



**A Steady State Continuous Flow Chamber  
for the Study of Daytime and Nighttime Chemistry  
under Atmospherically Relevant NO levels**

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## 1 Abstract

2 Experiments performed in laboratory chambers have contributed significantly to the  
3 understanding of the fundamental kinetics and mechanisms of the chemical reactions occurring  
4 in the atmosphere. Two chemical regimes, classified as ‘high-NO’ versus ‘zero-NO’ conditions,  
5 have been extensively studied in previous chamber experiments. Results derived from these two  
6 chemical scenarios are widely parameterized in chemical transport models to represent key  
7 atmospheric processes in urban and pristine environments. As the anthropogenic NO<sub>x</sub> emissions  
8 in the United States have decreased remarkably in the past few decades, the classic ‘high-NO’  
9 and ‘zero-NO’ conditions are no longer applicable to many regions that are constantly impacted  
10 by both polluted and background air masses. We present here the development and  
11 characterization of the NCAR Atmospheric Simulation Chamber, which is operated in steady  
12 state continuous flow mode for the study of atmospheric chemistry under ‘intermediate NO’  
13 conditions. This particular chemical regime is characterized by constant sub-ppb levels of NO  
14 and can be created in the chamber by precise control of the inflow NO concentration and the  
15 ratio of chamber mixing to residence timescales. Over the range of conditions achievable in the  
16 chamber, the lifetime of peroxy radicals (RO<sub>2</sub>), a key intermediate from the atmospheric  
17 degradation of volatile organic compounds (VOCs), can be extended to several minutes, and a  
18 diverse array of reaction pathways, including unimolecular pathways and bimolecular reactions  
19 with NO and HO<sub>2</sub>, can thus be explored. Characterization experiments under photolytic and dark  
20 conditions were performed and, in conjunction with model predictions, provide a basis for  
21 interpretation of prevailing atmospheric processes in environments with intertwined biogenic and  
22 anthropogenic activities. We demonstrate the proof of concept of the steady state continuous  
23 flow chamber operation through measurements of major first-generation products, methacrolein  
24 (MACR) and methyl vinyl ketone (MVK), from OH- and NO<sub>3</sub>-initiated oxidation of isoprene.



## 25 1. Introduction

26 With the discovery of the role of biogenic volatile organic compounds (BVOCs) in urban  
27 photochemical smog (Chameides et al., 1988), the interactions of biogenic emissions with man-  
28 made pollution and their subsequent impact on the atmosphere's oxidative capacity and aerosol  
29 burden have received extensive studies in the ensuing decades (De Gouw et al., 2005; Ng et al.,  
30 2007; Goldstein et al., 2009; Surratt et al., 2010; Rollins et al., 2012; Shilling et al., 2013; Xu et  
31 al., 2015). A particular research focus has been understanding the influence of nitrogen oxides  
32 ( $\text{NO}_x = \text{NO} + \text{NO}_2$ ) on the atmospheric oxidation cascades of BVOCs, which ultimately generate  
33 ozone ( $\text{O}_3$ ) and secondary organic aerosols (SOA). Nitrogen oxides alter the distribution of  
34 BVOC oxidation products by primarily modulating the fate of peroxy radicals ( $\text{RO}_2$ ), a key  
35 intermediate produced from the atmospheric degradation of VOCs by major oxidants including  
36 OH,  $\text{O}_3$ , and  $\text{NO}_3$ . In the absence of  $\text{NO}_x$ ,  $\text{RO}_2$  reacts predominantly with  $\text{HO}_2$  radicals yielding  
37 organic peroxides and other products, and to a lesser extent, undergoes self/cross-reactions  
38 yielding carbonyls, alcohols, and multifunctional species. In the presence of elevated  $\text{NO}_x$ , the  
39 dominant fate of  $\text{RO}_2$  is to react with NO leading to ozone production, and also to organic  
40 nitrates. During the night,  $\text{RO}_2$  also reacts with  $\text{NO}_3$  which is produced by the reaction between  
41  $\text{O}_3$  and  $\text{NO}_2$ . In addition, reaction of peroxyacyl radicals ( $\text{RC(O)O}_2$ ) with  $\text{NO}_2$  produces  
42 peroxyacyl nitrates that constitute a large reservoir of reactive nitrogen and a potentially  
43 important SOA precursor (Singh and Hanst, 1981; Nguyen et al., 2015).

44 Much of our understanding of the extent to which  $\text{NO}_x$  mediates the oxidation chemistry of  
45 BVOC in the atmosphere has been derived from measurements in laboratory chambers, where  
46 two extreme experimental conditions, i.e., 'high  $\text{NO}$ ' vs. 'zero- $\text{NO}$ ', were mostly performed to  
47 examine the reaction pathways of  $\text{RO}_2$  radicals (Kroll and Seinfeld, 2008; Orlando and Tyndall,  
48 2012; Ziemann and Atkinson, 2012). Results from these two chemical regimes have been widely  
49 incorporated into chemical transport models to represent key atmospheric processes in urban and  
50 pristine environments, respectively (Kanakidou et al., 2005). In the actual atmosphere, however,  
51 the fate of  $\text{RO}_2$  radicals is rather more complicated than simply undergoing bimolecular reactions  
52 with  $\text{NO}/\text{HO}_2$  as observed under the two extreme chamber conditions. It has been recently  
53 revealed that  $\text{RO}_2$  radicals may undergo an internal H-shift followed by sequential  $\text{O}_2$  addition,  
54 leading to highly oxygenated multifunctional peroxides (Ehn et al., 2014; Jokinen et al., 2015;  
55 Kurtén et al., 2015; Kirkby et al., 2016; Zhang et al., 2017). The rate of H-shift largely depends  
56 on the thermochemistry of the nascent alkyl radicals and can be reasonably fast, on a time scale  
57 of seconds to minutes (Crouse et al., 2013). Further, depending on the stability of the  $\text{RO}_2$   
58 precursor (alkyl radicals),  $\text{RO}_2$  radicals may lose  $\text{O}_2$  in competition with bimolecular reactions  
59 with  $\text{NO}$ ,  $\text{NO}_3$ ,  $\text{RO}_2$ , and  $\text{HO}_2$ . Recent theoretical and laboratory studies have found that the  
60 hydroxy peroxy radical conformers produced from isoprene photooxidation decompose readily  
61 to allylic radicals on time scales faster than bimolecular processes under atmospherically relevant  
62  $\text{NO}/\text{HO}_2$  levels (tens to hundreds of parts per trillion by volume). This highly dynamic system  
63 leads to formation of distinctly different products that depend on the concentrations of  
64 bimolecular reaction partners from those observed in chamber experiments under 'high- $\text{NO}$ ' and  
65 'zero- $\text{NO}$ ' conditions (Teng et al., 2017).

66 Anthropogenic  $\text{NO}_x$  emissions in the United States have decreased remarkably in the past  
67 few decades (EPA, 2014), resulting in significant changes in the degradation mechanisms of  
68 BVOCs, especially in regions impacted by both background and polluted air masses such as the  
69 Southeastern United States. However, the ultimate fate of peroxy radicals in environments with



70 sub-ppb NO levels is still poorly constrained, in part due to a lack of consistent measurements  
71 under well controlled conditions. Experimental environments with a controlled NO production at  
72 sub-ppb levels have been recently introduced to examine the various RO<sub>2</sub> fates in the  
73 atmosphere. For example, a ‘slow chemistry’ scenario initiated by photolyzing methyl nitrite  
74 (CH<sub>3</sub>ONO) under extremely low UV intensities as the OH radical source ( $J_{\text{CH}_3\text{ONO}} \sim 10^{-5} \text{ s}^{-1}$ ) was  
75 created to study the autoxidation chemistry of peroxy radicals produced from isoprene  
76 photooxidation (Crouse et al., 2011; Crouse et al., 2012; Teng et al., 2017). The resulting NO  
77 and HO<sub>2</sub> mixing ratios are maintained at ~ ppt (parts per trillion by volume) level (CH<sub>3</sub>ONO +  
78 O<sub>2</sub> +  $h\nu \rightarrow \text{HO}_2 + \text{NO} + \text{HCHO}$ ) over the course of several hours of reaction, and the average  
79 OH concentration (OH ~ 10<sup>5</sup> molec cm<sup>-3</sup>) is approximately one order magnitude lower than that  
80 in the typical daytime ambient atmosphere. Another example relates to a recent method  
81 development in the Potential Aerosol Mass (PAM) flow tube reactor where nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O)  
82 was used to produce ~ ppb (parts per billion by volume) level of NO (O<sub>3</sub> +  $h\nu \rightarrow \text{O}_2 + \text{O}(^1\text{D})$ ;  
83 O(^1D) + N<sub>2</sub>O → 2NO) (Lambe et al., 2017). Timescales for chemical reactions and gas-particle  
84 partitioning are ultimately limited to the mean residence time (~80 s) of the PAM reactor.

85 An alternative experimental platform to the batch-mode chamber and flow tube reactor  
86 described above is a well-mixed steady-state chamber with continuous feed of reactants and  
87 continuous withdrawal of reactor contents (Shilling et al., 2008). An attribute of the continuous  
88 flow steady state chamber is that, by control of the inlet reactant concentrations and the ratio of  
89 mixing to residence timescales, it is possible to simulate atmospheric oxidation under stable  
90 conditions over a wide range of time periods and chemical scenarios. In this study, we present  
91 the development and characterization of the NCAR Atmospheric Simulation Chamber, which is  
92 operated in steady state continuous flow mode for simulating atmospheric daytime and nighttime  
93 chemistry over chemical regimes not accessible in static chamber experiments. We focus on  
94 establishing an ‘intermediate NO’ regime characterized by a constant steady-state NO level  
95 ranging from tens of ppt to a few ppb in the chamber. This particular chemical regime is well  
96 suited for the study of atmospheric behavior of RO<sub>2</sub> radicals, as they can survive up to minutes  
97 and embrace various reaction possibilities as opposed to reaction with NO, NO<sub>3</sub>, HO<sub>2</sub>, and RO<sub>2</sub>  
98 as their dominant fate observed in most batch-mode chamber experiments. We employ the  
99 ‘intermediate NO’ regimes to reexamine the daytime and nocturnal chemistry of isoprene  
100 through the measurements of two first-generation products, methacrolein (MACR) and methyl  
101 vinyl ketone (MVK).

## 102 2. Experimental

### 103 2.1 NCAR Atmospheric Simulation Chamber Facilities

104 The NCAR Atmospheric Simulation Chamber consists of a 10 m<sup>3</sup> FEP Teflon (0.005” thick)  
105 bag that is housed in a cubic enclosure with UV reflective surfaces and a bank of 128 wall-  
106 mounted blacklight tubes (32W, Type F32T8/BL). To characterize photolytic conditions in the  
107 chamber, irradiance spectra were collected in the wavelength range of 180–600 nm at ~0.8 nm  
108 resolution by a custom-built spectroradiometer (Petropavlovskikh et al., 2007). Photolysis  
109 frequencies were calculated based on the measured downwelling spectral actinic fluxes. The  
110 computed photolysis rate of NO<sub>2</sub> ( $J_{\text{NO}_2} \sim 1.27 \times 10^{-3} \text{ s}^{-1}$ ) agrees within 3% with that measured by  
111 photolyzing 18.6 ppb NO<sub>2</sub> in the chamber and monitoring the NO production rate. The chamber  
112 is equipped with a standard set of measurements, including an integrated temperature and



113 humidity probe (Model 50U, VAISALA, CO) and a Magnehelic differential pressure indicating  
114 transmitter (Model 605-11, Dwyer Instruments, IN). The chamber temperature is controlled at  
115 295 K by the building's air conditioning system and increases to 305–306 K under maximum  
116 irradiation conditions. The relative humidity of the chamber air is below 10% under dry  
117 conditions and can be varied in the range of ~10–50% by flowing a portion of the purified dry  
118 flushing air into the chamber through a temperature-controlled water reservoir. The chamber  
119 internal pressure is maintained slightly above the ambient pressure to minimize the enclosure air  
120 contamination via penetration through the Teflon film.

121 Prior to each experiment, the chamber was flushed with purified dry air from a zero air  
122 generator (Model 737, Aadco Instruments, OH) for >12 h until ozone and NO<sub>x</sub> levels were below  
123 1 ppb. During the operation of the steady state continuous flow mode, the chamber was  
124 constantly flushed with purified dry air at 40 L min<sup>-1</sup>, which gives an average chamber residence  
125 time of 4.17 hours. The incoming and outgoing flows were balanced by a feedback control  
126 system that maintains a constant internal pressure of 1.2–4.9×10<sup>-4</sup> atm above the ambient. The  
127 characteristic mixing time in the chamber was determined to be ~9 min (~4% of the residence  
128 time) by rapid injection of tracer compounds including CO<sub>2</sub> and NO. Under such conditions, the  
129 gas/particle-phase composition in the outflow can be assumed identical to that in the well-mixed  
130 core of the chamber.

131 To mimic daytime photochemistry in the continuous flow mode, steady-state OH mixing  
132 ratio was created by photolyzing hydrogen peroxide (H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>) vapor that was continuously flowing  
133 into the chamber (H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>+*hν*→2OH,  $J_{\text{H}_2\text{O}_2} \sim 3.93 \times 10^{-7} \text{ s}^{-1}$ ). Specifically, a 20 mL syringe  
134 (NORM-JECT, Henke-Sass Wolf, MA) held on a syringe pump (Model 100, kdScientific, MA)  
135 kept at ~4 °C was used to deliver H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> solution (1–30 wt%, Sigma Aldrich, MO) into a glass  
136 bulb that was gently warmed at ~32 °C. The liquid delivery rate was sufficiently slow (100–300  
137 μL min<sup>-1</sup>) that all the H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> vapor was released into the glass bulb through evaporation of a small  
138 droplet hanging on the needle tip. An air stream (5 L/min) swept the H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> vapor into the  
139 chamber, resulting in an H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> mixing ratio in the range of 600 ppb to 16.22 ppm in the injection  
140 flow as a function of the concentration of H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> aqueous solution used. A spreadsheet (Table S2)  
141 for calculating the inflow H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> mixing ratio using the above input method is provided in the  
142 Supplement. As H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>-laden air was continuously entering the chamber, it took approximately  
143 three turnover times (~12.5 hr) for the desired H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> vapor mixing ratio to reach steady state in  
144 the chamber. The H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> vapor concentration in the chamber, though not measured, can be  
145 estimated from the steady-state OH mixing ratio derived from the observed exponential decay of  
146 a given parent hydrocarbon. Constant NO injection flow was achieved by diluting the gas flow  
147 from a concentrated NO cylinder (NO = 133.16 ppm, balance N<sub>2</sub>) to a desired mixing ratio  
148 (0.1–100 ppb) using a set of mass flow controllers (Tylan FC260 and FC262, Mykrolis Corp.,  
149 MA). Note that for experiments performed in the absence of any VOC precursor, H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> and NO  
150 were the only two species that were continuously input into the chamber for the establishment of  
151 a combination of different photochemical conditions as denoted by the O<sub>3</sub> and NO<sub>x</sub>  
152 measurements. For the isoprene photooxidation experiments, an isoprene standard (C<sub>5</sub>H<sub>8</sub> = 531  
153 ppm, balance N<sub>2</sub>) was constantly injected into the chamber and diluted with the flushing air to  
154 achieve an inflow concentration of ~20 ppb.

155 To mimic the nighttime chemistry in the continuous flow mode, steady-state NO<sub>3</sub> mixing  
156 ratio was created by constantly flowing diluted O<sub>3</sub> and NO air into the chamber (NO+O<sub>3</sub>



157  $\rightarrow\text{NO}_2+\text{O}_2$ ;  $\text{NO}_2+\text{O}_3\rightarrow\text{NO}_3+\text{O}_2$ ). The NO source can be replaced by  $\text{NO}_2$ , although the absolute  
158 absence of NO does not necessarily represent the actual atmospheric conditions.  $\text{O}_3$  was  
159 produced by photolyzing  $\text{O}_2$  in air at 185 nm using a mercury “Pen-Ray” lamp (UVP LLC, CA).  
160 Ozone concentration in the injection flow can be controlled from 3.5 ppb to 457 ppb  
161 automatically by adjusting the mercury lamp duty cycle. To study the  $\text{RO}_2+\text{HO}_2$  pathway,  
162 formaldehyde ( $\text{CH}_2\text{O}$ ) was input into the chamber along with NO and  $\text{O}_3$  to initiate  $\text{HO}_2$   
163 production ( $\text{NO}_3+\text{CH}_2\text{O}+\text{O}_2\rightarrow\text{HNO}_3+\text{HO}_2+\text{CO}$ ). Formaldehyde aqueous solution (37 wt%,  
164 Sigma Aldrich, MO) was diluted with ultrapure water (Milli-Q, Merck Millipore, MA) to 0.2–1.0  
165 wt% and continuously input into the chamber using the same method used for  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  input  
166 described above. It is worth noting that the formaldehyde aqueous solution contains 10–15%  
167 methanol as stabilizer to prevent polymerization. The presence of methanol in the chamber does  
168 not significantly impact the nocturnal chemistry as it consumes OH and  $\text{NO}_3$  radicals to generate  
169 formaldehyde and additional  $\text{HO}_2$  ( $\text{CH}_3\text{OH}+\text{NO}_3\rightarrow\text{HNO}_3+\text{CH}_2\text{O}+\text{HO}_2$ ,  
170  $\text{CH}_3\text{OH}+\text{OH}\rightarrow\text{H}_2\text{O}+\text{CH}_2\text{O}+\text{HO}_2$ ) (Atkinson et al., 2006). The use of formaldehyde as an  $\text{HO}_2$   
171 source mimics closely the atmospheric nighttime conditions in forest environments (Schwantes  
172 et al., 2015). To study the  $\text{NO}_3$ -initiated oxidation of isoprene, an injection flow of diluted  
173 isoprene ( $\sim 10$  ppb) was achieved using the procedure described above.

## 174 2.2 Analytical measurements

175 A suite of instruments was used to monitor gas-phase concentrations in the chamber  
176 outflow.  $\text{O}_3$  was monitored by absorption spectroscopy with 0.5 ppb detection limit (Model 49,  
177 Thermo Scientific, CO). The  $\text{O}_3$  monitor was calibrated using an Ozone Primary Standard in the  
178 range of 0 to 200 ppb (Model 49i-PS, Thermo Scientific, CO). The  $\text{O}_3$  monitor used for chamber  
179 experiments was periodically checked with the primary standard and was shown to be stable over  
180 long periods of time (less than 1 ppb drift in over 1 year). NO was monitored by  
181 chemiluminescence with 0.5 ppb detection limit (Model CLD 88Y, Eco Physics, MI). Zero-point  
182 and span calibrations of the  $\text{NO}_x$  monitor were performed prior to each experiment by supplying  
183 the instrument with pure  $\text{N}_2$  gas and diluted NO, respectively. Multi-point calibration was  
184 performed on a weekly basis and has shown a good stability and linearity in the NO  
185 measurement ranging from 1 ppb to 200 ppb.  $\text{NO}_x$  ( $\text{NO}+\text{NO}_2$ ) measurements were performed  
186 using a photolytic converter that selectively converts  $\text{NO}_2$  to NO upstream of the photo-  
187 multiplier tube in the CLD 88Y NO monitor. This converter uses two opposing arrays of UV  
188 LEDs shining into a cylindrical quartz mixing tube to achieve approximately 50% conversion of  
189  $\text{NO}_2$  to NO per second. The total efficiency for the equipment described here is approximately  
190 70% as determined by measuring calibrated  $\text{NO}_2$  standards. The sample path always includes  
191 the photolytic converter, and typical experiments cycle the power for the LED lights to switch  
192 between measuring NO (lights off) and  $\text{NO}_x$  (lights on).  $\text{NO}_2$  concentrations were then  
193 determined by subtracting the NO from the adjacent  $\text{NO}_x$  measurements.

194 A customized Proton Transfer Reaction Quadrupole Mass Spectrometer (PTR-Q-MS) was  
195 used to measure volatile organic compounds including isoprene ( $\text{C}_5\text{H}_8$ ), methacrolein (MACR,  
196  $\text{C}_4\text{H}_6\text{O}$ ), and methyl vinyl ketone (MVK,  $\text{C}_4\text{H}_6\text{O}$ ). The instrument was operated at 2.3 mbar drift  
197 pressure and 560 V drift voltage. Measurements reported here were obtained at a sampling rate  
198 of 10 Hz. In positive-mode operation, a given analyte [M] undergoes proton transfer reaction,  
199 producing an ion of the form  $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$ . The instrument background was collected by sampling the  
200 chamber air for at least 30 min prior to each experiment. Measured ion intensities for isoprene  
201 ( $\text{C}_5\text{H}_9^+$ ,  $m/z$  69) and MACR and MVK ( $\text{C}_4\text{H}_7\text{O}^+$ ,  $m/z$  71) were calculated as the signal of each ion



202 (counts per seconds) normalized to the total ion signal of  $\text{H}_3\text{O}^+$ . The instrument sensitivities  
203 towards isoprene, MACR and MVK were calibrated with a mixture of diluted gas standards. The  
204 instrument sensitivity towards MACR is identical to that of MVK, and as a result, the measured  
205  $\text{C}_4\text{H}_7\text{O}^+$  signal represents the sum of MACR and MVK in the sampling air. Since artifacts in the  
206 measured  $\text{C}_4\text{H}_7\text{O}^+$  signal can be produced through thermal decomposition of isoprene oxidation  
207 products, such as the peroxides, nitrates, and epoxides, on contact with hot metal surface (Liu et  
208 al., 2013; Nguyen et al., 2014; Rivera-Rios et al., 2014), a cold-trap system was used to avoid  
209 bias in the interpretation of the PTR-MS data. Specifically, a 1 m section of Teflon tubing was  
210 submerged in a low temperature ethanol bath ( $-40\pm 2$  °C) that could trap oxidized products less  
211 volatile than the authentic MACR and MVK standards after steady state was established in the  
212 chamber. The quantification of the sum of MACR and MVK was then based on the PTR-MS  
213 measured  $\text{C}_4\text{H}_7\text{O}^+$  ( $m/z$  71) signal downstream of the cold-trap.

### 214 3. Kinetic Modeling

215 Reaction kinetics and mechanisms for the gas-phase photochemistry were extracted from the  
216 Master Chemical Mechanism (MCMv3.3.1, accessible at <http://mcm.leeds.ac.uk/MCM/>). The  
217 inorganic reaction scheme includes 21 species and 48 reactions; and the isoprene oxidation  
218 system includes 611 species and 1974 reactions. The kinetic schemes were implemented in  
219 Matlab (Mathworks) to simulate the temporal profile of a given compound  $i$  in the chamber  
220 operated in the steady state continuous flow mode:

$$221 \quad \frac{dC_i}{dt} \cdot \tau = C_{i,0} + P_i - C_i - \sum k_i \cdot \tau \cdot C_i \quad (\text{Eq1})$$

222 where  $C_i$  ( $\text{molec cm}^{-3}$ ) is the gas-phase concentration of compound  $i$  in the well-mixed core of  
223 the chamber;  $C_{i,0}$  ( $\text{molec cm}^{-3}$ ) is the initial gas-phase concentration of compound  $i$  in the  
224 injection flow;  $k_i$  ( $\text{s}^{-1}$ ) is the pseudo-1<sup>st</sup>-order rate coefficient for a chemical reaction that  
225 consumes compound  $i$ ;  $\tau$  (s) is the chamber mean residence time and can be calculated as the  
226 total chamber volume divided by the incoming/outgoing flow rate; and  $P_i$  ( $\text{molec cm}^{-3}$ ) is the  
227 increment in the concentration of compound  $i$  through chemical production during one residence  
228 time. Note that two terms are neglected in Equation (1), i.e., organic vapor condensation onto  
229 particles and deposition on the chamber wall. This is a reasonable simplification here owing to  
230 the relatively high volatility ( $\geq 10^{-1}$  atm) of compounds studied. Incorporation of these two terms  
231 into Equation (1) is feasible given the vapor pressure of compound  $i$ , suspended particle size  
232 distribution, gas-particle and gas-wall partitioning coefficient, accommodation coefficients of  
233 compound  $i$  on particles and walls, and the effective absorbing organic masses on the wall  
234 (Zhang et al., 2014a; Zhang et al., 2015b; Huang et al., 2016; McVay et al., 2016; Nah et al.,  
235 2016).

236 Model simulations used for comparison with chamber measurements were initialized using  
237 experimental conditions summarized in Table S1 in the Supplement. Model input parameters for  
238 all simulations include temperature (295 at dark and 306 K under irradiation), local pressure  
239 ( $8.6 \times 10^4$  Pa), relative humidity (8% at dark and 5% under irradiation), light intensity  
240 ( $J_{\text{NO}_2} = 1.27 \times 10^{-3} \text{ s}^{-1}$  under irradiation and 0 at dark), chamber mean residence time (4.17 h), and  
241 input mixing ratios of  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  (0.11–16.2 ppm for photolytic experiments), NO (0.1–100 ppb for  
242 photolytic experiments and 10–20 ppb for dark experiments),  $\text{O}_3$  (22–225 ppb for dark  
243 experiments), HCHO (0–600 ppb for dark experiments), and isoprene (19.9 ppb for photolytic



244 experiments and 10.2 ppb for dark experiments). The model was propagated numerically for 25 h  
245 duration for each experiment.

## 246 4. Results and Discussions

### 247 4.1 Optimal operating conditions for daytime photochemistry

248 Figure 1 shows the model predicted steady-state mixing ratios of OH, HO<sub>2</sub>, NO<sub>3</sub>, NO, NO<sub>2</sub>,  
249 and O<sub>3</sub> in the chamber after 20 hours of photochemical reactions as a function of the H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> and  
250 NO concentrations in the continuous injection flow. Six blank chamber experiments were  
251 compared with simulations. In general, the model captures the evolution patterns of NO<sub>x</sub> and O<sub>3</sub>  
252 well. The predicted mixing ratios of NO, NO<sub>2</sub>, and O<sub>3</sub> agree within 69%, 11%, and 33%,  
253 respectively, with the measurements (see Table S1 and Figure S1 in the Supplement). The  
254 relatively large NO uncertainties originate from the measurements that were performed close to  
255 the instrument detection limit (0.5 ppb).

256 Simulated steady-state mixing ratios of OH radicals ([OH]<sub>ss</sub>) range from  $\sim 5 \times 10^5$  to  $\sim 4 \times 10^6$   
257 molec cm<sup>-3</sup>, which over  $\sim 4$  hours chamber residence time would be roughly equivalent to  $\sim 1$  h to  
258  $\sim 8$  h of atmospheric OH exposure ( $1 \times 10^6$  molec cm<sup>-3</sup>). As expected, [OH]<sub>ss</sub> increases with  
259 increasing NO influxes due to the enhanced NO<sub>x</sub>/O<sub>3</sub> cycling but decreases with increasing H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>  
260 influxes owing to the overwhelming reaction  $\text{OH} + \text{H}_2\text{O}_2 \rightarrow \text{H}_2\text{O} + \text{HO}_2$ . As a consequence, the  
261 steady-state mixing ratios of HO<sub>2</sub> radicals ([HO<sub>2</sub>]<sub>ss</sub>) reach up to  $\sim 7 \times 10^9$  molec cm<sup>-3</sup> when 16.2  
262 ppm H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> is continuously injected into the chamber. If 110 ppb H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> is used instead, the  
263 resulting [HO<sub>2</sub>]<sub>ss</sub> levels fall close to the ambient range ( $\sim 10^8$  molec cm<sup>-3</sup>).

264 Simulated steady-state NO mixing ratios in the chamber range from  $\sim 2$  ppt to  $\sim 0.9$  ppb from  
265 combinations of 0.1–20 ppb NO and 0.11–16.22 ppm H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> in the injection flow. The ratio of  
266 inflow NO concentration to the steady-state NO concentration in the chamber ranges from 5 to  
267 93, demonstrating the importance of chemical removal in controlling the overall steady-state NO  
268 levels. O<sub>3</sub> accumulation is an inevitable consequence under photolytic conditions and, for  
269 example, the presence of 10 ppb O<sub>3</sub> leads to the chemical removal term ( $k_{\text{O}_3+\text{NO}} \cdot [\text{O}_3] \cdot \tau$ ) in  
270 Equation (1) that reduces the steady-state NO concentration by a factor of 60. It is worth noting  
271 that under all simulated conditions in the continuous flow mode, O<sub>3</sub> ( $\sim 1$ –126 ppb) coexists with  
272 NO ( $\sim 0.002$ –0.9 ppb). This particular chemical scenario, which is impossible to achieve in  
273 batch-mode reactors due to prompt conversion of NO to NO<sub>2</sub>, could then be used to mimic  
274 ambient ozonolysis chemistry, for example, in forest regions that frequently encounter polluted  
275 air masses from nearby urban areas. The steady-state mixing ratios of NO<sub>2</sub> ([NO<sub>2</sub>]<sub>ss</sub>) exhibit a  
276 strong linear correlation with NO influxes. The use of less than 20 ppb NO in the injection flow  
277 results in a few to tens of ppb [NO<sub>2</sub>]<sub>ss</sub> that is higher than the range typically found in the ambient.  
278 The potential ‘quenching’ effect of NO<sub>2</sub> on RO<sub>2</sub> radicals through reversible termolecular  
279 reactions is discussed shortly.

280 In the so-called ‘high-NO<sub>x</sub>’ chamber experiments, the NO<sub>3</sub> radical is an unavoidable side-  
281 product when black lights are used as a representative of the solar radiation in mimicking the  
282 daytime photochemistry in the troposphere. The photolysis of NO<sub>3</sub>, although its primary sink in  
283 the atmosphere, proceeds rather slowly ( $J_{\text{NO}_3} \sim 1.8 \times 10^{-3} \text{ s}^{-1}$ ) under the present chamber  
284 photolytic conditions, thereby leading to a significant accumulation of NO<sub>3</sub> radicals  
285 ( $7.9 \times 10^4$ – $2.8 \times 10^8$  molec cm<sup>-3</sup>) at steady state. The simulated NO<sub>3</sub>/OH ratio dictates the extent to



286 which the  $\text{NO}_3$  (nighttime) chemistry competes with the OH-initiated (daytime) photochemistry.  
287 For compounds that are highly reactive towards  $\text{NO}_3$  such as isoprene,  $\text{NO}_3$ -initiated oxidation  
288 accounts for up to ~60% of the overall isoprene degradation pathways at the highest  $\text{NO}_3/\text{OH}$   
289 ratio (~255) simulated. Low concentrations of NO (< 20 ppb) and  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  (< 2 ppm) in the  
290 injection flow are therefore necessary to limit the interferences of  $\text{NO}_3$ -initiated chemistry.  
291 Again, taking isoprene as an example, the  $\text{NO}_3$  oxidation pathway contributes less than 0.1% of  
292 the overall isoprene degradation kinetics at the lowest  $\text{NO}_3/\text{OH}$  ratio (~0.13) simulated here.

293 Also given in Figure 1 is the calculated lifetime ( $\tau_{\text{RO}_2}$ ) of an  $\text{RO}_2$  radical with respect to  
294 reactions with NO and  $\text{HO}_2$  at 306 K. In most batch-mode chamber experiments,  $\tau_{\text{RO}_2}$  of only  
295 several seconds or less can be achieved, due to the presence of tens to hundreds of ppb levels of  
296 NO and  $\text{HO}_2$ . Here  $\tau_{\text{RO}_2}$  could extend to 60 s or even longer with the continuous input of low  
297 mixing ratios of  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  ( $\leq 110$  ppb) and NO ( $\leq 0.2$  ppb). Note that the presence of tens of ppb  
298  $\text{NO}_2$  in the chamber might impose a ‘quenching’ effect on the steady state  $\text{RO}_2$  level through  
299 rapid reversible reactions ( $\text{RO}_2 + \text{NO}_2 + \text{M} \leftrightarrow \text{RO}_2\text{NO}_2 + \text{M}$ ). We evaluate this potential ‘quenching  
300 effect’ using ethylperoxy radical ( $\text{C}_2\text{H}_5\text{O}_2$ ) generated from OH-oxidation of ethane as an  
301 example. Simulations shown in Figure S2 in the Supplement reveal that incorporation of the  
302  $\text{C}_2\text{H}_5\text{O}_2 + \text{NO}_2 + \text{M} \leftrightarrow \text{C}_2\text{H}_5\text{O}_2\text{NO}_2 + \text{M}$  reaction into the mechanism in the presence of ~1–80 ppb  
303  $\text{NO}_2$  does not notably change the behavior of  $\text{C}_2\text{H}_5\text{O}_2$  radical. One exception is the peroxyacyl  
304 radical, which combines with  $\text{NO}_2$  yielding peroxyacyl nitrate. For example, under 0.1–16 ppb  
305  $[\text{NO}_2]_{\text{ss}}$  as displayed in Figure 1, we calculate that the time needed for peroxyacetyl radical  
306 ( $\text{CH}_3\text{C}(\text{O})\text{O}_2$ ) to reach equilibrium with peroxyacetyl nitrate  
307 ( $\text{CH}_3\text{C}(\text{O})\text{O}_2 + \text{NO}_2 + \text{M} \leftrightarrow \text{CH}_3\text{C}(\text{O})\text{O}_2\text{NO}_2 + \text{M}$ ) ranges from ~1 to ~10 s, suggesting that the  
308 lifetime of peroxyacyl radicals is ultimately controlled by  $\text{NO}_2$  instead of NO/ $\text{HO}_2$  in the reaction  
309 system, and consequently, peroxyacyl radicals are not expected to be long-lived in the current  
310 chamber configuration.

#### 311 4.2 Application to OH-initiated oxidation of isoprene

312 Methacrolein (MACR) and methyl vinyl ketone (MVK) are major first-generation products  
313 from the OH-initiated oxidation of isoprene in the presence of NO (Wennberg et al., 2017). They  
314 are produced from the decomposition of  $\beta$ -ISOPO alkoxy radicals that are primarily formed from  
315 the reaction of  $\beta$ -ISOPOO peroxy radicals ( $\beta$ -1-OH-2-OO and  $\beta$ -4-OH-3-OO) with NO, see  
316 mechanisms displayed in Figure 2 (A). Reactions of  $\beta$ -ISOPOO peroxy radicals with  $\text{HO}_2$  and  
317  $\text{RO}_2$  also partially yield  $\beta$ -ISOPO alkoxy radicals that ultimately lead to MACR and MVK,  
318 although these pathways are considered to be minor in the presence of hundreds to thousands of  
319 ppt NO in the atmosphere. The molar yields determined from previous studies range from  
320 30–35% for MVK and 20–25% for MACR under high NO conditions ( $\text{NO} > 60$  ppb) (Tuazon  
321 and Atkinson, 1990; Paulson and Seinfeld, 1992; Miyoshi et al., 1994; Ruppert and Becker,  
322 2000; Galloway et al., 2011). It has been recently shown that the six hydroxyl peroxy radicals  
323 (ISOPOO) produced from the initial OH addition to the double bonds of isoprene undergo rapid  
324 interconversion by removal/addition of  $\text{O}_2$  that competes with bimolecular reactions under  
325 atmospherically relevant NO levels (Peeters et al., 2014; Teng et al., 2017). As a result, the  
326 distribution of ISOPOO radical isomers and their subsequent reaction products varies with their  
327 lifetimes with respect to bimolecular reactions. In the presence of hundreds of ppb NO as done  
328 by most previous experimental studies, the reaction of ISOPOO radicals with NO dominates over  
329 their interconversion, and the production of  $\beta$ -ISOPOO peroxy radical is less favored, leading



330 the experiments to underestimate the MACR and MVK yields typically obtained in ambient  
 331 conditions. Measurements by Liu et al. (2013) conducted at NO concentrations comparable to  
 332 the urban environment (~1 ppb) found much higher MACR (~31.8%) and MVK (~44.5%) yields  
 333 than other previous studies.

334 Here we perform a steady-state continuous-mode experiment to measure the production of  
 335 MACR and MVK from the OH-initiated oxidation of isoprene in the presence of ~0.45 ppb NO.  
 336 Figure 3 shows the observed and simulated temporal profiles of NO<sub>x</sub>, O<sub>3</sub>, C<sub>5</sub>H<sub>8</sub>, and C<sub>4</sub>H<sub>6</sub>O over  
 337 24 hours photooxidation of isoprene. In this experiment, C<sub>5</sub>H<sub>8</sub>, H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>, and NO were continuously  
 338 fed into the chamber, with constant inflow concentrations of 19.9 ppb, 600 ppb, and 19 ppb,  
 339 respectively. An outgoing flow at 40 L min<sup>-1</sup> continuously withdrew air from the chamber to  
 340 balance the pressure. After approaching steady state, the sampling tube was submerged into an  
 341 ethanol low temperature bath (-40±2 °C) to trap oxidized products that would otherwise undergo  
 342 thermal decomposition introducing interferences in the C<sub>4</sub>H<sub>7</sub>O<sup>+</sup> (*m/z* 71) signal. The measured  
 343 concentrations of C<sub>5</sub>H<sub>8</sub> and C<sub>4</sub>H<sub>6</sub>O upon cold-trapping agree within 2.8% and 4.6% uncertainties  
 344 with the model simulations, see Fig.3 (C) and (D).

345 To calculate the total molar yield (*Y*<sub>C<sub>4</sub>H<sub>6</sub>O</sub>) of MACR and MVK, two reactions are  
 346 considered:



349 where *k*<sub>1</sub> is the rate constant for OH reaction with isoprene, and *k*<sub>2</sub> is taken as the average of rate  
 350 constants for OH reactions with MACR and MVK. Uncertainties associated with the  
 351 simplification of *k*<sub>2</sub> in calculating the MACR and MVK yields will be discussed shortly. Also  
 352 note that the ozonolysis and NO<sub>3</sub>-initiated oxidation in total account for less than 6% of isoprene  
 353 degradation pathway under current experimental conditions and are neglected in the calculation.

354 In the continuous-mode operation, two mass conservation equations are satisfied at steady  
 355 state:

$$356 \quad \frac{d[\text{C}_5\text{H}_8]_{\text{ss}}}{dt} = [\text{C}_5\text{H}_8]_0/\tau - [\text{C}_5\text{H}_8]_{\text{ss}}/\tau - k_1 \cdot [\text{OH}]_{\text{ss}} \cdot [\text{C}_5\text{H}_8]_{\text{ss}} = 0 \quad (\text{Eq2})$$

$$357 \quad \frac{d[\text{C}_4\text{H}_6\text{O}]_{\text{ss}}}{dt} = Y_{\text{C}_4\text{H}_6\text{O}} \cdot k_1 \cdot [\text{OH}]_{\text{ss}} \cdot [\text{C}_5\text{H}_8]_{\text{ss}} - k_2 \cdot [\text{OH}]_{\text{ss}} \cdot [\text{C}_4\text{H}_6\text{O}]_{\text{ss}} - [\text{C}_4\text{H}_6\text{O}]_{\text{ss}}/\tau = 0 \quad (\text{Eq3})$$

358 where [C<sub>5</sub>H<sub>8</sub>]<sub>ss</sub> and [C<sub>4</sub>H<sub>6</sub>O]<sub>ss</sub> are the PTRMS measured steady-state concentrations of isoprene  
 359 and the sum of MACR and MVK when using the cold trap, respectively, [C<sub>5</sub>H<sub>8</sub>]<sub>0</sub> is the initial  
 360 concentration of isoprene, and τ is the chamber mean residence time and can be calculated as the  
 361 total chamber volume divided by the incoming/outgoing flow rate. The steady state OH radical  
 362 concentration ([OH]<sub>ss</sub>) can be derived by solving Equation (2). The calculated [OH]<sub>ss</sub> (3.13×10<sup>6</sup>  
 363 molec cm<sup>-3</sup>) is 12% higher than the model prediction (2.74×10<sup>6</sup> molec cm<sup>-3</sup>). The molar yield of  
 364 the sum of MACR and MVK from isoprene OH oxidation pathway in the presence of ~0.45 ppb  
 365 NO is thus given by Equation (4) and calculated as 76.7±5.8%:

$$366 \quad Y_{\text{C}_4\text{H}_6\text{O}} = \frac{[\text{C}_4\text{H}_6\text{O}]_{\text{ss}} + k_2 \cdot [\text{OH}]_{\text{ss}} \cdot \tau \cdot [\text{C}_4\text{H}_6\text{O}]_{\text{ss}}}{k_1 \cdot [\text{OH}]_{\text{ss}} \cdot \tau \cdot [\text{C}_5\text{H}_8]_{\text{ss}}} \times f_{\beta\text{-ISOPOO+NO}} \quad (\text{Eq4})$$



367 Here a 5.8% uncertainty originates from the assumption that MACR+OH and MVK+OH  
368 proceed with equal reaction rate, although the rate constant for MVK+OH is ~31% lower than  
369 that of MACR+OH. Another potential uncertainty relates to the accuracy of the simulated steady  
370 state HO<sub>2</sub> and RO<sub>2</sub> concentrations and the contribution of β-ISOPROO+HO<sub>2</sub> and β-ISOPROO+RO<sub>2</sub>  
371 reaction pathways to the overall β-ISOPROO fate. The fraction of β-ISOPROO radicals that reacts  
372 with NO ( $f_{\beta\text{-ISOPROO+NO}}$ ) was predicted as 0.88, which was used here to scale the final  
373 MACR+MVK yield, see Eq(4).

374 In summary, the measured yield of the sum of MACR and MVK in this study is close to that  
375 reported by Liu et al. (2013), but ~27–52% higher than the majority of previous measurements  
376 performed under high NO conditions (NO > 60 ppb). This is consistent with the dynamic nature  
377 of the six ISOPROO radical isomers that undergo rapid interconversion by addition/removal of O<sub>2</sub>.  
378 In the presence of ~0.45 ppb NO as performed in this study, lifetimes of the β-1-OH-2-OO  
379 peroxy radical with respect to reaction with NO and loss of O<sub>2</sub> are estimated as 9.4 s and 0.2 s,  
380 respectively, implying that the rapid interconversion between β-ISOPROO and δ-ISOPROO  
381 radicals essentially governs their distribution, and under such conditions, the production of  
382 thermodynamically more stable β-ISOPROO isomers is favored, leading to higher yields of  
383 MACR and MVK. Here the reported MACR and MVK yield from isoprene OH oxidation in the  
384 presence of ~0.45 ppb NO represents an illustration of chamber operation at steady state  
385 continuous flow mode for the establishment of certain experimental conditions that are not easily  
386 accessible from traditional batch-mode chamber experiments. A complete measurement of first-  
387 generation oxidation products from isoprene OH reaction under a wide range of NO levels  
388 (ISOPROO bimolecular lifetimes) will be forthcoming in a future publication.

### 389 4.3 Optimal operating conditions for nighttime chemistry

390 Figure 4 shows the model simulated steady-state mixing ratios of HO<sub>2</sub>, NO<sub>3</sub>, NO, NO<sub>2</sub>, and  
391 O<sub>3</sub> after 16 hours of dark reactions in the chamber as a function of the HCHO concentration and  
392 O<sub>3</sub>/NO ratio in the continuous chamber inflow. Blank experiments were compared with  
393 simulations in five cases (see Table S1 in the Supplement). The model captures the evolution  
394 patterns of NO<sub>x</sub> and O<sub>3</sub> well. The observed mixing ratios of NO<sub>2</sub> and O<sub>3</sub> agree with the  
395 simulations to within 11% and 6%, respectively (Figure S3 in the Supplement).

396 Compared with the photochemical reaction schemes discussed earlier, the nocturnal  
397 chemistry is rather straightforward; that is, the inflow O<sub>3</sub>/NO ratio governs the steady-state  
398 concentrations of NO<sub>3</sub>, NO<sub>x</sub>, and O<sub>3</sub>, while the inflow HCHO concentration ultimately controls  
399 the steady-state HO<sub>2</sub> level. Increasing the O<sub>3</sub>/NO ratio from 1 to 9 in the continuous inflow leads  
400 to increased NO<sub>3</sub> from 2.4×10<sup>5</sup> to 1.1×10<sup>9</sup> molec cm<sup>-3</sup>, but decreased NO from 1.8 ppb to 20 ppt  
401 and decreased NO<sub>2</sub> from 18 to 7 ppb. At a fixed inflow O<sub>3</sub>/NO ratio, doubling the NO and O<sub>3</sub>  
402 concentrations leads to elevated NO<sub>3</sub>, NO<sub>x</sub>, and O<sub>3</sub> by a factor of 2.0–3.2, 1.5–2.0, and 1.4–2.0,  
403 respectively. The use of HCHO as an effective dark HO<sub>2</sub> source does not significantly impact the  
404 steady-state mixing ratios of NO<sub>x</sub> and O<sub>3</sub>, but slightly weakens the NO<sub>3</sub> production.

405 The calculated RO<sub>2</sub> lifetime ( $\tau_{\text{RO}_2}$ ) with respect to reactions with NO, NO<sub>3</sub>, and HO<sub>2</sub> at 295  
406 K ranges from 3 to 225 s. The highest  $\tau_{\text{RO}_2}$  was achieved in the absence of any HCHO source  
407 and corresponds to a chemical regime that can be employed to study the intramolecular  
408 isomerization (autoxidation) pathway of RO<sub>2</sub> radicals, if any. Adding a continuous flow of  
409 HCHO to the system leads to the production of 10<sup>7</sup>–10<sup>9</sup> molec cm<sup>-3</sup> HO<sub>2</sub> radicals that then



410 constitute a significant sink of RO<sub>2</sub> radicals and represents prevailing forest environments during  
411 nighttime.

#### 412 4.4 Application to NO<sub>3</sub>-initiated oxidation of isoprene

413 NO<sub>3</sub>-initiated oxidation of isoprene proceeds by the NO<sub>3</sub> addition to the carbon double  
414 bonds followed by O<sub>2</sub> addition, yielding six distinct nitrooxy peroxy radicals (INOO), including  
415 two isomers (β-INOO) with O<sub>2</sub> added on the β-carbon to the nitrate group (see Figure 2B for  
416 schematic illustration). The β-INOO radicals react further with NO<sub>3</sub>, HO<sub>2</sub>, NO, and RO<sub>2</sub>,  
417 producing nitrooxy alkoxy radicals (β-INO) with molar yields of 1.00, 0.53, 0.97, and 0.40,  
418 respectively (Wennberg et al., 2017). The further decomposition of β-INO radicals produces  
419 MACR and MVK, together with HCHO and NO<sub>2</sub>. Depending on the actual fate of β-INOO  
420 radicals, the yields of β-INO radicals can then vary from 0.4 to 1.0, resulting in a distinct  
421 distribution of final oxidation products. It is thus important to specify the ultimate fate of INOO  
422 radicals during quantification of oxidation products from isoprene reaction with NO<sub>3</sub>. As an  
423 illustration, we performed one continuous mode experiment that targets on controlling the  
424 steady-state fate of INOO radicals to be their reaction with NO and HO<sub>2</sub> (46% and 38% INOO  
425 radicals are predicted to react with NO and HO<sub>2</sub>, respectively, as shown in Fig.5). Note that by  
426 adjusting the concentrations and fractions of inflow reactants (O<sub>3</sub>, NO, HCHO, and C<sub>5</sub>H<sub>8</sub>),  
427 different chemical fates and lifetimes of INOO radicals can be achieved.

428 Figure 5 shows the observed and predicted temporal profiles of NO<sub>x</sub>, O<sub>3</sub>, C<sub>5</sub>H<sub>8</sub>, and C<sub>4</sub>H<sub>6</sub>O  
429 over 25 hours of isoprene oxidation by NO<sub>3</sub>, with continuous input of 10.2 ppb C<sub>5</sub>H<sub>8</sub>, 205 ppb  
430 O<sub>3</sub>, and 59 ppb NO into the chamber and a balancing outgoing flow at 40 L min<sup>-1</sup> carrying well-  
431 mixed reactants and products. It took >16 hours to reach steady state for all the species  
432 displayed. In general, the model captures the trends of O<sub>3</sub> and NO well, while underpredicting  
433 the steady state NO<sub>2</sub> by ~26%. After ~18 hours of dark reaction, the PTR-MS sampling tubing  
434 was submerged into an ethanol cold bath (-40±2 °C) to trap artifacts in the PTR-MS measured  
435 C<sub>4</sub>H<sub>7</sub>O<sup>+</sup> (*m/z* 71) signal. The simulated steady-state concentration of isoprene agrees within 9%  
436 with the measurements. The derived concentration of the sum of MACR and MVK from the  
437 measured C<sub>4</sub>H<sub>7</sub>O<sup>+</sup> ion intensity upon cold-trapping is ~1.1 ppb, which is ~129% higher than the  
438 model predictions (~0.48 ppb). This disagreement can be attributed, to a large extent, to the  
439 oversimplified representation of the six different INOO radicals as one δ-INOO isomer in the  
440 MCMv3.3.1 mechanism. As a result, the production of β-INOO radical, the important precursor  
441 of MACR and MVK, from NO<sub>3</sub>-initiated oxidation of isoprene is suppressed in the simulations.  
442 The measured molar yield of the sum of MACR and MVK is 36.3±12.1%, with uncertainties  
443 arising from the fact that 10.5% isoprene is predicted to react with OH as an additional source of  
444 MACR and MVK. Using this value, the fraction of β-INOO over the sum of nitrooxy peroxy  
445 radicals is estimated as 48.6±16.2%, which is close to that (~46.3%) reported by Schwantes et al.  
446 (2015), although the estimated bimolecular lifetime of INOO radical in that study (~30 s) is  
447 lower than that predicted in the present work (~50 s). As discussed above, the hydroxyl peroxy  
448 radicals produced from OH-oxidation of isoprene could undergo rapid interconversion through  
449 addition/removal of O<sub>2</sub> at atmospherically relevant lifetimes. This interconversion significantly  
450 impacts the subsequent chemistry of individual ISOPOO radical isomers in terms of reaction  
451 rates and product distributions. It is likely that the INOO radicals follow similar interconversion  
452 due to the small R-OO bond dissociation energy, although no experimental evidence exists. A  
453 full examination of the INOO chemistry, i.e., their kinetic and thermodynamic properties as well



454 as their chemical fate at different lifetimes, will be the focus of future studies using this  
455 continuous flow chamber operation method.

## 456 5. Conclusions

457 We report here the development and characterization of the NCAR Atmospheric Simulation  
458 Chamber operated at steady state continuous flow mode for simulating daytime and nocturnal  
459 chemistry under atmospherically relevant NO levels. The chamber is designed to achieve a well-  
460 controlled steady-state environment by continuous inflow of reactants and continuous  
461 withdrawal of reactor contents. We use a combination of kinetic modeling and chamber  
462 experiments to characterize the ‘intermediate-NO’ chemical regime (tens of ppt to a few ppb)  
463 that can be achieved by precisely controlling the inlet reactant concentrations and the  
464 mixing/residence timescales of the chamber.

465 To mimic daytime photochemistry, continuous input of H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> and NO gases is required,  
466 resulting in steady state OH mixing ratios of 10<sup>5</sup>–10<sup>6</sup> molec cm<sup>-3</sup> under irradiation. Under such  
467 conditions, the lifetime of a peroxy radical with respect to reaction with NO and HO<sub>2</sub> can be  
468 extended to 60 s or even longer, thus providing a unique environment to study all reaction  
469 possibilities of RO<sub>2</sub> radicals including the intramolecular isomerization (autoxidation) pathway.  
470 When studying OH-initiated chemistry, care needs to be taken to avoid a range of experimental  
471 conditions (e.g., inflow H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> > 2 ppm and NO > 20 ppb) where NO<sub>3</sub>-oxidation might account for  
472 a large fraction of the overall degradation pathway of certain parent hydrocarbons such as  
473 alkenes.

474 To mimic nighttime chemistry, continuous input of NO (or NO<sub>2</sub>) and O<sub>3</sub> is needed to  
475 produce steady state NO<sub>3</sub> radicals in the range of 10<sup>6</sup>–10<sup>9</sup> molec cm<sup>-3</sup> in the dark. Under such  
476 conditions, an RO<sub>2</sub> radical can live up to 4 min prior to finding a bimolecular reaction partner  
477 (e.g., NO, NO<sub>3</sub>, and HO<sub>2</sub>), which were the dominant fates of RO<sub>2</sub> radicals in most batch-mode  
478 chamber experiments. Again, the long lifetime of RO<sub>2</sub> radicals achieved by the steady state  
479 continuous mode operation opens an avenue for close examination of RO<sub>2</sub> unimolecular  
480 (isomerization) pathways in nocturnal environments.

481 In simulating both daytime and nighttime chemistry with continuous flow operation method,  
482 O<sub>3</sub> accumulation is unavoidable. The extent to which ozonolysis interferes with OH- or NO<sub>3</sub>-  
483 initiated oxidation chemistry depends on the steady state O<sub>3</sub> concentration achieved in the  
484 chamber and its reactivity towards various parent VOCs. Taking isoprene as an example,  
485 ozonolysis accounts for <1% and <0.1% of the overall isoprene degradation kinetics,  
486 respectively, under established steady-state photolytic and dark conditions described above.

487 In atmospheric chemistry, the terms ‘zero-NO’ versus ‘high-NO’ have been widely used to  
488 classify photooxidation conditions and delineate the gas-phase fate of the peroxy radicals (RO<sub>2</sub>)  
489 generated from VOCs oxidation (Cappa et al., 2013; Zhang and Seinfeld, 2013; Loza et al.,  
490 2014; Schilling Fahnstock et al., 2014; Zhang et al., 2014b; Krechmer et al., 2015; Nguyen et  
491 al., 2015; Zhang et al., 2015a; Riva et al., 2016; Schwantes et al., 2017). In the so-called ‘high-  
492 NO’ regime, reaction with NO dominates the fate of RO<sub>2</sub> radicals, whereas in the ‘zero-NO’  
493 regime, the RO<sub>2</sub> radicals primarily undergo reaction with HO<sub>2</sub> and, perhaps to a much lesser  
494 degree, self/cross-combination. The importance of the ‘intermediate-NO’ regime lies in the fact  
495 that at sub-ppb levels of NO, the RO<sub>2</sub>+NO and RO<sub>2</sub>+HO<sub>2</sub> reactions are expected to co-exist and  
496 the RO<sub>2</sub> radical could survive up to several minutes before encountering a partner (NO/HO<sub>2</sub>) for



497 bimolecular reactions. Under such conditions, the RO<sub>2</sub> radical isomers may undergo  
498 interconversion by addition/removal of O<sub>2</sub> and intramolecular isomerization (autoxidation)  
499 through H-shift. Here we use isoprene as an illustrative VOC to explore the fate of RO<sub>2</sub> radicals  
500 under sub-ppb NO. Future work will focus on detailed characterization of oxidation products  
501 from isoprene day- and nighttime chemistry with particular attention given to the controlled RO<sub>2</sub>  
502 fates and lifetimes.

### 503 **Data Availability**

504 Data presented in this manuscript are available upon request to the corresponding author.

### 505 **Competing interests**

506 The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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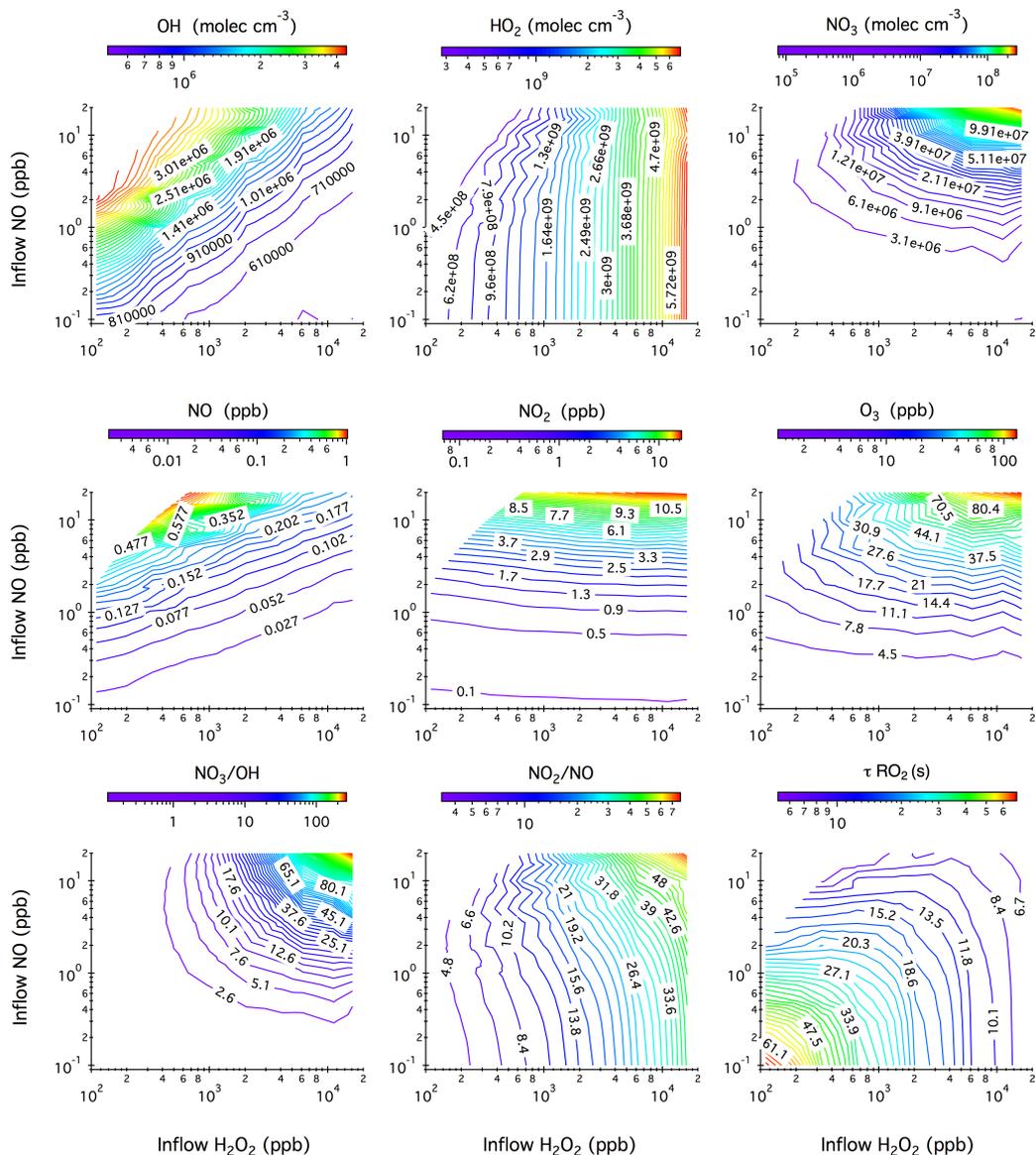


Figure 1. Contour plots showing the model predicted steady-state mixing ratios of OH, HO<sub>2</sub>, NO<sub>3</sub>, NO, NO<sub>2</sub>, and O<sub>3</sub> after 20 hours of photochemical reactions in the chamber as a function of the concentrations of H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> and NO in the continuous injection flow. Also given here are the simulated NO<sub>3</sub> to OH ratio, NO<sub>2</sub> to NO ratio, and the lifetime of an RO<sub>2</sub> radical ( $\tau_{RO_2}$ ) with respect to reactions with NO and HO<sub>2</sub>. Note that the ripples on the contour lines originate from the limited simulation datasets that are used to generate iso-response values.

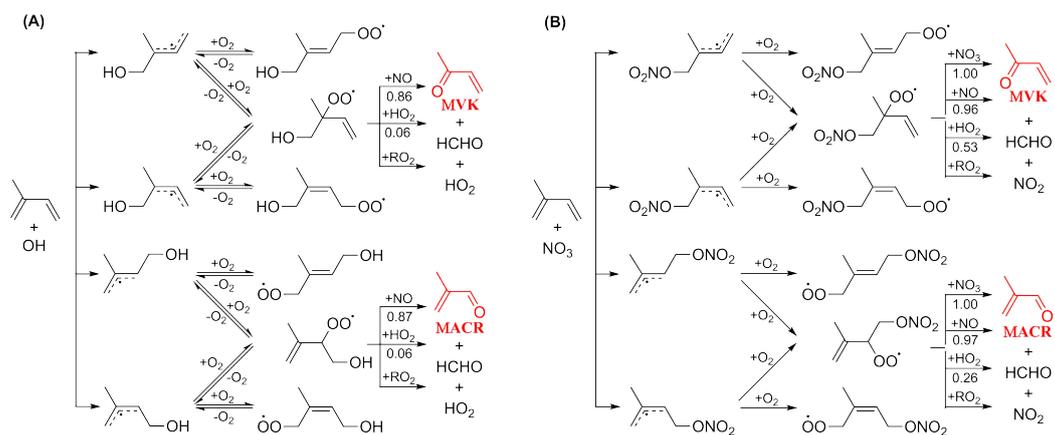


Figure 2. Representative mechanism for (A) OH- and (B) NO<sub>3</sub>-initiated oxidation of isoprene that leads to the formation of MACR and MVK.

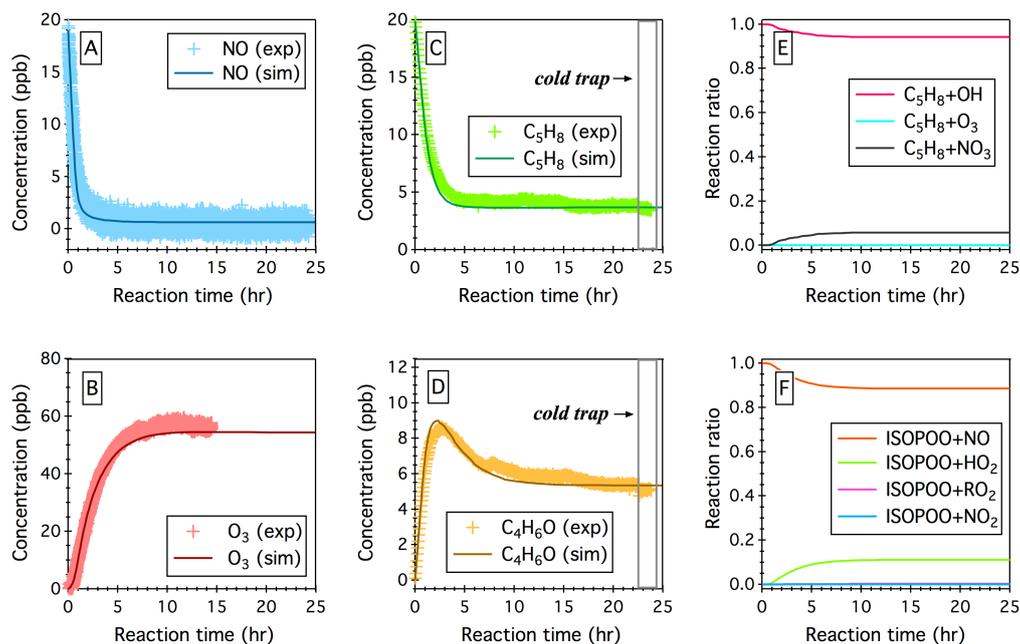


Figure 3. Simulated (sim.) and observed (exp.) temporal profiles of (A) NO, (B) O<sub>3</sub>, (C) isoprene (C<sub>5</sub>H<sub>8</sub>), and (D) the sum of MACR and MVK (C<sub>4</sub>H<sub>6</sub>O) over 24 hours OH-initiated oxidation of isoprene in the continuous-flow mode chamber operation. Also displayed here include (E) simulated fractions of OH-oxidation, ozonolysis, and NO<sub>3</sub>-oxidation as the removal pathways of isoprene, and (F) simulated fractions of ISOPROO radicals that react with NO, HO<sub>2</sub>, RO<sub>2</sub>, and NO<sub>3</sub>. Time 0 is the point at which the chamber lights are turned on. Initial experimental conditions are 19 ppb NO, 0 ppb NO<sub>2</sub>, 0 ppb O<sub>3</sub>, 600 ppb H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>, and 19.9 ppb C<sub>5</sub>H<sub>8</sub>, with continuous input of 600 ppb H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>, 19 ppb NO, and 19.9 ppb C<sub>5</sub>H<sub>8</sub> over the course of 24 hour photochemical reactions.

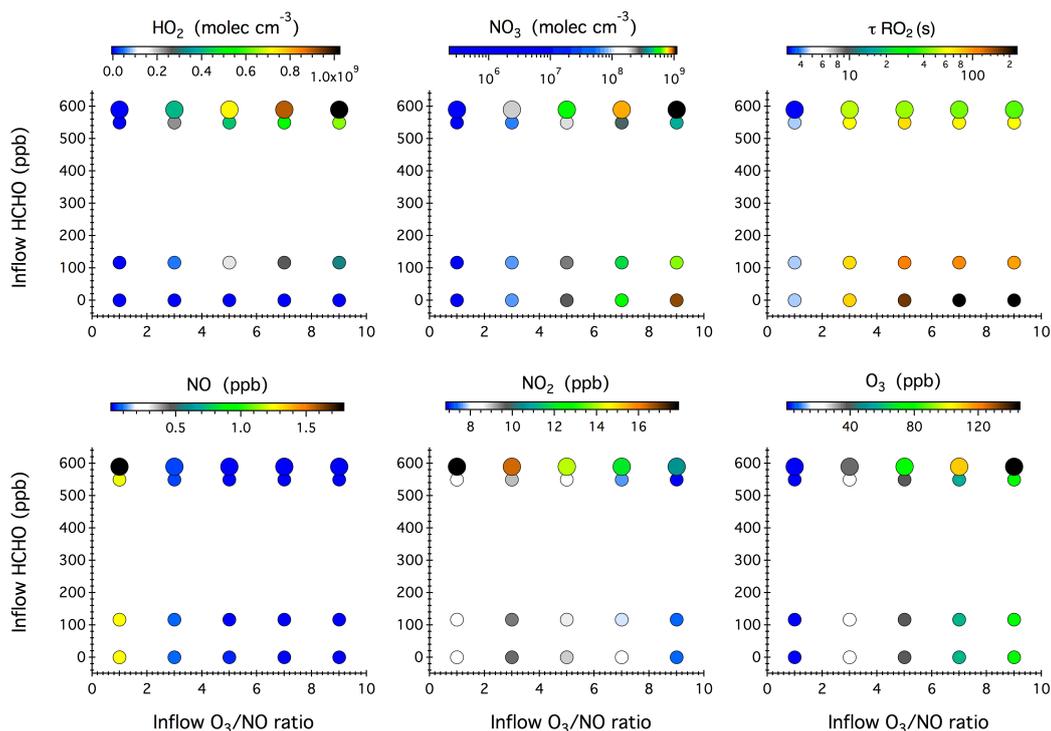


Figure 4. Simulated steady-state mixing ratios of  $\text{HO}_2$ ,  $\text{NO}_3$ ,  $\text{NO}$ ,  $\text{NO}_2$ , and  $\text{O}_3$  after 16 hours of dark reactions in the chamber as a function of the concentrations of  $\text{NO}$  and  $\text{O}_3$  in the continuous injection flow. The symbol size denotes different inflow  $\text{NO}$  concentrations, i.e., 10 ppb and 20 ppb. Also given here is the calculated lifetime of an  $\text{RO}_2$  radical ( $\tau_{\text{RO}_2}$ ) with respect to reactions with  $\text{NO}$ ,  $\text{NO}_3$ , and  $\text{HO}_2$ .

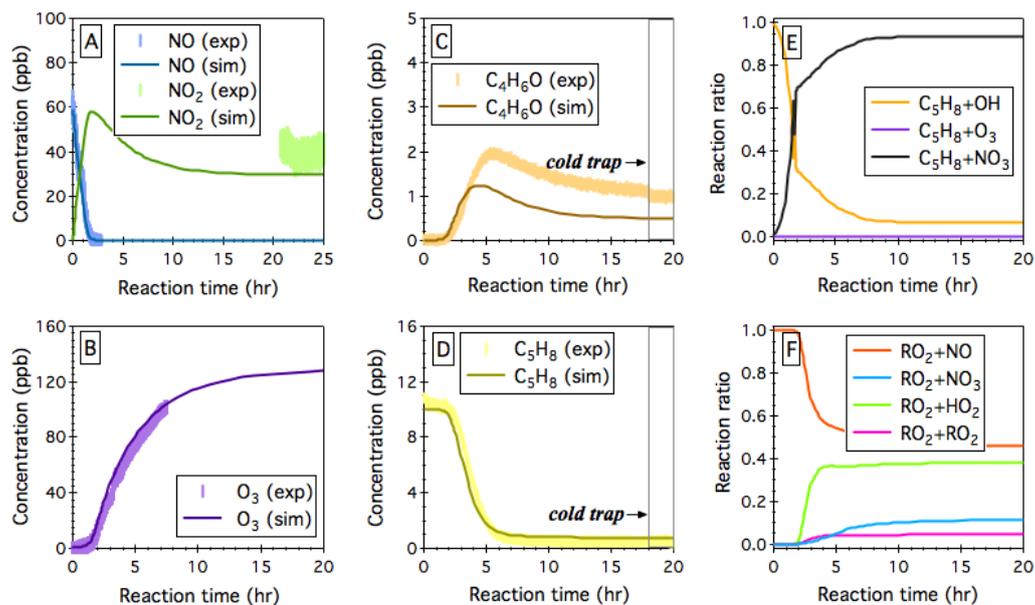


Figure 5. Simulated (sim.) and observed (exp.) evolution patterns of (A)  $\text{NO}_x$ , (B)  $\text{O}_3$ , (C) the sum of MACR and MVK ( $\text{C}_4\text{H}_6\text{O}$ ), and (D) isoprene ( $\text{C}_5\text{H}_8$ ) over 25 hours  $\text{NO}_3$ -initiated oxidation of isoprene under continuous-flow mode chamber operation. The fractions of isoprene that react with OH,  $\text{O}_3$ , and  $\text{NO}_3$  are given in panel (E), and the fractions of INOO radical that undergo bimolecular reactions with NO,  $\text{NO}_3$ ,  $\text{HO}_2$ , and  $\text{RO}_2$  are given in panel (F). Initial experimental conditions are 0 ppb  $\text{O}_3$ , 59 ppb  $\text{NO}_x$ , and 10.2 ppb  $\text{C}_5\text{H}_8$ , with continuous input of 205 ppb  $\text{O}_3$ , 59 ppb  $\text{NO}$ , and 10.2 ppb  $\text{C}_5\text{H}_8$  over the course of 25 hour dark reactions.