

# 1st tidal power delivered to US grid off Maine

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DAVID SHARP - Associated Press - Associated Press

A tidal power project is delivering electricity to the U.S. power grid for the first time, energy officials said Thursday.

Ocean Renewable Power Co.'s first underwater turbine, off eastern Maine, was delivering to the grid the first commercially produced tidal power on Thursday afternoon, said Bangor Hydro Electric Co., which operates the grid where the tidal power connects.

"This historic moment elevates the U.S. to the world stage," said Chris Sauer, president and CEO of Portland-based Ocean Renewable Power, which has invested \$15 million in the project.

The amount of power is modest for now. The first underwater turbine generator unit, installed last month in Cobscook Bay, produces enough electricity for 25 to 30 homes, company spokeswoman Susy Kist said. Two more turbines will come online next year.

The pilot program calls for more units to be installed off the Lubec and Eastport region at the nation's easternmost tip within four years, bringing production to 4 megawatts, enough power to keep more than 1,000 homes running.

All told, the company sees up to 50 megawatts of tidal power potential off Lubec and Eastport, home to one of the world's best tidal sites, where the tide rises and falls 20 feet twice a day.

Maine's congressional delegation praised the achievement.

"Maine has tremendous renewable resources, and I am encouraged that Ocean Renewable Power Company has successfully achieved the distinction of being the first to directly power homes and businesses right here in Maine with the power of our tides," Sen. Olympia Snowe said in a statement.

Ocean Renewable's Maine Tidal Energy Project was one of two tidal programs to receive pilot project licenses from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission earlier this year.

The other company, Verdant Power, is working to advance its own tidal energy system in New York City's East River. Verdant's tidal power design looks a lot like a wind turbine, only it's underwater.

Ocean Renewable uses rotating foils that lend the appearance of a manual reel mower for cutting grass.

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Ocean Renewable sees an international market for the system.

By 2014, Ocean Renewable and Nova Scotia-based Fundy Tidal Inc. hope to install the units in waters off Nova Scotia, where the Bay of Fundy offers even greater tidal power potential, Sauer said.

There have been expressions of interest from other countries, including Ireland, Scotland, France, Chile, Australia, New Zealand and Japan, Sauer said, and the company is seeking capital to build and install more TidGen units around the world.

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