

An Update on Fundy Tidal Energy

By MAARS Team Member Amanda Facey

The Offshore Energy Environmental Research Association (OEER) has completed its Fundy Tidal Energy Strategic Environmental Assessment Final Report. The Report was submitted to the Nova Scotia Department of Energy in April.

In the Report, the OEER recommends ten sustainability principles which are intended to ensure that renewable energy projects in the marine environment value ecological integrity and positively affect Nova Scotia socially, culturally and economically.

Another recommendation is for Nova Scotia to move ahead cautiously, starting with a demonstration program which should include the proposed demonstration facility and other technologies. This program would be used to determine feasibility, environmental impacts and effectiveness of mitigation approaches. Further recommendations include long term research and standards; how tidal energy should be incorporated into Nova Scotia's energy strategy; ensuring that the fishery and other marine resource users are not negatively affected and that compensation measures are in place if necessary; creating community and regional benefits; and the importance of implementing an Integrated Coastal Zone Management approach were recommended. Another recommendation was to establish effective collaboration with New Brunswick and the federal government.

The OEER also recommends continued engagement with Mi'kmaq communities by requiring proponents to facilitate discussion and

information sharing at the earliest stages. The Native Council of Nova Scotia should remain actively involved in this process.

The province of Nova Scotia promised not to move ahead with tidal energy development before this report was completed. However, the province announced the selection of three candidates to demonstrate tidal technologies in the Bay of Fundy in January. The three companies that won their bid to demonstrate tidal devices in the Bay of Fundy and the province are Nova Scotia Power Inc. using technology from Ireland, Clean Current of British Columbia using its own technology and Minas Basin Pulp and Power using technology from the USA.

Minas Basin Pulp and Power, a company in Hantsport, Nova Scotia, has also been given conditional approval by the province to construct the onshore host facility which would connect all tidal devices from the Bay of Fundy to the Nova Scotia Power grid. Gartner Lee, the environmental consulting company working for Minas Basin Pulp and Power on the host facility, met with the Native Council of Nova Scotia on March 18 to share information about the proponent and the project.

Before anything is put in the water several conditions must be met: site specific environmental assessments must be completed, federal and provincial permits and approvals must be granted and contribution agreements and land lease agreements must be developed between the province and the proponents.

For more information on Fundy Tidal Energy and to view the Final Report, go to <http://www.offshoreenergyresearch.ca/Home/tabid/77/Default.aspx>.