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Scientists expect to calculate amount of fuel inside Earth by 2025

Earth requires fuel to drive plate tectonics, volcanoes and its magnetic field. Like a hybrid car, Earth taps two sources of energy to run its engine: primordial energy from assembling the planet and nuclear energy from the heat produced during natural radioactive decay. Scientists have developed numerous models to predict how much fuel remains inside Earth to drive its engines -- and estimates vary widely -- but the true amount remains unknown.

In a new paper, a team of geologists and neutrino physicists boldly claims it will be able to determine by 2025 how much nuclear fuel and radioactive power remain in the Earth's tank. The study, authored by scientists from the University of Maryland, Charles University in Prague and the Chinese Academy of Geological Sciences, was published on September 9, 2016, in the journal Nature Scientific Reports.

"I am one of those scientists who has created a compositional model of the Earth and predicted the amount of fuel inside Earth today," said one of the study's authors William McDonough, a professor of geology at the University of Maryland. "We're in a field of guesses. At this point in my career, I don't care if I'm right or wrong, I just want to know the answer."

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