NREL
NATIONAL RENEWABLE ENERGY LABORATORY

2012 DOE Hydrogen and Fuel Cells Program Review

Renewable Electrolysis Integrated System Development & Testing

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Project ID: PD031

Overview

Timeline

Project start date: Sep. 2003
Project end date: Oct. 2012*

Barriers

G. Cost
H. System efficiency
J. Renewable integration

Budget

- Project Funding (2009-2011): $950k
- Funding received in FY11: $425k
- Planned Funding for FY12: $450k**

Partners

- Xcel Energy
- Giner Electrochemical Systems
- Avalence
- Proton OnSite
- Univ. of North Dakota/EERC
- DOE Wind/Hydro Program

* Project continuation and direction determined annually by DOE

**$185k from Production and Delivery, remaining from Technology validation

Relevance – Main Objectives

Testing – Performance

- Perform characterization and performance testing on electrolysis systems developed from DOE awarded projects
- Test electrolyzer stack and system response with typical renewable power profiles

Demonstration – Renewable Resources Integration

- Identify opportunities for system cost reduction and optimization as they pertain to electric utilities
- Characterize, evaluate, and model the integrated renewable energy systems
- Characterize electrolyzer performance with variable stack power
- Design, build, and test shared power electronics and direct-coupled renewable-to-stack configurations

Analysis* – Wind-to-Hydrogen

- Develop cost models for renewable electrolysis systems
- Quantify capital cost and efficiency improvements for wind- and solar-based electrolysis scenarios

*PD085 – "Hour-by-Hour Cost Modeling of Optimized Central Wind-Based Water Electrolysis Production", Genevieve Saur, Chris Ainscough

Relevance – Barriers Addressed

Capital Costs: R&D is needed to lower capital and improve the efficiency and durability of the system.

System Efficiency: In large production facilities even slight increases in efficiency enable significant reductions in hydrogen cost. Efficiency gains can be realized using compression in the cell stack.

Renewable Electricity Generation Integration: More efficient integration with renewable electricity generation is needed to reduce costs and improve performance.

Integrated Renewable Electrolysis Systems: These need to be developed, including optimization of power conversion and other system components from renewable electricity to provide high-efficiency, low-cost integrated renewable hydrogen production.

Table 3.1.4. Technical Targets: Distributed Water Electrolysis Hydrogen Production [a, b, e]
(Technical targets are being reevaluated and will be updated in the next release)

Characteristics	Units	2003 Status	2006 Status [c]	2012 Target	2017 Target
Hydrogen Cost	$/gge	5.15	4.80	3.70	<3.00
Electrolyzer Capital Cost [d]	$/gge $/kW	N/A N/A	1.20 665	0.70 400	0.30 125
Electrolyzer Energy Efficiency [f]	% (LHV)	N/A	62	69	74

MYPP 2011 Interim Update – Technical Plan - Production

Approach

Test, evaluate, model, and optimize the renewable electrolysis system performance for dedicated hydrogen production and electricity/hydrogen cogeneration

System Integration and Component Development

Work with industry to develop new advanced hardware and control strategies to couple renewable and electrolyzer systems.

Characterization Testing and Protocol Development

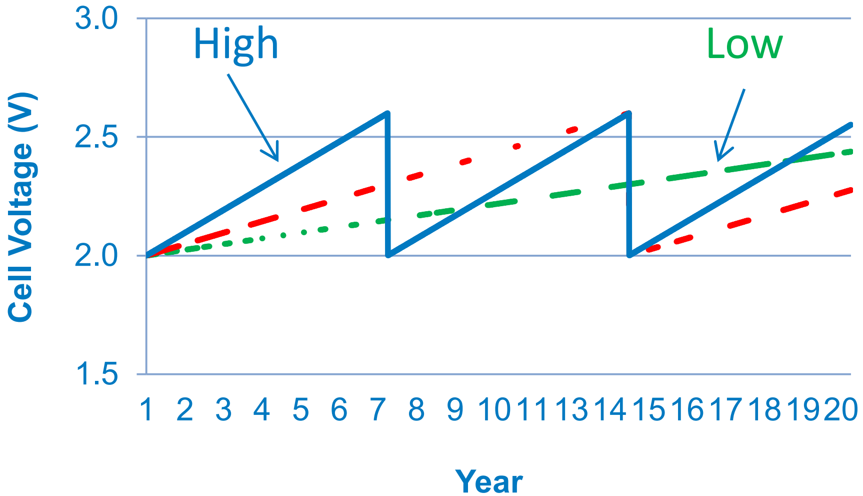
Install equipment, characterize performance, and develop standardized test procedures.

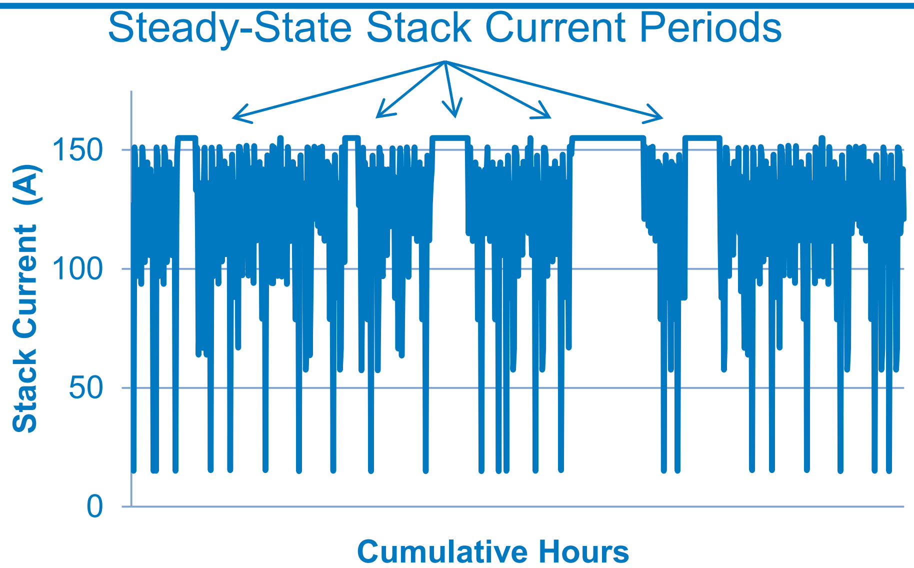
Systems Engineering, Modeling, and Analysis*

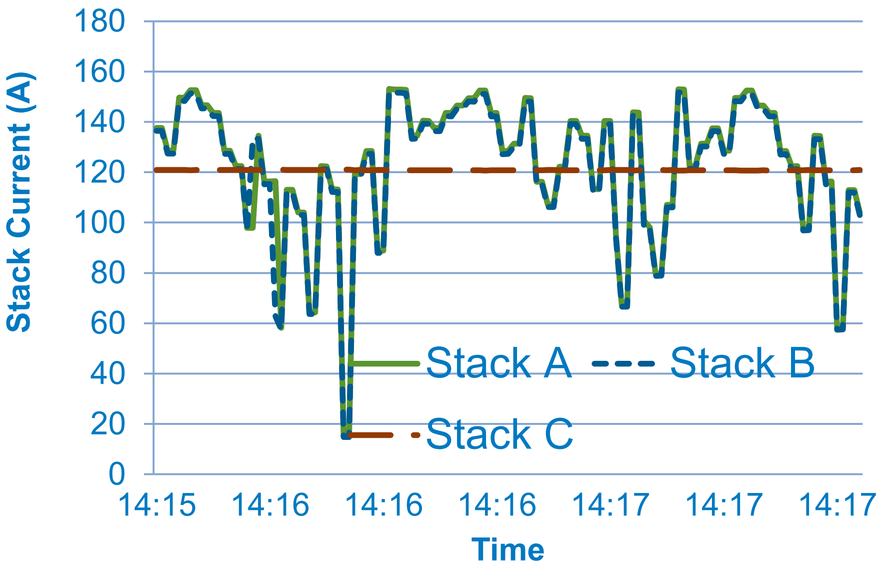
Develop concept platforms, develop and validate component and system models, system assessment, and optimization tools.

*** Analysis budget eliminated in FY12**

Stack Performance – Varying Current







Mode	Average Decay µV / cell-hr	% Difference Relative to Constant Current
Variable	11.6	30%
Variable	10.5	18%
Constant	8.9	-
Hours	5474	

Diagnostics Laboratory for Prototypes

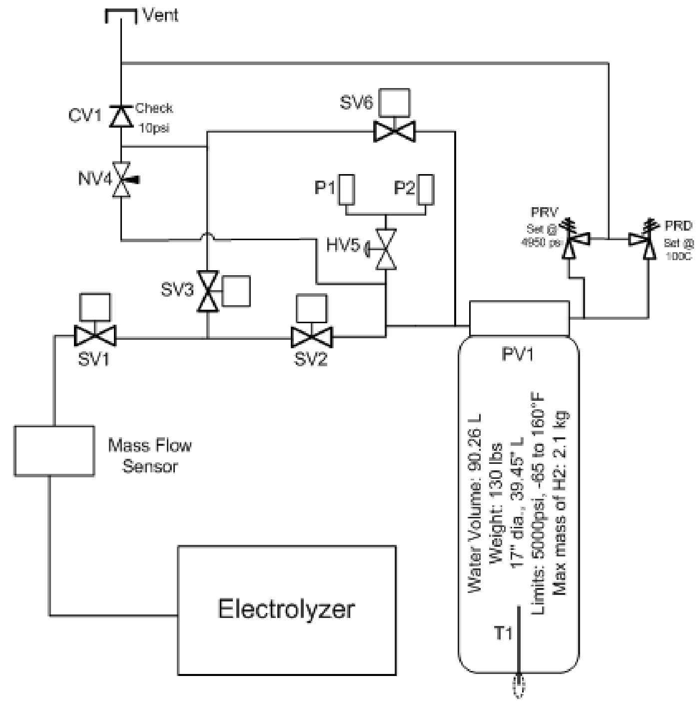
- PDL – Class 1, Div. 2, Group B (12’x14’x10’)
- Hydrogen product, vent and heating from adjacent Wind-to-Hydrogen Production Building
- 75 kVA, 480Δ:208Y/120V, 3p Supports testing of GES, Avalence and WFO H_2-systems
- 480V, 100A service available
- Safety, monitoring and control
- Product can be compressed or vented

Mass Flow Measurements

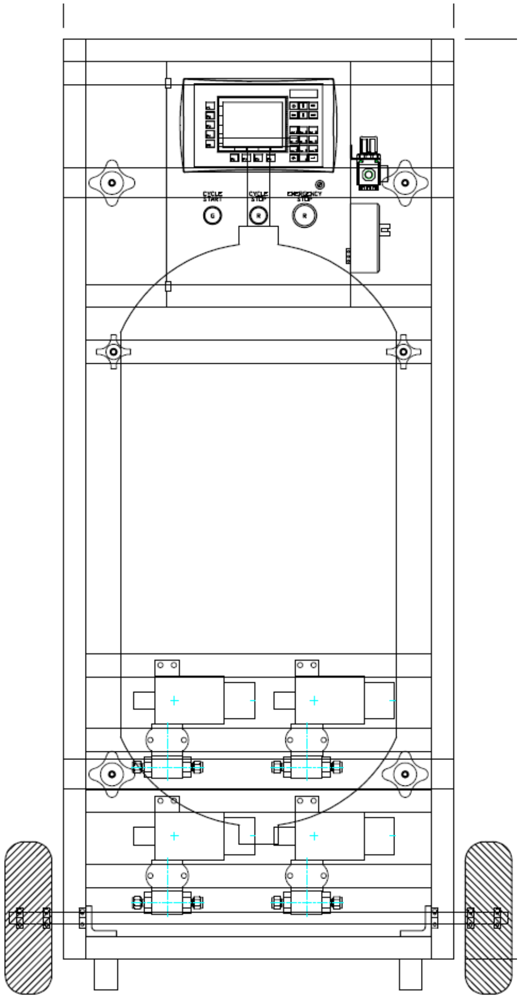
Prototype for 10,000 psig system for California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), Division of Measurement Standards (DMS)

The CDFA through the DMS has entered into a two year contract with the California Energy Commission to develop standards suitable for the commercial measurement of gaseous hydrogen for vehicle and other refueling applications which include device accuracy, installation, field testing and use.

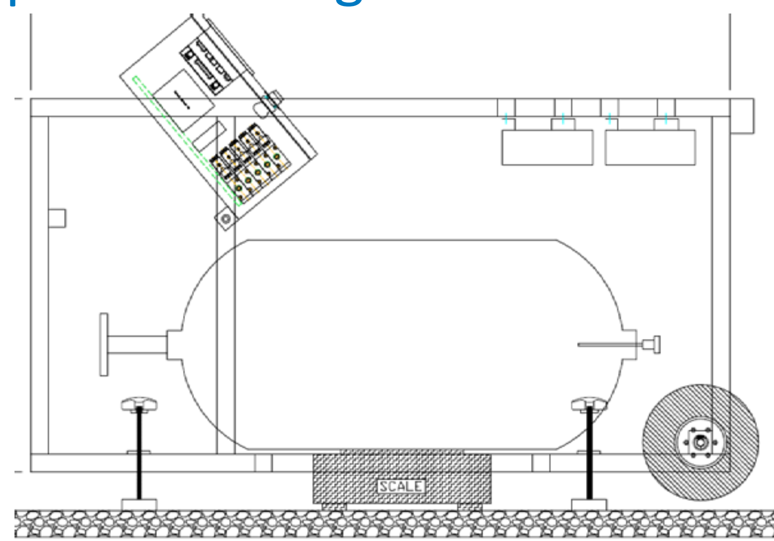
- NIST monitoring progress



Mass Flow Measurements



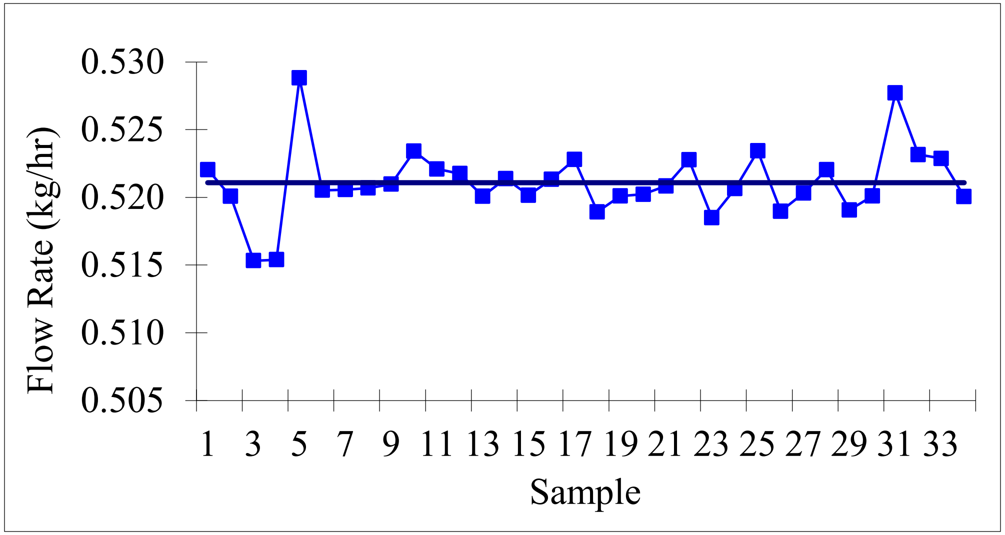
- System designed with industry input
- Intended to be shippable
- Volumetric measurements of mass flow for
  - ➢ Electrolyzer
  - ➢ Dispenser (Today, up to 350 bar)
  - ➢ To Fuel Cell
  - ➢ Compressor
- Designed to accomplish 3 testing methods with one assembly
  - Volumetric
  - Master meter
  - Gravimetric

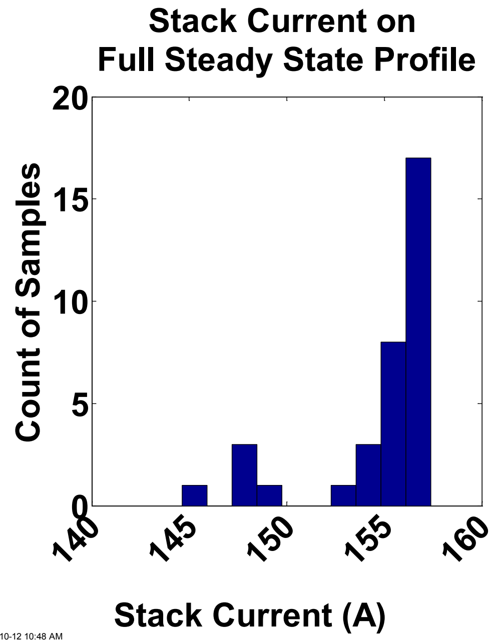


Mass Flow Measurements

Full Constant Stack Current

- 34 trials spread across 3 days
- Each lasting about 9 minutes
- P initial = 20 psig
- P final = 180 psig
- Flow (avg) = 0.521 kg/hr
- Std Dev = 0.003 kg/hr





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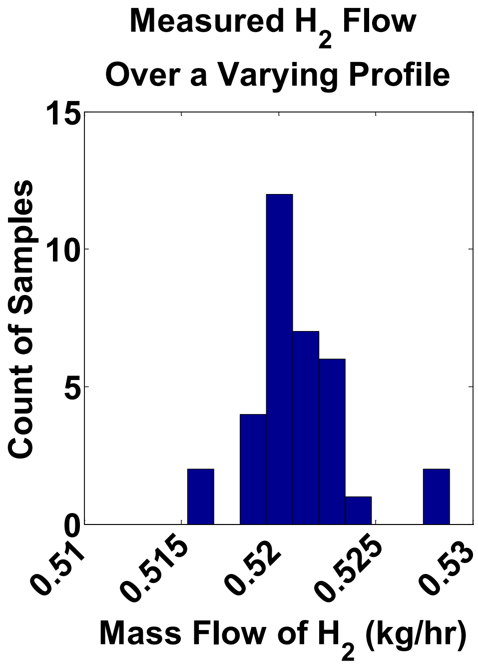
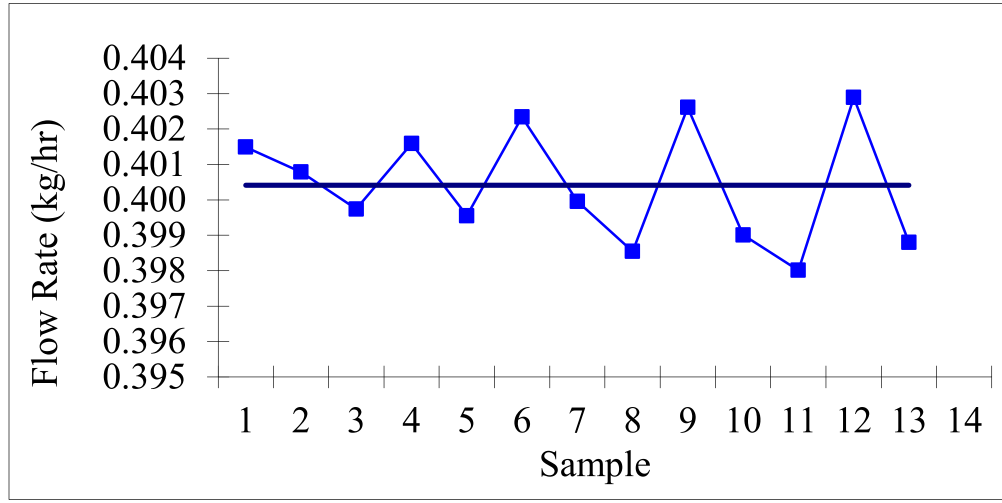
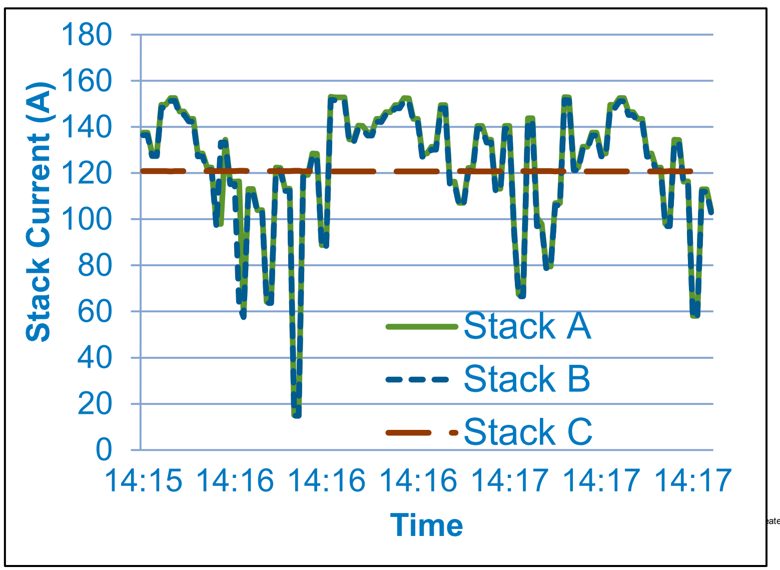


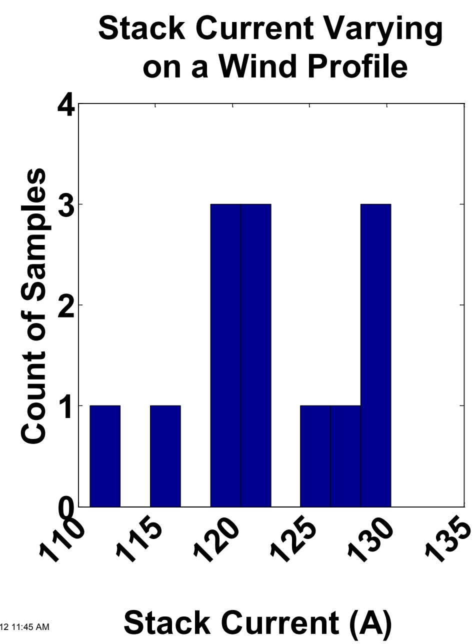
Mass Flow Measurements

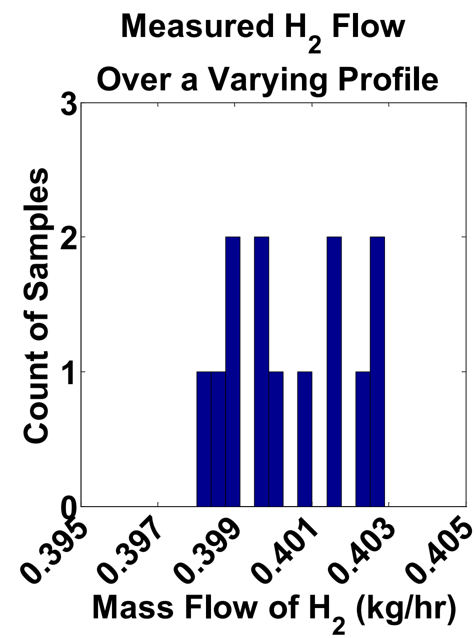
Variable Stack Current

- Each lasting about 11 minutes
- Flow (avg) = 0.400 kg/hr
- Std Dev = 0.002 kg/hr
- Although varying current, volumetric accumulation evens out flow variations









Electrolyzer – Grid Frequency Support

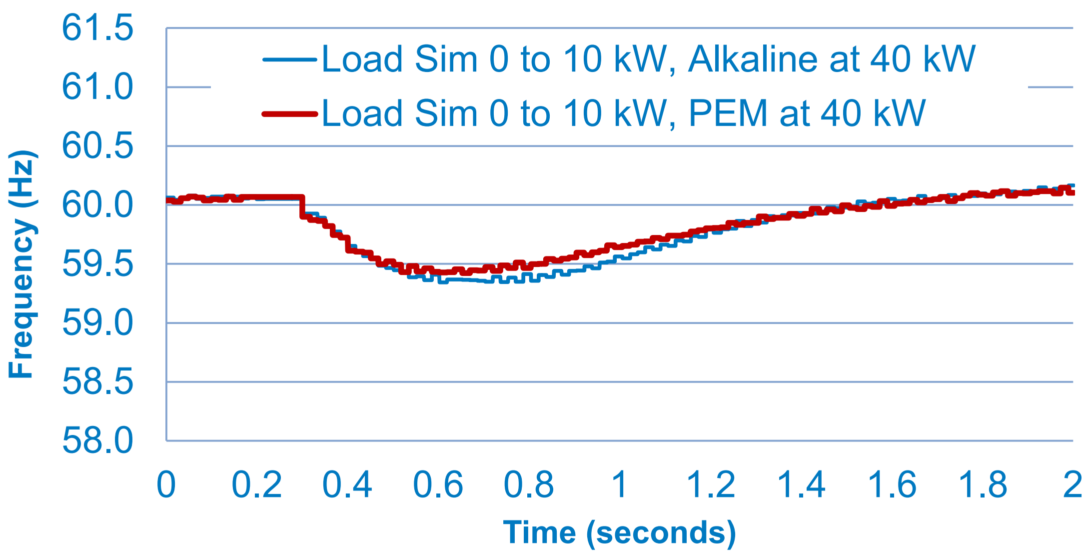
Experimental Setup showing AC mini-grid configuration to test frequency response of PEM and alkaline electrolyzers

Electrolyzers have the potential to realize an additional revenue stream by providing ancillary grid support services.

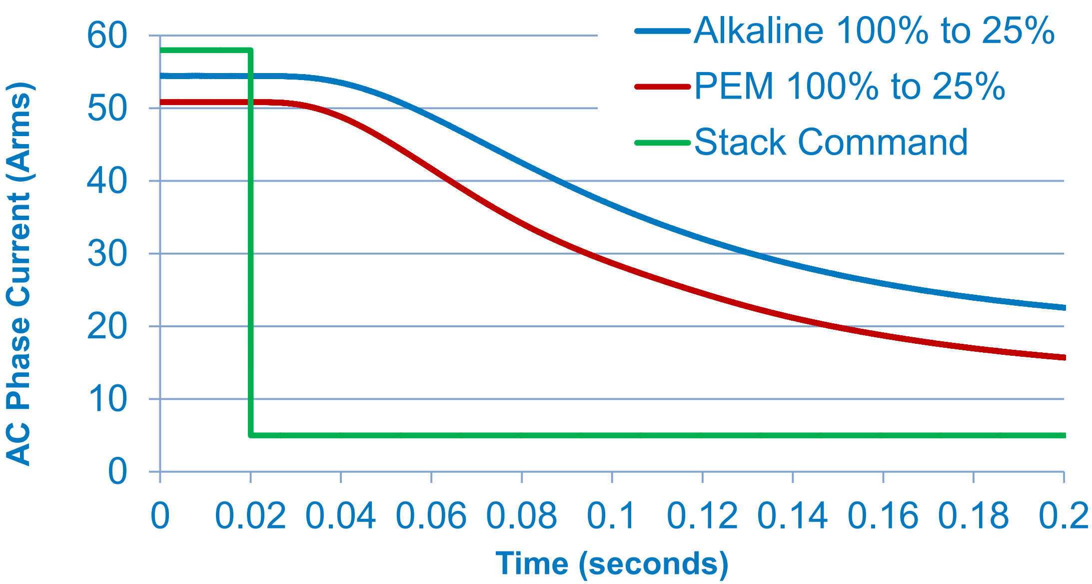
- 120 kW diesel generators powering electrolyzers
- Load simulator adding or shedding load to induce frequency disturbances
- Electrolyzers commanded to shed or add load to reduce magnitude and duration of frequency disturbance

Electrolyzer – Grid Frequency Support

'Natural' un-mitigated frequency disturbances on AC mini-grid caused by 10 kW resistive load step while powering the alkaline and PEM electrolyzer

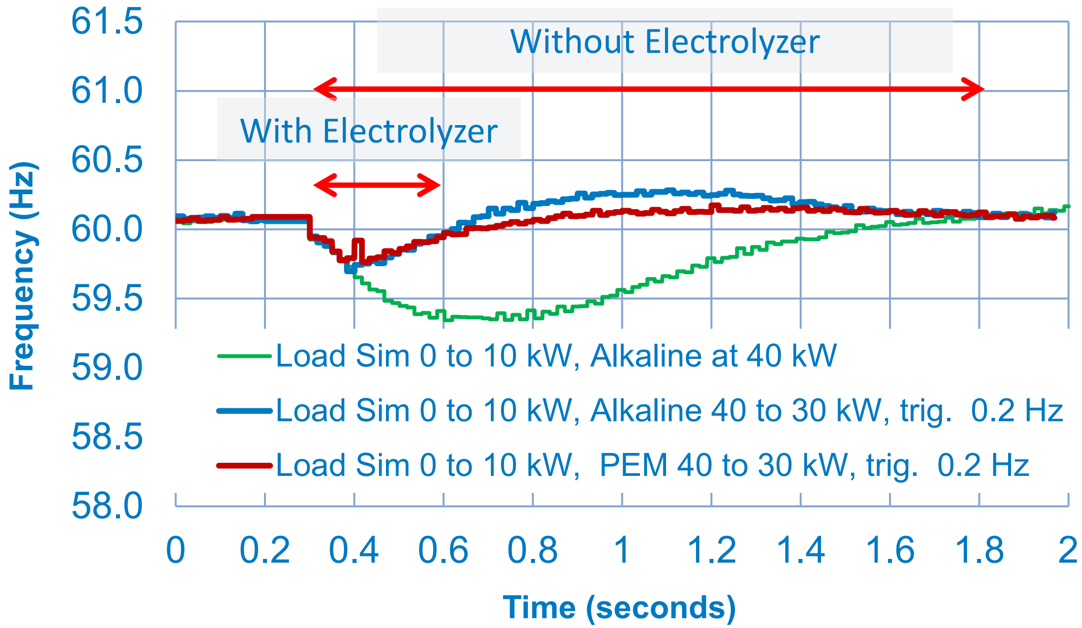


PEM and alkaline system-level response showing AC phase current (rms) to command to shed stack power

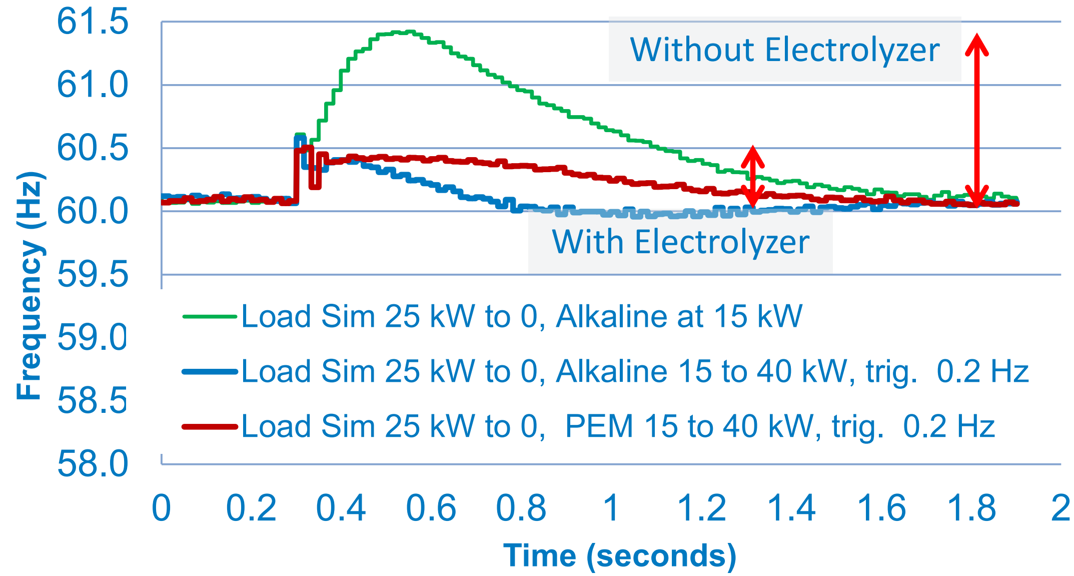


Electrolyzer – Grid Frequency Support

10 kW steps -PEM and alkaline systems responding to shorten magnitude and duration of under-frequency disturbance on AC mini-grid



25 kW steps - PEM and alkaline systems responding to shorten and reduce magnitude of over-frequency disturbance on AC mini-grid



Collaborations

DOE, CRADA, NCAP and TSA

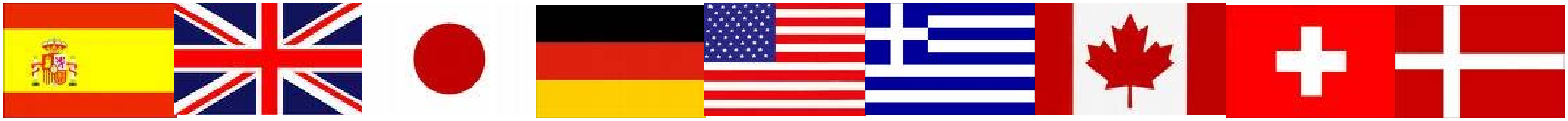
- Xcel Energy – Wind-to-Hydrogen demonstration project since 2005
- Angstrom Advanced – Tested small alkaline electrolyzer (MA)
- Next Hydrogen – Performing market analysis (CAN)
- MAETEC – Preparing to test electrolyzer (UT)
- Electrolyzer manufacturers (GES, Avalence, Proton, Teledyne)

Information sharing

- Hydrogen Utility Group – Led my Xcel Energy
- Electrolyzer manufacturers (GES, Avalence, Proton, Teledyne)
- University of North Dakota/Energy & Environmental Research Center
- Ft. Collins Utility (CO)

International

- International Energy Agency, Annex 24 “Wind Energy and Hydrogen Integration” (Ending 2012)
- Risø-DTU (Denmark) – Modeling and experimental verification of enhanced energy storage systems



Future Work

- Validate improved stack and system efficiency
  - May 2012 delivery – Giner
- Validate medium pressure from alkaline stack
  - FY13 delivery – Avalence
- Utilize test facilities and equipment to support industry
  - NCAP activities – NREL funded
- RESIST modeling of electrolyzers performance
- ANOVA analysis of mass flow equipment
  - Improve volumetric mass flow accuracy
  - Demonstrate improved master meter calibration
- Complete variable stack testing
- Demonstrate Bi-polar multi-stack operation

Summary

Relevance: Addressing capital cost, efficiency, and renewable energy source integration to reduce the cost per kilogram of hydrogen

Approach: Demonstrating advanced controls, system-level improvements and integration of renewable energy sources to electrolyzer stack

Technical Accomplishments:

- Designed and installed new test facility and infrastructure to support validation and performance testing of DOE-awarded systems
- Operating 2 (of 3) stacks with wind profile for stack decay comparison. ~5000 hrs
  - Comparison of voltage decay rates of steady-state and variable stack current operation to better understand long-term impacts of variable stack operation
  - Improving understanding of short-term voltage transients
- Completed frequency mitigation testing of alkaline and PEM electrolyzers on AC grid
  - Both provided sub-second response to reduce magnitude and duration of disturbance
- Designed, built and began testing with volumetric mass flow system

Technology Transfer & Collaborations: Validating system performance and disseminating results to industry to enable improved renewable and electrolyzer integration. Active and informal partnerships with industry, academia and domestic/international researchers.

Proposed Future Research:

- Validation of stack/system efficiency and higher-pressure operation of DOE-awarded systems
- RESIST modeling of electrolyzer performance
- ANOVA and performance improvements of mobile volumetric mass flow system
- Demonstrate bi-polar stack operation