

2.5 Connétable D.J. Murphy of Grouville of the Minister for Planning and Environment regarding the steps taken to investigate the benefits of tidal energy:

What steps, if any, is the Minister taking to investigate the benefits of tidal energy and has any contact been made with the Alderney group who are already investigating this matter?

Senator F.E. Cohen (The Minister for Planning and Environment):

The Connétable of Grouville will be aware that the Council of Ministers has recently charged my department with producing an energy policy for Jersey. This policy will take a very broad overview of all aspects of energy policy, including economic, security of supply, resilience, international obligations and environmental impacts. The project has cross-departmental significance and a political steering group, consisting of Senator Ozouf and Senator Syvret and myself, will guide the process. Our first meeting will be on 30th May. I can confirm that the energy policy will include consideration of the various options that exist for us to make use of locally derived energy sources such as tidal energy. I expect to be able to report back on this work towards the end of 2006. My department has recently been in contact with Alderney Renewable Energy. This is a private company that has been granted a 5-year concession by the States of Alderney to use areas of Alderney's coastal water for the purpose of attracting developers of tidal energy technology to carry out their experimental trials. Tidal energy systems are estimated to be around 15 years away from market readiness. Currently, the delivered cost of tidal stream energy would be at least twice as expensive as the conventional generation and the operational costs of maintaining the kit are still untested. However, these issues will be overcome and the cost of tidal power will become more attractive as production costs are reduced by better design and increased scale, particularly if the global price of conventional generation of energy rises.

2.5.1 The Connétable of Grouville:

Is the Minister aware that in fact the first mass-producing tidal energy turbine is finishing construction off Lynmouth in Devon and is going on-stream into the national grid at the end of August? It has taken I think about 2 years to build, so I would question and would he please confirm that when he said 15 years that it was not serious? Thank you.

Senator F.E. Cohen:

I am no expert on tidal energy but I have had a trawl round the internet recently and read a few articles about the subject. It is very clear that the current cost of producing tidal energy is around twice conventional generation and that the projects that are being put in place around the world are effectively experimental, although they are generating energy which is being put into a number of grids around the world.

2.5.2 Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

Would the Minister undertake in his investigations with the Health Minister to investigate the procedures in relation to the agreement with the J.E.C. (Jersey

Electricity Company Limited) and the French net. At the moment, I am led to believe that there is an agreement whereby if the French grid needs electricity, the Jersey Electricity Company can sell them back electricity and the practice of burning oil in the past few months has occurred in order for them to do so. Would he undertake, with his group, to look into the environmental impacts that that is having?

Senator F.E. Cohen:

Sir, yes, I will.

2.5.3 Deputy P.J.D. Ryan of St. Helier:

Could the Minister confirm, as part of the energy strategy that he will be looking into, that he will be prepared to look at the liberalisation of the Jersey grid?

Senator F.E. Cohen:

Sir, yes, I am.