

The Inside Poop on a New Energy Source

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SF Public Utilities Commission

A handful of biosolids produced from sludge

An interesting item in the enviro-news site Grist by Todd Woody shows just how far some environmental entrepreneurs will go to reduce, reuse, recycle, especially when it comes to finding alternative energy sources.

In his eye-catching piece, "California going to sh*t--for green electricity," Woody tells us that the California Energy Commission has given an almost \$1 million grant to the Delta Diablo Sanitation District in Northern California to experiment with turning biosolids into energy.

Biosolids is the clean term for sewage that comes out of our houses and includes human waste. Crap.

How can this end product be given a new start as energy? Delta Diablo is going to work with Intellergy, a company based in Point Richmond, in Contra Costa County that has developed a process for turning biosolids into a hydrogen rich gas which in turn can be used to generate fuel cells.

Intellergy discusses its history, on the company website:

Intellergy has designed, built and operated steam reforming systems over two decades. These have been operated on a large variety of organic materials and waste streams including agricultural waste, solvent-contaminated air streams, liquid solvents, paint and partially full paint cans, plastics, municipal, medical, and pharmaceutical solid waste, and Kevlar, Gortex, printed circuit boards, and other military material.