

Statement

February 17th, 2020

Honourable Judge, Civil Division 2, Tokyo District Court

Plaintiff: Tetsuya Komatsubara

1. I am a fisherman belonging to the Yokosuka branch of the Yokosuka City Eastern Fisheries Cooperative. The Yokosuka City Eastern Fisheries Cooperative holds fishing rights under the Fisheries Law in the Tokyo Bay areas around Yokosuka Port and Kurihama Port, and I as a member of this cooperative also engage in fishing in the above mentioned areas.

2. I own two 5-ton fishing boats and one 4-ton fishing boat, and I dive and fish for giant clams, sea cucumbers, taira clams and so on together with my eldest son in the waters around Yokosuka Port and Kurihama Port in Tokyo Bay. Other activities I engage in include trawling and gill net fishing, catching saltwater eel and octopus, seaweed harvesting, and a recreational fishing boat business. Our catches over one year add up to approximately 20 million yen.

3. For our diving fishing, we put on a diving suit and helmet with an attached air hose, then dive from the fishing boat to the shallow seabeds for hours while a compressor on our boat sends air to the air hoses on our helmets. We collect giant clams, taira clams, sea cucumbers, and so on from the bottom of the sea, and especially in the case of giant clams usually buried in the shallow sand, high pressure water is sent through a hose from the fishing boat so we can dig up the surrounding sand without damaging the clams.

The waters of Tokyo Bay where we work are rich fishing grounds, home to a vast diversity of marine life. In particular, giant clams are sold at the price of 5,500 yen per kilogram as a luxurious ingredient for sushi, while sea cucumbers are traded at the high price of 1,000 yen per kilogram as a high-end ingredient for Chinese cuisine.

This kind of diving fishing for giant clams has been practiced throughout the country. However, due to natural shallow sea beds being lost as a result of landfills, the number of places at which these clams can be found has been decreasing, only in this area and only affecting us, as the Fishery Examination Station has also been noticing. We are very careful about resource conservation so that we do not end up taking too many precious giant clams. Additionally, even the slightest changes in the environment so far have caused great damage to us by inhibiting our collection of shellfish, so changes in the marine environment can be a matter of life and death for us.

4. I have also been active in trawling, fishing for sayori, saltwater eel and octopus, seaweed collection, and running a recreational fishing boat business. Species such as flounder, black and red sea bream, scorpionfish, rockfish, sea bass and so on can be caught through trawling, and sayori are caught by capturing them in nets using two fishing boats. When

fishing for saltwater eel and octopus, tubes for capturing eel and octopus traps are tied with long ropes, submerged and laid on the seabed, left overnight and pulled up the next day.

5. In recent years, due to global warming, the sea temperature has been rising in Tokyo Bay as well. As a result, the amount of giant clams, taira clams, sea cucumbers, etc. at the bottom of the sea has decreased, as these organisms prefer waters with lower temperatures. Therefore, the catches of diving and fishing have also been declining.

In addition, rising sea water temperatures have prompted the “rocky-shore denudation” phenomenon where seaweeds such as like arame, wakame and hondawara are unable to grow at the bottom of the sea, and fish and shellfish species breeding in those seaweeds can no longer thrive. Catches of flounder, black and red sea bream, scorpionfish, rockfish, sea bass, saltwater eel, octopus, sayori, and others have also dropped sharply due to sea temperature rises.

For this reason, while my catches were valued at around 35 million yen in 2007, in 2019 this decreased to around 20 million yen.

6. Additionally, once the coal-fired power plant in Kurihama goes into operation, a large amount of hot wastewater will be discharged from the power plant for cooling purposes, leading to further increases in sea water temperature. This will make it impossible for the fish and shellfish established in these waters to survive there and for fishers like me to continue living due to the severe damages to the local fishing industry.

7. In October of 2019, I heard about the lawsuit submitted by residents living in the areas near the Yokosuka coal-fired power plant’s construction site from Mr. Rikuro Suzuki, one of the plaintiffs of said lawsuit. As I mentioned before, when the coal-fired power plant in Kurihama goes into operation, my right to engage in fishing and my right to life and livelihood will be harmed, something I would be unable to recover from.

I decided to participate in this lawsuit opposing the construction of a new coal-fired power plant in order to prevent further damage from arising, and I ask for your support in achieving a verdict that protects the rights of fishers like me.