

# A new smog chamber system for atmospheric multiphase chemistry study: design and characterization

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39 **Abstract.** Multiphase chemistry is an important pathway for the formation of secondary organic aerosols  
40 in the atmosphere. In this study, an indoor 2 m<sup>3</sup> Teflon chamber system (Aerosol multiPhase chemistry  
41 Research chamber, AIR) was developed and characterized to specifically simulate atmospheric  
42 multiphase chemistry processes. The temperature and humidity controls, diurnal variation simulation,  
43 and seed particle generation unit in this chamber system were designed to meet the needs of simulating  
44 multiphase atmospheric chemical reactions. The AIR chamber is able to accurately control temperature  
45 (2.5 ~ 31 ± 0.15 °C) and relative humidity (RH < 2 % ~ > 95% ± 0.75%) over a relatively broad range.  
46 In addition, an RH regulation module inside the chamber was designed to simulate the diurnal variation  
47 of ambient atmospheric RH. The aerosol generation unit is able to generate pre-deliquescent seed  
48 particles with an organic coating across a wide range of phase states or morphologies. The organic  
49 coating thickness of the aerosols within the chamber can be precisely controlled through adjusting the  
50 condensation temperature, further helping to elucidate the roles of seed particles in multiphase chemical  
51 reactions. The inner walls of the AIR chamber are passivated to reduce the wall loss rates of reactive  
52 gases. Yield experiments of  $\alpha$ -pinene ozonolysis with and without seed particles combined with a box  
53 model simulation demonstrate the high-quality performance of secondary aerosol formation simulation  
54 using the AIR chamber.

## 55 **1 Introduction**

56 Smog chamber is a mainstream tool in chemical laboratory studies to simulate the formation and  
57 evolution of air pollutants (Batchvarova et al., 2006; Chen and Lelevkin, 2006; Kolev and Grigorjeva,  
58 2006; Mocanu et al., 2006; Tolkacheva, 2006) and reveal the parameterization or mechanisms of  
59 atmospheric processes (Wenger, 2006; Olariu et al., 2006; Bejan et al., 2006; Mellouki, 2006; Barnes,  
60 2006; Albu et al., 2006; Carter, 2006; Rudzinski, 2006; Zielinska et al., 2006). Chamber simulations have  
61 irreplaceable advantages over other laboratory methods such as oxidation flow reactors (Kang et al.,  
62 2007; Lambe et al., 2015; Corral Arroyo et al., 2018; Cosman and Bertram, 2008) and bulk solution  
63 experiments (Brunamonti et al., 2015; Turšič et al., 2003; Pratap et al., 2021; Fleming et al., 2020; Mekić  
64 et al., 2019) in tracking atmospheric transformation processes and understanding kinetic processes.

65 The development of chambers is closely related to advances in atmospheric chemistry research. Starting  
66 with studies of photochemical smog in Los Angeles in the 1940s (Haagensmit, 1952) and continuing to  
67 the 1970s, chambers were designed primarily to study the formation of ozone (Akimoto et al., 1979;  
68 Carter et al., 1982) as well as the chemistry of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and NO<sub>x</sub> (Morriss et  
69 al., 1957) in the atmospheric boundary layer. With the development of submicron particle measurement  
70 techniques, chambers were further used in secondary organic aerosol (SOA) formation studies from the  
71 1980s leading to numerous important scientific discoveries (Hidy, 2019; Odum et al., 1996; Odum et al.,  
72 1997; Griffin et al., 1999; Paulsen et al., 2005; Rollins et al., 2009; Hu et al., 2014; Wang et al., 2014).

73 Since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, many chambers have been built or upgraded to address integrated  
74 atmospheric scientific questions, including PM<sub>2.5</sub> pollution (Johnson et al., 2004; Hallquist et al., 2009;  
75 Hurley et al., 2001), reaction kinetic parameters, mechanisms of VOC oxidation intermediates (Brauers  
76 et al., 2003; Bohn et al., 2004; Ren et al., 2017), as well as multiphase processes (Warneke and C., 2004;  
77 Pöschl and Shiraiwa, 2015; Liu and Abbatt, 2021; Franco et al., 2021).

78 In recent years, multiphase chemistries have been invoked to explain the bursting growth of particles (Su  
79 et al., 2016; Wang et al., 2016; Su et al., 2020) and physicochemical processes of SOA formation under  
80 high ion strength conditions in the atmosphere (Cheng et al., 2015; Su et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2021).  
81 Atmospheric multiphase processes can undergo different reaction pathways that are influenced by  
82 different environmental conditions (e.g., light, temperature, and relative humidity (RH)) and aerosol  
83 physicochemical properties including aerosol liquid water content (ALWC), aerosol phase state, and  
84 morphology (George and Abbatt, 2010; Davidovits et al., 2011; Abbatt et al., 2012; Ziemann and  
85 Atkinson, 2012; Herrmann et al., 2015; Ravishankara, 1997; George et al., 2015; Su et al., 2020). Thus,  
86 a precise control of such parameters in a chamber system is vital for simulating atmospheric multiphase  
87 chemistry. Different from outdoor chambers (Leone et al., 2010; Stern et al., 1987; Pandis et al., 1991;  
88 Johnson et al., 2004; Martin-Reviejo and Wirtz, 2005; Rollins et al., 2009; Cocker et al., 2001; Peng et  
89 al., 2017), indoor chambers are usually equipped with artificial light sources (Takekawa et al., 2003;  
90 Carter et al., 2005; Paulsen et al., 2005), that can provide controllable irradiation for the simulation of  
91 multiphase processes. Compared to large chambers (Brauers et al., 2003; Leone et al., 1985; Pandis et  
92 al., 1991), temperature and RH inside small chambers can achieve faster equilibria and provide a more  
93 precise simulation of parameters such as diurnal RH change and ALWC (Takekawa et al., 2003; Carter  
94 et al., 2005; Paulsen et al., 2005; Wang et al., 2014; Bin Babar et al., 2016), thus improving  
95 reproducibility and efficiency when conducting experiments. In addition, small chambers may have the  
96 potential for controlling RH change and simulating co-condensation phenomena. Adversely, the wall loss  
97 effects are more significant for small chambers (Carter et al., 1982; Carter and Lurmann, 1991; Dodge,  
98 2000). The influence of aerosol phase state on kinetics of gas-particle interactions has received increasing  
99 attention (Virtanen et al., 2010; Berkemeier et al., 2016; Wang et al., 2015a; Reid et al., 2018), and this  
100 requires the phase state of seed particles can be controlled in chamber simulations. A laboratory study  
101 using pre-deliquescence way to control particle phase state has been reported (Faust et al., 2017),  
102 providing a feasible way for phase state control. In regard of particle morphology, some chamber-based

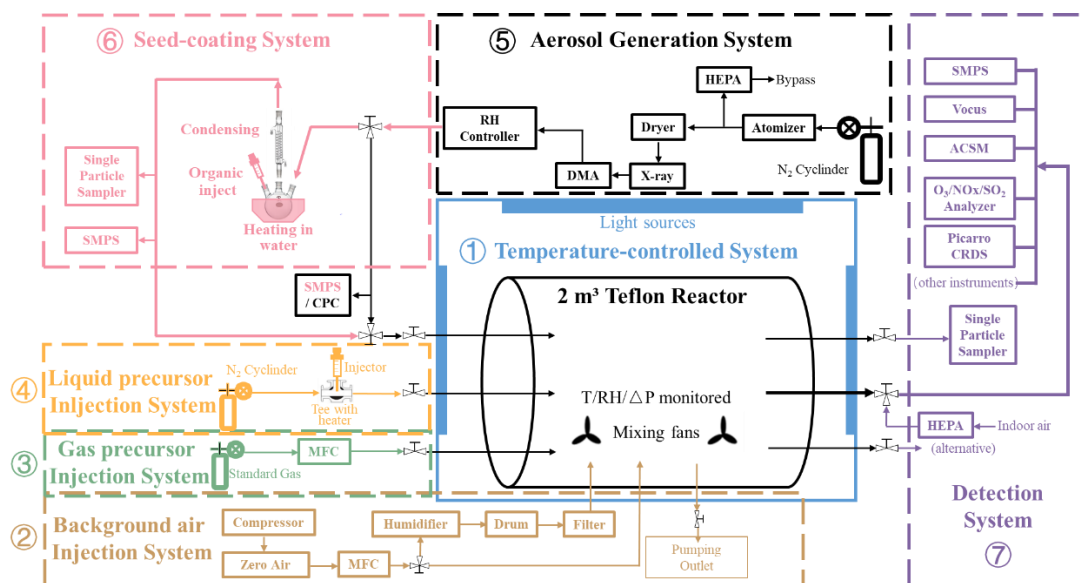
103 experimental studies in recent years have preliminarily shown that organic coatings have important  
104 effects on the kinetics of aerosol multiphase transformation (Zhou et al., 2019; Zhang et al., 2018; Zhang  
105 et al., 2019), which deserves more researches. As these studies showed evidence that the morphology  
106 and phase state of aerosol particles play important roles in the atmospheric multiphase chemistry  
107 processes, focused chamber studies on multiphase chemistry require additional steps to control the  
108 morphology and phase state of seed particles in chamber design.

109 In this study, we designed and built a new indoor 2 m<sup>3</sup> Teflon chamber system (Aerosol multiphase  
110 process Research chamber, AIR) with a focus on accurately simulating atmospheric multiphase processes.  
111 The temperature and RH inside the AIR chamber were precisely controlled to within  $\pm 0.15$  °C and  $\pm$   
112 0.75 %, respectively. A quantitative manipulation of the RH cycle was designed to simulate the diurnal  
113 variations in ambient RH. The seed generation subsystem, including an inorganic particle pre-  
114 deliquescence unit and an organic-coating unit, was designed to manipulate the aerosol phase state and  
115 organic-coated morphology. A series of experiments were conducted to characterize the spectral  
116 distribution and photolysis parameters of light sources, temperature, RH, wall loss behaviors of gas and  
117 particles, and particle morphology. Additionally, a series of experiments involving the oxidation of  $\alpha$ -  
118 pinene with seed particles were conducted in the AIR chamber to demonstrate the effectiveness of the  
119 chamber in simulating atmospheric multiphase chemistry. Our results indicate that the AIR chamber  
120 system has more precise temperature and RH control capabilities compared to other chambers. Phase  
121 state and morphology of seed particles can also be accurately manipulated in advance, which is rare in  
122 existing smog chamber systems.

## 123 **2 Facility**

124 Figure 1 displays the schematic design of AIR chamber system, and the real picture of the reactor bag  
125 and enclosure system are shown in Fig. S1. The chamber system includes the 2 m<sup>3</sup> fluorinated ethylene  
126 propylene (FEP) Teflon film (75  $\mu$ m, Du Pont, USA, light transmission  $\geq 93\%$ ) reactor and the associated  
127 temperature and RH control, artificial light sources, zero air injection and humidification, gaseous/liquid  
128 precursor injection, seed aerosol generation, and the instrument-optional detection components. To  
129 achieve a precise control of thermodynamic parameters and aerosol morphology when simulating  
130 atmospheric multiphase chemistry processes, the temperature inside the reactor is precisely controlled to

131 within  $\pm 0.15$  °C. An RH regulation module is designed and built to simulate the ambient RH diurnal  
 132 variation, which is capable of changing the RH in the reactor at a time scale of half an hour. In addition,  
 133 a pre-deliquescing device and a coating device are custom-built to couple to the seed aerosol generation  
 134 component, for manipulating the phase state (metastable aqueous or solid) and core-shell morphology  
 135 (1% ~ 12% shell thickness) of seed aerosols. The detailed description of each system is shown in Section  
 136 2.1-2.4.



137  
 138 **Figure 1. Schematic diagram of AIR chamber system.**

139 **2.1 The reactor and enclosure**

140 The Teflon reactor is a 2 m<sup>3</sup> horizontal cylinder (1.2 m in diameter, 1.8 m in length). It is fixed on a  
 141 stainless-steel frame with four ridges firmly adhered on the Teflon air bag (Fig. S1), so that the variable  
 142 volume of the reactor during sampling is adequate (this chamber system is designed to operate in Batch  
 143 Mode). As to each circle side of the cylinder, three stainless steel tubes are threaded through the Teflon  
 144 film to act as the inlets (for injecting seeds and liquid phase precursors) or sampling outlets for the  
 145 detection system, respectively. The interface between each tube and the film is sealed by a Teflon flange  
 146 and a perfluorinated O-ring. At the bottom inside the reactor, two magnetic-levitation fans (patent number:  
 147 2019213329392, Beijing Convenient Environmental Tech Co. Ltd.) are equipped, with four speed levels  
 148 (1000, 1350, 1700, 2000 rpm). A temperature and RH sensor (HMP110, Vaisala, Finland) and a  
 149 differential pressure sensor (MSX-W10-PA-LCD, Dwyer, America) are also equipped at the bottom  
 150 inside the reactor.

151 The rectangular enclosure (2.4 × 1.6 × 2.3 m, L, W, H) of the reactor is temperature-controlled by a

152 circulation system. The indoor air is introduced from the top of the enclosure and exhausts through the  
153 bottom. The chiller power is constant, while the heating power is controlled through a proportional-  
154 integral-derivative (PID) feedback. Forty black lights (1.2 m, 40 W, Bulb-T12, GE, USA) are fixed on  
155 the inner wall of the enclosure as light sources for atmospheric process simulation. The number and  
156 position of these lights in work can be controlled by the system computer, so that the light intensity can  
157 be variable in experiments. Specular insulated material (SUS304, stainless steel, 8K, mirror plate) is used  
158 as the enclosure inner wall so that the irradiation inside the reactor can be homogeneous. One side of the  
159 enclosure is a double door for entering and reactor maintenance.

## 160 **2.2 Cleaning and humidifying system**

161 The background gas in the reactor is from the indoor air. An air compressor (FOHUR, FH-50L)  
162 compresses the indoor air into a zero-air generator (Aadco, 737-14-A-CH4-240) for purification,  
163 removing airborne contaminants such as particulate matters, hydrocarbons, water vapor, NO<sub>x</sub>, O<sub>3</sub> and  
164 SO<sub>2</sub> to produce zero air (RH can be dried to < 2%, and the background concentrations of other  
165 contaminants are displayed in Table S2). Then, with the control of a mass flow controller (MFC,  
166 HORIBAMETRON, S4832/HMT), zero air is fed into the reactor through a 1/2" stainless steel tube  
167 (sealed at the bottom interface by a 304 stainless steel flange) at a flow rate of  $\leq 50$  L/min (to ensure the  
168 cleaning efficiency of the zero-air generator is sufficient), acting as the background gas and cleaning gas  
169 for the reactor. At the same time of feeding into the cleaning zero air, a pump beside the chamber system  
170 will exhaust the air from the reactor with a flow rate of 20 L/min to accelerate the gas exchange. The  
171 positive differential pressure inside the reactor is monitored. When the differential pressure reaches 30  
172 Pa, the MFC will stop the zero-air feed, and when the value falls below 20 Pa, zero air feed will restart.  
173 This is designed to avoid damaging the Teflon film of the reactor during cleaning.

174 The zero air is also used as humidifying gas. When switching to the humidification mode, the zero air  
175 will go into a humidification tank filled with deionized water (Milli-Q, 18M $\Omega$ ) switched by a three-way  
176 valve, generating humidified zero air. Then, the humidified air flows through a filter (Waterman, HEPA)  
177 to remove the water droplet, and injects into the reactor to humidify. During the humidifying, the exhaust  
178 pump mentioned above keeps working. The flow rate of the humidified zero air (20 ~ 25 L/min) is set to  
179 be slightly higher than the exhausting rate for fast reaching the target RH inside the reactor.

### 180 **2.3 Precursor injection system**

181 According to the phase state of precursor reagents, the precursor injection system of this chamber system  
182 contains two types. One is used for the injection of gaseous precursors. Standard gas cylinders containing  
183 reactive gas (such as SO<sub>2</sub>, NO<sub>2</sub>, NH<sub>3</sub>, HCHO, etc.), inject relevant gaseous precursors into the reactor at  
184 a set flow rate and injecting duration under the control of a computer-connected MFC. The oxidant O<sub>3</sub> is  
185 produced through the decomposition of O<sub>2</sub> (from a standard O<sub>2</sub> cylinder) exposed to the 185 nm UV light.  
186 After flowing through the MFC, the gaseous species enter the reactor via a stainless-steel tube at the  
187 bottom of the chamber.

188 The other type is used for the injection of liquid precursors. Note that, the liquid precursors here mean  
189 the species is in liquid phase before injected into the reactor, but should be gaseous after injecting into  
190 the chamber, such as  $\alpha$ -pinene standard solvent. A tee (the inlet on the left side of the chamber, as shown  
191 in the 'Liquid precursor Injection System' in Fig. 1) is fitted in the pipeline before the liquid precursors  
192 entering the reactor, with a 1 mm thick silicone membrane clamped to the right-angled end. The specific  
193 amount of the liquid precursors is taken with a microsyringe, penetrating the silicone membrane and  
194 slowly injected into the tee. At the same time, pure N<sub>2</sub> is used as the carrier gas to vaporize the liquid  
195 precursor and carry it into the reactor under a specific gas cylinder pressure (0.25 MPa). After injection,  
196 N<sub>2</sub> is continuously purged for 60 seconds to ensure that no liquid precursors remain in the pipeline.

### 197 **2.4 Seed generation system**

198 The seed aerosol generating system is a complex subsystem of AIR chamber system designed in this  
199 study. In addition to the common aerosol generation device, this study couples an RH-controlling device  
200 and a coating device to control the phase state and morphology of the seeds for supporting the simulation  
201 of atmospheric multiphase processes.

202 Commonly, the species used to generate the seed particles (typically dissolved inorganic salts such as  
203 ammonium sulfate and sodium chloride) are first dissolved in deionized water (Milli-Q, 18 M $\Omega$ ) and  
204 then generate a solution. Then, it is atomized as humid aerosol flow by an atomizer (TSI 3076) with N<sub>2</sub>  
205 blowing. Passing through a Nafion tube (PERMA PURE, MD-700-24F-3), the humid flow is dried and  
206 forms dry polydisperse seed aerosols. The drying is realized by pumping the air at the outer layer of the  
207 Nafion tube to a negative pressure (~20 kPa). It is tested that, within the range of the aerosol generation  
208 flow rate ( $\leq 3$  L/min), the RH of the aerosol flow can be dried to below 30 %. An X-ray neutralizer and

209 DMA (DMA, Model 3082, TSI, Inc., USA) are optional, for selecting monodisperse aerosols from the  
210 polydisperse aerosol flow (flow rate ratio of sheath flow to aerosol flow is controlled between 5:1 and  
211 10:1), to support monodisperse experiments. For polydisperse seeds experiments, the seed generation  
212 system can inject seeds into the reactor to the desired amount within a time scale of seconds to several  
213 minutes. For monodisperse seeds experiments, if large-sized seeds that have a lower number fraction in  
214 the generated aerosol population are selected, the time scale will expand to 40-50 minutes. The  
215 appropriate time scale for seed injection can be adjusted by changing the solution concentration and  
216 aerosol flow rate.

217 Besides, an RH controlling device is designed in this study to pre-deliqesce the generated dry seeds that  
218 forming metastable seed aerosols. As shown in Fig. S9, N<sub>2</sub> is used as the initial gas, which is then divided  
219 into two paths, one is the dry N<sub>2</sub>, and the other goes through the deionized water (Milli-Q, 18MΩ, heated  
220 to 45 °C) to act as the wet gas. The flow rate of each path is controlled by an MFC (GAS TOOL  
221 INSTRUMENT, GT 130MAX). Then the two flows mix into one as the humidifying gas and enter the  
222 outer layer of a Nafion semi-permeable tube (PERMA PURE, MD-700-24F-3). The flow with seed  
223 aerosols goes through the inner layer of the Nafion tube and then is humidified. The RH of the humidified  
224 flow is detected by an RH sensor (HYGROCLIP2, HC2A-S). The two MFCs of each flow path and the  
225 RH sensor are connected to a computer and controlled by a Labview program with PID feedback.  
226 Through the two MFCs adjusting the ratio of the flow rates of the dry and wet flow path, the RH of seed  
227 aerosol flow is controlled. This device has been tested to enable rapid changes in RH between 5 % and  
228 90% within 5 mins, and the RH variability can be within ± 0.2 %.

229 In order to investigate the effect of aerosol coating on atmospheric multiphase process, a device is  
230 designed in this study to generate a thickness-controlled and species-known coating on the generated dry  
231 monodisperse seed aerosols. The constitution of the coating device is shown in Fig. S10. This device  
232 consists of a water bath (Changfeng, HW.SY11-KP1), a three-necked flask (250 mL, 19#-24#-19#), a  
233 condensing glass tube (30 cm, 24#), and a thermostatic bath (BiLon, SC-05B). The organic species (~  
234 400 μL) with low volatility (saturated vapor pressure in the order of 10<sup>-4</sup> ~ 10<sup>-5</sup> mmHg at room  
235 temperature) used to form coating is set at the bottom of the three-necked flask, which is heated in the  
236 water bath to evaporate the organic vapor. The dried seed aerosol flow enters through the side port of the  
237 three-necked flask, and then carries the hot organic vapor into the condensing tube (condensing  
238 temperature is controlled at 20 °C by the thermostatic bath in this study). Due to the reduced temperature,



239 the saturated vapor pressure of the organic drops, and the organic vapor will preferentially condense on  
240 the surface of seed aerosols that forming a coating. The coating efficiency can keep stable within four  
241 hours, which is sufficient to meet the duration of injecting seeds for general experiments.

## 242 **2.5 Detection system**

243 As shown in Figure 1, three stainless steel tubes are fixed on the right side of the reactor to act as sampling  
244 outlets. The middle steel tube of them is 3/8 " in size and acts as the main sampling tube, connected to a  
245 3/8 " stainless steel three-way plug valve. One outlet of the plug is attached to a HEPA filter, and the  
246 other outlet is attached to the line to sampling instruments. This design allows a quick sampling switch  
247 between indoor air and the reactor. The other two stainless steel tubes are both 1/4 " and are used as  
248 auxiliary sampling outlets (e.g. temporarily collect single particle samples for a few minutes).

249 An SMPS system (a DMA, Model 3082, and a CPC, Model 3772, TSI, Inc., USA), and a CPC (Model  
250 3750, TSI, Inc., USA) downstream of the seed generation system, are the standing instruments for the  
251 chamber system, used to measure the particle number size spectrum distribution and particle total number  
252 concentration in the reactor, respectively. Other instruments are optional according to the specific  
253 research aim, and typically the total sampling flow rate should be lower than 6 L/min.

254 The other detection instruments involved in this study, include the instruments for gaseous species  
255 detection (Thermo Scientific gas analyzer (Model 43i-TLE for SO<sub>2</sub>, Model 42i-TL for NO<sub>x</sub>, Model 49i  
256 for O<sub>3</sub>, Model 48i-TLE for CO), Picarro cavity ring-down spectroscopy (Picarro CRDS, G2401) for CO<sub>2</sub>  
257 and CH<sub>4</sub>, Summa Canister (SILONITE, 1869) and GC-MS (Agilent, 7890A/5975C) for non-methane  
258 hydrocarbon (NMHC)), instruments for particulate species detection (Time-of-Flight Aerosol Chemical  
259 Speciation Monitor (ToF-ACSM, Aerodyne)), and instruments for volatile organic compounds (Vocus  
260 Proton-Transfer Reaction Time-Of-Flight Mass Spectrometry (Vocus-PTR-TOF-MS, Vocus S, Tofwerk),  
261 shorted as Vocus).

262 The sampling flow rate of each instrument is calibrated before each experiment. For Thermo Scientific  
263 instruments and Vocus, a single standard concentration is tested at each experiment, to act as a basis for  
264 instruments status verification and data quantification. For the data collected by ACSM, the calibration  
265 is performed based on the mass concentration calculated from SMPS data.

### 266 **3 Characterization of the AIR chamber**

267 A series of experiments were carried out to evaluate the performance of this chamber system, including  
268 leakproofness, sample-volume support, background concentrations, mixing performance, light  
269 characteristics, temperature and RH control, gas and particle wall loss, as well as characterizations of  
270 aerosol particles with the core-shell morphology. All the instruments for measurement are included in  
271 Section 2.5.

#### 272 **3.1 Fundamental parameters**

273 Leakproofness of the reactor was characterized by the positive pressure difference between the air inside  
274 the reactor and the ambient air and the change in the total number concentration of background particles  
275 inside the reactor. When the reactor was filled with zero air, the positive pressure difference inside the  
276 reactor was maintained at  $> 3$  Pa within 24 hours (Fig. S2a), then slowly decreased to  $\sim 0.5$  Pa after  
277 several days. When the air inside the reactor was sampled at a flow rate of 5 L/min, the positive pressure  
278 difference decreased to zero after 2 hours, and then total particle number concentration slowly increased  
279 from  $\sim 0$   $\text{cm}^{-3}$  to a final  $< 10$   $\text{cm}^{-3}$  in  $\sim 3.5$  hours (Fig. S2b). This concentration is negligible for a particle  
280 number concentration of  $10^3 \sim 10^4$   $\text{cm}^{-3}$  that are usually used in experiments. Moreover, this chamber  
281 system is designed to operate in batch mode, and the reactor can provide a sampling volume of 1000  $\sim$   
282 1200 L (Fig. S3) and a sampling time of more than 3 hours at a total sampling flow rate of 5 $\sim$ 6 L/min.  
283 The results above indicate that the system leakproofness is reliable for further experiments.

284 The reactor background was also characterized after repeated cleaning with zero air. As shown in Fig.  
285 S4, the background particle total number concentration was  $< 1$   $\text{cm}^{-3}$ , and increased only to 4  $\text{cm}^{-3}$  with  
286 the mixing fans turned on. Irradiation slightly increased the background particle concentration but still  
287 only to  $< 10$   $\text{cm}^{-3}$ , which is negligible when compared with normal reaction conditions. Table S1 shows  
288 the background concentrations of chemical species in AIR chamber reactor under dry and high RH  
289 conditions. Compared with data reported for other chambers (White et al., 2018; Bin Babar et al., 2016;  
290 Wang et al., 2014; Platt et al., 2013; Carter et al., 2005; Chen et al., 2019b), the background  
291 concentrations of gaseous pollutants including  $\text{SO}_2$ ,  $\text{NO}_x$ ,  $\text{O}_3$  and CO in the reactor were comparable or  
292 lower for the AIR chamber. The background concentration of total non-methane hydrocarbon (NMHC)  
293 was higher than literature values due to the presence of chemically inert  $\text{CHClF}_2$  (half of the total NMHC  
294 concentration), which originates from the indoor refrigeration system and is hard to eliminate within the

295 zero-air generation system. Nevertheless, this species does not interfere with the reactions under most  
296 experimental conditions. The reactor can be cleaned to background levels with a volume of zero air >5  
297 times that of the reactor (Table S2) after each experiment. The cleaning process can be completed in less  
298 than 9 hours, as shown in Section 2.2.

299 The mixing performance of the injection into the reactor was examined using NO<sub>2</sub> concentration and  
300 total particle number concentration as tracers (Fig. S5). The mixing time to uniformity (the duration  
301 between the two plateaus in Fig. S5) was 5 minutes without running fans and less than 1 minute with the  
302 fans on. Furthermore, the mixing time was independent of the fan speed.

### 303 **3.2 Light source characterization**

304 The reflective inner wall (SUS304, stainless steel, 8K, mirror plate) of the AIR chamber is equipped with  
305 40 UV lamps (1.2 m, 40 W, Bulb-T12, GE, USA) to provide irradiation during the experiments. There  
306 are 10 lamps on the left, right, back, and top of the wall, respectively, and each lamp can be turned on or  
307 off separately by the control system, so that the light intensity in experiments varies from 2.5% to 100%  
308 intensity. These light sources can also be replaced by lamps with different emission spectra to provide a  
309 variety of irradiation conditions.

310 For current light sources, a portable UV spectrometer (StellarNet Inc., Tampa FL, USA) was used to  
311 characterize the irradiance spectrum in the reactor (Fig. S6). The irradiance is mainly distributed in the  
312 range of 360 ~ 390 nm, peaking at 370 nm, which is within the range of peak irradiance of UV lights  
313 used in other indoor chambers (340 ~ 371 nm) (Wang et al., 2014; Ma et al., 2022; Bin Babar et al., 2016;  
314 Chen et al., 2019b; Lane and Tang, 1994; Thuner et al., 2004). Another small peak appears at 405 nm,  
315 which is convenient for directly checking the status of the lamps.

316 The photolytic rate constant for NO<sub>2</sub> can be used to characterize the irradiation intensity. Previous  
317 literature (Wang et al., 2014; Bin Babar et al., 2016; Ma et al., 2022) often characterize irradiation  
318 intensity through the photolytic rate constant of NO<sub>2</sub> ( $J_{\text{NO}_2}$ ), calculated through the steady-state  
319 concentrations of NO<sub>x</sub> and O<sub>3</sub> (Atkinson et al., 2004). This study mainly used a spectrometer, namely  
320 the Jvalue instrument (AVANTES, AvaSpec-ULS-TEC-EVO), to measure the irradiance and directly  
321 calculate the photolytic rate constants of a few important species in atmospheric photochemistry. Notably,  
322 the Jvalue instrument was also calibrated using the  $J_{\text{NO}_2}$  values derived from the steady NO<sub>x</sub>-O<sub>3</sub>  
323 concentration under several light schemes to correct for the geometry defect of the Jvalue instrument

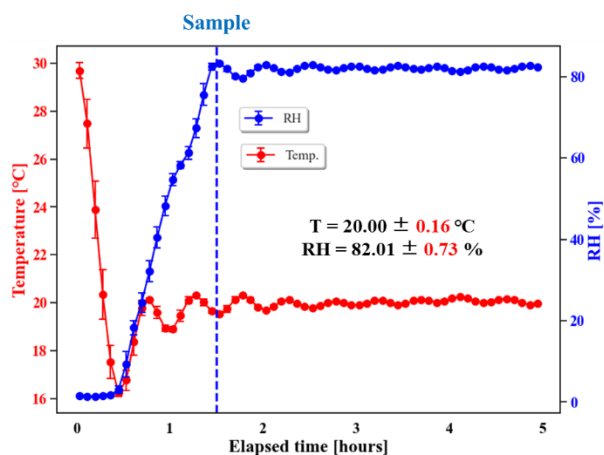
324 when placed inside the AIR chamber. The calibration factor of the traditional  $J_{\text{NO}_2}$  method is  $1.49 \pm$   
325  $0.06$ . As shown in Table S3, the current light source is more suitable for the photolysis of HONO and  
326  $\text{NO}_2$  (photolytic rate constants on the order of  $10^{-4} \sim 10^{-3} \text{ s}^{-1}$ ). However, the photolysis of HCHO,  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$ ,  
327 and  $\text{O}_3$  is slow (photolytic rate constants on the order of  $10^{-8} \sim 10^{-7} \text{ s}^{-1}$ ). The  $J_{\text{NO}_2}$  maxima of other  
328 chambers are usually in the range of  $2 \sim 9 \times 10^{-3} \text{ s}^{-1}$  (Chen et al., 2019a; Li et al., 2017; Wang et al., 2014;  
329 Bin Babar et al., 2016; Ma et al., 2022). In comparison,  $J_{\text{NO}_2}$  due to the light source in the AIR chamber  
330 is  $4.10 \times 10^{-3} \text{ s}^{-1}$ , close to the median value of the other chambers. Moreover, the photolytic rate constant  
331 of HONO due to the light source in this chamber ( $J_{\text{HONO}}$  at the level of  $10^{-4} \text{ s}^{-1}$ ) is comparable to or  
332 slightly higher than the value of HONO photolysis in the ambient atmosphere in China ( $J_{\text{HONO}}$  at the  
333 level of  $10^{-5} \sim 10^{-4} \text{ s}^{-1}$ ) (Zheng et al., 2020).

334 When only lamps on two sides of the AIR chamber were turned on (four schemes with 20 lights on, noted  
335 as ‘only back/top’, ‘left and right’, ‘odd’ and ‘even’ in Table S3), the photolytic rate constants in the  
336 reactor under different configurations were almost the same ( $J_{\text{HONO}} = 5.10 \pm 0.12 \times 10^{-4} \text{ s}^{-1}$ ,  $J_{\text{NO}_2} =$   
337  $2.16 \pm 0.05 \times 10^{-3} \text{ s}^{-1}$ ), and nearly equal to half of that with all 40 lights on. In addition, the photolytic  
338 rate constant of the scheme ‘left and right’ (20 lights) was the sum of that of ‘only left’ (10 lights) and  
339 ‘only right’ (10 lights). These results indicate that the irradiation in the reactor is uniformly distributed.  
340 Notably, because the measurement interface of  $J_{\text{value}}$  was a little biased to the left during detection, the  
341 value for ‘only left’ was higher than that for ‘only right’.

### 342 **3.3 Performance of temperature and RH control**

343 The temperature and RH in the reactor are measured by a high-accuracy sensor (HMP110, Vaisala,  
344 Finland). Detailed descriptions of temperature and RH control are given in Section 2.1 and 2.2. The  
345 internal design of our chamber enclosure ensures that the circulating air, which controls the temperature  
346 surrounding the reactor, reaches equilibrium (taking  $< 2$  hours as shown in Fig. 2) from the outside of  
347 the Teflon film to the inside. This design guarantees that the temperature distribution is spatially  
348 homogeneous, even for a chamber system with a  $30 \text{ m}^3$  reactor (Wang et al., 2014). The accuracy for RH  
349 of this sensor is shown by its measurement error of  $< 1\%$  from that measured by a hygrometer (chilled  
350 mirror hygrometer, Edgetech Instrument, USA), with an  $R^2 > 0.99$ . The temperature in the reactor can  
351 be stably controlled in the range of  $2.5 \text{ }^\circ\text{C} \sim 31 \text{ }^\circ\text{C}$ , and the control range of RH is  $< 2\% \sim > 95\%$ . The  
352 fluctuations in the temperature inside the reactor are within  $\pm 0.15 \text{ }^\circ\text{C}$  of any set temperature, and the

353 corresponding RH fluctuations for RH > 80 % are within  $\pm 0.75$  %. The RH fluctuation caused by the  
 354 water permeation through the FEP filter can be ignored due to the slow permeation rate of water  
 355 molecules (0.007L/m<sup>2</sup>/24h/atm). The stability achieved with the temperature and RH controls across a  
 356 wide range of temperatures is shown in Table S4. The illumination of lamps raises the lowest achievable  
 357 temperature by 3 °C for every 10 lights on. However, the illumination of the reactor does not affect the  
 358 stability of temperature and RH inside the reactor. When the set temperature is close to room temperature  
 359 (20 °C in Table S4), the fluctuation is < 0.1 °C, demonstrating a more accurate temperature and RH  
 360 control performance compared with other chambers (Table S5) (Wang et al., 2014; Wu et al., 2007; Bin  
 361 Babar et al., 2016; Ma et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2015b). Sampling operation (lasting more than 3 hours  
 362 with flow rate at 5 L/min, Fig. 2) does not significantly affect the stability of temperature and RH control  
 363 either, which also indicates the permeation and wall loss of water molecules do not affect a lot.  
 364 In order to simulate the diurnal variations in ambient air temperature and RH, a proportional-integral-  
 365 derivative (PID) feedback controlling function was designed. The RH in the reactor can reach the target  
 366 RH by controlling the temperature. After receiving the target RH input, the control program calculates  
 367 the stepwise theoretical RH value at each time increment and the corresponding temperature control steps  
 368 based on current temperature and RH in the reactor. This calculation is also adjusted in real-time to  
 369 optimize the gradual change of RH. Figure S7 demonstrates two examples to show alternate linear change  
 370 and constant control of RH. The RH can reach the set value within a few hours with fluctuations < 0.75%.  
 371 This function performs even better at low temperatures, suggesting the potential of using this chamber  
 372 system to simulate diurnal variations of RH in the ambient atmosphere in wintertime.



373  
 374 **Figure 2. Stability of temperature and RH control in the reactor during sampling. The chamber was operated**  
 375 **in batch mode.**

### 376 3.4 Wall loss of gas and particles

377 The wall loss process is considered as a first-order kinetic process, in that the decay rate of a  
378 concentration is proportional to the concentration:

$$379 \frac{dC(t)}{dt} = -k \cdot C(t) \quad (1)$$

380 where  $C(t)$  is the species concentration at time  $t$ , and  $k$  is the wall loss rate constant (in units:  $s^{-1}$  or  $min^{-1}$ ).  
381 The wall loss rates of gaseous species such as  $NO_x$  and  $O_3$  in this study are shown in Table S6, the  
382 values of which are lower than other small Teflon chambers ( $2 \sim 5 \text{ m}^3$ ) (Wu et al., 2007; Wang et al.,  
383 2015b; Li et al., 2017; Bernard et al., 2016), as a result of passivation of the inner surface of the reactor  
384 with 2 ppm  $O_3$  for 3 days. In Table S6, when turn on the fans, the wall loss is usually much higher, so the  
385 fans will only be turned on during the injection period, and when simulating the reaction and sampling,  
386 the fans are kept off.

387 The wall loss rate constant  $k$  of particles is dependent on particle size (diameter, noted as  $D_p$ ). Smaller or  
388 larger particles often have higher  $k$  values (Crump and Seinfeld, 1981) due to higher diffusion or  
389 sedimentation rates, respectively. The dependence of  $k$  values for particles with  $D_p < 50 \text{ nm}$  is rarely  
390 reported in previous chamber studies. This study demonstrates that the constant  $k$  decreases as a function  
391 of decreasing  $D_p$  when particles are smaller than 50 nm, which is also shown in Fig. S7 of Ma et al (Ma  
392 et al., 2022). The  $\log_{10}(k)$  value for particles can be approximated with a segmented linear function of  
393  $\log_{10}(D_p)^{93, 94}$ . In addition to the slopes to be determined, the inflection point  $D_p$ , where the loss trend  
394 inverses, changes with different chambers. In this study, two inflection points are selected at 50 nm and  
395 150 nm according to the identified inflection particle size bin of 45.3 – 53.2 nm and 143.3 – 165.5 nm,  
396 respectively (Fig. S8). Furthermore, the  $k$ - $D_p$  dependence has been reported to deviate in different  
397 experiments even in the same reactor. This study found that such deviations can be corrected through an  
398 up-and-down shift of the  $\log_{10}(k)$ - $\log_{10}(D_p)$  function curve. Even for deliquescent particles ( $RH = 90 \%$   
399 in Fig. S8, the  $D_p$  of the x-axis represents the liquid particle diameters), this method still accurately  
400 described the relationship between  $k$  and  $D_p$  ( $R^2 \sim 0.95$ ) when considering the hygroscopic growth of the  
401 particle size.

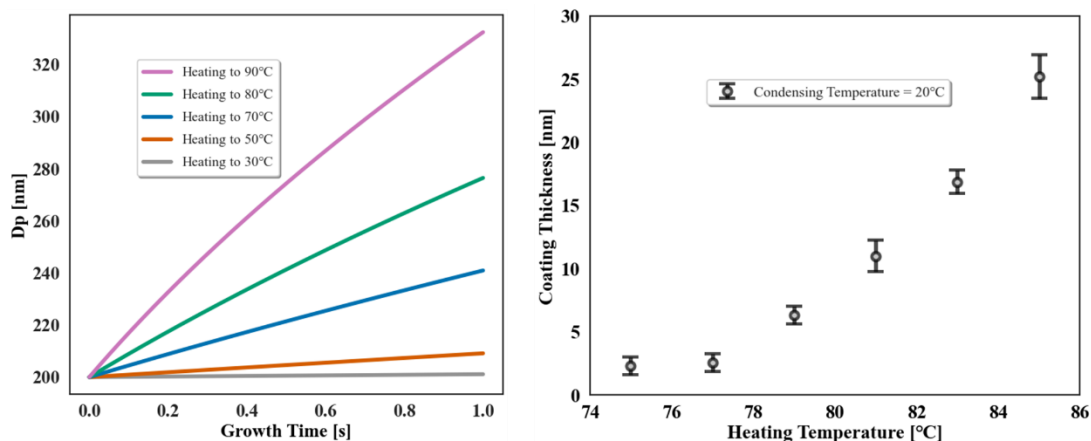
402 Another commonly used parameter to characterize the particle wall loss behavior in chambers is the total  
403 volume wall loss rate constant ( $k_v$ ). For small Teflon chambers of  $2 \sim 3 \text{ m}^3$  in size (Takekawa et al., 2003;  
404 Li et al., 2017; Liu et al., 2019),  $k_v$  values typically range from  $2.84 \sim 4.72 \times 10^{-3} \text{ min}^{-1}$ . The particle wall

405 loss is slightly higher in the chamber in this study, with the  $k_v$  found to be  $5 \times 10^{-3} \text{ min}^{-1}$  (Table S7).

### 406 3.5 Morphology of seed particle generation

407 Seed particles are typically used to simulate aerosol formation by the multiphase chemistry pathway. The  
408 AIR chamber is designed to couple to a subsystem for generating seed particles with different phase  
409 states through pre-deliquesting, adopted from a previous study (Faust et al., 2017). A volatilizing-  
410 condensing method is used to generate known-composition organic-coated inorganic particles in the AIR  
411 chamber, with a detailed description in Section 2.4.

412 As shown in Figure 3, squalane is coated onto dry 200-nm monodisperse NaCl seed particles to produce  
413 a core-shell morphology for the particles. The coating thickness is controlled by adjusting the water bath  
414 heating temperature while maintaining a fixed condensation temperature of 20 °C. The surface area  
415 concentrations of the introduced seed ( $> 800 \mu\text{m}^2/\text{cm}^3$ ) are sufficient that no homogeneous nucleation of  
416 organic vapor occurs. Both the size distributions of the particles before and after condensing organics on  
417 the particles are monodisperse. Using the Clausius-Clapeyron equation that describes the relationship  
418 between saturation vapor pressure and temperature, as well as the Maxwell equation that describes the  
419 condensation growth rate of particle size under a certain supersaturated vapor pressure, the coating  
420 thickness can be predicted in relation to the heating temperature (Fig. 3a), to assess the feasibility of the  
421 selected coating species. The coating thickness is calculated as half of the difference in peak  $D_p$  of the  
422 monodisperse particle size distribution before and after the seeds are coated (Fig. 3b). For squalane, the  
423 device allows for a relatively accurate control of coating thickness in the range of 5 to 25 nm (1 % ~ 12 %  
424 shell thickness). For organic species with similar volatilities (saturated vapor pressure in the order of  $10^{-4}$   
425  $\sim 10^{-5}$  mmHg at room temperature), the device could provide similar control performance.



426

427 **Figure 3. Relationship between coating thickness on dry 200 nm NaCl seed and heating temperature in the**  
428 **coating device, with squalane as the coating species and 20 °C condensing temperature. (a) Theoretical**  
429 **estimation in different growth times. (b) Measured results by SMPS.**

#### 430 **4 Applications in SOA generation—— $\alpha$ -pinene ozonolysis researches**

##### 431 **4.1 SOA yield of seed-absent experiments**

432 SOA are generated from  $\alpha$ -pinene ozonolysis in the AIR chamber to evaluate its performance, with  
433 experiment conditions given in Table S8 (NO.1 ~ 5). The key parameter Y, representing the yield of SOA,  
434 is defined as:

$$435 \quad Y = \frac{\Delta mo}{\Delta ROG} \quad (2)$$

436 where  $\Delta mo$  represents the total mass concentration of generated SOA, and  $\Delta ROG$  represents the total  
437 mass concentration of reactive organic gas that was consumed in the reaction (specifically referring to  $\alpha$ -  
438 pinene in this study), with both units in  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ . SOA mass concentration was measured by a ToF-ACSM  
439 (Section 2.5). The organic mass measurement was also corrected based on the particle size distribution  
440 data from SMPS, where the  $\alpha$ -pinene-derived SOA density was assumed as  $1.3 \text{ g}/\text{cm}^3$ . This density value  
441 is also used in many previous researches (Bahreini et al., 2005; Alfarra et al., 2006; Ma et al., 2022), but  
442 higher than the unit density assumption used in some other chamber studies (Wang et al., 2011; Wang et  
443 al., 2014; Bin Babar et al., 2016; Cocker Iii et al., 2001; Li et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2015).

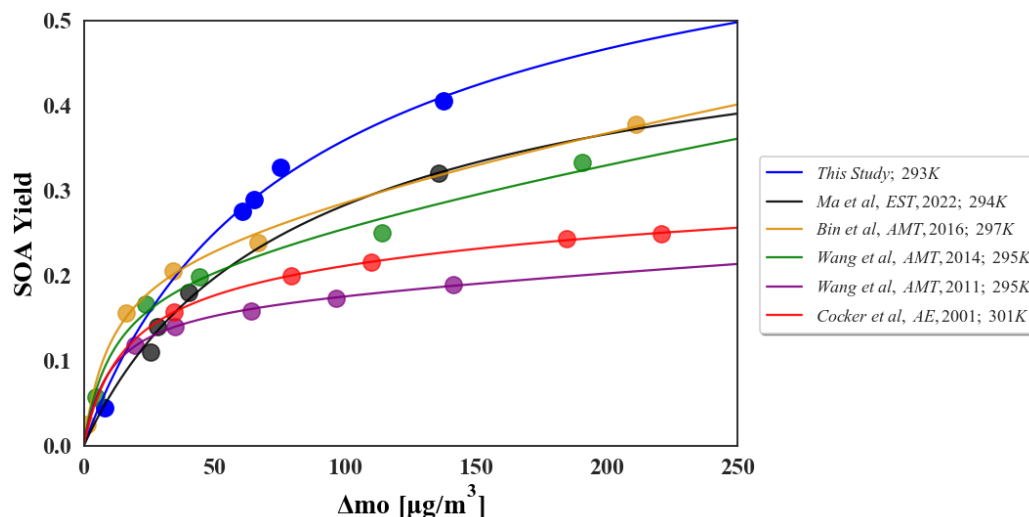
444 Odum et al (Odum et al., 1996) found that the two-product model reproduces well the non-linear  
445 relationship between the SOA yield Y and the particulate organic mass concentration ( $mo$ ):

$$446 \quad Y = mo \cdot \sum \frac{\alpha_i \cdot K_{om,i}}{1 + mo \cdot K_{om,i}} \quad (3)$$

447 where  $\alpha_i$  and  $K_{om,i}$  are the mass-based stoichiometric and partition coefficient for species  $i$ , respectively,  
448 and  $mo$  is the total mass concentration of organic aerosol. Figure 4 shows the results of the two-product  
449 model that fits the seed-absent SOA yield results in this study. The Odum model fits results from other  
450 chamber studies are also shown in Figure 4 for comparison. Detailed model fitting parameters are shown  
451 in Table S9. In contrast, Y in this study is a little higher than those in other small or medium-sized  
452 chambers, which may be owing to the lower gas wall loss in our Teflon reactor (Section 3.4) and the  
453 lower experimental temperature. The four fitting parameters in this study,  $\alpha_1$ ,  $\alpha_2$ ,  $K_1$ ,  $K_2$ , are 0.62479,  
454 0.0326791, 0.0121589, 0.0121596, respectively.  $K_1$  and  $K_2$  are close and are moderate values; however,



455  $\alpha_1$  is significantly higher than those in other chambers. Such higher value for  $\alpha_1$  can be an indication of  
456 a lower volatilizing loss of the gas phase intermediates within the AIR reactor compared with the other  
457 chambers. The good fitting from our experiment indicates that the chamber system in this study is stable.  
458 These results imply a reliable performance of our chamber system for experimental simulation studies  
459 of atmospheric secondary transformation process.



460  
461 **Figure 4.** Two-product model fitting curve of seed-absent  $\alpha$ -pinene-derived SOA yield in this study and the  
462 comparison with other literature results. The data of the blue line is from this study, and other data is obtained  
463 from these references (Cocker Iii et al., 2001; Wang et al., 2011; Wang et al., 2014; Bin Babar et al., 2016; Ma  
464 et al., 2022).

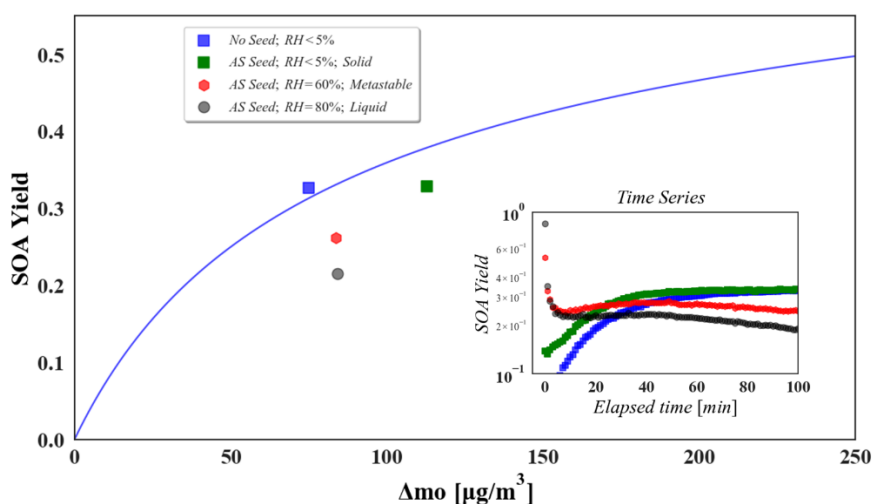
#### 465 4.2 Effects of seed phase state on SOA yield

466 The effects of different seed phase state on the yield of  $\alpha$ -pinene-derived SOA were further investigated  
467 using ammonium sulfate as the seed particles (Table S8, NO.6 ~ 8). We used seeds with sufficient surface  
468 area concentration to prevent the gas phase products of VOC from homogeneous nucleation. Figure S11  
469 shows the relevant measured parameters during one reaction (e.g., experiment NO.8). The yields of all  
470 the experiments are summarized in Fig. 5. In general, the yield in the presence of dry seeds is not  
471 significantly different from that in the absence of seeds, consistent with the outcome of Odum et al (Odum  
472 et al., 1996). However, in the presence of aerosol liquid water and ammonium sulfate seeds, the  $\alpha$ -pinene-  
473 derived SOA yield is reduced. This suppressing phenomenon is also reported by Cocker et al (Cocker Iii  
474 et al., 2001), which may be related to the finding of Lutz et al (Lutz et al., 2019) that an inhibition of  
475 organic species partitioning in the particulate phase exists at high sulfates level. However, to our  
476 knowledge, the suppressing phenomenon above may not be common, that has only been reported in the

477  $\alpha$ -pinene ozonolysis system with ammonium sulfate seeds.

478 The subplot in Fig. 5 demonstrates the SOA yield at each elapsed time point in these experiments. Liquid  
479 water can significantly promote the initial SOA yield and generation rate (Zhang et al., 2018), and our  
480 results have reproduced this phenomenon (subplot in Fig. 5). However, the oxidation reaction proceeds,  
481 it is observed that the SOA yield with liquid seeds decreases, and larger seed aerosol liquid water contents  
482 produce greater decreases in the yield. These indicate the AIR chamber system facilitates the researches  
483 of aerosol properties on atmospheric multiphase processes.

484 It is worth noting that, the organic vapor wall loss can have significant influence on SOA formation.  
485 However, quantifying wall losses of gaseous organic products is still a challenge in chamber experiments.  
486 Gaseous intermediates are difficult to be quantitatively measured, and the theoretical calculations of wall  
487 losses also have large uncertainties due to the lack of data on some parameters, such as the effective wall  
488 mass concentration and eddy diffusion coefficient inside the reactor. The wall loss behavior of gases  
489 essentially depends on the concentration gradient between the gas phase and the wall. To our knowledge,  
490 there is no conclusive evidence to support higher wall losses of gaseous intermediates under higher RH,  
491 which are even significant enough to cause a notable reduction in SOA yield. In addition, if higher RH  
492 can enhance the diffusion of gaseous intermediates towards the wall, then the diffusion of gaseous  
493 intermediates towards the particle phase should also increase. Compared with experiments without seed  
494 particles, when seed particles exist, gases condense on the particles while condensing on the walls,  
495 causing the gas-phase concentration to decay more rapidly, resulting in less wall loss of gases and higher  
496 SOA yields during the initial period of the experiment, as shown in the subplot of Fig. 5. However, the  
497 final difference in SOA yields is still unclear because, under the condition without seed particles, particles  
498 generated through nucleation continue to grow and can provide a considerable amount of condensation  
499 sink after the reaction proceeds for a period of time. This process needs to be numerically described and  
500 analyzed that carefully consider wall loss behavior and physicochemical properties of particles in future  
501 studies.



502

503 **Figure 5. Effects of phase state and liquid water content of ammonium sulfate seed particles on the SOA yield**  
 504 **of  $\alpha$ -pinene ozonolysis ( $\alpha$ -pinene =  $60 \pm 13$  ppb, O<sub>3</sub> =  $296 \pm 30$  ppb). In the main plot, the blue line is the fitting**  
 505 **two-product curve from no-seed experiments data in this study, which is a replicate of the curve in Fig. 4. The**  
 506 **subplot shows the current yield since the initial time point of each experiment, where the blue points represent**  
 507 **the data of no-seed experiment, green points represent the data of solid seed experiment, red points represent**  
 508 **the data of metastable seed experiment, and grey points represent the data of liquid seed experiment.**

## 509 5 Conclusions

510 The reported special phenomena relying on specific particle properties are well reproduced in AIR  
 511 chamber benefitting from the seed phase state control, and the accurate temperature and RH control  
 512 facilitates the quantization of the effects of aerosol liquid water. Besides, compared to other chambers,  
 513 the manipulation of composition and thickness of organic coating could provide a more clarity surface  
 514 property. Broad temperature range, adjustable irradiation intensity, and the fast-responding RH cycle,  
 515 make this chamber system suitable for simulating diurnal ambient atmosphere in different seasons. These  
 516 performances of handling key parameters suggest the potential of this AIR chamber system for the  
 517 laboratory simulation of atmospheric multiphase processes.

## 518 Data availability

519 The data in this study are available from the authors upon request ([zhijunwu@pku.edu.cn](mailto:zhijunwu@pku.edu.cn)).

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525 **Author contributions**

526 TZ and ZW conceived the study. TZ, ZW, JW, WF conducted the laboratory measurements. TZ carried  
527 out the data analysis. TZ, KB, YY, XY, ZB, XM, YZ participated in the instrument managements. SG,  
528 YC, CL, YZ, S-ML and MH supported this research. TZ wrote the paper with inputs from all co-authors.

529 **Competing interest**

530 The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that  
531 could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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