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ALGAE BIOMASS ORGANIZATION ABO BLOG

ARPA-E Awards \$2.1M for Open Ocean Farming of Kelp for Hydrocarbon Biofuels

November, 25 / 2015

Giant kelp (aka macro algae) are among the most prolific producers of biomass, growing in enormous underwater forests up and down the west coast of North America. For years kelp have been eyed as a source of biofuels, and yesterday one San Diego company received an award from the Department of Energy's (DOE) Advanced Research Projects Agency-Energy (ARPA-E) to give their unique cultivation technology a run at producing biocrude from seaweed.

The \$2.1 million dollar award to Marine BioEnergy, Inc. is part of ARPA-E's OPEN 2015 Program – also issued in 2009 and 2012 – that serves as an open call to scientists and engineers for transformational technologies across the entire scope of ARPA-E's energy mission.

Marine BioEnergy's approach to kelp farming is far different from those in operation today. They won't be farming near the coasts where kelp can find a place to anchor themselves to the seafloor and access much needed nutrients, but rather out in the open ocean.

Marine BioEnergy's technology uses floating platforms far from the coasts that keep the kelp near the surface during the day, where they can access ample solar energy, and submerge themselves deeper during the night to give the kelp access to deep-water nutrients.

The kelp is then harvested and processed into biocrude using hydrothermal liquefaction (HTL) and catalytic hydrothermal gasification (CHG) processes.

The open ocean is big, really big. So finding a way to grow kelp out there has the potential to produce a lot of biomass.

Congratulations to Marine BioEnergy on their award and the chance to develop this exciting technology!

[Check out ARPA-E's press release on the award announcement.](#)

[Green Car Congress](#) also has a [great article on MicroBio's approach](#).



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