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Huge Wind Turbine Farm Opens Off Coast of Southeast England

By JULIA WERDIGIER

LONDON — The world's largest offshore wind turbine farm, with a capacity to power more than 200,000 homes for a year, opened on Thursday off the coast of southeast England.

The wind farm is operated by Vattenfall, a Swedish energy company, and has 100 turbines spread over 13.5 square miles. At 377 feet tall each, the turbines are visible from the coast in Kent.

The Thanet wind farm, run by the Swedish energy company Vattenfall, has 100 turbines on 13.5 square miles.

The wind farm took more than two years to build and is expected to generate 300 megawatts of electricity.

Vattenfall's turbines mean that power generated from wind can reach five gigawatts in Britain, enough "to power all homes in Scotland," Chris Huhne, Britain's energy secretary said in a statement.

"We're in a unique position to become a world leader in this industry," Mr. Huhne said. "We are an island nation, and I firmly believe we should be harnessing our wind, wave and tidal resources to the maximum."

The British government has

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said it aims to support the renewable energy industry to achieve its goal to get 15 percent of energy from sources like wind farms by 2020. The efforts have focused mainly on wind power in recent years. Wind accounts for about 4 percent of Britain's electricity needs.

Some industry executives

feared that more government investment would be threatened in October, when the coalition government presented its program of spending cuts intended to reduce the budget deficit.

Britain has about 260 wind farms operating across the country and off its coasts.

Vattenfall operates 700 wind turbines in countries including Sweden, Germany, Poland and Britain.

The British wind farm is part of Vattenfall's plan to double its electricity generated from wind power from 2009 to 2011 by building nine wind farms in six countries.