

Britain sinks tidal scheme, names eight future nuclear sites

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Power lines near a Nuclear Power Station are pictured in north-west England in 2008. The British government confirmed on Monday it will drop plans for a multi-billion-pound tidal energy project, as it identified eight sites suitable for building new nuclear power stations.

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An official study said the proposed 10-mile (16-kilometre) barrage stretching across the Severn river, which was to generate energy using [tidal power](#), could cost more than 34 billion pounds (54 billion dollars, 38.9 billion euros).

It described the project as "high risk in comparison to other ways of

generating low-carbon electricity", although it said the proposal could be reconsidered in the future.

"Other low carbon options represent a better deal for taxpayers and consumers," said the energy minister, Chris Huhne.

The barrage would have stretched between Weston-Super-Mare in southwest England and the Welsh capital Cardiff.

But the report said the barrage was unlikely to attract adequate investment from the private sector and would rely heavily on public investment.

The project has been scrapped as Britain's finance minister George Osborne prepares to announce billions of pounds in public spending cuts on Wednesday in order to reduce the country's huge deficit.

The decision to scrap the project was welcomed by environmental campaigners. Martin Harper of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds said the barrage would have "trashed" local wildlife sites.

It would have destroyed "huge areas of estuary marsh and mudflats used by 69,000 birds each winter and block the migration routes of countless fish," Harper added.

The Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government also cleared the way for new nuclear power plants to be built at eight sites in England and Wales -- three fewer than the 11 proposed by the previous Labour government.

The coalition had already said it would give the go-ahead to companies that want to build new nuclear plants, provided no public subsidy is required, despite Liberal Democrat opposition to new nuclear power

stations before the party was in power.

But environmental campaigners Friends of the Earth slammed the announcement, describing it as a "reckless" disregard for the need to tackle climate change.

"[Nuclear power](#) is not the solution to tackling climate change -- it would leave us saddled with toxic waste for centuries to come," said campaigner Simon Bullock.

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