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### **Tidal current power project gets the go-ahead**

**New Zealand may become the home to the largest tidal current power project in the world. Consents granted by the Environment Court and the Minister of Conservation have given the go-ahead to Crest Energy's 200 MW tidal current power project in the outer part of the Kaipara Harbour.**

AWATEA member, Crest Energy, was granted consents by the Environment Court in a decision released on 3 February 2011. The Court also recommended that further consents be approved by the Minister of Conservation. Those consents were awarded by the Minister on 17 March and enable Crest Energy to proceed with the proposed programme.

Kaipara Harbour is the largest natural harbour in the Southern Hemisphere and the proposed project will make a significant contribution to energy supply in the Northland peninsula, where demand is high but other generation options are relatively few. When fully completed, the project may also offset the requirements for some upgrades to the national transmission grid.

The proportion of New Zealand's renewable electricity generation has recently risen to just below 75% and the Association welcomes the first commercial-scale marine energy project in New Zealand waters, as the first step to marine energy achieving a meaningful contribution to the national energy supply portfolio. The country has exceptionally good wave energy resources and regionally strong tidal current energy resources.

The long journey of the Kaipara project through the Environment Court should ensure that environmental concerns raised in the Court will be dealt with by staged development of the project, with stages separated by publicly notified reviews, and a rigorous adaptive management process.

The Crest Energy project proposal is the largest tidal current energy project in the world, which will use an array of completely submerged tidal turbines, rather than a barrage. The world's largest tidal barrage project, the 254 MW Sihwa Lake tidal barrage, is due to come on stream in the near future.

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