

## UK could become leading exporter of wave and tidal power, say MPs

New report from Energy and Climate Change Committee calls on government to establish long term goals for marine energy

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A tidal turbine developed by Atlantis Resources Corporation at Invergordon, on the Cromarty Firth. The UK is home to about 35 of the world's 120-130 wave and tidal energy developers. Photograph: Mike Brookes Roper/PA

The government will today be called on to increase its support for wave and tidal power in a new report from MPs warning the UK is at risk of repeating mistakes which allowed the country to lose its early lead in the developing wind power industry.

MPs on the Commons' Energy and Climate Change Committee (ECC) on Monday released a report on the future of marine renewables, which will claim the UK could become a leading exporter of wave and tidal power equipment and expertise if the government adopts a more visionary approach to developing marine energy. Seven of the eight full-scale prototype devices installed worldwide are in UK waters, making the country the current world leader in the development of wave and tidal energy technologies.

The government has also recognised that marine power could provide up to 27GW of capacity in the UK by 2050, much of which is expected to be deployed after 2020.

But the report warns that an overly cautious approach to deployment may allow other less risk-averse countries to steal the UK's lead.

Industry players are concerned that government proposals for subsidies for marine and tidal only extend to 2017, leaving a question mark over the sector's long-term future.

The ECC report will issue a series of recommendations designed to ensure the UK retains its leading position, including clarifying how much revenue support marine power can expect to receive beyond 2017 as soon as possible.

It also recommends the government boost investor certainty by setting a target to reduce the cost of marine energy to 14p per kWh by 2020.

According to the Carbon Trust, the first wave farms are likely to cost 38-48p/kWh and the first tidal farms 29-33p/kWh, although developers remain confident costs will fall as technologies mature.

"Britannia really could rule the waves when it comes to marine renewable energy," said committee chairman Tim Yeo. "We are extremely well placed to lead the world in wave and tidal technologies, which could potentially bring significant benefits in manufacturing and jobs, as

well an abundant supply of reliable low-carbon electricity."

The report urges the government not to repeat the same mistake it made in the 1980s in developing wind power, which saw the UK lose its one-time lead in research and testing wind turbines to Denmark, which is now home to the world's largest supplier of wind turbines.

"In the eighties the UK squandered the lead it had in wind power development and now Denmark has a large share of the worldwide market in turbine manufacturing," added Yeo. "It should be a priority for the Government to ensure that the UK remains at the cutting edge of developments in this technology and does not allow our lead to slip."

A spokeswoman from the Department of Energy and Climate Change said the government was "fully committed to spurring on the growth of this industry".

"[We] have already taken great strides to make this happen," she said. "Last month Climate Change Minister Greg Barker launched the South West Marine Energy Park and there are plans to create similar parks in Scotland and Northern Ireland."

The report was welcomed by green groups and renewable trade associations, including the UK's leading marine power trade body Renewable UK.

"The marine energy industry is now on the threshold of commercial viability, and the Committee's report contains important recommendations which, if implemented, will

help push it towards becoming a major part of our electricity generation system," said RenewableUK director of policy Dr Gordon Edge.

"Certainty is the watchword for securing the investment marine energy will require to become a major power source. We don't yet have that certainty, and the Committee's call for long-term clarity on Government support for marine energy is timely."

Angus Norman, chief executive of Ocean Power Technologies Ltd, agreed the UK needs to take further action to accelerate the commercialisation of marine energy.

"Whilst recent proposals by the UK government to support the development of the sector go a long way to strengthen the business case for harnessing marine energy, the report makes a timely and strong case for further impetus if the UK is to extend its leadership in this sector and make it a commercial-scale marine renewable industry," he said.

Friends of the Earth energy campaigner Paul Steedman said the report was right to highlight the UK's huge potential for marine power.

"Most people don't know we're already world leaders in this technology," he said. "The right support for this pioneering industry would create tens of thousands of new jobs and provide a home-grown source of clean energy."

"The Government must make it easier for marine power developers to transform our broken energy system and shift us off our dangerous reliance on coal and gas."

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*Find words that mean the following:*

1.energy generated by the sea

2.an enlightened way of viewing plans

3.the amount that something or someone can supply

4.adj meaning that someone or an organization or country is cautious

5.people or organizations taking part in something

6.confidence in a project or industry

7.determine a limit