

Letters

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Scotland needs to regain control of its seabeds to cash in on marine energy

THE development of marine energy is very welcome ("Scotland set to realise potential as 'Saudi Arabia of marine power'", The Herald, March 17) but it is important to point out that, contrary to your report, the Crown Estate does not own anything and cannot announce anything.

The Crown Estate is a bundle of property rights administered by the Crown Estate Commission (CEC) and it is this body which has consistently confused the public by adopting the identity of the property which it administers as a branding device.

Furthermore, the CEC does not "own" the seabed, it merely administers the property rights of the seabed. The seabed is crown land, a type of public land defined by Scots law. As such, it is within the competence of the Scottish Parliament to transfer title from the Crown to Scottish ministers and there would then be nothing left for the CEC to administer.

Why does this matter? Because, as Jim Hunter points out in Alan Taylor's report on the Beaulieu to Denny pylon controversy, "the real issue is how we capture some part of the revenue from renewable energy for the wider community and development purposes in the Highlands".

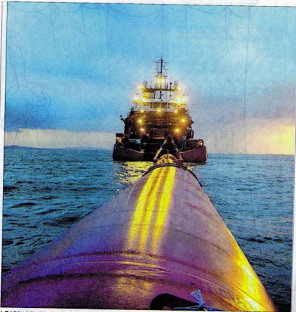
We can only do that if the seabed is owned and controlled in Scotland either by Scottish ministers or, preferably, by local authorities. Then, and only then, will we be in a position to call the shots and secure the revenues which can be used for the common good around Scotland's coasts.

Quite why an SNP government has not done anything to repatriate Scotland's crown lands is a mystery. If, as Alex Salmond has claimed, Scotland's seas make us the Saudi Arabia of marine power, why is Scottish crown land being administered by a property company in London to whom all the rents will flow?

Andy Wightman,
9 Inverleith Terrace, Edinburgh.

IT IS good news that Scotland has taken a world-leading role in the marine energy industry (The Herald, March 17).

Scotland is reckoned to have one-quarter of Europe's potential for generating electricity from wind and tidal power. However, further growth is undermined by



LEADING THE WORLD: A wave energy converter is towed out into the North Sea.

Scottish fossil fuel fund in order that further monies can be invested by the Scottish Government into creating thousands of jobs in renewable energy.
Andrew Rosie,
68 MacDowall Road, Edinburgh.

THE signing of 10 project agreements to generate as much as 1.2 gigawatts of wave and tidal energy from the seas off Scotland's north coast is to be applauded. This will position our nation as home to the most ambitious plans of any country in the world to harness wave and tidal power (The Herald, March 17).

Following the world's first commercial wave and tidal leasing round, agreements have now been signed to develop six

electricity grid, a critical part of which is, of course, the Beaulieu to Denny upgrade.

The challenges are considerable, but the opportunities are immense, developing world-leading technologies to generate clean, green electricity, delivering an energy and jobs bonanza for Scotland.
Alan Simpson,
19 Canning Street, Edinburgh.

I HAVE no doubt that Tom Johnston former Secretary of State for Scotland 1941-45 would have a wry smile at Alan Taylor's report "No pylon protests when first vital electricity lit up the community" (March 17).

Mr Johnston, a former MP for West