Turning seawater into drinking water

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What if you could dip your water bottle into the ocean, let it sit in the sun for about an hour and then gulp it down?

Revolutionary, right?

That’s what Shane Ardo is working on in his lab at UC Irvine. And he’s got a lot of backers who believe he can do it.

The associate professor of chemistry has spent the past six years working toward the development of a device that converts sunlight into ionic power.

This would not only create a new source of solar energy, it could be used to take the salt out of seawater.

“We’re on the cusp,” he says.

He’s already received $1.8 million in grants, awards and funding.

Ardo doesn’t believe he could have come this far if his lab wasn’t in the UC Irvine Chemistry Department.

“They were very open to what I was proposing,” he says. “It’s so collegial at UCI across many departments. The academic atmosphere is excellent.”

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