ENERGY MATTERS

On The Road To Creating Real Power From Waves

(NAPSA)—With 2,069 miles of Atlantic coastline and 7,623 miles of Pacific coastline, America may be in a unique position to put the waters to work, creating an inexpensive, renewable source of energy.

While water power is nothing new, the process behind the latest "wave" of innovation certainly is. Power plants using oscillating water column (OWC) technology are able to harness the power of waves, generating a commercial level of energy that can then be connected to the nation's power grid. The result could be greater self-sufficiency and reduced reliance on foreign energy sources.

The technology was developed by Voith Siemens Hydro—the company that, among other things, delivers turbines for Niagara Falls and equipment for numerous power plants throughout the U.S.—and its Scottish subsidiary, Wavegen. This technology has been demonstrated on the Scottish island of Islay since 2000, where electricity generated by the plant is supplied to the local grid. Currently, a feasibility study is under way for a commercial project on the Hebridean Island of Lewis, which will be a major milestone in the commercial use of marine energy.

The power of waves may soon be harnessed to help meet America's energy needs.

If the project goes ahead, the OWC technology would be integrated into a new breakwater (a barrier that absorbs the force of the crashing waves). By combining this energy project with the breakwater development, civil engineering costs could be shared and result in a considerable cost reduction for the wave power plant, while providing local benefit from the new breakwater that creates a new harbor for the local infrastructure. And when the technology reaches America's shores, the nation could see the same benefit.

To learn more about OWC technology and its energy-producing properties, visit www.voithsiemenshydro.com or www.wavegen.com.