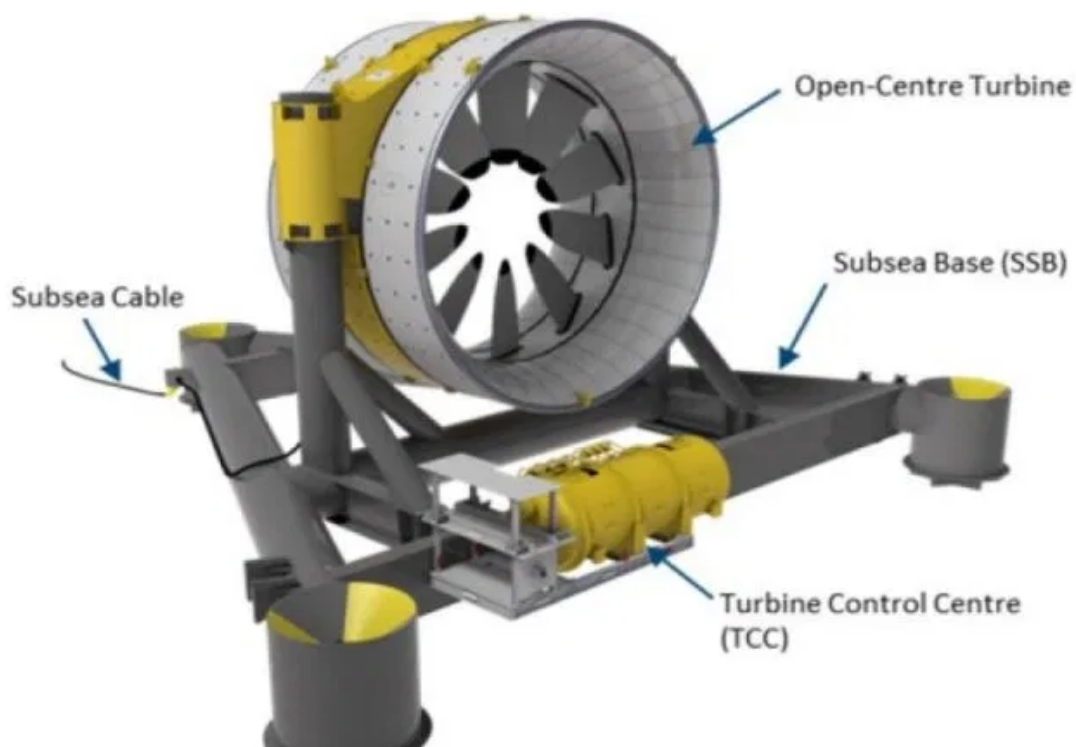


warktimes.com

Cape Sharp turbine spinning with no monitoring for effects on sea creatures

Posted on

5-6 minutes



Cape Sharp's 300 tonne turbine sits on a 700 tonne base with the Turbine Control Centre attached to it

For the third time in nine years, the blades on a massive turbine are spinning in the turbulent tides of the Bay of Fundy without the environmental monitoring systems that are now

legally required to gauge the turbine's potential effects on sea life.

"They're breaking the law right now," says Darren Porter who speaks for the fisherman's group Fundy United Federation.

"You've got an unmonitored turbine on the bottom of the Minas Passage in what the fishermen call the highway of life" Porter adds, "and it's not being monitored currently so we'll never know the effects it's having and that is absolutely unexcusable."

Porter was referring to the [turbine deployed on July 22](#) by Cape Sharp Tidal Inc. The company is a partnership between the Irish-based turbine developer OpenHydro, which owns 80 per cent, and Emera, parent company of Nova Scotia Power.

On July 26, Naval Energies, OpenHydro's French parent company [began bankruptcy proceedings](#) in Dublin saying the turbine developer was "seriously insolvent" with debts of about \$426 million. Naval Energies announced the next day that it was getting out of tidal power development altogether partly, it said, because the fledgling industry can't compete with other renewable technologies such as offshore wind.

Rush to deploy?





OpenHydro's Alasdair McLean on the beach at Black Rock shortly after the latest turbine deployment

Darren Porter condemns the apparent rush to get the turbine in the water days before the end of lobster fishing season, especially when at least some OpenHydro officials must have known that the company was facing possible financial collapse.

Alasdair McLean, country manager for OpenHydro Technology Canada Ltd., has not been available for media interviews since the news broke about the company's financial problems.

On the day of the deployment, he made no mention of the possibility of bankruptcy when asked during an interview with *The New Wark Times* why it was necessary to deploy the turbine destroying about 100 of Mark Taylor's traps just before the end of lobster season on July 31:

Audio Player

Environmental monitoring disabled



FAST-3 underwater sensor platform

According to officials who speak for Cape Sharp, FORCE, the body that oversees the tidal test site at Black Rock, and the Nova Scotia Department of Energy, the newly deployed turbine has been isolated from the power grid for safety reasons since no one from OpenHydro is there to check it.

That means that various environmental monitoring devices on the turbine have also been disabled.

Officials say that a legally required contingency monitoring plan has been “initiated” probably using a [FAST sensory platform](#), but they are vague about when it might go into effect.

It’s not the first time an OpenHydro turbine has been operating at the FORCE test site with its environmental sensors disabled.

In April 2017, Cape Sharp disconnected its first turbine from the grid in preparation for its retrieval leaving the turbine blades spinning for eight weeks with no environmental monitoring in its immediate vicinity. Moreover, it came to light later that several of Cape Sharp's turbine monitoring devices failed to work properly during the 2016-2017 deployment.

Regulators reacted by [ordering the company and FORCE](#) to improve their monitoring devices as well as their back-up or contingency plans.

There appears to have been no environmental monitoring when the first OpenHydro turbine was deployed in November 2009. The public did not learn for more than a year, after the turbine was finally retrieved, that all 12 of its blades had been destroyed [within the first 20 days](#).

Remove turbine now?

Meantime, Darren Porter is calling on the Nova Scotia government to remove the turbine until things are sorted out.

The Department of Energy has confirmed that Cape Sharp Tidal Inc. was required to post a bond to cover the full costs of decommissioning the turbine. JoAnn Alberstat, who speaks for the department, would not disclose the amount of the bond on the grounds that it's commercially sensitive information.

But Porter says he's heard it was for \$1 million.

He adds that Cape Sharp is required to submit weekly reports to regulators on turbine performance, but the company did not

submit the first report due last Monday.

“The government should just step in and just take over,” he says. “Take that million dollars that they were supposed to put away” he adds, “get that barge up here and get that turbine out of the water until things sort themselves out.”