non-proliferation regime.

We look forward to hearing your thoughts on this matter.

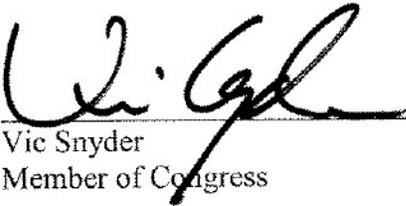
Sincerely,



Edward J. Markey
Member of Congress



Donald M. Payne
Member of Congress



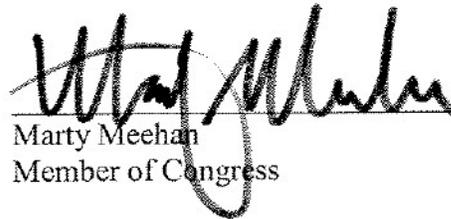
Vic Snyder
Member of Congress



Sheila Jackson Lee
Member of Congress



James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



Marty Meehan
Member of Congress