

Archived News

:: Wilson Announces £2.3m Boost For Wave Energy 20 May 2002

Energy Minister Brian Wilson today announced Government funding of up to £2.3 million to support the development and demonstration of a series of new wave energy devices off the Western Isles.

The award will be made to Wavegen, based in Inverness, following finalisation of the project's technical assessment by the DTI. The funding offer will be based on three devices, located in shallow waters and based on an extension of the oscillating water column principles already demonstrated onshore.

Speaking in Stornoway, Mr Wilson said:

"I am a strong supporter of wave energy and am determined to ensure that the UK remains the world leader as the technology takes off. Wavegen have submitted a very exciting proposal for DTI funding and I am convinced it can make a major contribution to the development of this new industry.

"Our assessors are still pursuing a number of technical questions with Wavegen but it is clear that there is sufficient merit in the project for me to announce the Department's intention in principle to back it. A formal letter of commitment will follow when issues relating to the sequential development of the three devices and other outstanding points have been resolved. I hope this can be done very quickly."

"I am also very hopeful that Wavegen will choose to manufacture the devices at Arnish on Lewis, leading to an early re-opening of the yard. Arnish is an ideal facility for renewables-related

"Developers will have noted the strong public support for renewables projects in crofting areas. This is clearly related to the perceived benefits in terms of both jobs and royalties. It is a message which should not be lost on the industry, or indeed on landowners elsewhere in the country. If they want support for their projects, they should offer something in return.

"Better still, of course, there are community-owned estates in the Highlands and Islands which are in a position to negotiate on their own behalf. I can assure any community landowner of my own Department's support, along with the Scottish Executive, in identifying and developing the energy assets at their disposal."

Notes for editors

1. The Government is very supportive of renewable energy and has set an ambitious target of securing 10% of electricity supplies from renewables by 2010.
2. Wave energy is a potentially very exciting source of energy and Wavegen have the only operational shoreline wave energy device in the UK. It is widely accepted that the future for wave energy is to move offshore where there is a much larger resource. Wavegen have therefore applied for funding to develop an intermediate device that will be used in shallow waters based on an extension of the oscillating water column principles already demonstrated onshore. The advantage of this concept is its simplicity.

manufacturing and I am confident that it will soon be playing a major role in supporting the huge expansion of renewable energy, both wind and wave, in Scotland and beyond."

Speaking later at the annual general meeting of Harris Development Ltd in Tarbert, Isle of Harris, Mr Wilson said it was "essential" that communities should see direct, tangible benefits from renewable energy developments in return for accepting and promoting them.

Mr Wilson added:

"If crofting law did not exist in the Highlands and Islands then it would have to be invented for this purpose. Crofting communities are entitled by law to half the development value of projects which take place on their land. That is a principle which could usefully be applied throughout the UK if we are serious about winning acceptance for renewable projects.

3. The funding will come from the £100 million allocated last year by the Prime Minister for renewable energy development.

Public Enquires: 0207-215 5000
General Enquiries textphone (for people with hearing impairments):
0207-215 6740



Department of Trade and Industry 1
Victoria Street London SW1H 0ET

Press Enquiries: 020-7215 5976

(Out of Hours : 0207 215 3234/ 3505)

Public Enquiries: 020-7215 5000

Textphone (for people with hearing impairments): 020-7215 6740

<http://www.dti.gov.uk> ..

[back to Archived News](#) ..