



HydroGEN: Photoelectrochemical (PEC) Hydrogen Production

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April 30, 2020

Annual Merit Review

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P148C

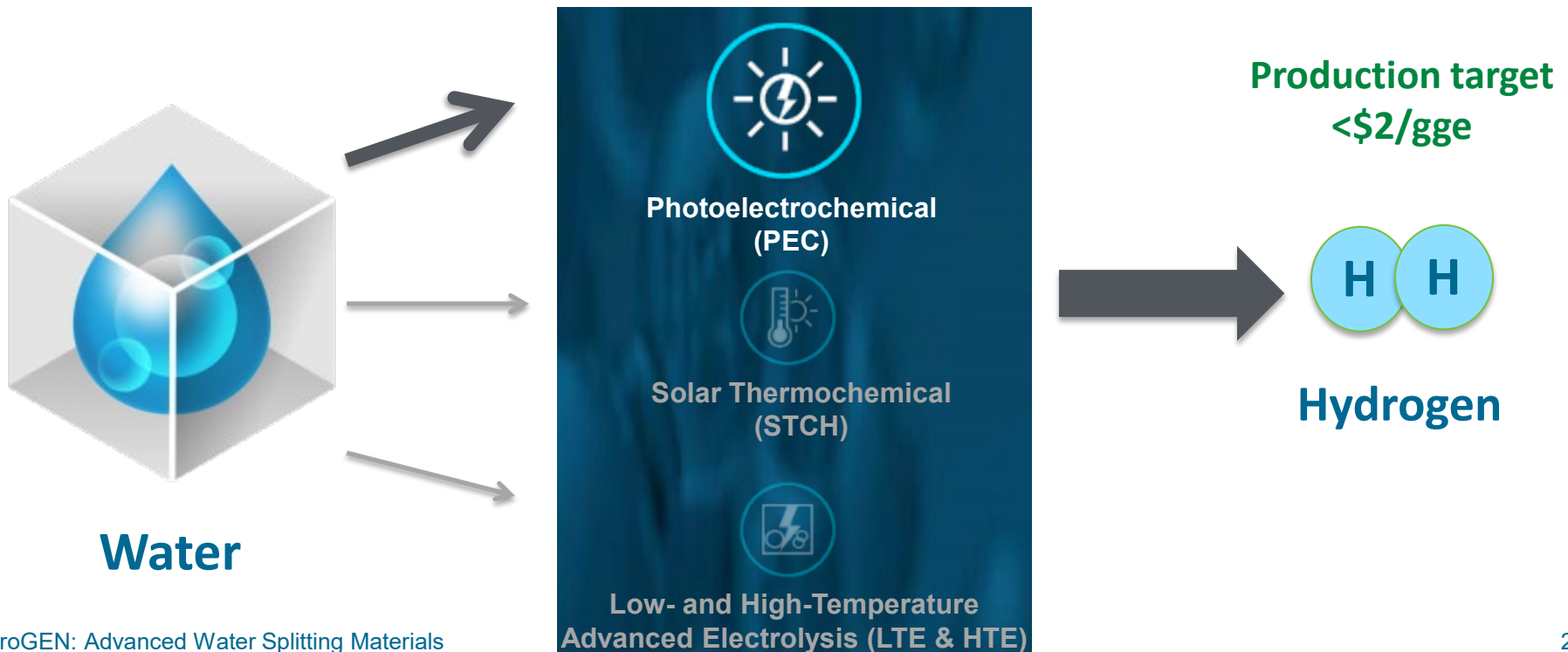


Advanced Water-Splitting Materials (AWSM) Relevance

AWSM Consortium 6 Core Labs:



Accelerating R&D of innovative materials critical to advanced water splitting technologies for clean, sustainable & low cost H₂ production, including:





Approach

- Cost, durability, efficiency
- Benchmarking workshop
 - Device stability and scalability
 - Protocols
 - Scaling studies should also inform/guide materials processing pathways & component performance criteria.
 - Protocols relate to real world conditions, such as varying illumination, temperature and low concentrated sunlight conditions
 - Advanced spatially resolved techniques, such as pH imaging, are needed
- Internal lab work this year addresses those barriers above



Approach – EMN HydroGEN

PEC: Photoelectrochemical Electrolysis

Barriers

- Cost
- Efficiency
- Durability

PEC Node Labs



Support through:



Personnel
Equipment
Expertise
Capability
Materials
Data

PEC Projects

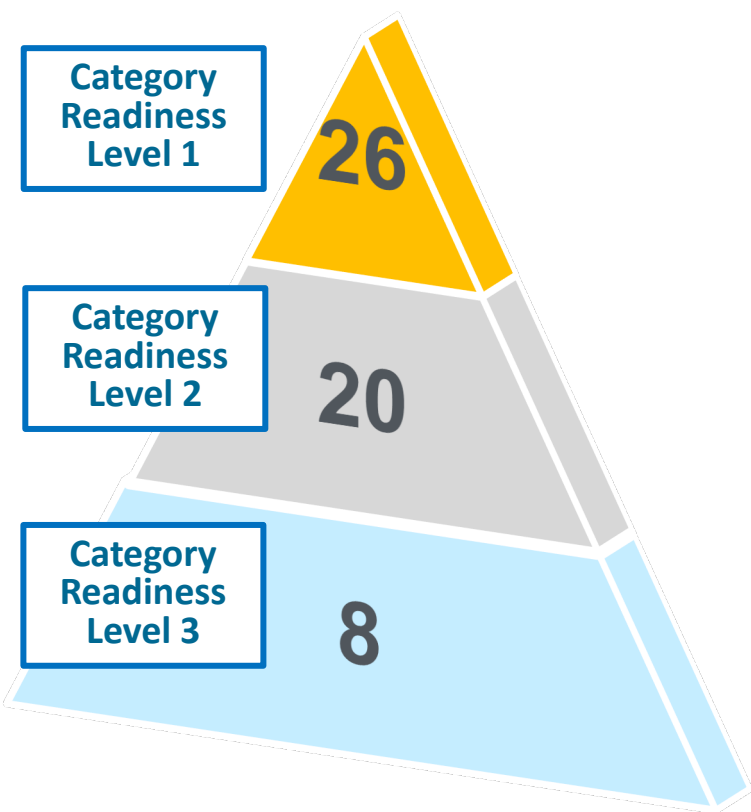


STANFORD UNIVERSITY





Collaboration: 54 PEC Nodes, 2 Supernodes



Analysis: 2
Computation: 8
Process and Scale up: 4
Integration: 2

Characterization: 14
Synthesis: 5
Benchmarking: 4

Analysis: 2
Computation: 6
Process and Scale up: 4
Integration: 2

Characterization: 12
Synthesis: 5
Benchmarking: 6

Analysis: 3
Computation: 3

Characterization: 3
Synthesis: 2

22 (17 by FOA) Nodes utilized
22 Lab PIs engaged
100's of files on Data Hub

- Nodes comprise equipment and expertise including uniqueness
- Category refers to availability and readiness with 1 being most ready and available
- Many nodes span classification areas



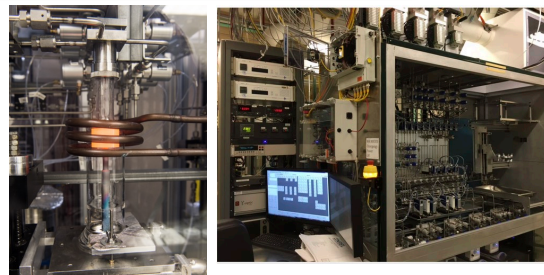
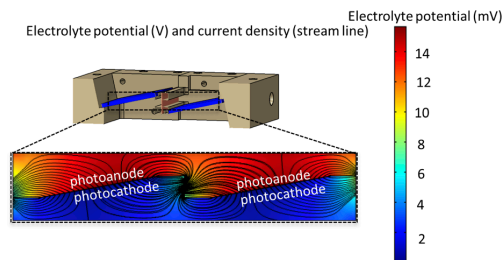
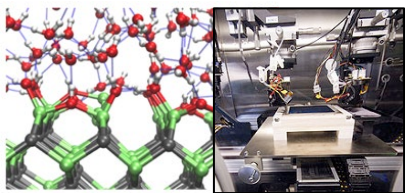
Collaboration: HydroGEN PEC Node Utilization

Lab	Node	Hawaii	Stanford	Rutgers	Michigan	Rice	Toledo	UCI	Super
LLNL	Material Design and Diagnostics	✓							
LLNL	Interface Modeling				✓			✓	✓
LBNL	Multiscale Modeling								✓
NREL	Structure Modeling								✓
NREL	First principles theory						✓		
NREL	MOVPE		✓	✓					✓
NREL	CIGS	✓							
NREL	Combi/High Throughput	✓		✓					
NREL	Surface Modifications				✓			✓	
NREL	Corrosion analysis	✓	✓					✓	✓
NREL	Surface Analysis Cluster Tool				✓				

Computation

Material Synthesis

Characterization

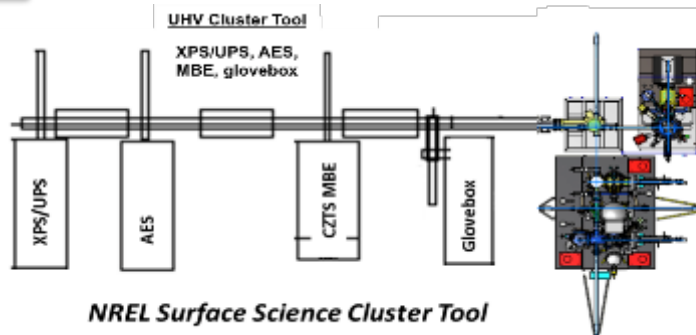
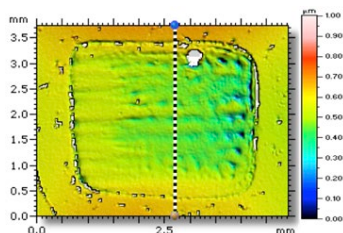




Collaboration: HydroGEN PEC Node Utilization

Lab	Node	Hawaii	Stanford	Rutgers	Michigan	Toledo	Rice	UCI	Super
NREL	PEC Characterizations		✓	✓					✓
NREL	On-Sun Efficiency Benchmarking	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
NREL	RDE								✓
LBNL	Microelectrode								✓
LBNL	Probing and mitigation corr						✓		✓
LBNL	In situ and operando				✓		✓		✓
LBNL	Prototyping								✓
LBNL	Photophysical Characterization	✓	✓						
LBNL	On-Sun Testing						✓		✓
LBNL	In situ APXPS and XAS								✓
LLNL	In situ X-ray characterization					✓			

Characterization



- AMANDA Atomic Molecular Nanocrystal Deposition Apparatus
- Omicron System XPS/UPS/IPES
- LEED
- STM/AFM
- ISS
- TPD



Best-in-class Platinum Group Metal-free Catalyst Integrated Tandem Junction PEC Water Splitting Devices



Rutgers University PI: Garfunkel/Dismukes

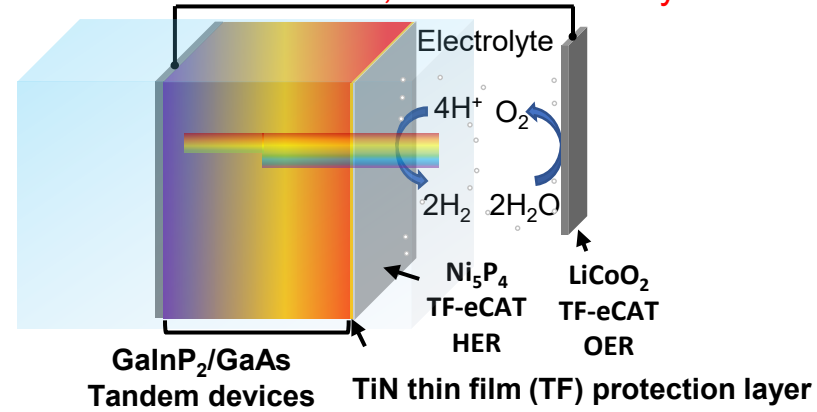


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Project Goals:

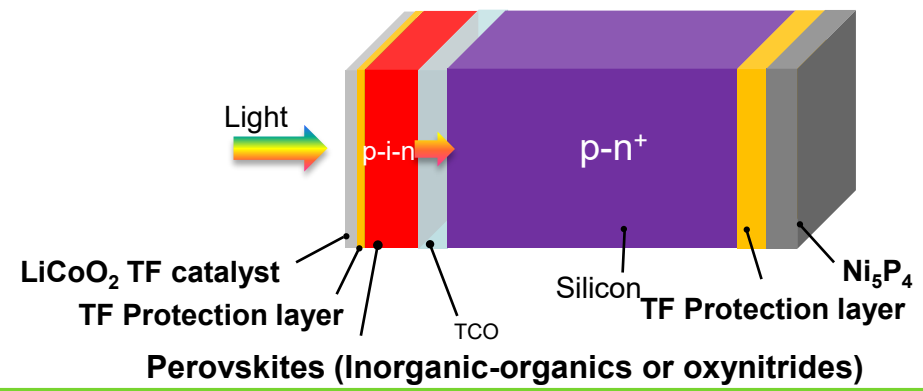
High-Performance (HP) device

Goal: >10% STH, > 100h durability



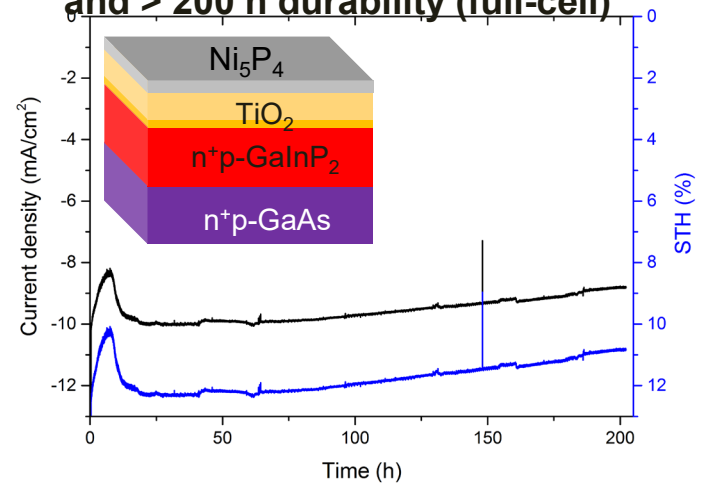
High-Value (HV) device

Goal: ~10% STH, > 24h durability

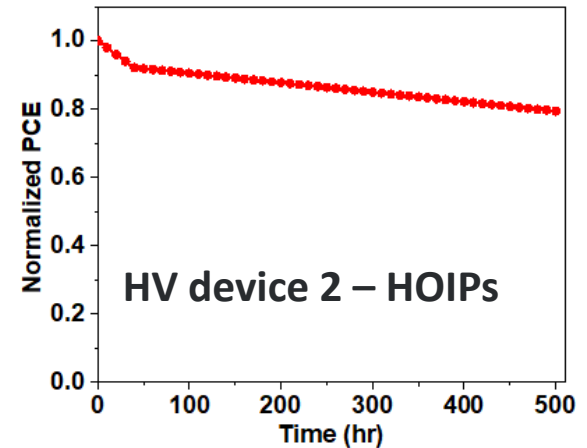


Achievements: Highlights

HP device achieves >12% STH and > 200 h durability (full-cell)



HV progress – Hybrid organic inorganic perovskite (HOIPs) wide bandgap (1.61 eV) n-i-p orientation achieves PCE > 20% and > 500 h





Protective Catalyst Systems on III-V and Si-based Semiconductors for Efficient, Durable Photoelectrochemical Water Splitting Devices

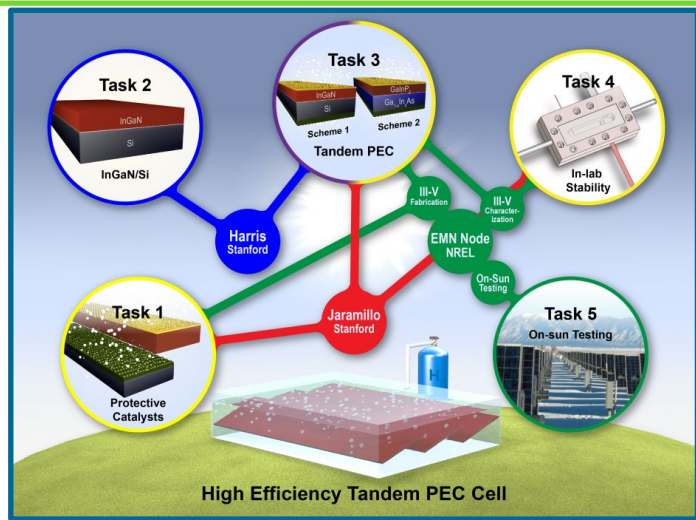
Stanford University PI: T. Jaramillo



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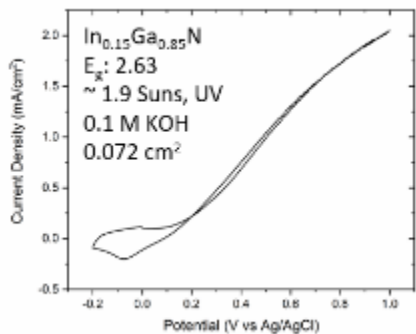
Goals:

- To develop unassisted water splitting devices that can achieve > 20% solar-to-hydrogen (STH) efficiency.
- Devices that can operate on-sun for at least 2 weeks.
- Devices that can provide a path toward electrodes that cost \$200/m² by incorporating earth-abundant protective catalysts and novel epitaxial growth schemes.



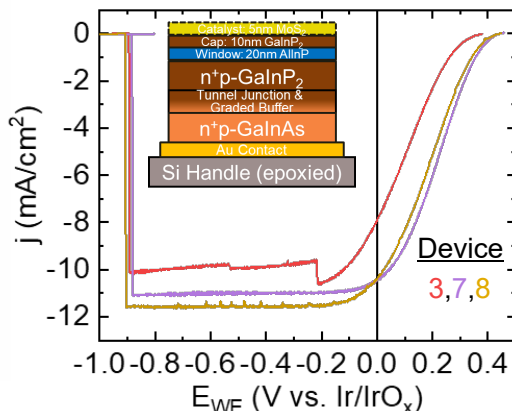
Highlights

InGaN grown by MOCVD gives photoanode behavior

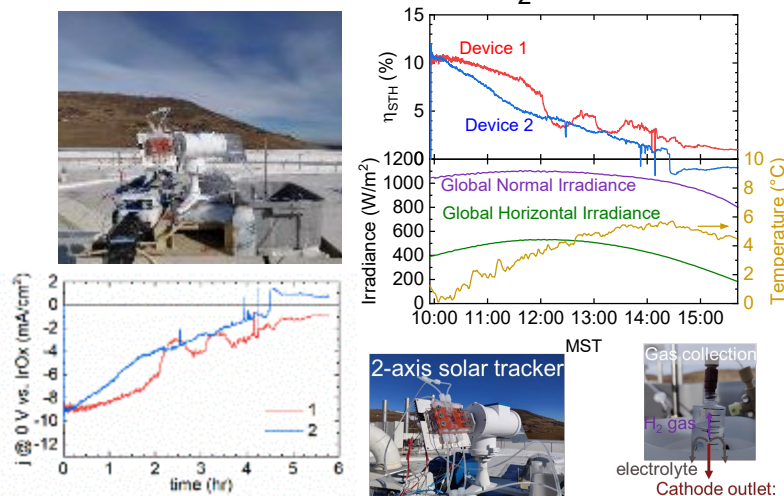


30 nm NiO
n- $\text{In}_{0.15}\text{Ga}_{0.85}\text{N}$
p-Si (111) degenerately doped
In-Ga Eutectic

MoS₂-protected GaInP₂/GaInAs tandem yields 12.8% STH



On-sun PEC testing of MoS₂/GaInP₂/GaAs. Generated 14.4 mL of H₂ on 1/15/20





Novel Chalcopyrites for Advanced Photoelectrochemical Water-Splitting

University of Hawaii PI: Gaillard



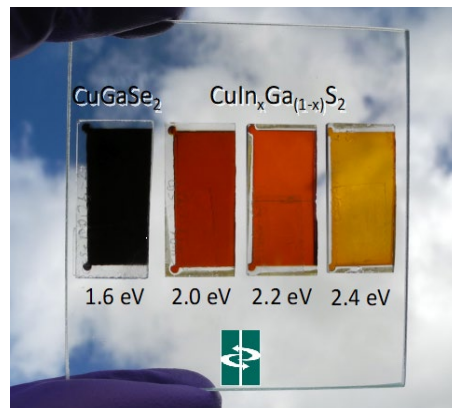
UNLV
UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA LAS VEGAS

#P162

Project Goals

Strengthen theory, synthesis and advanced characterization “feedback loop” to accelerate the development of efficient materials for H₂ production.

Develop innovative technologies to synthesize and integrate chalcopyrites into efficient and low-cost PEC devices.



Addressing materials efficiency, durability & integration barriers through multi-disciplinary research.



N. Gaillard
(Device integration)



C. Heske
(Spectroscopy)



T. Jaramillo
(Catalysis/Corrosion)



T. Ogitsu
(Theory)



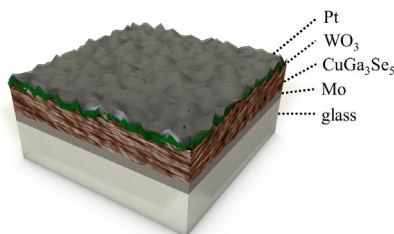
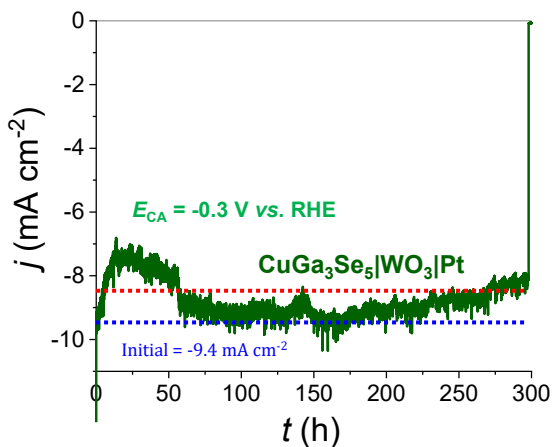
J. Cooper
(Carrier dynamics)



K. Zu (absorbers)
A. Zakutayev (junctions)
T. Deutsch (benchmarking)

Highlights

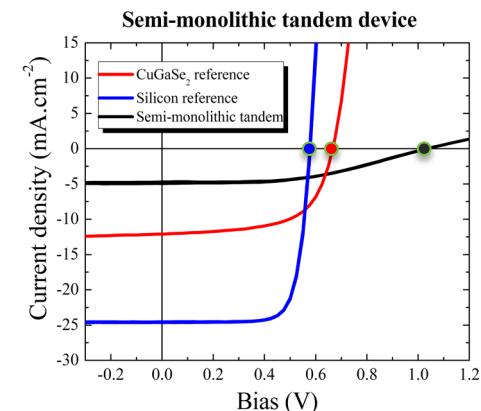
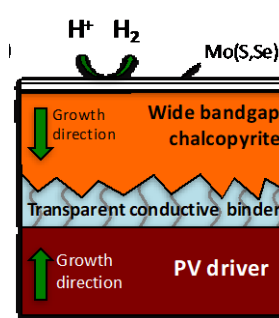
1) Extending chalcopyrites durability with WO₃ ALD coatings



→ Retained > 90% of initial photocurrent density for more than 270 h of continuous testing

2) Semi-monolithic tandem devices

→ Solid-state devices created by exfoliating and bonding wide bandgap (1.7 eV) CuGaSe₂ onto narrow bandgap (1.1 eV) silicon.



→ Tandem device photovoltage (1,035 mV) represents over 80% than the sum of the individual sub cells.



Monolithically Integrated Thin-Film/Si Tandem Photoelectrodes

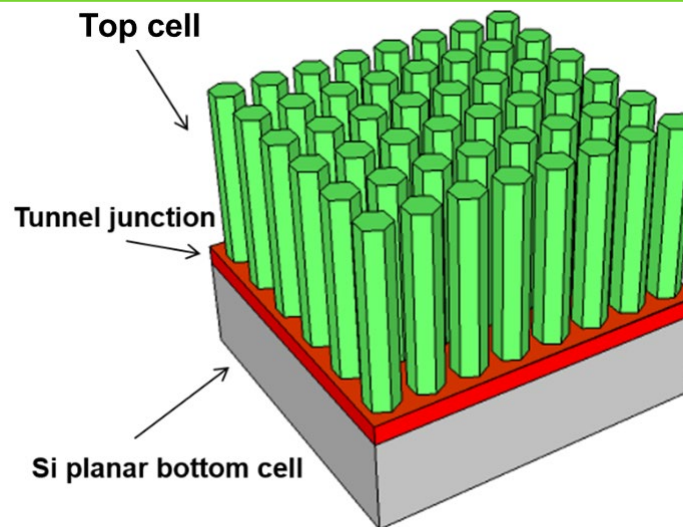
University of Michigan PI: Z. Mi



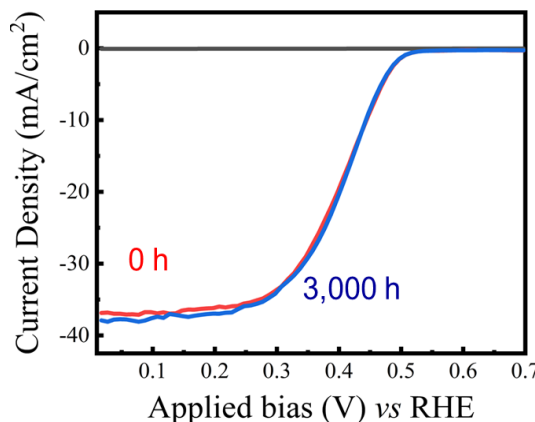
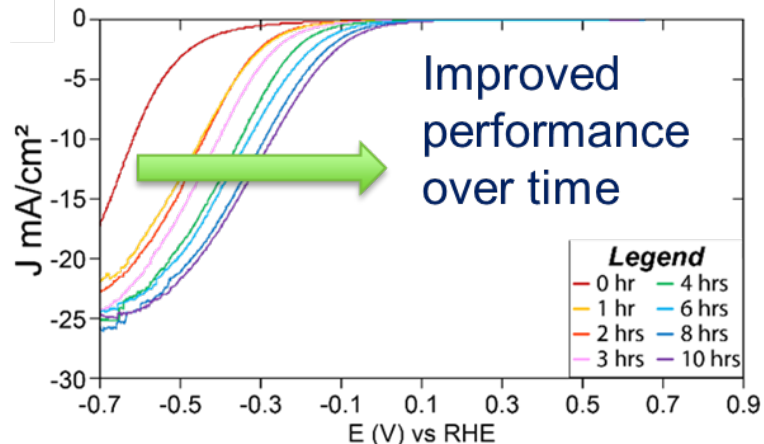
#P163

Project Goals: Develop Si-based low cost tandem photoelectrodes to achieve high efficiency (>15%) and stable (>1,000 hrs) water splitting systems

- (i) The use of Si and GaN, the two most produced semiconductors, for scalable, low cost manufacturing;
- (ii) The incorporation of nanowire tunnel junction for high efficiency operation;
- (iii) The discovery of N-rich GaN surfaces to protect against photocorrosion and oxidation



Highlights Through combined theoretical and experimental studies, we have observed a unique self-healing process for N-terminated GaN photocathodes, which leads to stable water splitting without using any extra surface protection.



No performance degradation was observed for 3,000 hrs continuous solar water splitting for GaN/Si photocathode.



Perovskite/Perovskite Tandem Photoelectrodes for Low-Cost Unassisted Photoelectrochemical Water Splitting

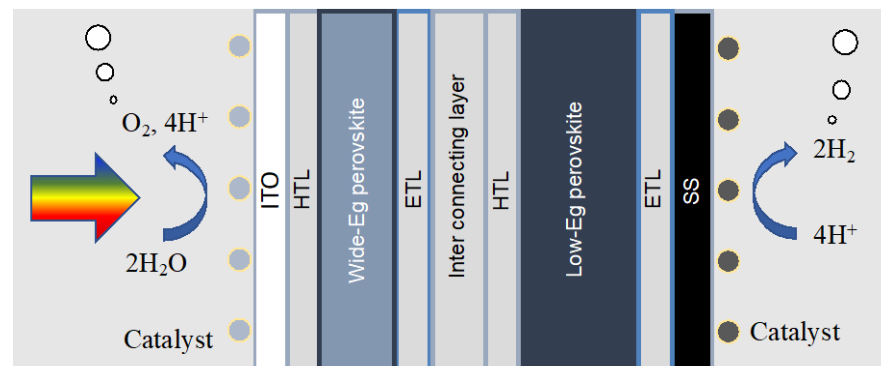
University of Toledo PI: Y. Yan



#P191

Project Goals:

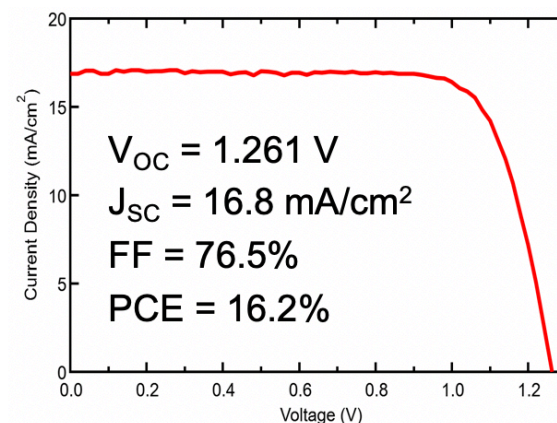
- Demonstrate perovskite/perovskite tandem photoelectrodes for wireless and unassisted water splitting.
- Develop water impermeable coating to protect tandem photoelectrodes during the operation in water.
- Demonstrate tandem photoelectrodes with a STH efficiency of up to 20%.



Schematic device structure and working principle of the proposed perovskite/perovskite tandem photoelectrode

Highlights or Approach for BP1

- Demonstrated efficient semitransparent n-i-p wide band-gap perovskite ($\text{FA}_{0.75}\text{Cs}_{0.2}\text{MA}_{0.05}\text{Pb}(\text{Br}_{0.3}\text{I}_{0.7})_3$) solar cells.
- Fabricated n-i-p low-bandgap mixed Sn-Pb perovskite solar cells.
- Discovered critical issues for fabricating efficient n-i-p low-bandgap mixed Sn-Pb perovskite solar cells.
- A plan is proposed to mitigate the critical issues, i.e., to increase the bandgap by increasing the Pb/Sn atomic ratio.



Photocurrent density-voltage curve of a wide-bandgap perovskite solar cell in a n-i-p configuration, i.e., glass/ITO/SnO₂/C₆₀-SAM/FA_{0.75}Cs_{0.2}MA_{0.05}Pb(Br_{0.3}I_{0.7})₃/Spiro-OMeTAD/MoO_x/ITO.



Development of Composite Photocatalyst Materials that are Highly Selective for Solar Hydrogen Production and their Evaluation in Z-Scheme Reactor Designs

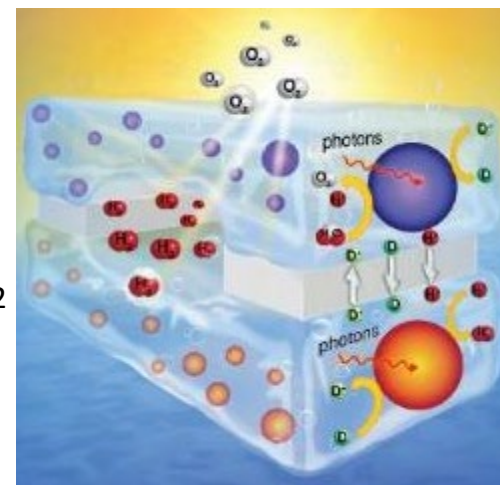
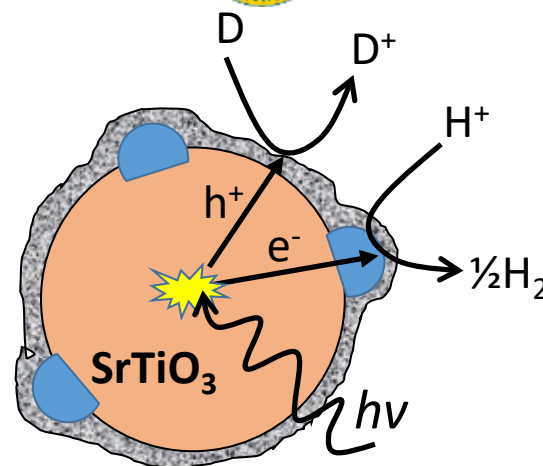
University of California-Irvine PI: S. Ardo



#P192

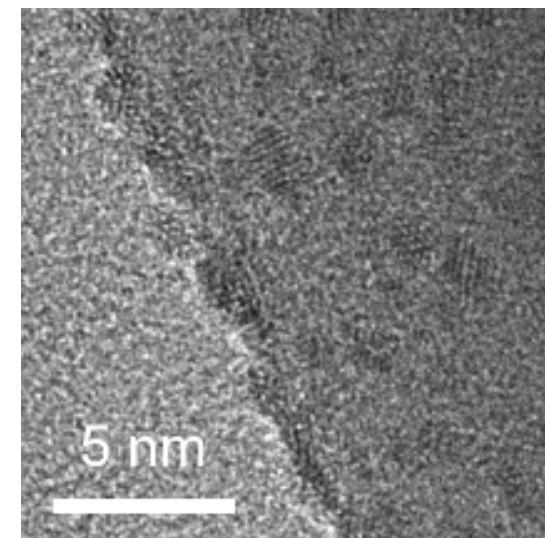
Project Goals

- Improve yield for H₂ evolution from doped SrTiO₃ photocatalyst particles illuminated with near-infrared light
- Engineer selective H₂ evolution over redox shuttle reduction using coatings deposited on photocatalyst particles
- Develop detailed models to simulate particle-to-reactor-level processes



Highlights or Approach for BP1

- Ir-doped SrTiO₃ with Ir cocatalysts evolves H₂ using ≤ 650 nm light (**BP1 Target: H₂ evolution using ≥ 750 nm light**)
- SiO_x-coated Pt electrodes attenuate undesired Fe(III) reduction, yet allow for partial desired Fe(II) oxidation and full desired H₂ evolution (**BP1 Targets: deposit TiO_x coatings on electrodes; evaluate coated electrodes for selective O₂ evolution**)
- Our models can simulate processes operative in photocatalytic reactors, including undesired reactions (**BP1 Target: include effects due to thermal gradients in the model**)





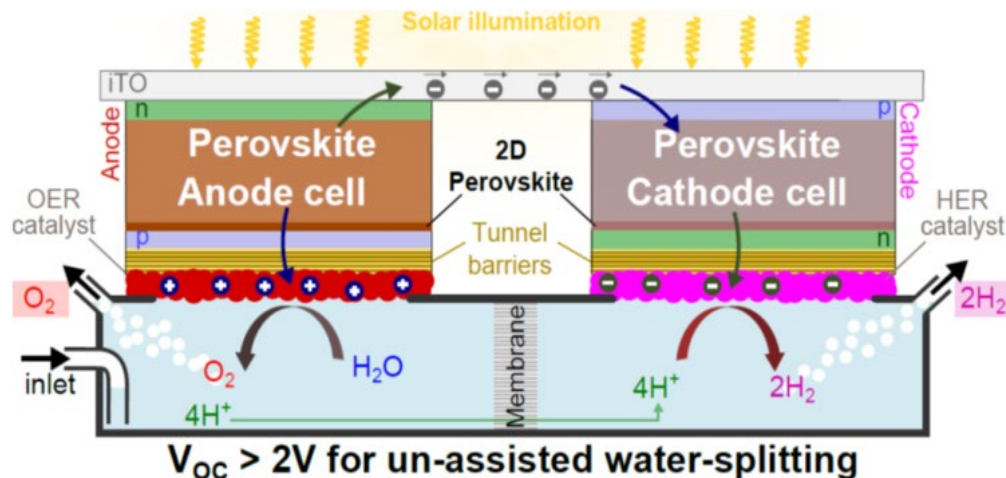
Highly Efficient Solar Water Splitting Using 3D/2D Hydrophobic Perovskites with Corrosion Resistant Barriers

Rice University PI: A. Mohite  RICE

#P193

Project Goals:

- Develop high-efficiency heterostructure 3D/2D halide perovskite solar cells (PCE >20%) with hydrophobic termination
- Fabricate corrosion-resistant barriers, integrate HER/OER catalysts, test durability in electrolyte
- Understand degradation mechanisms in PEC and mitigate
- Test, benchmark, optimize performance and stability of PEC
- Scale up to 5x5in²



Highlights or Approach for BP1

- Selection, fabrication, optimization of 3D/2D perovskites for efficiency and band alignment
- Demonstrate a 3D/2D PSC with ~20% PCE with 1000h stability, <10% voltage degradation over 100h in electrolyte with 1-Sun flux
- Demonstrate PEC with photocathode and photoanode as HaP-PEC with 5-10% STH efficiency for 1 hour
- **3D/2D perovskite solar cell with 20% PCE and well-aligned bands**
- **Over 1h anticorrosion performance in acidic electrolyte and initial device PV efficiency 15%**

Catalysts in carbon matrix

Conducting polymer blend

Tunnel barrier

ETL/HTL

3D/2D Perovskites

HTL/HTL

ITO

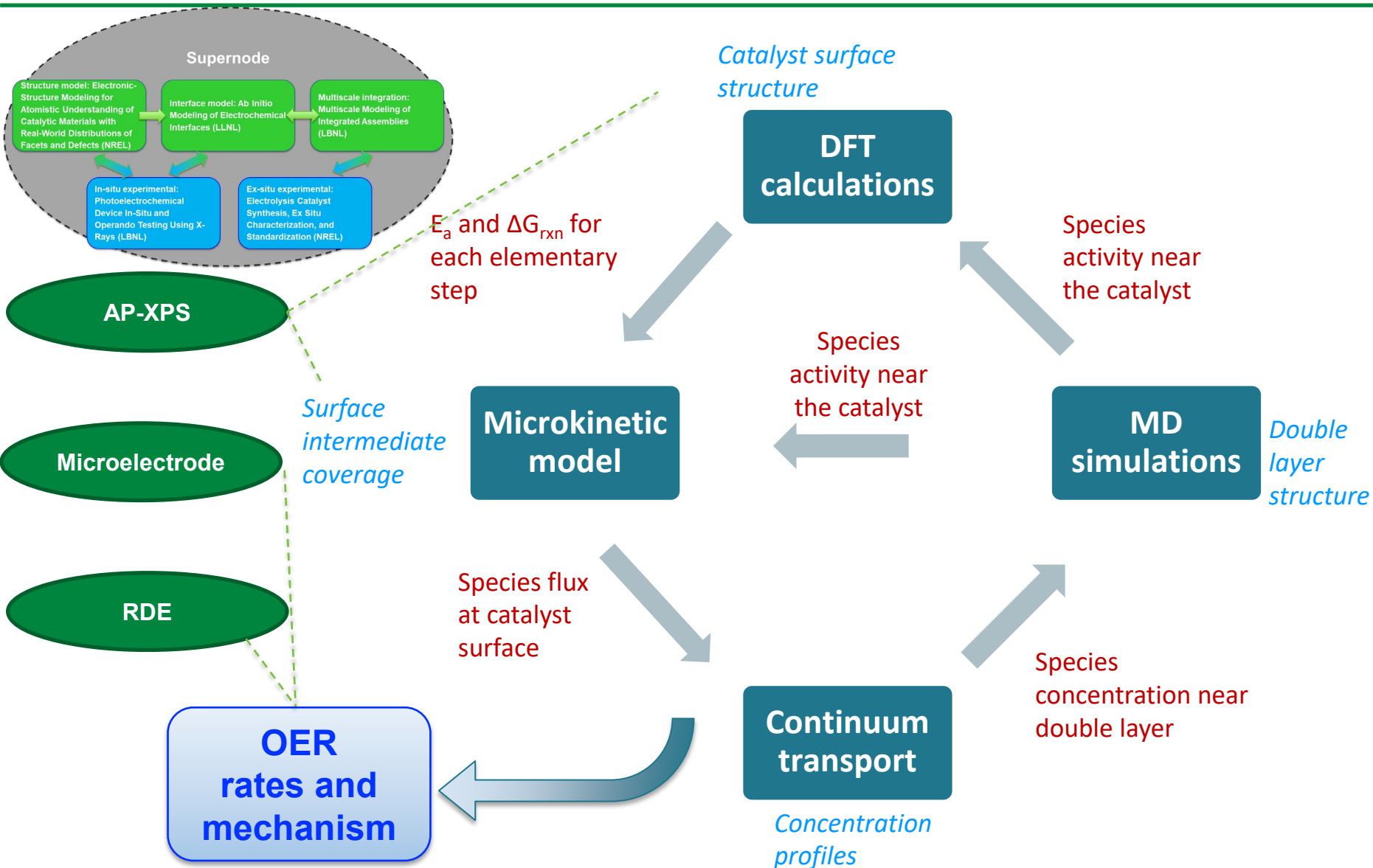


OER Modeling Supernode

- **Objective**
 - Utilize validated theory across length scales to understand the mechanism of oxygen evolution going from acid to neutral to alkaline pH
 - Develop new models and structures for the inherent “messy” real system
 - Apply multiscale theories for reaction mechanism analysis on IrO₂
 - Validate experimentally using both RDE and developed microelectrode setups and ambient-pressure XPS
 - Provide critical analysis for both LTE and PEC technologies
- **Knowledge gaps**
 - Develop and demonstrate rigorous continuum/DFT/microkinetic multiscale theoretical descriptions of electrochemical reactions in general, including structure and interfaces
 - Need to understand proton source and limiting pathways for OER
 - Need to explore spectator ion and related electrolyte effects
 - Explore how ionomer interactions differ from aqueous ones in terms of controlling kinetics
- Seedling projects not focused specifically on OER and not at such a fundamental level, can benefit from knowledge and new capabilities
- New nodes possibly developed and leveraged
 - Dynamic microelectrode



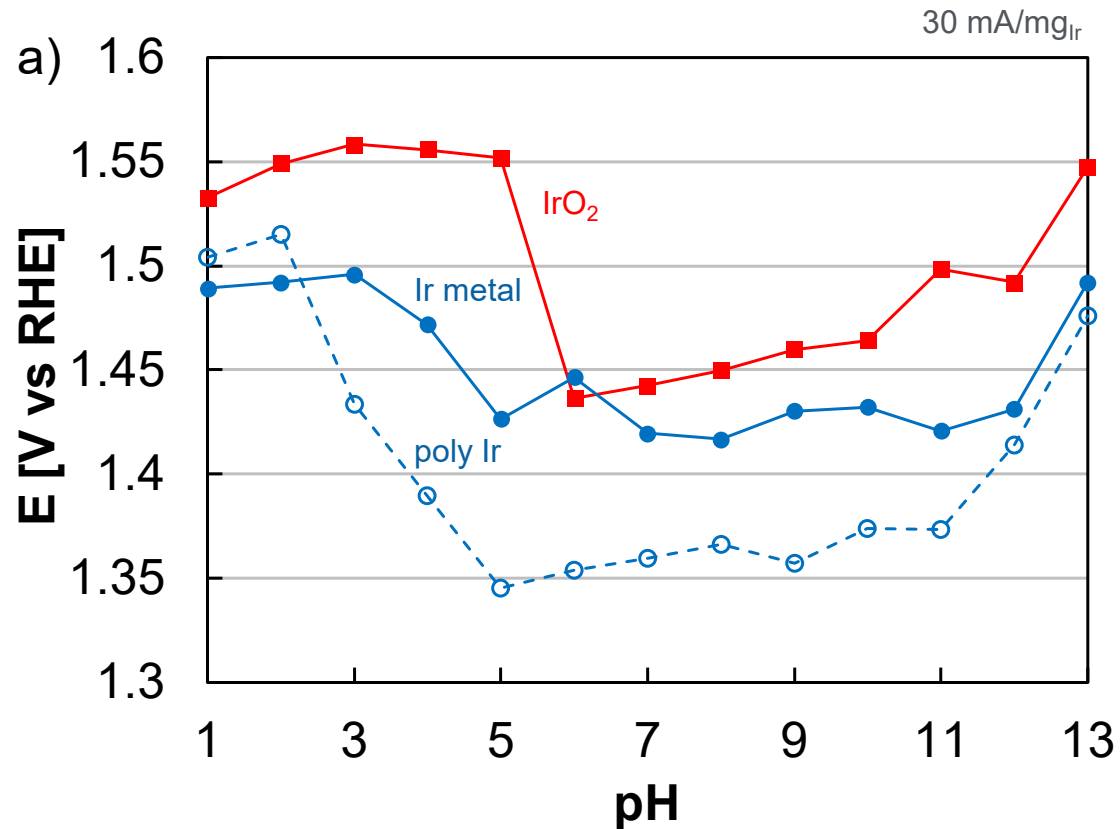
OER Modeling Approach: Multiscale Interactions





Metal/Oxide Data Comparisons

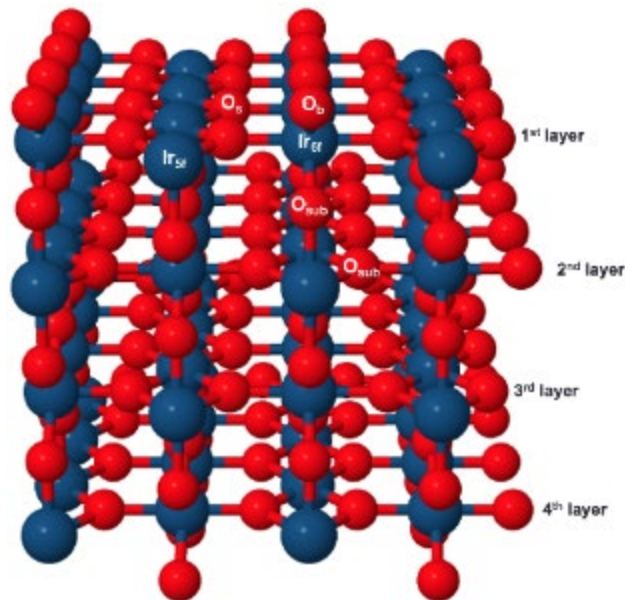
- Materials evaluated:
 - Ir oxide (Alfa Aesar), red
 - Ir metal (Johnson Matthey), blue solid
 - Polycrystalline Ir, blue dashed
- For metal, activity improvement extended into weakly basic pH
- Activity dropped at pH 0/14, may be due to contaminants at higher concentrations





Atomistic Modeling

- Two limiting cases to explore reaction mechanisms and how to determine barriers
 - Case 1: Bare Ir metal sites available and vacuum calculations to understand possible mechanisms
 - Case 2: Pourbaix-informed surface species and reaction mechanism in solution to feed into microkinetic modeling
- Bare IrO₂ (110) surface



Active Sites	No.	Notes
O (O _s + O _b)	24	H* can adsorb on O _s or O _b or Ir _{5f} sites
Ir (Ir _{5f} only)	8	O*, OH*, OOH*, O ₂ * adsorb only on Ir _{5f} sites Ir _{6f} fully coordinated and typically unreactive (also blocked by O _b)

Lattice Vectors:

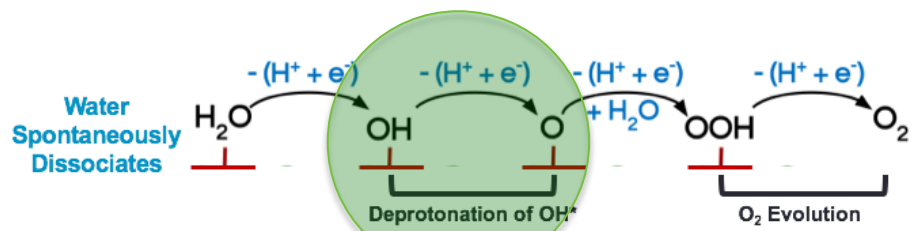
$a = 12.73774 \text{ \AA}$

$b = 12.59768 \text{ \AA}$

$SA = a \times b = 160.46 \text{ \AA}^2$



Case 1: Bare Ir Surface: searching for alternative reaction pathways



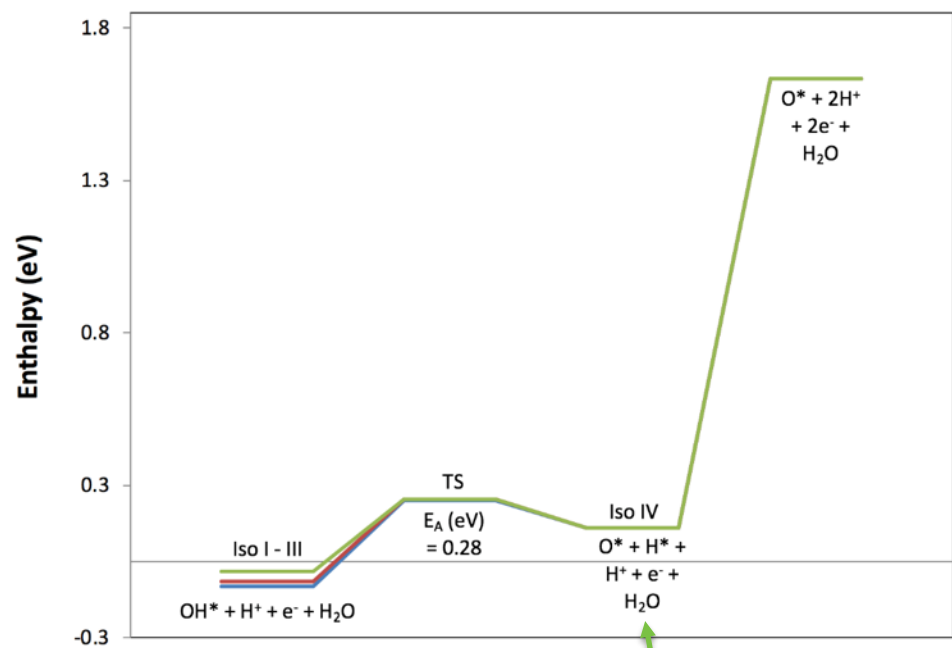
Completed

Running

Spontaneous Reprotonation

Deprotonation

Reaction Profile of Deprotonation of OH^*



O^* and H^* co-adsorbates

I \rightarrow IV, E_A (eV) = 0.28

III \rightarrow IV, E_A (eV) \approx 0.24

II \rightarrow IV, E_A (eV) = 0.27

I, E_{OH} (eV) = -3.39
 P_{300K} = 58.43%

III, ΔE_{OH} (eV) = 0.05
 P_{300K} = 9.59%

II, ΔE_{OH} (eV) = 0.02
 P_{300K} = 31.95%

IV, ΔE_{OH} (eV) = 0.19
 P_{300K} = 0.04%
OH dissociation

Rxn: $OH^* \rightarrow O^* + H^*$

Isomer	E_A (eV) (TS)	Notes
I \rightarrow IV	0.28	Main Pathway
II \rightarrow IV	0.27	Iso II \rightarrow Iso I \rightarrow IV
III \rightarrow IV	0.24	Iso III \rightarrow Iso I \rightarrow IV

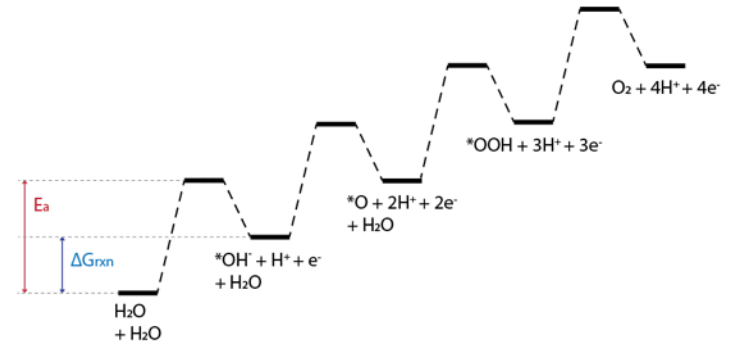
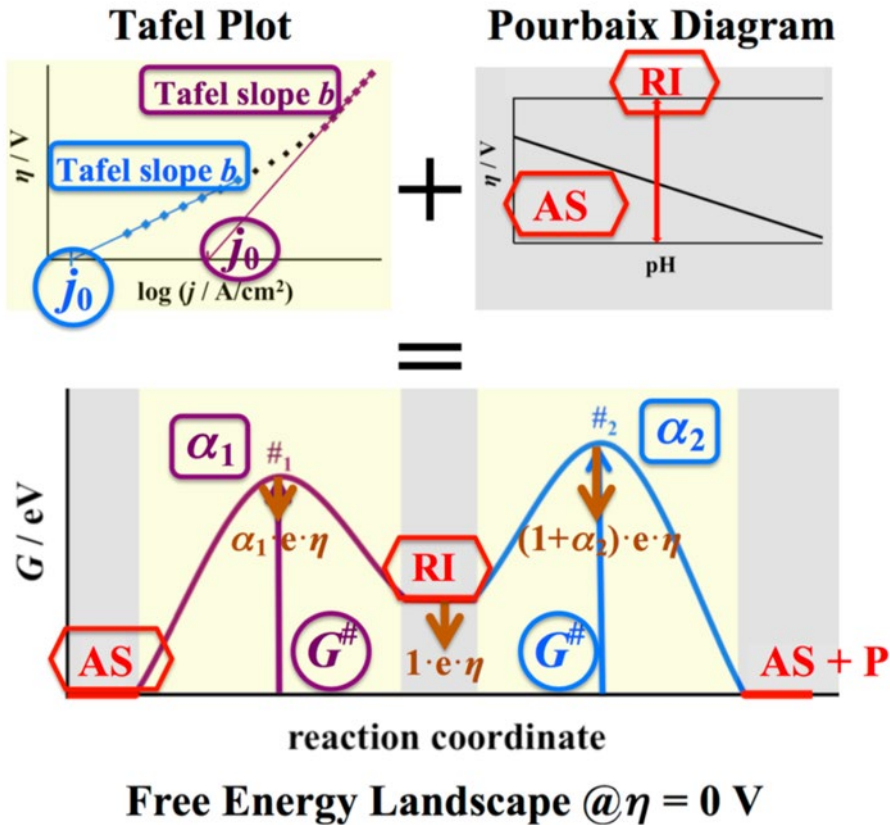


Case 1: Key findings

- Low O coverage limit
 - Multiple pathways of OH^* deprotonation collapse to one
 - Characterization of a new, alternative mechanism utilizing co-adsorbed O^* and OH^* in proximity to each other in order to evolve O_2
 - Multiple pathways to deprotonation of $\text{O}^* + \text{OH}^* \rightarrow \text{O}^* + \text{O}^* + \text{H}^*$
- High O coverage limit (thermodynamically favored): two adjacent O vacancies (active sites) for $\text{O}^* + \text{OH}^*$ co-adsorption pathway may be possible at high reaction rate (or high potential)



Case 2: IrO₂ Surface from Pourbaix Analysis



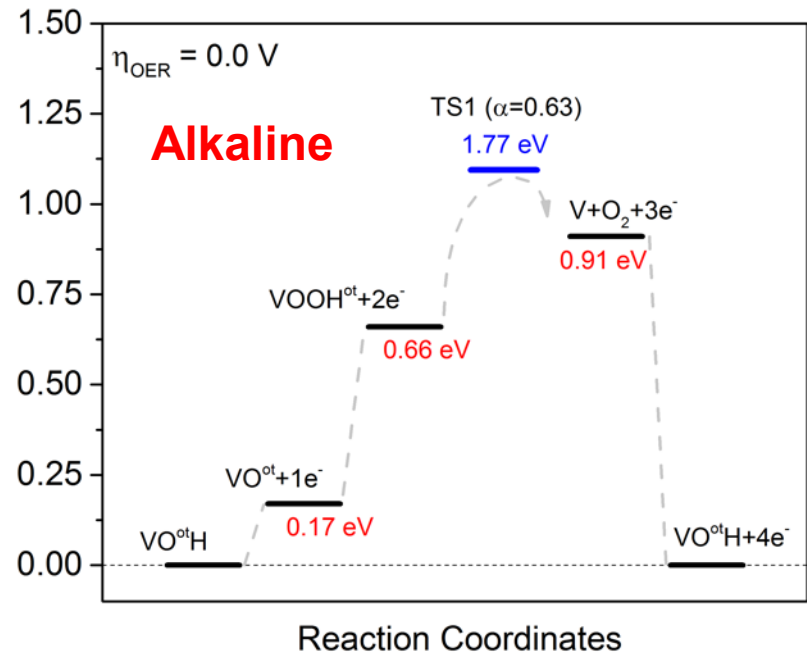
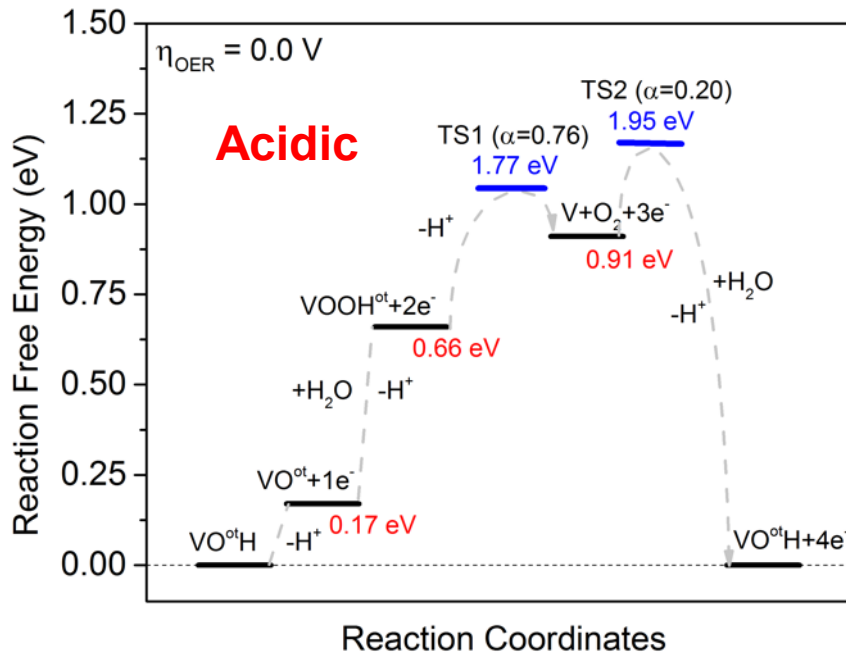
1. (We know the intermediate steps)
2. **Pourbaix diagram => initial step**
 - Sequence is determined
3. **Tafel Plot => E_a corresponding to j_0**
4. Which TS is rate limiting?

Exner and Over, ACS Catalysis 9, 6755 (2019)



Case 2: Key Findings

- Established a way to determine intermediates, energetics and kinetics of OER based on Exnter and Over, ACS Cat. 9, 6755 (2019)
- Improved *ab-initio* Pourbaix diagram
- Refining transition states with *ab-initio* simulations
- Method to examine effects of solvation established

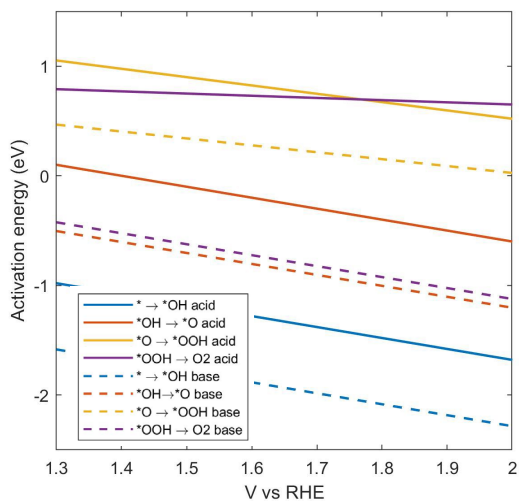




Microkinetic Modeling Framework

- Using DFT inputs to model OER rate and pathways including mass-transport effects

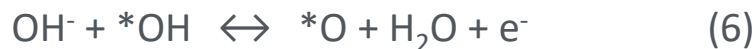
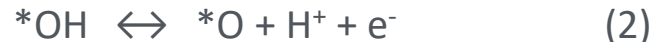
Potential-dependent free energies



$$K_i = \exp\left(-\frac{\Delta G_{rxn}^o - n_i eV}{k_B T}\right)$$

$$k_{fi} = A \exp\left(-\frac{E_a^o - \beta_i n_i eV}{k_B T}\right)$$

Alkaline and acidic elementary steps



$$r_1 = k_{f1} a_0 \theta_* - k_{r1} a_{\text{H}^+} \theta_{* \text{OH}}$$

$$r_2 = k_{f2} \theta_{* \text{OH}} - k_{r2} a_{\text{H}^+} \theta_{* \text{O}}$$

$$r_3 = k_{f3} a_0 \theta_{* \text{O}} - k_{r3} a_{\text{H}^+} \theta_{* \text{OOH}}$$

$$r_4 = k_{f4} \theta_{* \text{OOH}} - k_{r4} a_{\text{H}^+} a_{\text{O}_2} \theta_*$$

...

$$\frac{\partial \theta_*}{\partial t} = -r_1 + r_4 - r_5 + r_8$$

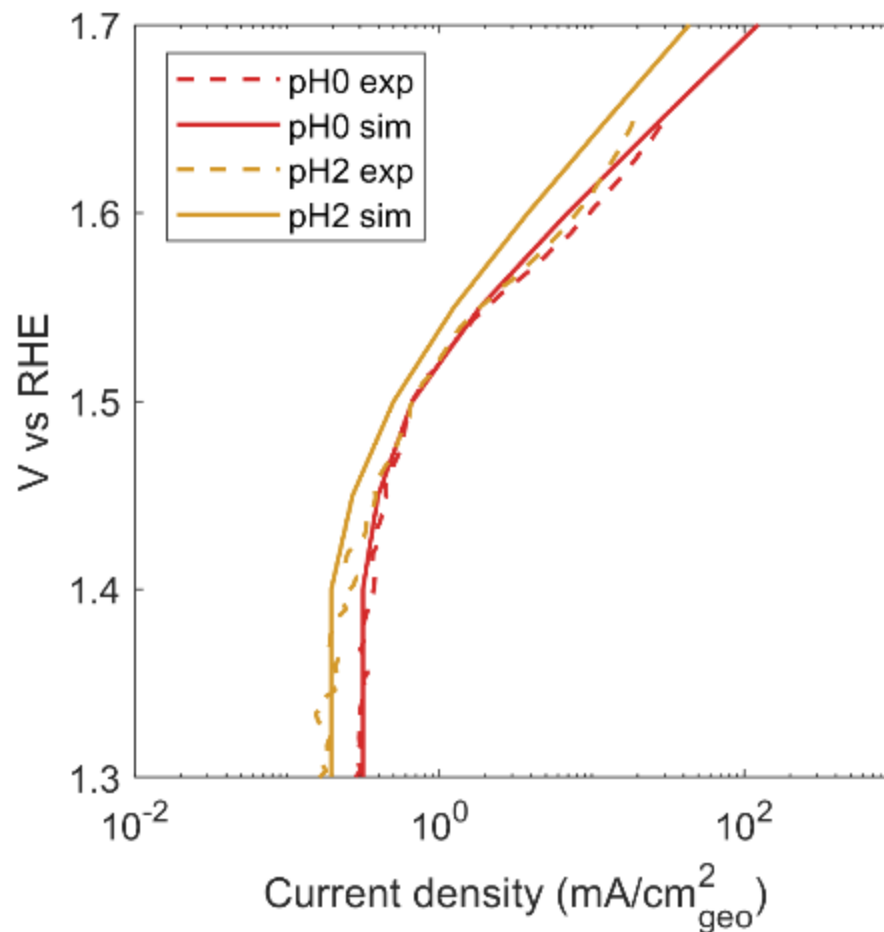
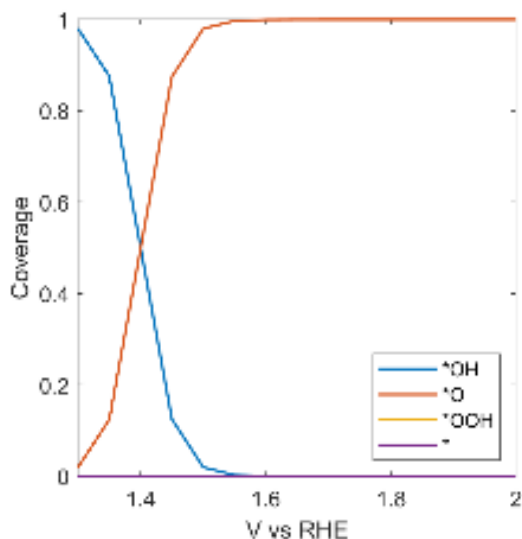
$$\frac{\partial \theta_{* \text{OH}}}{\partial t} = r_1 - r_2 + r_4 - r_5$$

$$\frac{\partial \theta_{* \text{O}}}{\partial t} = r_2 - r_3 + r_6 - r_7$$

$$\theta_* + \theta_{* \text{OH}} + \theta_{* \text{O}} + \theta_{* \text{OOH}} = 1$$

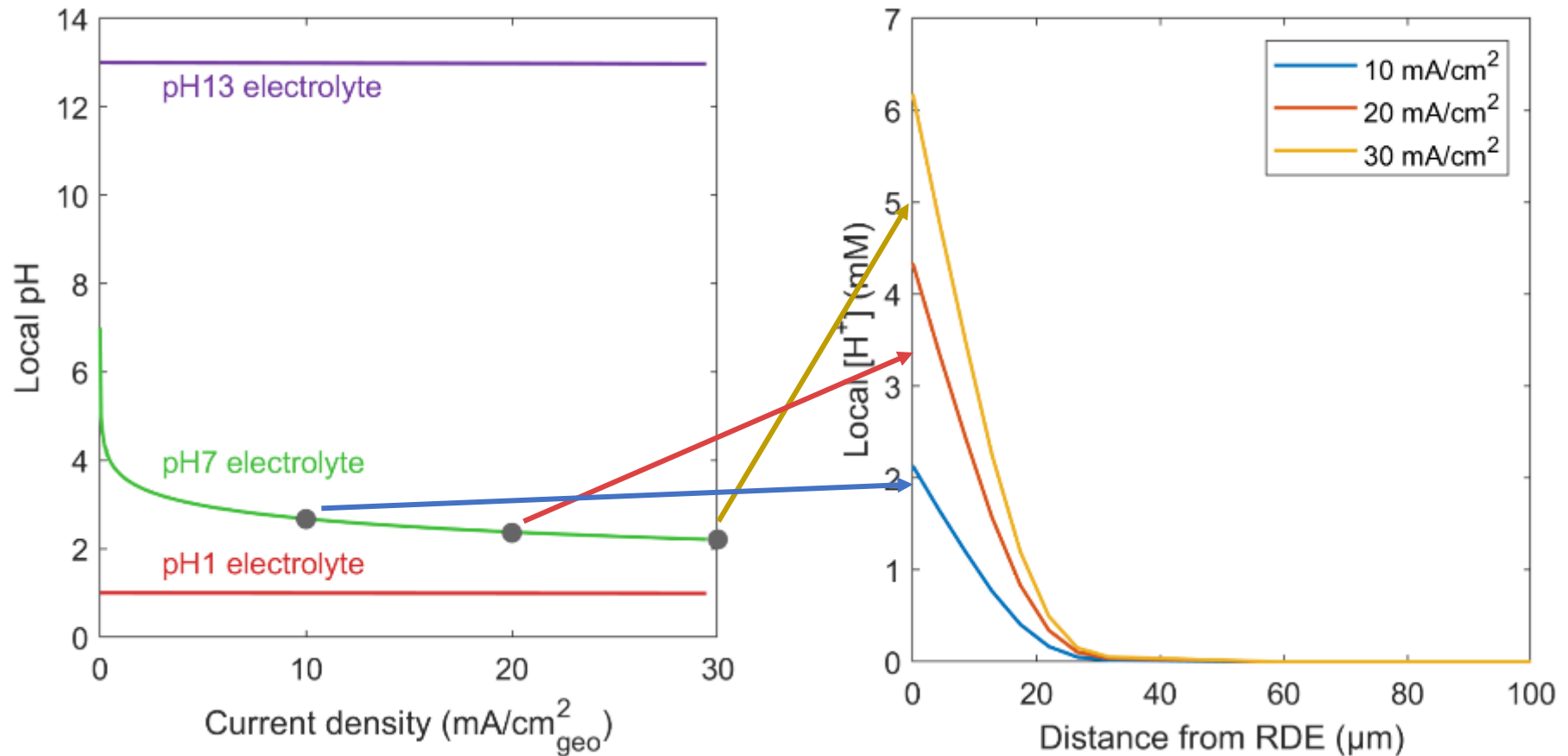


- Using only site density as a fitting parameter
 - Barriers from DFT & MD calculations
- Good agreement for low pH
 - Added a capacitive element for low current density
- Surface Coverages





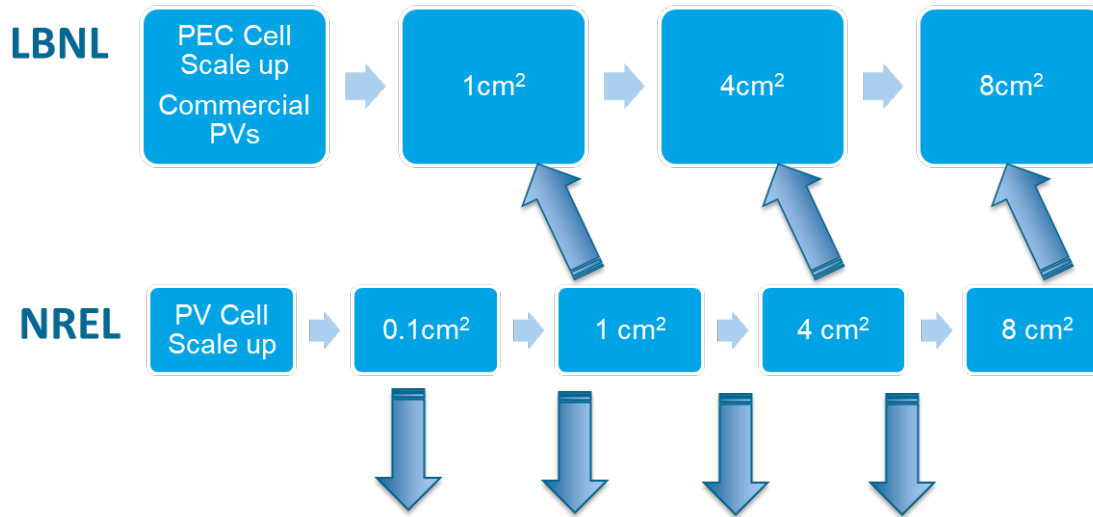
- Concentration polarization effects are significant in neutral pH
 - Concentration boundary layer $\sim 30 \mu\text{m}$ near the electrode





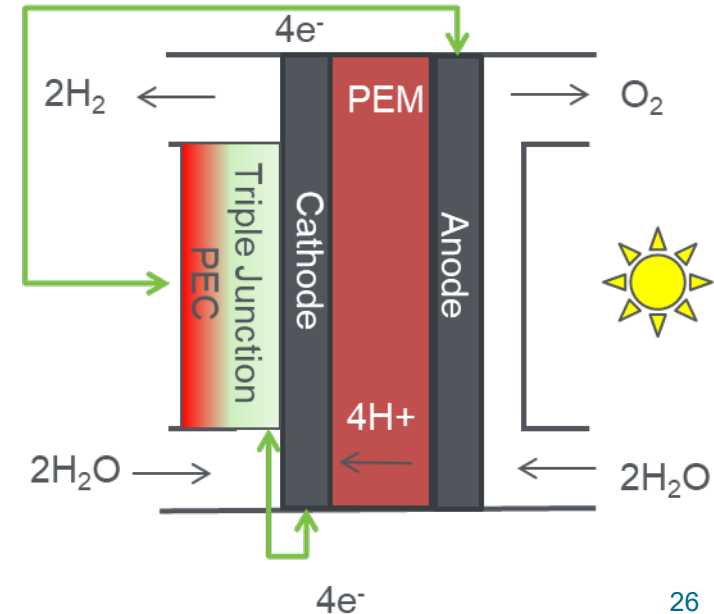
PEC Supernode Approach

Goal: Understand integration issues and emergent degradation mechanisms of PEC devices at relevant scale, and demonstrate an integrated and durable 50 cm² PEC panel.



- Benchmarking
- In situ degradation and characterization
- Emerging Degradation Pathways
- Modeling

Integrated Photoelectrochemical





PEC Supernode

- Much of existing PEC work is on $< 1\text{cm}^2$ cells

- Unclear what issues lie for larger cells
- Need to scale up *and* improve durability to approach \$2/kg

Identify looming issues with scale up

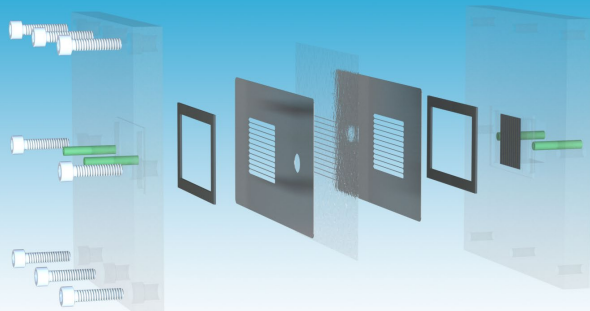
Tough for seedlings (resources, equipment)

- The main focus of the PEC Supernode is to:

- Develop understanding of integration issues and emergent degradation mechanisms of PECs at scales $> 1\text{ cm}^2$
- Demonstrate fabrication of PEC cells at scale

Supernode benefits seedlings and benchmarking

1 cm²

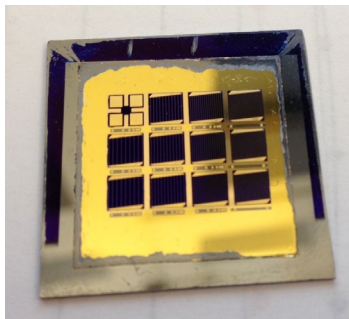


8 cm²

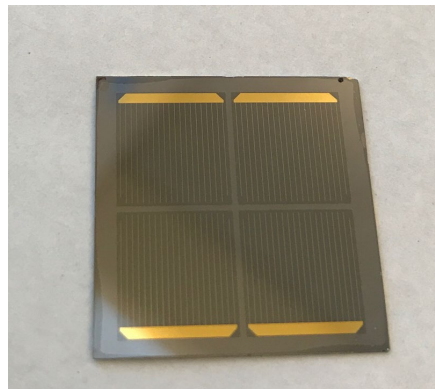




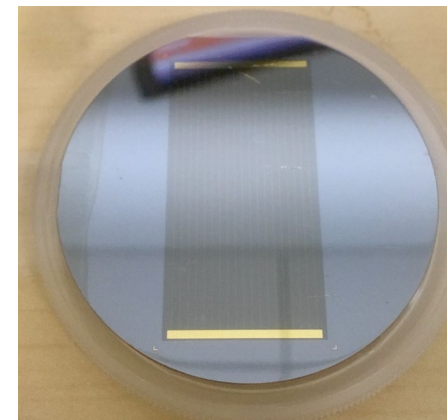
NREL PEC Fabrication: GaInP/GaAs cells with 0.1-8 cm²



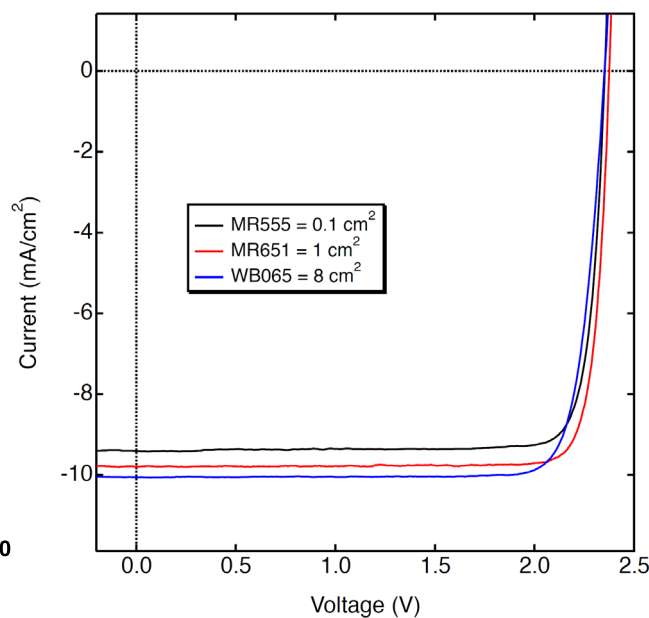
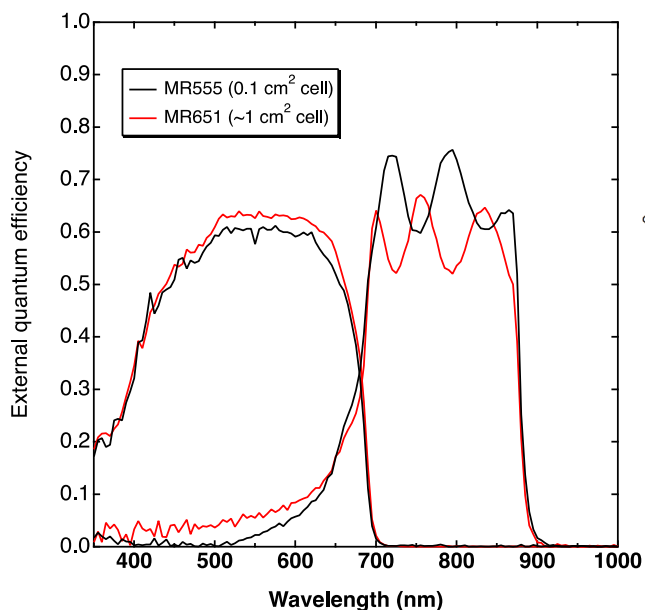
11 PV cells, ~0.1 cm²



4 PV cells, ~1 cm²



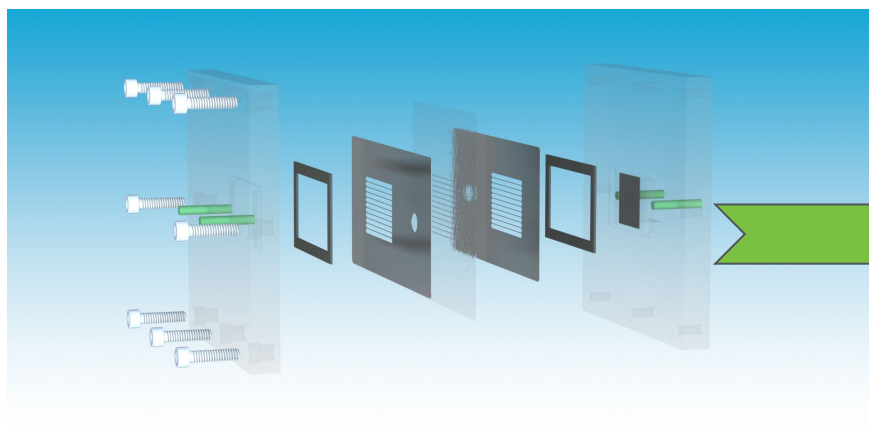
1 PV cell, 8 cm²



- Successful growth of a large area tandem cells on our 2" MOVPE reactor.
- Significant effort toward developing growth recipes for uniform and high-quality GaInP
- ***These are the largest area III-V cells made at NREL, and enable larger area PEC studies.***



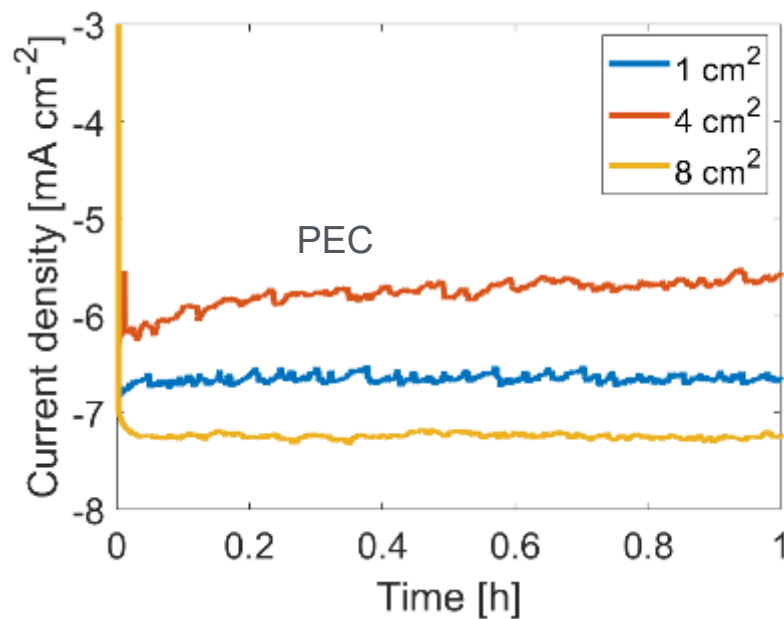
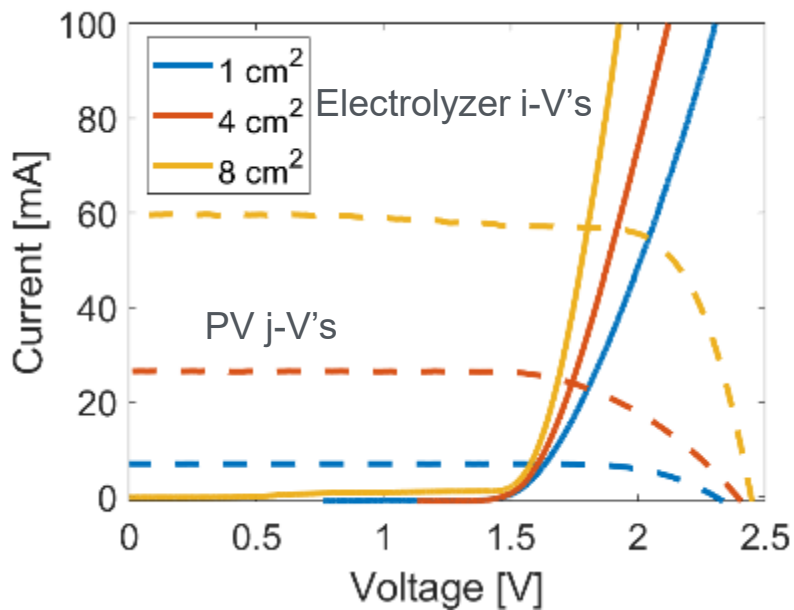
Scale Up Towards 8cm² Illuminated Area



1 cm²

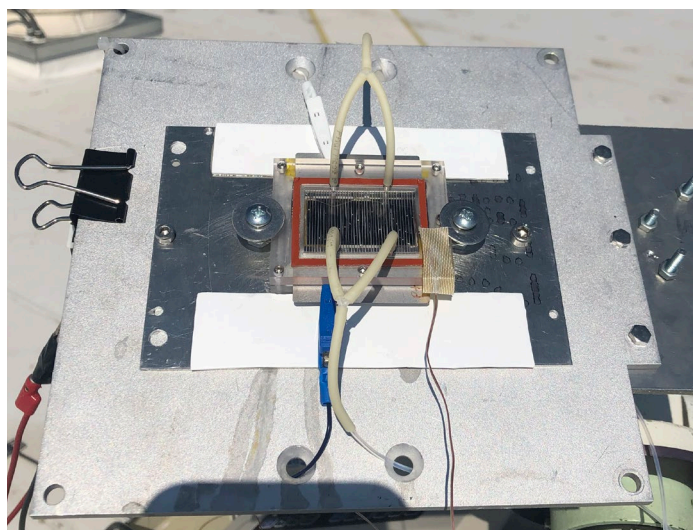
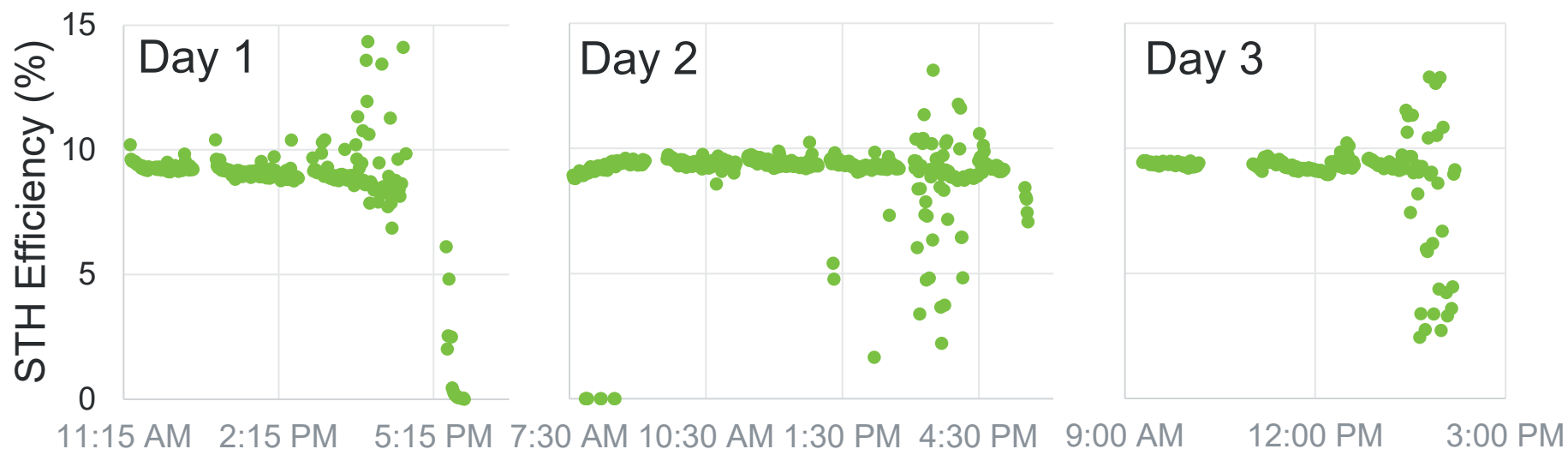


8 cm²





8-cm² Cell Testing at NREL: On Sun Durability

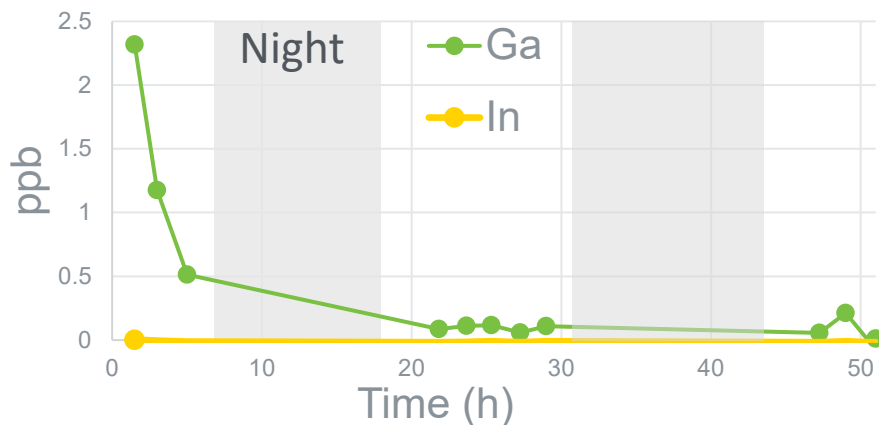


- **Test Duration: 2 days, 2 hours, and 50 minutes**
- Global Normal insolation (Kipp & Zonen CMP22) was measured using data collected at the Solar Radiation Research Laboratory (SRRL)
- Data spikes in afternoon of each day are due to intermittent cloud coverage (data collection offset between device and insolation measurements)
- Steady-state STH efficiency was **9.2%**

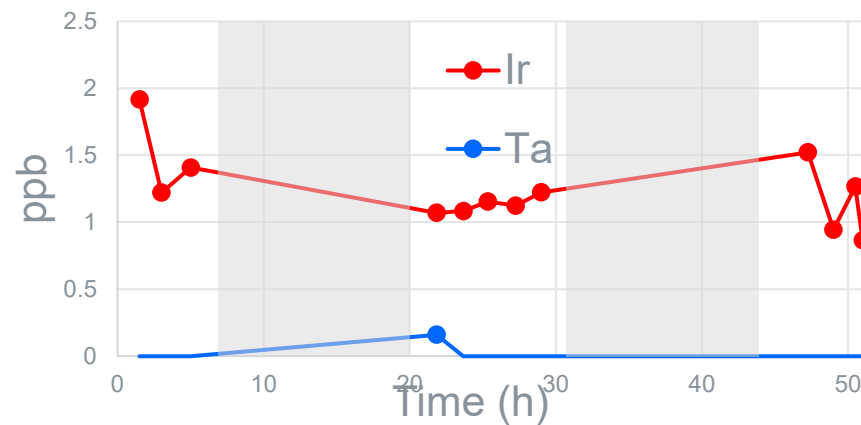


8cm² PEC Testing at NREL: ICP-MS Results

Cathode Effluent



Anode Effluent



Cathode Effluent

- Gallium content in electrolyte was initially high but dropped off by Day 2
- Indium was not detected

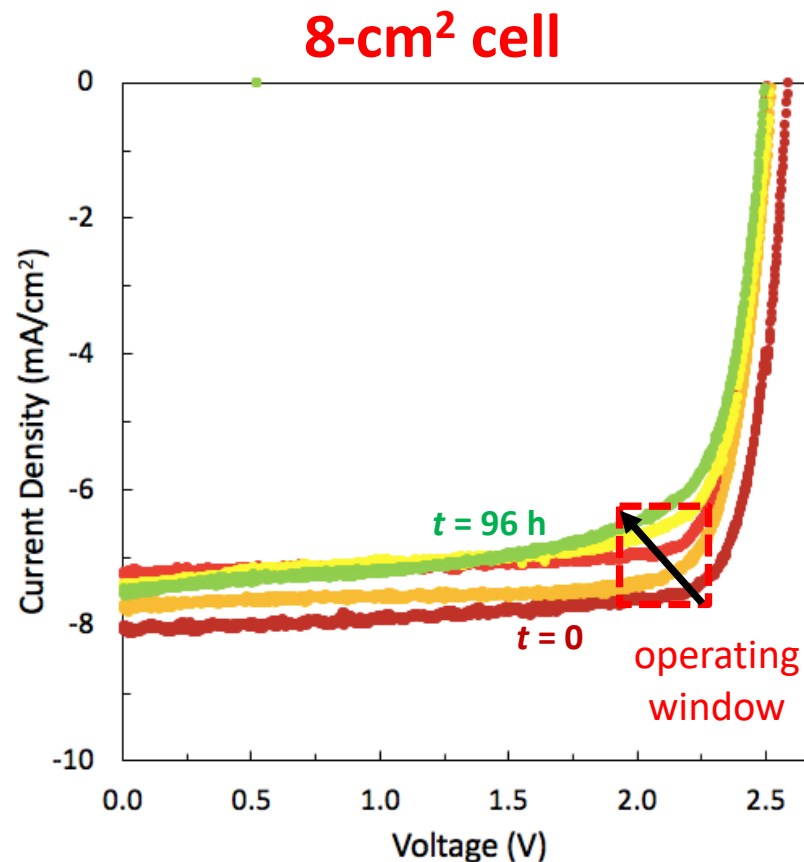
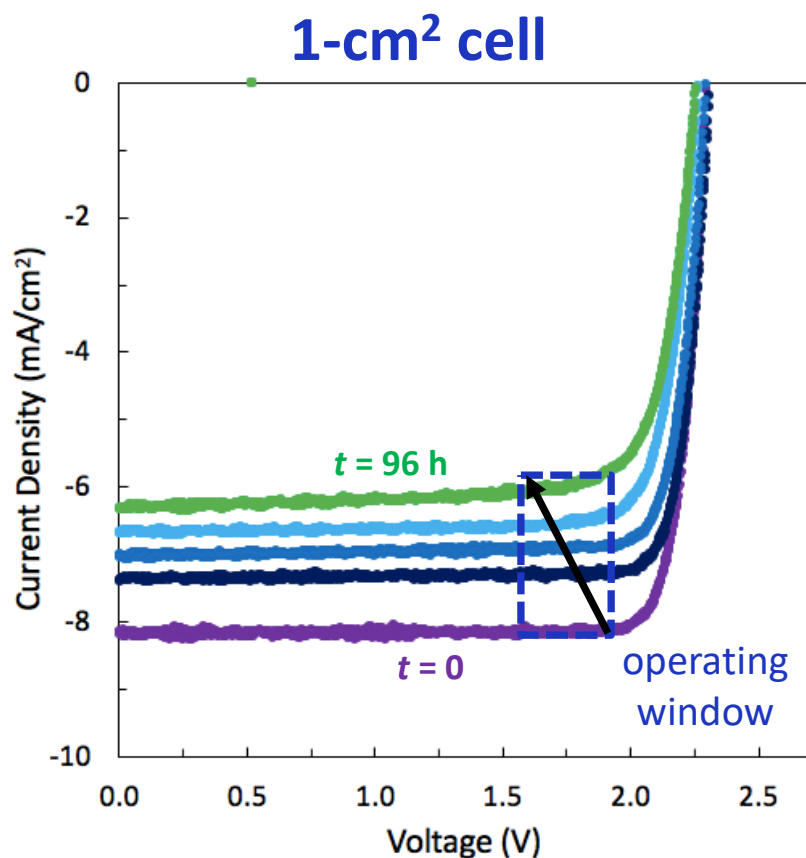
Anode Effluent

- Approximately 1-2 ppb of iridium was found in every aliquot
- Little to no tantalum was detected



Durability: 1-cm² and 8-cm² cells

- PV performance vs. time

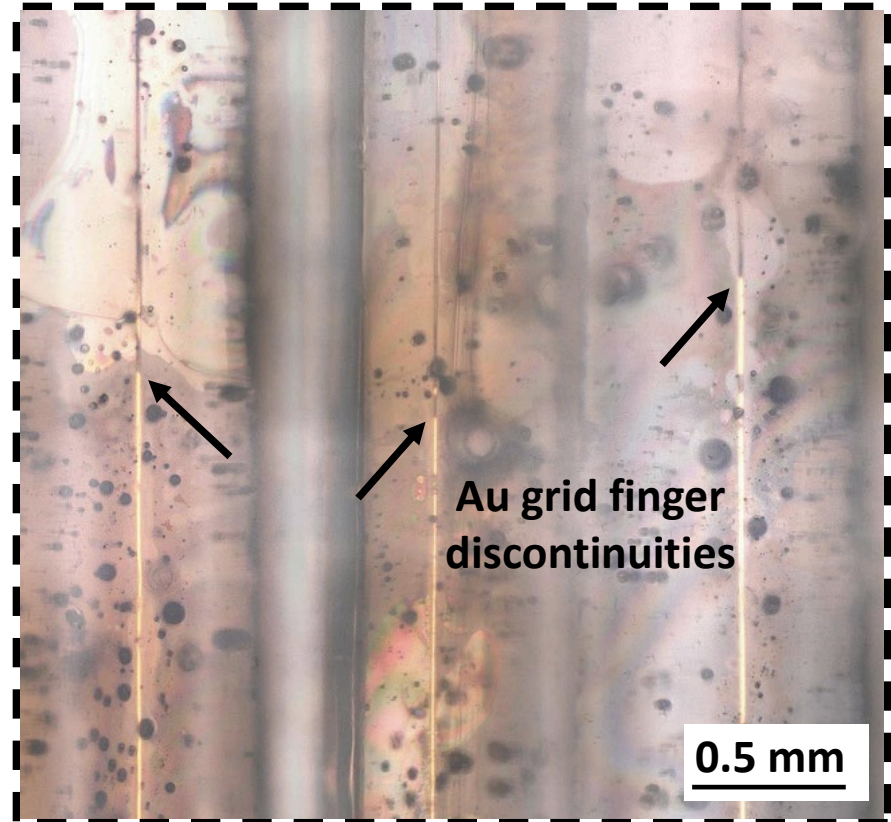
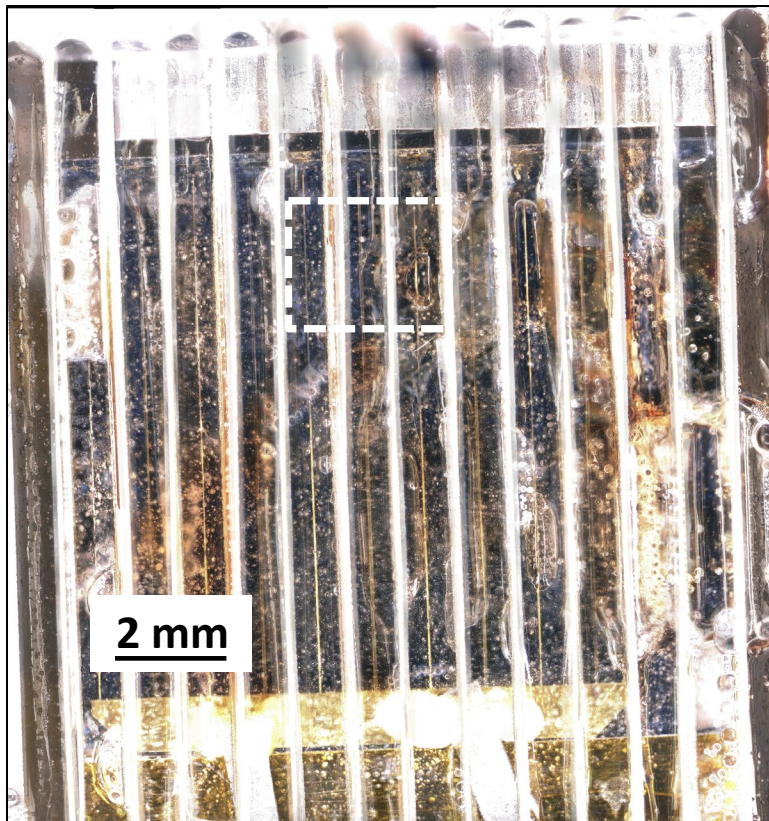


Both cells show light-limited photocurrent decrease vs. time, while the 8-cm² cell also shows significant photocurrent losses due to shunting (slope at short-circuit)



Durability: 1-cm² and 8-cm² cells

- Stereoscopy after durability testing



Indicates failure of the epoxy to resist a combination of water or ion permeation to the PV anti reflection coating and current collectors



- Water permeates epoxy
- Gold grid finger delamination
 - Epoxy swelling and pulling up on gold and/or
 - Photo-anodic corrosion of underlying n-GaAs contact layer
- Anti-reflective coating dissolution
 - Consistent with photocurrent decline without photovoltage decline
 - For Al_2O_3 , slight acidity would cause it to dissolve (Pourbaix)
- Bubbles in epoxy – more light scattering
 - Heat/light-driven degassing of epoxy and/or
 - H_2 permeation
- Blistering



Future Work

- **OER Supernode**
- Refine DFT mechanism gaps, especially under neutral and alkaline
 - Examine relevant pathways and mechanisms
 - Subsurface oxygen delivery
 - Complete coverage dependent reaction pathway study
 - Evaluate Tafel curve calculated based on our parameter
 - Determine reaction mechanisms at neutral pH and impact of local effects
 - Include solvation and potential effects in the simulation of transition states
- Build further pipelines and linkages across the modeling scales
 - Include additional pathways (i.e. co-adsorption) into microkinetic model
 - Couple mass transport, bubble transport, and microkinetics to simulate full polarization curve across different pHs
- Increased validation
 - Gas-phase using microelectrodes
 - Validate the surface coverages using ambient pressure XPS
- **PEC Supernode**
- Durability parametric and round-robin studies to establish the influence of test conditions and their relevance to actual operation
 - 2-electrode vs 3-electrode PEC and integrated PEC cells
 - Tandem: dependencies on current limiting junction & light source
 - Intermittent/diurnal vs. constant illumination
 - Electrolyte (pH, surfactant, anion/cation species and concentration)
 - Statistics – understanding intrinsic variability on a common photoelectrode across multiple labs (GaInP/GaAs with Pt cocatalyst)

Any proposed future work is subject to change based on funding levels



Summary

- Supporting 7 FOA projects with 22 nodes and 22 PIs
 - Synthesis, benchmarking, modeling, characterization
 - 100's of files on the data hub and numerous exchanged samples
 - Personnel exchange of postdocs, students, and PIs to the labs
- Working closely with the project participants to advance knowledge and utilize capabilities and the data hub and move the technology forward
 - Seedling projects demonstrate improvements in durable, less expensive materials with high performance and improved durability
- Water and/or solid electrolyte contact with PV are detrimental to durability
 - Barrier layer helps prevent PV corrosion, but may fail upon stress tests
- Successful scale up to 8 cm² cells
- Brought together various modeling nodes to work to determine different OER reaction pathways
 - Going from *ab-initio* calculations to macroscale microkinetic and transport ones
 - Demonstrated different OER reactions pathways and ways to refine model predictions
- Future work
 - Examine durability issues under both 2-electrode and 3-electrode cells and real-world conditions
 - Validate predicted surface coverages and refine multiscale models

Acknowledgements



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U.S. Department of Energy



HydroGEN
Advanced Water Splitting Materials

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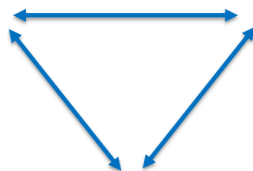


HydroGEN
Advanced Water Splitting Materials

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OER Supernode Team

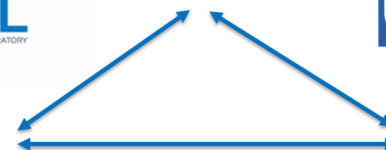


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Response to reviewers

- This project was not reviewed last year