

# GILES CHICHESTER MEP

for the South West and Gibraltar

## PRESS LETTER

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### To the Editor, Letters

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Dear Editor

The Westcountry boasts a long history of notable inventors whose creations have benefited mankind. Those of Sir Humphrey Davy, Richard Trevithick and Charles Babbage are but a few which spring to mind. A recent addition could be Alvin Smith of Dartmouth whose Searaser energy system may contribute greatly to supporting not only UK energy needs but also those of the developing world.

The challenge of climate change and political issues affecting the security of our oil and gas supplies have prompted government and multi-national companies to invest vast sums of money in the search for the new holy grail – a source of cheap, sustainable and eco-friendly electricity. About one third of global energy use is based on electricity and this is predicted to double by 2030. The race is on, therefore, to discover new technologies which will lessen our dependence on electricity generation from fossil fuels and cut back green house gas emissions.

Recently, in Dartmouth, I met with inventor Alvin Smith, an engineer who is not involved in high tech, big money research but working at home has invented a system which uses wave energy to produce electricity. The system he calls Searaser works by utilising wave energy to pump water into land based storage tanks which is then released to power a hydro electric turbine. A prototype has been successfully tested. There are many ongoing experiments to harness the power of the ocean which utilise wave and tidal generation. The difference with Searaser is that the generator is land based and, consequently, the system is less costly, more easily maintained and not subject to salt corrosion.

The viability of Searaser is not yet proven for it needs to be thoroughly costed and tested across the full range of sea conditions. I am, however, impressed by the invention which, when fully developed, could become an important, sustainable source of electric power. According to Alvin Smith, a network of 11,000 Searasers around the coasts of Britain could produce enough electric power to serve our domestic needs. This inexpensive (1.5 pence per kilowatt), simple power generation system could, in my view, be of even more significance in the support it could provide for agricultural and industrial development in the third world.



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*Conservatives in the European Parliament*