

Startup taps underwater volcano as energy source in “proof point” test

The world's first demonstration of a subsea geothermal power plant has taken place near an active underwater volcano almost a mile below the ocean surface. It generated less than 10 seconds of net-positive electricity but showed the technical feasibility of tapping another form of renewable energy underwater.

The three-week test deployment of the 3-ton prototype power plant took place at the Axial Seamount in the northeast Pacific Ocean in September. Endurance Energy, the Seattle-based startup behind the effort, aims to eventually commercialize subsea geothermal power for Pacific island nations and other customers looking for alternatives to importing expensive fossil fuels.

“The deep ocean gives us unlimited cold seawater for cooling, and its weight keeps the system and the well pressurized, so our plants can be compact,” said Andrew Redd, founder and CEO of Endurance Energy, in an email to Ars.

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