

28th January 2005

npower Juice to speed wave farm development

Harnessing the power of wave energy in the UK moved a step closer today as RWE npower announced the first award from its npower Juice fund.

Regen SW, the renewable energy agency for the South West of England, has received an award of £195,000 for a project to collect data on the wave energy climate off the North Cornish coast. The project is designed to speed up the installation of the world's first wave farms, which could be in place off the South West of England within three years.

npower Juice is a non-premium domestic green energy product developed in a pioneering partnership with Greenpeace to give consumers a simple and practical way to help protect the environment. npower Juice is generated from the UK's first major offshore wind farm, developed by npower renewables, at North Hoyle off the North Wales coast. For every npower Juice customer, npower makes an annual contribution of £10 each year - up to a maximum of £500,000 per year. The fund is then used to support new and emerging renewable energy technologies such as wave, tidal and solar.

This, the first of many npower Juice funded projects, involves installing a wave measurement buoy 12 miles off the coast near St. Ives. The area has great potential for the generation of electricity from waves and is being investigated by the South West Regional Development Agency as the possible site for Wave Hub, a connection point out at sea into which developers can plug their generators. Wave energy companies will be able to use the data from the buoy to develop their wave machine designs. In addition this 'real' data will help prove to investors that projects will be financially viable.

Mike O' Brien, Energy Minister, endorsed the announcement;

"Greenpeace and npower's Juice Fund is an innovative way of channelling support into emerging renewable energy technologies. This funding announcement is a welcome boost for the marine renewables industry in the UK, and for the South West in particular. The UK has one of the largest marine energy resources in Europe. With our engineering skills and experience we have the potential to be a world leader in marine renewable technology and capitalise on new industry and jobs."

Kevin McCullough, director of npower renewables said;

"This project represents an important step in helping establish confidence in wave energy, we're hoping to help kick start a thriving marine industry in the UK. The Government has set challenging targets for the development of renewable energy. Onshore windfarms and biomass projects will help us meet the short term targets of supplying 10% of our electricity from renewable sources by 2010, but we also need large scale offshore windfarms and marine technology to be developed as quickly as possible to meet long term renewables targets.

As one of the UK's leading renewable energy developers we are delighted to be actively involved in the development of wave and tidal power in the UK."

Matthew Spencer, chief executive of Regen SW said:

"This project will bring the UK's first wave farm a little closer. We've very aware of the great wave resource we've got off the South West coast, but with the help of this award we'll be able to provide wave energy companies with accurate measurements from the sea. They've told us they need this data to encourage investment in their wave machines, so this project will help speed up their progress in getting devices out to sea."

Stephen Tindale, Executive Director, Greenpeace said,

"Juice customers should be proud of this achievement. By signing up to npower Juice they are directly funding the research and development of clean renewable energy such as this wave project."