



Tidal energy demonstration: a worthwhile endeavor

In light of the recent news that tidal energy developer OpenHydro is seeking creditor protection, there have been important questions raised about the future of tidal energy, both here at home and abroad.

Presently, the demonstration of in-stream tidal energy is expensive and the technology still needs to be proven. We know this is the nature of emerging technologies – we’ve seen this in the early stages of other green technologies such as wind energy, electric vehicles, and even solar power.

What’s clear is that we can’t keep burning fossil fuels while the impacts of climate change continue to mount. We need solutions, and we need to find out if in-stream tidal energy can help meet our clean energy goals. It will take time to find the answers and to know if this new technology is both safe and affordable.

Part of the purpose of tidal energy demonstration at Fundy Ocean Research Center for Energy or ‘FORCE,’ established in 2009, is to facilitate the investigation of tidal power’s future in Canada. They do this by providing shared infrastructure and a forum to conduct the critical research to understand if tidal energy can be a viable industry in Canada.

The Canadian opportunity for tidal energy is immense – many of us have built our lives around the water and are looking to new ways to use our coastal resources. Tidal energy, and other marine renewables like wave, offshore wind, and river current energy, provide us with promising opportunities to apply our skills to new, emerging sectors while reducing our reliance on foreign sources of carbon-emitting fossil fuels.

Some have said the opportunity in-stream tidal presents could contribute as much as \$1.7 billion to our GDP. And while we are still in the early stages of learning about the resource and technologies, we’re already seeing some of the benefits of being on the cutting edge of tidal energy research and development. We’re developing critical expertise in research, working with new and innovative technologies, and marine operations.

There are plenty of challenges diversifying and greening our electricity sector. This past week has demonstrated this. And more challenges lie ahead. But we must not be complacent – we must innovate, learn from our experiences, and capitalize on the world-class resources and talent we have here in Canada.

To put it simply: tidal energy demonstration is a worthwhile endeavor.

Amanda White
Acting Executive Director, Marine Renewables Canada