

Scottish Government want control over Crown Estates...

Scottish Ministers are seeking the UK Government's support to make the Crown Estate more accountable and ensure Scotland benefits to the full from its plentiful natural resources.

In Scotland the Crown Estate – who manage the seabed up to 12 miles from shore as well as the foreshore and some on-land assets – is the responsibility of UK Government and, as such, is not accountable to Scottish Ministers.

Discussions are already underway to determine how the Crown Estate is managed in Scotland, so that local communities receive greater benefits and to ensure that the organisation adapts to the post-devolution, 21st Century era.

Rural Affairs and Environment Secretary Richard Lochhead said:

“The people of Scotland should benefit from our marine and natural resources yet, despite the arrival of devolution over a decade ago, the Crown Estate remains unaccountable to Scotland. It is time for the Crown Estate to deliver greater benefits to Scotland and our communities.

“The election of a new UK Coalition Government provides the opportunity for the Crown Estate to fully adapt to the post-devolution era, with greater transparency and accountability for their activities north of the Border. We must ensure that Scottish communities see more benefits from the revenues generated on their doorstep.

“The fact that a UK body like the Crown Estate controls our seabed when the flow of all other marine powers are going in the opposite direction is out of step with modern and progressive political arrangements.

“A series of meetings have already begun between Scottish Government officials and their Crown Estate and UK Government counterparts to explore the options. At my most recent meeting with the Secretary of State for Scotland we agreed to hold further talks in the near future about the Crown Estate.

“Scotland’s offshore energy potential is vast and we have the opportunity to be a world leader in this area. Therefore we are continuing to work closely and constructively with the Crown Estate on our ongoing offshore renewables work. However, what is critical is that we ensure that the fruits of this good work stay in Scotland.”

Background

Research from the Offshore Valuation Group, published in May 2010, found that Scotland’s total offshore resource is estimated at 206 Gigawatts. By harnessing around a third of that resource, offshore renewables capacity could reach 68 GW by 2050, which would provide a net value in terms of electricity sales estimated at £14 billion.

More than 12,000 jobs in marine renewables could be created by 2020, which would contribute £2.5 billion to Scotland’s economy, according to a report published by the Marine Energy Group last September.

A UK Treasury Select Committee report in March 2010 recommended that a concordat or memorandum of understanding between the Scottish Government and the Crown Estate Commissioner is needed to consolidate the working relationship and highlighted the need for the Crown Estate to greatly strengthen its management within Scotland.

The 2009 Calman Report acknowledged evidence from local authorities and others calling for the Crown Estate to be devolved to enable the Crown Estate to be made more accountable and to help ensure that its Scottish assets are managed in Scotland’s interests.