

HydroGEN Consortium: Advancements in Renewable Hydrogen Production

Huyen N. Dinh (She/Her/Hers) Director of HydroGEN, NREL

PRiME, Honolulu, HI October 6, 2024 L04 – Solar Hydrogen Evolution Reaction or Water Reduction

When is hydrogen day?

Hydrogen and Fuel Cells Day October 8

- Held on hydrogen's very own atomic weight-day

Biden Administration Energy Goals

Carbon-free U.S. electricity generation

MOROGEN FUEL

Net zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions—including transportation, buildings, industry, and agriculture

2035 2050 Environmental Justice

Diversity, equity, and inclusion for energy jobs, manufacturing, and supply chain all over the United States

H2@Scale: Enabling Affordable, Reliable, Clean and Secure energy

Source: DOE Hydrogen and Fuel Cell Technologies Office, https://energy.gov/eere/fuelcells/h2-scale

Transportation and Beyond

Large-scale, low-cost hydrogen from diverse domestic resources enables an economically competitive and environmentally beneficial future energy system across sectors Hydrogen can address specific applications that are hard to decarbonize Today: 10 MMT $H₂$ in the US Economic potential: 2x to 4x more

Materials innovations are key to enhancing performance, durability, and reduce cost of hydrogen generation, storage, distribution, and utilization technologies key to H2@Scale

"Hydrogen at Scale (H₂@Scale): Key to a Clean, Economic, and Sustainable Energy System," Bryan Pivovar, Neha Rustagi, Sunita Satyapal, Electrochem. Soc. Interface Spring 2018 27(1): 47-52; doi:10.1149/2.F04181if.

Improving the economics of H2@Scale

SMR

Electrolvze

What is Hydrogen Energy EarthShot?

Hydrogen

Hydrogen Energy Earthshot

"Hydrogen Shot"

"1 1 1" \$1 for 1 kg clean hydrogen in 1 decade

Launched June 7, 2021 Summit Aug 31-Sept 1, 2021

S. Satyapal, et al., "Overview of DOE RFI Supporting Hydrogen Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Provisions, Environmental Justice, and Workforce Priorities, Feb. 24, 2022

U.S. National Clean Hydrogen Strategy and Roadmap

www.hydrogen.gov Released June 5, 2023

www.energy.gov

\$7B for 7 Hydrogen Hubs Announced October 13, 2023

DOE selects consortium to bridge demand for clean H₂ **providing market certainty and unlock private capital Jan 2024**

H2 Hubs managed by OCED: See<https://www.energy.gov/oced/office-clean-energy-demonstrations>

National Laboratory Collaboration is Critical for Success

Goal: Accelerate foundational R&D of innovative materials for advanced water splitting (AWS) technologies to enable clean, sustainable, and low-cost $(51/kg H₂)$ hydrogen production.

HydroGEN: Advanced Water Splitting Materials 12 *for hydrogen productionHydroGEN is focused on early-stage R&D in H₂ production and fosters cross-cutting innovation using theory-guided applied materials R&D to advance all emerging water-splitting pathways*

HydroGEN Lab R&D + Lab Capability Support

Lab Capability Support of 24 New "Seedling" Projects

5 AEME projects: 3 FOA-awarded projects & 2 Lab-call awarded projects

6 PEC FOA-awarded projects

6 p-SOEC projects : 4 FOA-awarded projects & 2 Lab-call awarded projects

5 TCH FOA-awarded projects

HydroGEN: Advanced Water Splitting Materials [presentation-database.html](https://www.hydrogen.energy.gov/amr-presentation-database.html)). Some project technical accomplishments are highlighted in this presentation. 14 6 PEC and 5 STCH FOA-awarded projects have AMR presentations [\(https://www.hydrogen.energy.gov/amr-](https://www.hydrogen.energy.gov/amr-presentation-database.html)

LTE: improve AEM electrolysis performance and durability

HTE:

MS-SOEC: improve performance and durability with a scaled-up cell

p-SOEC: understand the proton conduction and electronic leakage mechanisms of electrolyte materials in proton-conducting SOEC

PEC: materials stability and device durability

STCH: identify and understand how structural features, composition, and defect dynamics engender high capacity–high yield behavior in materials

Cross-Cutting Modeling: theoryguided design to analyze performance and durability of materials under simulated operating conditions

HydroGEN PEC Lab R&D Goal and Approach

(Lead: Joel Ager, LBNL)

STH efficiency has improved but durability has not and is limiting PEC advancement

Goal: Elucidate the degradation mechanism(s) and improve the durability of PEC materials and devices.

Approach:

- Prioritize durability stressors and establish PEC device durability protocol
- Use density functional theory (DFT) and microkinetic modeling to describe the local environment at the electrode/electrolyte interface under operation
- Provide mechanistic understanding of PEC device degradation guided by theory and in operando characterization

Comparison of the solar to hydrogen efficiency (STH) and lifetime H2 produced for unassisted water splitting devices. The "PEC Goal" point in the upper right. Data sourced with permission from Cheng et al. in 2022 Solar Fuels Roadmap, *J. Phys. D. Appl. Phys*. **2022**, 55 323003. PEC goal from Ben-Naim et al., *ACS Energy Lett.* **2020**, 5, 2631–2640.

HydroGEN PEC Lab R&D Relevance and *Potential Impact*

- Develop standardized PEC device measurement techniques *Improves reproducibility between labs*
- Develop device and system-level performance metrics *Clearly define improvements needed for economic viability*
- Develop reliability science needed for closing the durability gap *New materials for durable PEC water-splitting devices Accelerated wear protocols to quantify progress*

PEC/LTE: Atomistic insights into transport, OER activities, stability

optimizing protective layers

HydroGEN: Advanced Water Splitting Materials **18 Chou et al., ACS Appl. Energy. Mater (2023)** Zagalskaya et al., (in preparation) 18

operating conditions on activity

 $IrO₃$

alkaline

neutral

 $3.17 eV$

acidic

 $2.15 eV$

 6.22 eV

controlling catalyst durability

Proposed PEC device- and system-level performance metrics

- Solar to hydrogen conversion efficiency STH (%)
- Area-normalized lifetime production of H_2 $kg/m²$ normalized to PV area for concentrators

Parkinson, B. *Acc. Chem. Res.* **1984**, *17*, 431–437

Pinaud et al, Energy Env. Sci. **2013**.

Ager, J. W.; Shaner, M. R.; Walczak, K. A.; Sharp, I. D.; Ardo, S. *Energy Environ. Sci.* **2015**

Ben-Naim, M.; Britto, R. J.; Aldridge, C. W.; Mow, R.; Steiner, M. A.; Nielander, A. C.; King, L. A.; Friedman, D. J.; Deutsch, T. G.; Young, J. L.; Jaramillo, T. F. *ACS Energy Lett.* **2020**,

Cheng, W.-H., Deutsch, T. G., Xiang, X. in 2022 Solar Fuels Roadmap, *J. Phys. D. Appl. Phys.* 2022

Holmes-Gentle, I.; Tembhurne, S.; Suter, C.; Haussener, S. *Nat. Energy* **2023**

Device-level metrics Theory System-level metrics

• Area $m²$

receiver area for concentrators

• Lifetime

hours

as reported by source

• System H_2 production rate kg/hr

Concentrator Array STH Efficiency 15%

Type 3: Fixed **Panel Array** STH Efficiency

 (c)

Analysis of 44 literature reports using proposed performance metrics

HydroGEN PEC Seedling Projects & Lab Collaboration

Semi-Monolithic Devices for Photoelectrochemical Hydrogen Production - Nicolas Gaillard (PI), University of Hawaii

Project Vision: Develop innovative technologies to combine dissimilar material classes, such as **chalcopyrites** and **perovskites**, into multi-junction (MJ) devices for efficient, low-cost and durable PEC water splitting.

• **Task 1 - Perovskite-Chalcopyrite PEC devices**

- Combine high efficiency wide bandgap perovskite (PCE record = 21.05% with 1.7 eV absorber) and high efficiency narrow bandgap chalcopyrite (PCE record = 23.3% with 1.1 eV absorber) single junction cells into standalone water splitting MJ devices
- **Task 2 - All-Chalcopyrite PEC devices**
	- Develop efficient wide bandgap chalcopyrites (e.g., CuGaSe₂, CuGa₃Se₅, $CulnGaS₂$)
- **Task 3 - Durable PEC devices**
	- Develop unique organic (polymer-based) and inorganic (non-precious catalysts) coating strategies to extend durability of PEC MJ devices
	- Superstrate MJ structure: photo-absorbers are sandwiched between an FTO-coated glass substrate and a thick stable OER catalyst layer, which shields the solar absorbers from the electrolyte, ensuring long-term operation.

Demonstration of a Robust, Compact Photoelectrochemical (PEC) Hydrogen Generator – Joel A. Haber (PI), Caltech

Project Vision: Holistic PEC device design to enable water-splitting electrolysis at potentials that maximize photocurrent from twoterminal, dual junction Si/organohalide perovskite photovoltaics. Design electrolysis components that minimizes electrocatalytic overpotentials, electrolyte polarization, membrane resistance, and flow inhomogeneities, enabling operation below 1.7 V photopotential.

Project Impact

- On ≥0.25 cm² area-matched devices demonstrate ≥15% STH efficiency for 1000 h under continuous AM1.5 illumination
- Demonstrate 0.1 g/h H₂ generation under diurnal cycle for 2 weeks at NREL PEC outdoor test facility

Project Approach

- Dual junction organo-halide perovskite (1.7 eV) and silicon heterojunction (SHJ) PV architectures
- Device integration levels to provide diagnostic insight into interface impacts on performance and degradation
	- 2-terminal monolithically integrated PVSK/Si PV—probe integration and durability
	- Ni activated ALD-TiO2 protected Si PV for OER
	- Fully integrated device, minimum shadowing from contacts, minimum charge carrier and ionic transport distances highest potential efficiency
- Scale up: Design large-area hydrogen generator device, including reactant feeds and product collection using experimental measurements and multiphysics modeling.

Gallium Nitride (GaN) Protected Tandem Photoelectrodes for High Efficiency, Low Cost, and Stable Solar Water Splitting – Zetian Mi (PI) University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

18

8

Project Vision: Develop GaN-protected multi-junction tandem photoelectrodes to achieve both high efficiency (STH >20%) and longterm stable (1,000 h) spontaneous water splitting systems.

Project Approach

- Integrate GaN with high efficiency perovskite and III-V photoelectrodes to achieve stable operation
	- Have demonstrated the formation of GaON layer from GaN leads to self-improved performance and long-term stability (3,000 h).
- Address the processing incompatibility between III-V (or perovskites) with GaN by utilizing a low-temperature epitaxial growth process and nanoscale engineering to achieve high quality GaN surface protection.
- Use concentrated sunlight to significantly reduce the amount of photocatalyst and therefore the overall system cost.
	- With the use of GaN-based nanostructures, we have recently demonstrated direct solar water splitting with STH of 6.2% under 160x concentrated sunlight.

Scalable halide perovskite photoelectrochemical cell modules with 20% solar-tohydrogen efficiency and 1000 hours of diurnal durability – Aditya Mohite (PI) Rice University

Project Vision: Develop halide-perovskite based tandem PEC module with an area of 200 cm², with an unassisted STH efficiency of 20%, with 1000 hours of diurnal operation .

Project Approach

High-efficiency PVs: Exploit 3D/2D perovskite solar cells and Si-Perovskite tandem solar cells and minimodules with Voc > 1.9 V and Jmpp > 18 mA cm⁻²

Barriers: Conductive Adhesive Barrier (CAB) design for protection and efficient electron/hole transport to catalysts Integration of catalysts: Reactor design to integrate HER and OER catalysts with CAB in low-gap configuration e.g. PEMs or AWE reactors

Integrated PEC-PEM design: Monolithic Perovskite/Si photoanode with conductive adhesive barrier

All-Perovskite Tandem Photoelectrodes for Low-Cost Solar Hydrogen Fuel Production from Water Splitting – Yanfa Yan (PI), University of Toledo

Project Vision: Design, fabricate, and test all-perovskite tandem photoelectrodes and panels to achieve low-cost, high solar-to-hydrogen efficiency as well as long-term stable, unassisted photoelectrochemical (PEC) water splitting systems.

Project Approach

- **Wide-bandgap (1.7 - 1.8 eV) perovskite top absorbers**
	- Suppress halide segregation by reducing defect density
	- Use mixed 2D/3D and all-inorganic perovskites
- **Narrow-bandgap (1.2 - 1.5 eV) perovskite bottom absorbers**
	- Develop a single-crystal-synthesis route
	- Avoid catalytic interface erosion
- **Scaling-up production of tandem photoelectrode panels**
	- All-perovskite tandem photoelectrodes promise theoretical STH efficiencies of more than 22%.
- **Understand material properties and intrinsic stability**
- **On-sun PCE testing**

Achieved continuous operation in water for >120 h at 1 sun

>200 cm2 Type-3 PEC Water Splitting Prototype Using Bandgap-Tunable Perovskite Tandem and Molecular-Scale Designer Coatings – Shu Hu (PI), Yale University

Project Vision: Develop a Type-3 PEC water splitting system, combining low-cost hybrid organic-inorganic perovskite (HOIP) with molecularly-engineered ALD-grown coatings of protective, conductive, and catalytic multi-functionalities

Project Impact & Approach:

- High efficiency (>18%), high purity (>99.999 vol% H_2), stability (>2-week diurnal), and 0.12 gram H_2 per hour throughput;
- Discovery of <1.15 eV bandgap new hybrid perovskite materials
	- Fabrication of thin films of a new Pb-free perovskite-like material $(Cs_4CuSb_2Cl_{12})$. Potentially more stable to light, temperature and water and can be mass-produced.
- Develop low-temperature protective coating (TiAlO_x)
	- 100 nm TiAlOx film grown at 85°C show good protection
- Advanced manufacturing approach
	- Quality control large scale fabrication by computer numerical control (CNC) machine
	- For each unit cell, the O2 and H2 can be generated and collected separately. Therefore, when assembled into the large-area device, no extra effort is needed to separate O_2 and H₂.

FTO/ITO

Large-area device

This work was fully supported by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE), Hydrogen and Fuel Cell Technologies Office (HFTO).

James Vickers

Gibbons

Anne Marie Esposito

David Peterson

Katherine Rinaldi William Eric Miller

Huyen.dinh@nrel.gov

Thank You

NREL/PR-5900-91596

This work was authored by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, operated by Alliance for Sustainable Energy, LLC, for the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) under Contract No. DE-AC36-08GO28308. Funding provided by the U.S. Department of Energy Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Hydrogen and Fuel Cell Technologies Office. The views expressed in the article do not necessarily represent the views of the DOE or the U.S. Government. The U.S. Government retains and the publisher, by accepting the article for publication, acknowledges that the U.S. Government retains a nonexclusive, paid-up, irrevocable, worldwide license to publish or reproduce the published form of this work, or allow others to do so, for U.S. Government purposes.

CINREL **Transforming ENERGY**

Acknowledgements

NREL Team

Huyen Dinh, Lead Principal Investigators:

Shaun Alia Bryan Pivovar Sara Havig Natasha Headland Nguyen Rachel Hurst Emily Harrell Christina Vader Eric Payne Angel Medina-Drago Megan Grimes Robert Bell Guido Bender Todd Deutsch Michael Dzara David Ginley Steve Harvey

Scott Mauger Chris Muzzillo Judy Netter Genevieve Saur Sarah Shulda Myles Steiner James Young Andriy Zakutayev Kai Zhu

LBNL Team

Joel Ager, Lead Principal Investigators:

Peter Agbo Oliva Alley Hanna Breunig Ethan Crumlin Walter Drisdell Dan Gunter Jinghua Guo Frances Houle David Larson Ahmet Kusoglu Xiong Peng David Prendergast Francesca Toma Michael Tucker Adam Weber

Acknowledgements

Anthony McDaniel, Lead Principal Investigators:

Andrea Ambrosini Kenneth Armijo Sean Bishop Arielle Clauser Eric Coker Bert Debusschere Tyra Douglas

Cy Fujimoto Pinwen Guan Keith King Mark Rodriguez Josh Sugar Matthew Witman

SNL Team LLNL Team

Tadashi Ogitsu, Lead Principal Investigators:

Sarah Baker Monika Biener Alfredo Correa Tedesco Thomas Yong-Jin Han Tae Wook Heo Jonathan Lee Christine Orme Tuan Anh Pham Christopher Spadaccini

Tony Van Buuren Joel Varley Trevor Willey Brandon Wood Marcus Worsley Timofey Frolov

INL Team

Dong Ding, Lead Principal Investigators:

Qian Zhang

Micah Casteel Rebecca Fushimi Dan Ginosar Gabriel Ilevbare Wei Wu