

Speaking Notes

**Hon. Jack Keir
Minister of Energy - NB**

**Fall Symposium
Ocean Renewable Energy Group**

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Thank you, Chris.

It's a pleasure for me to be with you today at your 4th symposium, and I want to thank you very much for the kind invitation.

This is all quite new to me having been elected for the first time to provincial politics as part of the new Shawn Graham government in New Brunswick on Sept. 18th.

I was thrilled to be named Energy Minister two weeks later.

I can tell you without reservation that I am fascinated by the complexities of the renewable and alternative energy industries, and the tremendous potential that can be developed in the years ahead.

Being with those of you who work diligently and tirelessly to bring these industries to Canada is always a learning experience for me.

I was very fortunate when Premier Graham was putting his cabinet together that we had one-on-one meetings with him and were able to express to him the various portfolios we were interested in.

My riding is near Saint John and as you may be aware, the energy sector there is growing by leaps and bounds so my choice was clear when I met the Premier, and I was pleased beyond description that he gave me the green light on my request.

It's been a steep learning curve for me and there's still a lot to absorb, but it's also been very rewarding. There certainly isn't any lack of issues to work on within the energy sector itself.

The topic of renewable energy was front and centre in the energy section of our election platform.

In fact, as Chris mentioned, the foundation of the entire campaign was based on three pillars: Energy, Education and Economic Development.

On the energy front – we were clear in that we want to make New Brunswick a leader in generation and green power in the years ahead.

New Brunswick has a great diversity of energy generation – from oil, to hydro, to coal to nuclear and some significant wind power announcements coming soon. But we also believe we need greater diversity in the types of renewable energy systems we must install in the province ... that's why I think we need to increase our focus on tidal energy.

And I think just as there has been co-operation in tidal study that we, and some of you participated in through the Electric Power Research Institute – I think that much of the success that lies ahead in exploiting tidal energy will only come through co-operation between jurisdictions.

In New Brunswick we share coastal areas with Nova Scotia, Maine and P.E.I and I am a big believer in the good things that can be accomplished when people put their heads, and resources together.

We also believe that the federal government has a role to play in helping to foster further research and eventual development in tidal energy.

I'm confident that Ottawa, which has shown time and again that it is willing and able to assist other types of projects in other areas of Canada, will understand that the Atlantic region deserves its share of co-operation and assistance as well in coming up with "made in Canada" solutions to our energy challenges.

Our department is already working on a number of fronts to get the ball rolling on the tidal file. Staff have been exploring economic opportunities for the province and the region, including research, construction and maintenance as they would be related to tidal energy.

We want to explore potential partnerships and see where we could best export our knowledge if we were able to tap into all of the potential aspects tidal energy has to offer in the years ahead including research, economic development and electricity production from this renewable source.

One of the goals of our new government is to become self sufficient within the next 20 years. That means standing on our own two feet and we see energy as a key to this economic development drive which will be needed to reach the self-sufficiency goal.

That's why I will be continually stressing to our cabinet that for energy to reach its full potential we have to explore all avenues and look at what needs to be done not only today, but well into the future.

And we can't just limit ourselves to looking at our needs ... we must explore if we can play a role in helping other meet their own needs.

To get the job right we have to continue our work in exploring tidal energy further and see what is the best fit for New Brunswick.

I feel that one of the most important things to explore soon, and quite possibly in partnership with Nova Scotia and the Federal Government – is the possibility of joining resources to advance the knowledge base on the tidal resources.

We have to examine very closely the technologies to harness the energy and understand the marine science to be sure that the technology works in harmony with existing industry and the environment.

It is important to understand the effects of these emerging technologies, in their full scale size, on the environment, existing infrastructure and sensitive industries like the herring and lobster industries in NB.

This is especially important in a region as diverse as the Bay of Fundy.

Through the EPRI study and preliminary discussions with researchers and scientists in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia it is clear that we have the high calibre resources, including people and equipment, already in the region. It would be extremely beneficial both economically and socially to expand on these existing resources.

We feel that this work is fundamental to fully define where and how we can exploit tidal energy.

It is necessary for site development as well as attracting third-party and private-sector investors who would be interested in working with us to harness energy from our waters.

It is because I feel that there is great potential in this idea that I have asked staff of our department to develop this idea further and identify the parameters of this type of research as well as identify potential sources of funding to put the seed money in place to get this work started in earnest.

While we still have a way to go before making such a project a reality – this again fits into my earlier remarks of working in co-operation and putting our heads together to come up with creative ideas, backed by strong scientific data, so that we can take advantage of our clean, tidal resources as a source of energy.

The study carried out by EPRI is a great launching pad for both of our provinces and I think with a team effort we can get to the next stages of exploration and potential development fairly quickly.

Just three days ago we saw, in New Brunswick, how two jurisdictions working together can accomplish good things. We had a ceremony that marked the beginning of construction of a 345 kilovolt transmission line from our province to Maine.

It's a \$60 million project on our side and \$90 on the Maine side and it will result in great benefits in moving electrons not only to our province, but it will also provide great stability to the Maritime network.

Hopefully some day it will carry electricity from tidal power.

In fact I think you will see in the years ahead our government promoting more and more co-operation when it comes to energy projects.

Premier Graham has already championed the Maritime Energy Accord which is being developed right now, and we have seen a number of projects come together in my area of Saint John that have required participation from many different sectors, from small companies, to municipal and provincial governments, non profit organizations, to massive international companies.

Just as I have said all along in relation to major projects happening in my region – I believe strongly that when we are at the point of doing pilot projects, and then hopefully full-scale generation projects from tidal – we want to assure that any environmental sensibilities are known and taken into consideration.

This includes not only environmental issues, but also sensibilities surrounding aquaculture and fisheries – industries that are of great importance to our province as well as Nova Scotia.

As we develop a strategic plan for moving forward with Tidal Energy in New Brunswick we will communicate with stakeholders and ask for feedback and input on how they see tidal energy playing a role in the future of our province.

I am very new to the work of OREG but from everything I have learned so far, this is always up front in the priorities of your group and I congratulate you for that.

I look forward to hearing more about your work in the months ahead and we will keep you up to date on our quest of forging partnerships that will produce solid results. I hope that your group will be able to play a role as well in our drive to bring projects to our region.

They say that even a 1,000-mile journey starts with one step, and I realize that bringing tidal power to our country has been a challenge and that other areas of the world are a bit further ahead than we are.

But that doesn't mean that we can't catch up to the work being done in other areas, and in fact in some cases, the lessons learned from projects in other areas of the globe will be of great benefit to us as we continue to grow the tidal energy sector here at home.

As long as groups like yours and governments like the one I represent are open to sharing information and working together, it will make the challenge of meeting our goals that much easier to reach.

I want to thank you very much for your kind invitation today, and I look forward to being with you again to give you an update on our work on the tidal energy file.

Thank you.