



Transformative Materials for High-Efficiency Thermochemical Production of Solar Fuels

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Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory



Project Overview

Project Partners

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Project Vision

Combine high-throughput computation and experiment to discovery and design novel, improved STCH materials.

Project Impact

Will explore enormous combinatorial space of materials, to "tune in" desired STCH enthalpy and entropy of reduction. We will design materials with reduced temperatures of reduction but sufficient gas-splitting rates.

Award #	EE0008089
Start/End Date	10/01/2017 - 03/31/2021
Year 1 Funding* Year 2 Funding* Year 3 Funding*	\$250K \$375K <mark>\$ddd</mark>

* this amount does not include cost share or support for HydroGEN resources leveraged by the project (which is provided separately by DOE)





Project Motivation

Project builds on background of PIs in STCH materials, attempt to combine high-throughput computational and experimental exploration of oxygen offstoichiometric oxides and phase change materials for enhancing the efficiency of STC production of solar fuels.

Barriers

Risk mitigated by exploring large space of novel STCH materials, and the combined use of high-throughput calculations and experimental efforts to explore this space. Focus to date is on perovskite and doubleperovskite oxide materials.

Key Impact

Identify compounds which show: a) synthesizeability, b) thermodynamics favorable for <1400°C reduction and c) thermodynamics favorable for facile water splitting. State-of-the-art currently CeO_2 and SLMA perovskite.

Partnerships

Productive collaborations with HydroGEN nodes and other seedling projects: Ginley (NREL) – in situ XRD and synthesis; Zakutayev (NREL) – thin film composition gradient synthesis; McDaniel/Coker (SNL) high-T XRD; O'Hayre (CSM) – $(Sr,Ce)_2MnO_4$ layered perovskite



A Design Map for Materials:

Thermodynamics very challenging for <u>stoichiometric</u> reactions (at moderate pressure)



Perovskites (ABO₃ or AA'BB'O₆)

- Until recently : ceria (CeO₂) ^[1]
- ✓ More recently: perovskites ^[2]
- ✓ Perovskites have several good qualities for TWS
 - Tolerate large oxygen off-stoichiometry
 - High Stability
 - Studied for other applications (e.g. SOFC)
 - Enormous compositional space
- High-Throughput Density Functional Theory,
 The Open Quantum Materials Database (OQMD)
- High-Throughput screening of ~11,000 ABO₃ perovskites based on stability and reduction enthalpy

[1] W.C. Chueh, et. al, Science 330 (2010)

[2] A.H. McDaniel, et.al, Energy & Environmental Science 6, 2424 (2013)

[3] S. Kirklin, et. al, npj Computational Materials 1, 15010 (2015)



Summary of Year-2 Scope of Work

- (a) Evaluate thermodynamics of site-substituted perovskites with electrochemical impedance measurement using thin film
- (b) Experimentally measure thermodynamics of reduction of seven predicted double-perovskite oxides and their applicability for STCH
- (c) Expand computational double perovskite survey to 10,000's of compounds
- (d) Validation of computational entropies for materials screening

The thermodynamics acquired from electrochemical impedance measurement on thin film will be discussed, the synthesis, thermodynamics of reduction and hydrogen production measurement on predicted double perovskites will be presented. The expanded computational searching for double perovskite and the validated entropy computation models will be useful for identifying more promising materials for STCH.



- This project aims to identify promising compounds which show:
 - a) ground state stability/synthesizeability of compound,
 - b) thermodynamics favorable for <1400C reduction and
 - c) thermodynamics favorable for facile water splitting. State-of-the-art currently CeO₂ and SLMA perovskite.
- Discovery of new, higher-efficiency materials is critical towards the practical use of STCH for H₂ production (and solar fuels, more generally). Our combined high-throughput computation and experimental approach is greatly accelerating this materials discovery effort.
- Collaborations with HydroGEN nodes (NREL, SNL) and other Seedling projects (CSM) will greatly facilitate research progress

Accomplishments – Oxide Thermochemistry by Thin Film Electrochemical Impedance in Year 1



Method demonstrated using zirconia-ceria films, lessons learned for improvement

Accomplishments – Reduction of Oxide Materials in Year-1

Material	Structure Type	Crystal System	Space Group
LuFeO ₃	Perovskite	Orthorhombic	Pbnm
HoFeO ₃	Perovskite	Orthorhombic	Pbnm
YFeO ₃	Perovskite	Orthorhombic	Pnma
LuCrO ₃	Perovskite	Orthorhombic	Pbnm
ErCrO ₃ Perovskite		Orthorhombic	Pbnm
HoCrO ₃	Perovskite	Orthorhombic	Pbnm
PrCoO ₃	Perovskite	Orthorhombic	Pbnm
SmCoO ₃	Perovskite	Orthorhombic	Pbnm
LaCoO ₃	Perovskite	Rhombohedral	R-3c
LaNiO ₃	Perovskite	Rhombohedral	R-3c
YMnO ₃ "LuMnO ₃ "		Hexagonal	P6 ₃ mc
LuMnO ₃	"LuMnO ₃ "	Hexagonal	P6 ₃ mc
HoMnO ₃	"LuMnO ₃ "	Hexagonal	P6 ₃ mc
SrMnO ₃	"BaMnO ₃ "	Hexagonal	P6 ₃ /mmc
BaMnO₃	"BaNiO ₃ "	Hexagonal	P6 ₃ /mmc
CaMnO₃	Perovskite	Ortho	Pnma
LaMnO ₃	Perovskite	Orthorhombic	Pnma



Experimental measurements of redox thermodynamics of computationally predicted perovskites by TGA

- (i) Validate the enthalpy calculation
- (ii) Obtain high-quality entropy data to guide entropy calculation

Accomplishments – Synthesis and Reduction of Oxide Materials in Year-2

Mn-Containing $A_2BB'O_6$

Compounds	Structure	E _v ^o (eV/vacancy)
Sr ₂ TiMnO ₆	P21/c	2.190
La ₂ CuMnO ₆	P21/c	2.892
La ₂ ZnMnO ₆	P21/c	3.031
Sr ₂ CuWO ₆	Fm-3m	3.071
Sr ₂ CuWO ₆	l4/m	3.111
Sr ₂ ZrMnO ₆	Fm-3m	3.270
La ₂ NiMnO ₆	P21/c	3.438

Objective

(1) Experimental:

(i) Target enthalpy in the range 150 – 300 kJ/mol-O

(ii) intermediate composition perovskites w/tunable capacity, releasing 5 mL O₂ g⁻¹(oxide)

(2) Computational:

- (i) a database of > 10^4 site-substituted AA'BB'O₆ perovskites and double perovskites
- (ii) entropy calculation within 20% of experimental

Accomplishments – Thermodynamic Measurements

- 7 predicted A₂BB'O₆ compounds were synthesized and temperature stability range of each material was evaluated
- Thermogravimetry (TG) was employed to measure oxygen non-stoichiometry at different oxygen partial pressures and temperatures, and the reduction enthalpy and entropy were extracted

Reduction:
$$\frac{1}{\delta_f - \delta_i} MO_{x - \delta_i} \rightarrow \frac{1}{\delta_f - \delta_i} MO_{x - \delta_f} + \frac{1}{2}O_2(g)$$

When at Equilibrium: $\Delta G = \Delta G^0 + RT \ln(K^{eq}) = 0$

$$K^{eq} = pO_2^{\frac{1}{2}} = \exp(-\frac{\Delta G^0}{RT}) = \exp(-\frac{\Delta H^0 - T\Delta S^0}{RT})$$
$$\frac{R}{2}\ln(pO_2) = -\frac{\Delta H^0}{T} + \Delta S^0$$

For a given δ , linear relation of $\frac{R}{2}\ln(pO_2)$ vs. $\frac{1}{T}$ gives slope= $-\Delta H^0$, intercept= ΔS^0

ΔH and ΔS control T, P for water splitting

Also, provides key data for prediction of hydrogen evolution

Overall $\delta(T)$ of Representative Materials

Oxygen non-stoichiometry profiles from continuous and stepped TGA analysis



Analyze within $0.004 < \delta < 0.245$

Analyze within $0.004 < \delta < 0.228$

Accomplishments – ΔH and ΔS of Reduction

Thermodynamics of Reduction

The enthalpy and entropy are extracted using van't Hoff method^[1,2] and compared with other STCH materials



- Enthalpy of Materials A and B (two phases) all fall in the range of 150 300 kJ/mol-O
- Lower enthalpy and higher entropy compared to typical perovskite La_{1-x}Sr_xMnO₃, thermodynamically more favorable for water splitting

[1] Panlener, R. J., et al., Journal of Physics and Chemistry of Solids, 1975.[2] Hao, Y., et al., Chemistry of Materials, 2014.HydroGEN: Advanced Water Splitting Materials

Accomplishments – Examples of Predictable Hydrogen Production using Thermodynamics Data

Predictable Hydrogen Productions

Compare measured hydrogen production profiles to profiles predicted for a gas flow or thermodynamically limited process ^[1,2] (solid remains in quasi-equilibrium with gas phase)



Profiles are very sensitive to gas flow rate, as predicted for quasi-equilibrium H_2 production can be reasonably well predicted using thermodynamic data Macroscope rate is limited by thermodynamics, minor role of material kinetics

Accomplishments – Cyclic Hydrogen Production

1400 °C – 1100 °C, pH₂O = 0.4 atm

O₂

 H_2





Free of (short term) degradation; ideal ratio of 2:1 in $H_2:O_2$ observed

Accomplishments – Hydrogen Productivity Comparison with Literature Results

H₂ Productivity Comparison

Compared with reported promising materials on the basis of cumulative hydrogen productivity versus cycle-time-averaged productivity



Our materials A and B offer excellent combinations of cumulative and cycle-average hydrogen productivity

A and B are competitive candidates for high-capacity thermochemical hydrogen production

FeMgCoNi)O_x, Zhai (*E&ES*, 2018) SM64 (= La_{0.6}Sr_{0.4}MnO₃) Yang (*J. Mat. Chem. A*, 2014). SM74 (= La_{0.7}Sr_{0.3}MnO₃) ibid SMA6464 (= La_{0.6}Sr_{0.4}Mn_{0.6}Al_{0.4}O₃), McDaniel (*E&ES*, 2013) JC25Mn75 (BaCe_{0.25}Mn_{0.75}O₃), Barcellos (*E&ES*, 2018)



Accomplishments – Thin Film Characterization





Vary thickness to distinguish contributions

Example: $Ce_{0.8}Zr_{0.2}O_{2-\delta}$





Accomplishments – Thin Film Characterization

$$d\delta = -\frac{RTV_m}{8F^2V} \frac{C_{chem}}{\hat{p}O_2} d(\hat{p}O_2)$$

integrate to obtain $\boldsymbol{\delta}$





Accomplishments – Thin Film Characterization



Difference in spectra features \Rightarrow bulk transport properties also accessible

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Accomplishments: High throughput DFT screening



HydroGEN: Advanced Water Splitting Materials

Expand computational mixed-/double-perovskite survey to 10,000's of compounds

We performed HT DFT screening on stabilities of

 A₂BB'O₆ (A=Ca, Sr, Ba, La, Zn, Cd, Hg, and Pb; B/B'= 50 elements) mixed B-site perovskites. There are 1250 possible combinations for each A-site cation. *Ten* prototype structures for compounds with A=Ca, Sr, Ba, and La to determine the ground state structure. *One* prototype structures for compounds with A=Zn, Cd, Hg, and Pb

2) RAB_2O_6 (*R*=Y + rare earth, *A*=alkaline earth metal, transition metal) mixed *A*-site perovskites

Two prototype structures for 1750 compositions



27 of them are stable and 135 are metastable

Total number of structures calculated: 38673 Total number of compositions screened: 11750

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			Experimentally known		
A-site	site Stable M	Metastable	not in OQMD	in OQMD	
			total/stable/metastable	total/stable/metastable	
Ba	216	199	75/46/21	47/40/7	
Sr	187	212	77/44/26	52/46/6	
Ca	109	250	67/35/29	21/17/2	
La	63	181	56/15/31	32/18/13	
Zn	0	16	0	0	
Cd	5	52	6/1/2	1/1/0	
Hg	1	11	0	1/1/0	
Pb	18	118	67/2/39	7/2/5	

- Most experimentally known mixed/double perovskites determined to be stable or metastable: Validation of our screening strategy
- Significant number of previously-unknown mixed perovskites predicted



- Oxygen vacancy formation energy of the double perovskites that have been synthesized experimentally
- Some calculations of newly discovered compounds still ongoing



- Among the transition metal of *B*-sit cation coordinated in oxygen octahedral, we found Mn⁴⁺ is much easier to reduce than other cations. The spread of the value is mainly from the effects of octahedral distortion.
- Therefore, we performed DFT calculations on known and predicted stable Mn⁴⁺ containing double perovskites, and found the oxygen vacancy formation energy varies from 2.2 to 3.4 eV/vacancy, depending on another *B*-site cation and octahedral rotation
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Accomplishments: HT DFT screening pyrochlore



Our calculations show that one oxygen site of $R_2Mn_2O_7$ pyrochlore compounds have relatively low oxygen vacancy formation energy. Pyrochlore also has high oxygen diffusivity. Therefore, we performed HT DFT screening on thermodynamic stability of pyrochlore



Compute Entropies of Reduction

- Compute entropies of reduction of experimentally measured perovskites and double-perovskites
- Question: Which entropy contributions are most significant? Specifically, does vibrational entropy make a significant contribution?

Formation free-energy (ΔG) of oxygen vacancy:

 $\Delta G(T) = \Delta E + \Delta H^{\text{vib}}(T) - T[\Delta S^{\text{vib}}(T) + \Delta S^{\text{conf}}(T) + \Delta S^{\text{electron}}(T)] + 0.5^*TS(O_2)$

 ΔE - vacancy formation enthalpy $\Delta H^{vib}_{,}$ - vibrational energy $\Delta S^{vib}_{,}$ - vibrational entropy $\Delta S^{conf}_{,}$ - configurational entropy $\Delta S^{electron}_{,}$ - electronic entropy $S(O_2)$ - entropy of O_2 gas (JANAF)

We calculated configurational and vibrational entropies difference of bulk and its defective counterpart. The vibrational entropy calculation requires phonon calculations, which is very expensive. We spent several million CPU hours on vibrational entropy calculations.



Compute Entropies of Reduction: Issues

- 1. Phonon calculation is very expensive, especially for the supercell with vacancy. For example, one phonon calculation within the harmonic approximation for the vacancy takes ~500,000 CPU hours
- 2. For compounds with a low-temperature distorted structure (which commonly happens in perovskite), the room-temperature phase usually has imaginary frequencies, which prevents vibrational entropy calculations. For example, DFT calculations of the 4-H structure of SrMnO₃ synthesized experimentally, has many imaginary frequencies, since the there is a phase transition to C222₁ phase at low temperature.
- 3. The simplest method that can include the temperature effect on phonon calculations is the self-consistent phonon, which is $10 \sim 50$ times more expensive than harmonic phonon calculations.

Therefore, we only calculated the vibrational entropies of the compounds without imaginary frequencies.

Experimental vs. Computational Entropy of Reduction (T= 1000 K)

ABO ₃	½ S (O₂) [J/mol/K]	ΔSconf [J/mol/K]	ΔSvib (V) [J/mol/K]	ΔScalc [J/mol/K]	ΔSexp [J/mol/K]	Comments
LaCoO ₃	122	32			167 ± 2	Magmom issues
PrCoO ₃	122	31			218 ± 4	Magmom issues
SmCoO ₃	122	32			288 ± 7	Magmom issues
YFeO ₃	122	27	-1	148	163 ± 20	Within 20% √
BaMnO ₃	122	32			220 ± 14	Imaginary phonons
CaMnO ₃	122	31	18	171	188 ± 9	Within 20% √
HoMnO ₃	122	33	12	167	166 ± 9	Within 20% √
LaMnO ₃	122	29			155 ± 42	Complex structure
LuMnO ₃	122	33			197 ± 22	In progress
SrMnO ₃	122	32			166 ± 3	Imaginary phonons
YMnO ₃	122	33	11	166	161 ± 4	Within 20% √
LaNiO ₃	122	32			186 ± 14	In progress



Search for Ce⁴⁺ oxides for STCH application



The giant onsite electronic entropy of $Ce^{4+} \rightarrow Ce^{3+}$ motivates us to search for other Ce^{4+} oxides with smaller reduction enthalpy

Comp.	source	Space group	E _v ^o (eV/vacancy)
CeO ₂	ICSD	Fm-3m	3.05
CeTi ₂ O ₆	ICSD	C2/m	2.59, 2.43, 2.52
Sr ₂ CeO ₄	ICSD	Pbam	5.01, 4.95
SrCeO ₃	ICSD	Pnma	4.34, 4.39
BaCeO ₃	ICSD	Pnma	4.67, 4.68
$CeRh_2O_5$	ICSD	Pnma	4.16, 3.36, 3.57
Ba ₂ CePtO ₆	ICSD	Fm-3m	3.66
Sr_2CeIrO_6	ICSD	P2 ₁ /c	4.63, 4.67, 4.66
Ca ₂ CeO ₄	Literature	Pbam	4.41, 4.75
CaCeO ₃	OQMD	Pnma	4.14, 4.35
Sr_2CeSnO_6	OQMD	P2 ₁ /c	5.07, 4.92, 4.99
Sr ₂ CeZrO ₆	Literature	P2 ₁ /c	4.46, 4.44, 4.45
$SrCe_{0.5}Zr_{0.5}O_3$	Literature	Pnma	4.63, 4.54, 4.55
Sr ₂ CeHfO ₆	Literature	P2 ₁ /c	4.56, 4.54, 4.55

HydroGEN: Advanced Water Splitting Materials



Publications/Presentations

Publications (several in preparation)

- D. R. Barcellos, F. G. Coury, A. Emery, M. Sanders, J. Tong, A. McDaniel, C. Wolverton, M. Kaufman, and R. O'Hayre, Inorg. Chem. 58, 7705 (2019)
- S S. Naghavi, J. He, and C. Wolverton, CeTi₂O₆—A Promising Oxide for Solar Thermochemical Hydrogen Production, ACS Appl. Mater. Interfaces (accepted)
- X. Qian, J. He, E. Mastronardo, B. Baldassarri, C. Wolverton, S.M. Haile, Exceptional Stability and Favorable Redox Thermodynamics of Material for High-Capacity Solar Thermochemical Water Splitting, Submitted, (2020).

Invited Presentations (partial list)

- 2019 236th ECS Meeting
- 2019 American Chemical Society
- 2019 Materials Research Society
- 2019 Telluride Science Research Center Workshop
- 2018 TMS



- External validation of materials performance using DOE Nodes.
- Bulk measurements of generation 2 phase-change double perovskites.
- Establish thermodynamic properties of three 2nd generation systems.
- Thermochemical cycling measurements on the most promising materials.
- Refine computational approaches by feedback from experiments in Years 1 and 2 – extend to structure types beyond perovskite
- Focus computational work on promising phase-change compounds

- HydroGEN node collaborations on synthesis and characterization of additional computationally predicted compounds



- Experimentally measured the enthalpy and entropy of predicted twelve perovskites and validated the high-throughput DFT calculation approach.
- Validated the high-throughput electrochemical impedance approach to extract redox thermodynamics by using gradient film.
- High-Throughput Computational Survey of mixed perovskite phases resulted in prediction of compounds with promising thermodynamics
- Experimentally measured the thermodynamic properties of two predicted double perovskites and acquired high-capacity hydrogen productivity