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South Korea to send boron to stabilize Japan reactor

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SEOUL (Reuters) - South Korea said on Wednesday it would send some of its reserve boron to Japan after a request from Tokyo for the metalloid, which being is mixed with seawater to limit damage to Japan's crippled nuclear reactors.

An economy ministry official said South Korea would send 52.6 tons of boron to Japan from its reserves of 310 tons.

Tokyo has requested supplies of the key material, vital for stopping fission nuclear reactions, after its own stockpile has been largely used up at the Fukushima nuclear power plant.

Boron is the main material that goes into control rods used to halt or slow down fission reactions at nuclear reactors. Japan has mixed large amounts of boron with seawater and poured them into the reactors as an emergency measure.

A sample of the metalloid would be sent to Japan immediately for assessment, the ministry official said.

(Reporting Cho Meeyoung, Writing by Jeremy Laurence; Editing by Jonathan Hopfner)

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