

Wave Energy

Diane Kepley:

The Atlantic Ocean is a massive resource when it comes to generating energy. Wave power, "the motion of the ocean," is being looked at as a potential power source for all of Ireland's energy needs.

Owen Sweeney:

We have the potential to-to produce, from wave alone, er, two or three times our entire, uh, consumption, which will be maybe fifteen thousand megawatts.

Diane Kepley:

The Irish government set up the Hydraulics and Maritime Research Centre in 2004 with the goal to produce five hundred megawatts of electricity by 2020. The HMRC is developing prototype generators in its lab.

Tony Lewis:

The-the principle that it operates on is that there is a large uh, ducting, or chamber, inside this device, which is open to the sea at the rear. And inside the chamber, there is an air volume. That air volume is compressed by the waves, and as the waves go by, that compressed air is forced through the turbine, which spins to generate electricity.

Diane Kepley:

As promising as the technology looks on the surface, diving deeper shows that there are several obstacles to bringing wave power to market.

Richard Toll:

Wave power is so expensive; it's twofold. First, er, very few people live in the ocean. Er, it's simply a long way away from where we need the electricity, and that increases its costs. And the second reason is that the environment is so hostile.

Diane Kepley:

But while wave power is expensive compared to other renewables, those costs are expected to come down as the industry is scaled up.

Diane Kepley:

Diane Kepley, The Associated Press.

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