



Stakeholder perceptions of marine renewable energy

An overview by Jodie West, Ian Bailey and Ian Whitehead

Socio-economic Cluster- University of Plymouth



‘It’s out of sight, out of mind’

Or is it?

- There is still concern for visual Impacts
- Loss of fishing ground
- Impacts on wildlife
- Impacts on surfing conditions
- Impacts on tourism
- Navigational issues

Research Aims

- Examine views of key stakeholders in marine areas on issues proponents and developers of marine renewable energy projects may need to consider
- Explore how these issues might be managed
- Case study of Cornish Wave Hub project

Methodology

Interviews were conducted in July 2008, with representatives from the following groups:

- 1- an organisation involved in fisheries management and protection
- 2- a renewable-energy organisation
- 3,4 & 5 - three representatives from different spheres of local government and concerns for economic and sustainability issues
- 6- a charity concerned with water quality
- 7- a local fisherman
- 8- a local surf school

Issues

- Robust science and cumulative impacts
- The dis-benefits of benefits
- Representation and impact
- Delays and apathy



Robust science

- Longevity of baseline data
- Is science capable of measuring the impacts of marine renewable energy at any size or scale?

The dis-benefits of benefits

- Inflating the benefits may appear attractive, but it can backfire

'The optimistic vet'

Representation and impact

- **Compassion fatigue** - *stakeholder scepticism and lack of empathy for the concerns of the commercial fishing industry*
- **The power of the minority**- *the surfing community is proposed to have the loudest voice and the ability to use it if aggravated*

Delays create apathy

- If projects are delayed it appears to make some stakeholders apathetic to the development.

“I don’t want to give anymore of my time or support to a project that probably isn’t going to happen”

Conclusions

1. Cannot assume that the high level stakeholder support for demonstration projects will be equally offered to cumulative commercial ventures
 2. Overlaps and distinctions between terrestrial and marine - lessons but no easy read across
- Further research
 - Public perceptions
 - Distance / time
 - The influence of science pre and post implementation