

*Issued : 21 June 2013*

**"British MPs shocked by impact of Rance Barrage  
and call for dated Severn Barrage idea to be struck from agenda"**

British MPs and Lords met on Monday to consider plans to build a tidal power barrage across the estuary of the River Severn, in the west of the country. The Severn estuary has the second highest tidal range in the world, thus making it a potential candidate for a tidal barrage similar to that constructed in the Rance in the 1960's.

The British Government is currently considering proposals to build a giant 18 km barrage spanning the Severn Estuary between Cardiff in Wales and Weston-super-Mare. The supporters of this €35 billion project claim that it would generate up to 5% of the UK's electricity.

This scheme has caused great controversy in the UK. Numerous environmental groups, such as WWF (World Wildlife Fund) and the RSPB (Royal Society for the Protection of Birds), have voiced concerns about the potentially devastating environmental impact of a barrage on wildlife in the Severn Estuary, while the Port of Bristol has opposed the project as it would effectively block the port's access to the sea.

Throughout the discussions, much attention has been focussed on the Rance Barrage, as this is the only existing precedent for a tidal power barrage in Europe.

At Monday's meeting parliamentarians were shown a film made by the Severn Rivers Trust, an environmental charity, showing the impact of the Rance barrage, and in particular the dramatic level of siltation that has occurred within the Rance marine basin since construction of the barrage.

Charles Walker MP, Chairman, said at the conclusion of the meeting:

"On behalf of my parliamentary colleagues, I thank the environmental groups for bringing the devastating La Rance experience to our attention. The effects on the biodiversity, the local people and the local economy are striking. It is no wonder that this form of power generation has been considered and dismissed by other countries – from Canada and France to South Korea. The UK government should forge ahead with its support for sustainable energy generation, but not a damaging barrage concept."

Above all, Charles Walker noted that tidal barrages wherever they have been built in the world have been associated with massive siltation problems. It was agreed that the MPs sponsoring Monday's meeting will now write to the British Government urging that the barrage concept for the Severn Estuary be abandoned. The British Government has until the end of July to announce its decision regarding a Severn Barrage.

Contact : Severn Rivers Trust

Jonathan White

[email@jonathanwhite.eu](mailto:email@jonathanwhite.eu)