

Times & Transcript

N.B. studies tidal power

No indication when electrical generation in Bay of Fundy could begin

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Published Wednesday June 13th, 2007
Appeared on page A12

The provincial government is taking the next step in harnessing the energy of the highest tides in the world but there's no indication when homeowners could tap into tidal power.

Energy Minister Jack Keir announced New Brunswick and the government of Nova Scotia will contribute \$75,000 each towards a study examining the potential impact on the economy and environment if a tidal power project was established in the Bay of Fundy.

"The Bay of Fundy is used by a lot of different folks and we want to make sure any tidal opportunities are going to work in cooperation and partnership with those people who already use the Bay of Fundy," said Keir.

Once the report is complete the province would need to examine the numerous technologies used to harness tidal power and determine whether to proceed with a pilot project.

"We can't go quicker than the process allows. We want to get it right. It's important that we get it right the first time," said Keir.

A report released last year by California-based Electric Power Research Institute identified Head Harbour Passage, adjacent to the Bay of Fundy, could power between 5,000 and 11,000 homes.

The report stated the capital costs for a test site would be about \$3.8 million.

This latest study continues the work of the EPRI research by examining what impact such a project would have on the area.

"This study is going to take a look at, from an environmental point of view, shipping lines, the right whale issue, fishermen. We want to have collaboration and discussion with all those stakeholders in the Bay of Fundy," said Keir.

The Offshore Energy and Environmental Research Association, which includes St. Francis Xavier University, Cape Breton University, Acadia University and the Nova Scotia energy department, will issue a request for proposals for someone to gather

background information on various tidal technologies and environmental information concerning the Bay of Fundy.

"We welcome New Brunswick's involvement in tidal energy development," Nova Scotia Energy Minister Bill Dooks said in a statement. "A lot of work needs to be done before demonstration turbines can be put in the water, and New Brunswick is helping us move that work forward."

Meinhard Doelle of the research association said the report will include recommendations to government as to whether pilot projects should proceed.

"What's the environmental impact at various levels of development and what is the impact on existing users and what would be the impact on local communities, on the economy in the two provinces and, assuming that this can go ahead or should go ahead, how do we maximize the benefits, how do we minimize any risk?" he said.