



Alyn  
Smith  
Energy News  
Summer 2013

Catching up on some of the developments in energy policy and development across the EU shows just how much of a role Scotland is playing in driving forward new technology and improving the landscape and thinking around the energy sector.

We've got a Scottish Government committed to championing renewable energy technology, leading academics in energy, the European Marine Energy Centre in Orkney testing new technology, and we've got individuals and companies across Scotland thinking a lot about their energy use. We're building a new energy future.

We're also influencing what goes on across Europe. It was the influence of Scotland's offshore oil and gas industry that made the new safety protocol workable, it's Scotland that's driving renewable thinking, and it's Scotland that's first in Europe to research how to use the power grids for future improvements.

**“We're building a new energy future”**

On the domestic front we've had to fight to get fair tariffs for connection to the grid; that was a long and hard campaign and it looks like we've been successful but, like every victory won against a Whitehall department or regulator, we'll keep a wary eye on proceedings.

There's lots going on and lots of work being done and there's lots more still to come. This will remain one of the most interesting policy areas across Scotland and the EU for quite a few years to come.

This newsletter is to give you a flavour of what's going on, I hope you find it useful and, as always, please don't hesitate to get it touch.

**All the contact details are on the back page, as well as my website, facebook and twitter accounts – don't forget you can register for regular updates at [alynsmith.eu](http://alynsmith.eu)**

**Yours**

**Alyn Smith MEP**



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# Offshore Oil And Gas Safety

It's now 25 years since the Piper Alpha disaster took the lives of so many people. Scotland will not forget what happened that day and the safety regime has been improved enormously since then.

It isn't perfect, by any means, and there are still injuries and deaths in the industry. The recent helicopter crash which killed four people showed that we cannot relax in our efforts to improve safety. Four families are grieving the loss of life and thousands of other families have been reminded of the dangers their loved ones face at work.

The crash may have more to do with aviation safety than offshore safety but the two cannot be completely separated. Scotland has one of the best safety regimes in the industry but there is much more still to do. Protecting the workers as far as possible must be our aim.

Much of that responsibility lies with the industry but we also have a role to play. The European Parliament approved a new package of rules on safety for the oil and gas sector earlier this year. The original proposal as drafted by the European Commission was not in the best interests of safety or the Scottish industry and may have been damaging for both.

Fortunately the industry and unions were on their toes and provided plenty of information, data and arguments to allow me — and other MEPs — to submit amendments to make it workable for Scotland. Our offshore safety standards are world class — we learned through bitter experience — but they're not yet perfect.

The industry made sure that the incoming EU legislation won't diminish the oil and gas safety regime in the North Sea. Now we must see further improvements in our own safety record.

## New Weapon In Fight Against Climate Chaos

There is a new weapon in the fight against climate chaos after the EU agreed in the European Parliament to new restrictions on trading greenhouse gases in July. This represents a new opportunity for the Scottish renewables industry.

The reinforced Emissions Trading System (ETS) is an opportunity for the renewables industry because the cost of pumping pollutants into the air will go up and clean energy technology will become a much more attractive economic prospect as a result.

That means it will be more cost effective for industry to change to clean energy which will, in turn, provide big opportunities for Scottish benefits in terms of jobs and environmental protection.

Part of the deal means that EU allowances for trading CO2 won't be increased in the next few years as had been planned and those increases will at least be deferred. This is what the EU Commission is calling 'back-loading' and we'll come back to it in years to come.

This is just a short-term fix though and we really need to change the ETS to make it stronger, more efficient and fit for purpose.



Image: morguefile.com

Through hard work Scotland has become a world-leader in renewables and if we don't fix the system for emissions trading now then we are putting this work at risk.

# Sustainable Energy Week: Showcase for Scotland

At the end of June the EU's Sustainable Energy Week (EUSEW) was a busy one.

Scotland is leading the way with sustainable energy and is home to some of the most exciting emerging energy technologies so it was no surprise that Scotland played a central role in EUSEW. Since 2006, EUSEW has showcased activities dedicated to energy efficiency and renewable energy solutions encouraging best practice, inspiring new ideas and building alliances to help meet the EU's energy and climate goals.

From traditional fuels to our vast renewable energy potential and future fuels still to be exploited, we have it all on the energy front. We won the resources lottery twice; the first was oil, the second is renewables. We have expertise and knowledge which is recognised internationally as the highest standard. Scotland has a lot to offer in sustainable energy and we're right at the cutting edge of what the EU is doing.

A high level policy conference focusing on ocean energy was organised by the Scottish Government, Scotland Europa and the EU Ocean Energy Association to showcase Scotland's contribution and ensure that we stay at the front of the debate.



That was followed by Aberdeen City Council completing its role in Brussels as part of the Low Carbon Regions in the North Sea (LOWCAP) project.

The agenda for this year's Sustainable Energy Week was packed and Scotland's success in Europe can continue as we build for the future.

## Scotland "Centre Of The Green Universe"



The ocean energy conference, as part of EUSEW, was of particular interest. Scotland's advances in renewable energy and the potential that our oceans have to help meet our energy targets were highlighted.

We emphasised Scotland's role in harnessing this potential alongside the European Commission and the Irish Energy Minister (Ireland held the EU Presidency at the time). Scotland is

leading the way on ocean energy in particular and I'm delighted that this was recognised; our location is ideal for ocean energy.

It's no coincidence that Scotland is home to the world's best testing facility for wave and tidal energy prototypes — the European Marine Energy Centre in Orkney — allowing us to have more devices being developed and tested than anywhere else in the world. It makes sense for Scotland to be at the heart of development and we need to help the sector reach that crucial market-ready stage.

# Transmission Charging Change Welcome

## Good News For Scottish Islands

Ofgem has announced that it intends to change its transmission charging regime to encourage more low-carbon energy. About time, too. The current transmission regime is discriminatory against renewables in Scotland generally and island generators in particular.

The changes aren't perfect but they're moving in the right direction. Renewable energy generators in Scotland should see their costs lowered as a result. The new system will take into account the type of electricity generated and the way that energy generators use the grid. Crucially, it will take the cost of transmitting energy from Scottish islands to the mainland into account as well.

## In Brief

### Ocean energy advisory group

Alyn has become a member of an advisory group set up to drive the development of Europe's wave and tidal energy sector.

He was chosen to sit on RenewableUK's Legislation Advisory Group alongside a number of experts on ocean energy from all over Europe. He will address the main policy challenges and contribute towards the creation of a Market Deployment Strategy for the sector as part of the Strategic Initiative for Ocean Energy (SI Ocean).

### Green energy nominations open

Nominations are now open for the Scottish Green Energy Awards. There are 12 categories which acknowledge those who are making a difference to the renewable energy industry in Scotland. Here are the details:

Nominate at: [www.scottishrenewables.com/nominations/green-energy-awards-nominations](http://www.scottishrenewables.com/nominations/green-energy-awards-nominations)

Include a brief description as to why you — or your nominee — should be considered for this award.

#### Categories are:

- Best Politician
- Contribution to Skills and Training
- Community Initiative
- Best Innovation
- Business Growth
- Contribution to Sustainable Development
- Best Project
- Contribution to Supply Chain Development
- Public Sector Initiative
- Best Journalist
- Innovation in Solar Energy
- Outstanding Contribution

Deadline for nominations: **25th October 2013.**

4

Best of luck!



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Scotland has the resources to take full advantage of renewables as the technology develops but we need a fair transmission charging system. I'm glad we're now heading in that direction; it will make a big difference to our island and remote communities.

### Europe's first electricity grid research centre opens in North Lanarkshire: Scotland leading the way

In May, Europe's first electricity grid research centre opened in Cumbernauld, North Lanarkshire.

Strathclyde University's world-leading Power Networks Demonstration Centre is a joint venture between the University, Scottish Power Energy Networks, Scottish and Southern Energy Power Distribution, Scottish Enterprise and the Scottish Funding Council. The research centre, equipped with control and simulations systems and home to a power network independent from the national grid, aims to speed up the adoption of advanced technologies for the electricity sector and convert research into low carbon solutions for the industry.

### Edinburgh firm gets go-ahead for Lewis wave farm

Edinburgh company, Aquamarine Power, got Scottish Government approval to develop the world's most advanced wave farm off Lewis. It will be the largest commercial wave array in the world in one of the best locations in Europe. 50 Oyster machines will produce 40MW of clean, renewable electricity and power nearly 30,000 homes.

## Contact Alyn

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