High Energy Rechargeable Li-S Cells for EV Application. Status, Challenges and Solutions

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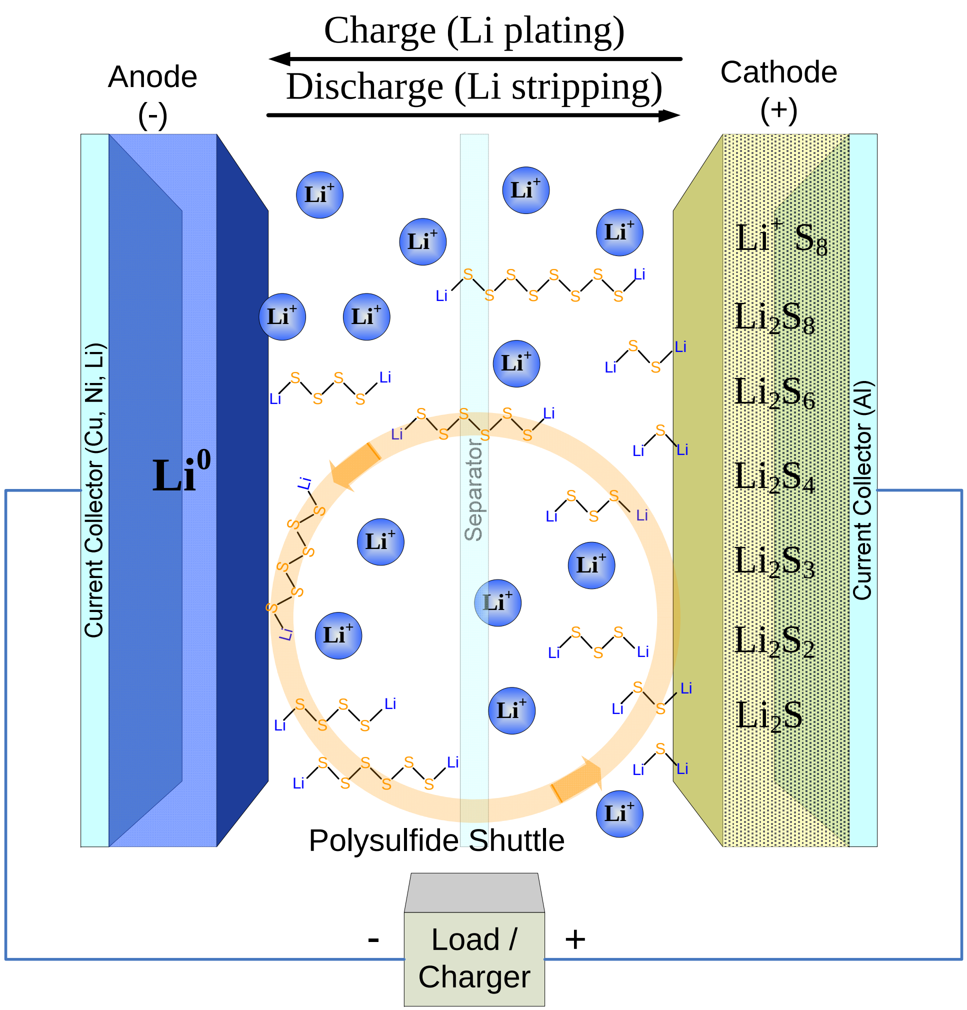
Outline

- Why lithium-sulfur technology?
  - Specific energy.
  - Rate capability.
  - Low temperature performance.
- Status of lithium-sulfur technology.
- Addressing the challenges.
- New approach pursued by Sion in collaboration with BASF for EV applications.
- Conclusions.

Why Lithium Sulfur Technology?



- **Lithium ions are stripped from the anode during discharge and form Li-polysulfides in the cathode.**
  - Li_2S in the cathode is the result of complete discharge.
- **On recharge the lithium ions are plated back onto the anode as the Li_2S_x moves toward S_8**
- **High order Li-polysulfides (Li_2S_3 to Li_2S_8) are soluble in the electrolyte and migrate to the anode scrubbing off any dendrite growth.**

Theoretical Energy: ~2800Wh/l and 2500 Wh/kg

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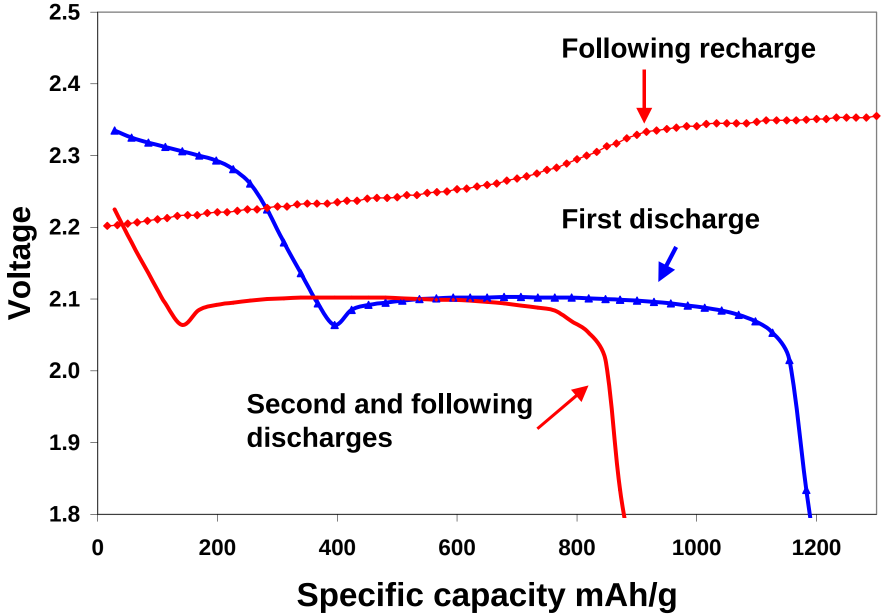
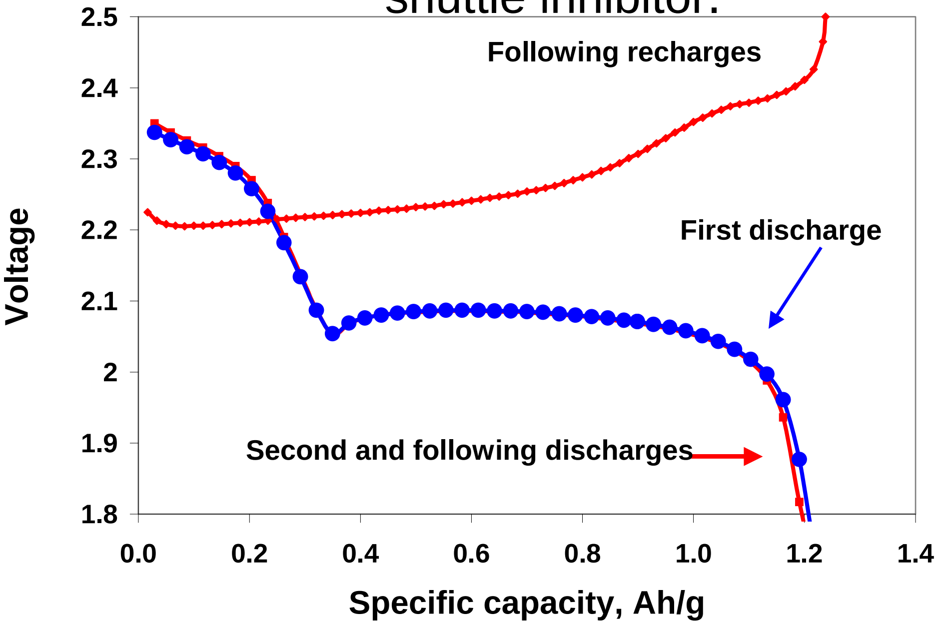
Why Lithium Sulfur Technology?

Specific Energy

Typical experimental discharge and charge profiles with strong shuttle.



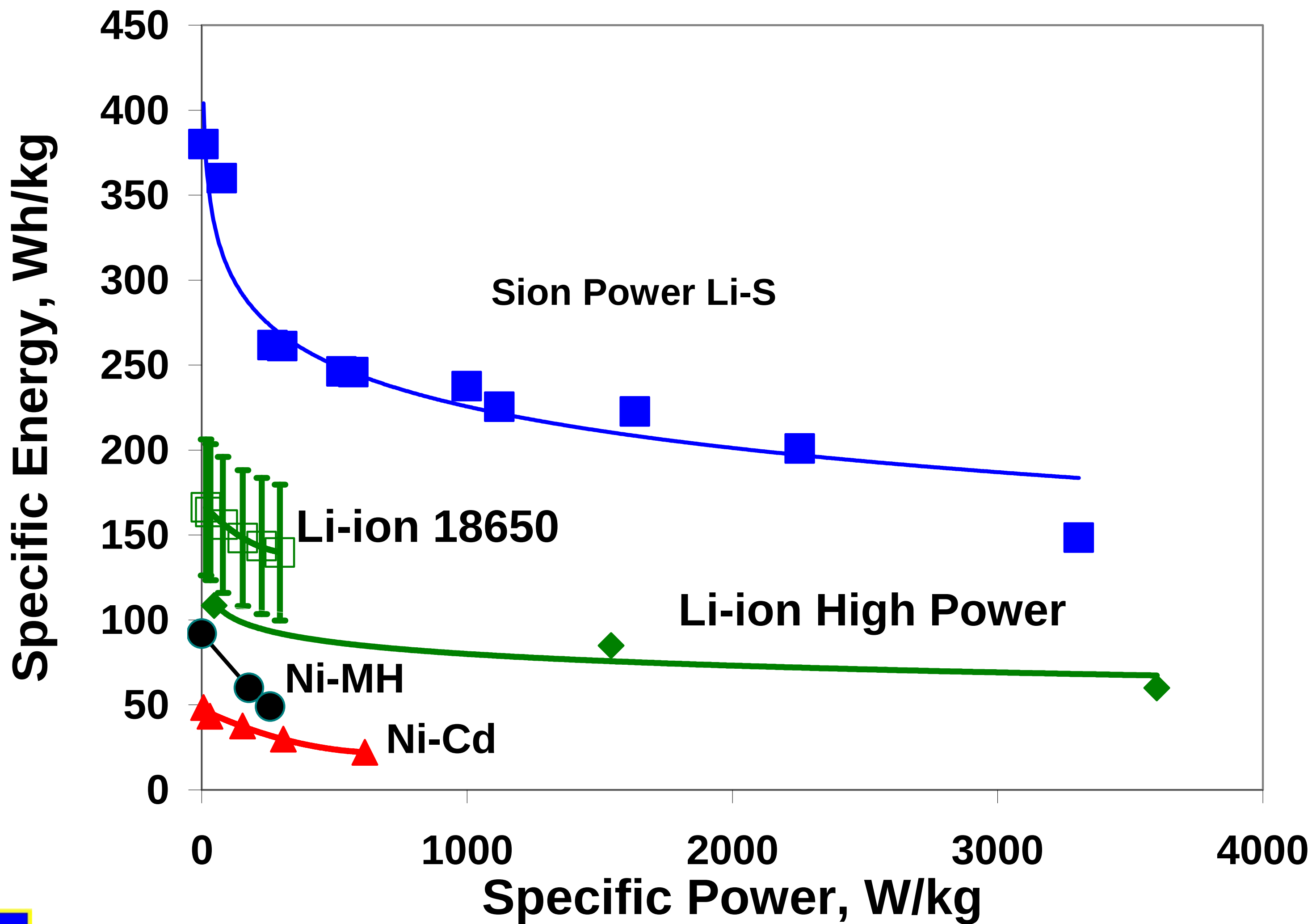
Charge and discharge profiles with shuttle inhibitor.



With NO_3^- additives Sion Power controls shuttle and achieves 100% of high plateau sulfur utilization, 99.5% charge efficiency and 350 – 450 Wh/kg

Why Lithium Sulfur Technology?

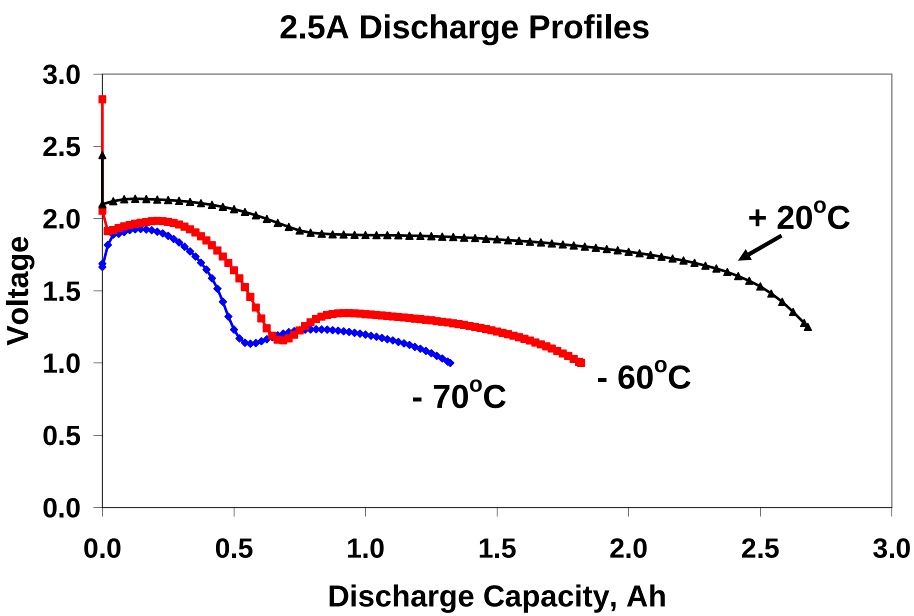
Rate Capability

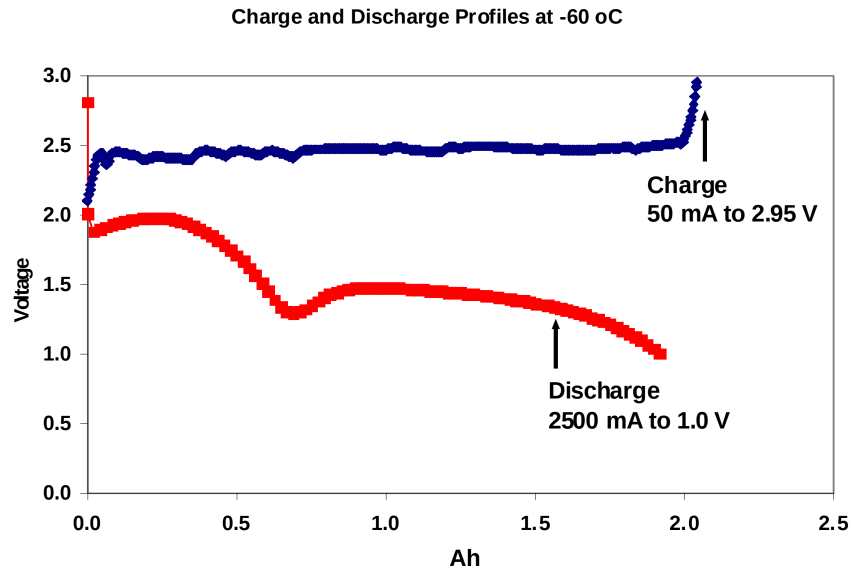


Why Lithium Sulfur Technology?

Low Temperature Performance

Work partially support by NASA Glenn Contract NNC06CA85C





Batteries with optimized solvent and salt concentrations delivered:

1)~160 Wh/kg at -60ºC at 1C,

2)~130 Wh/kg at -70ºC at 1C,

3) The battery can be recharged at -60°C.

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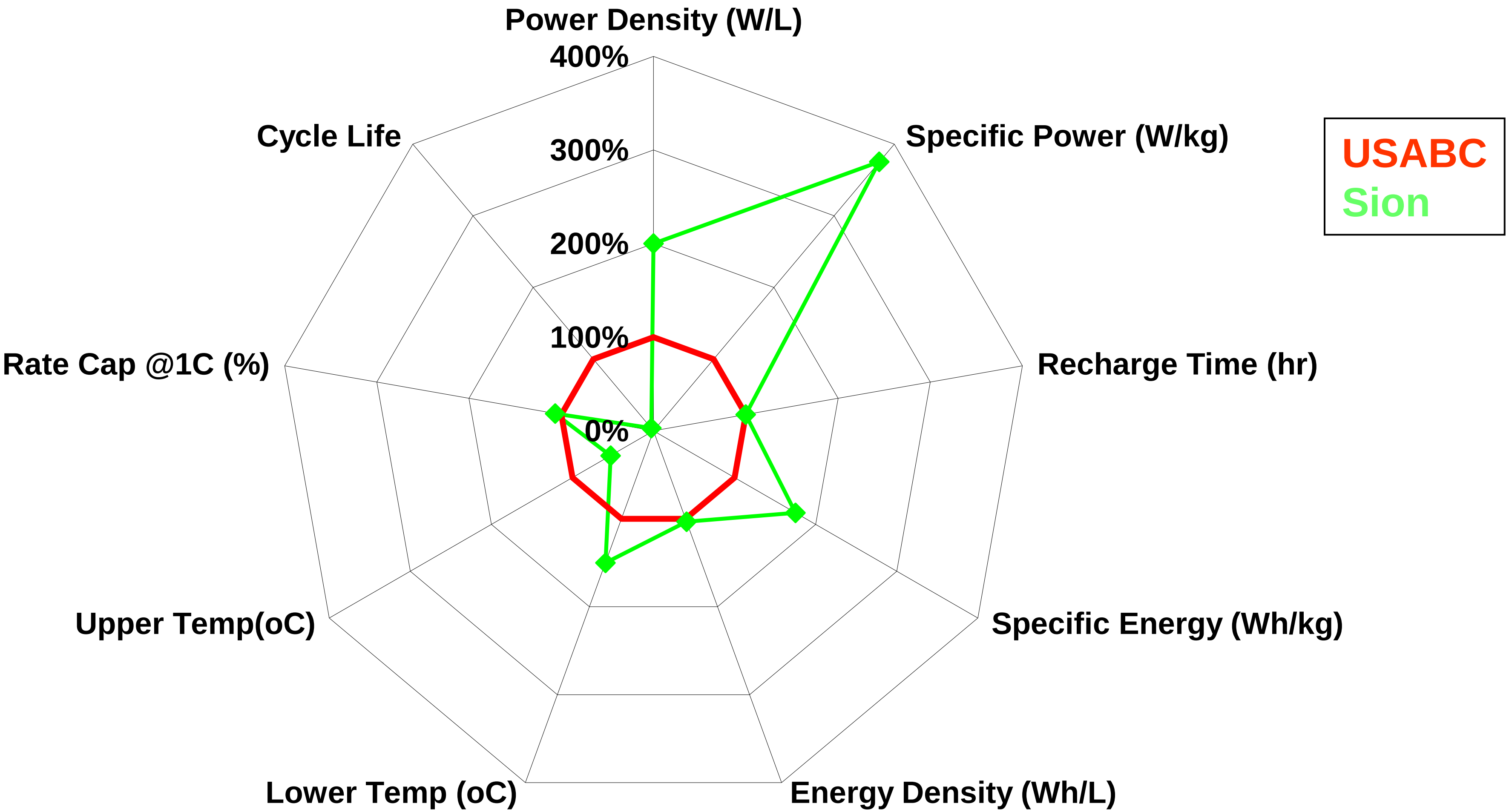
Status of Lithium Sulfur Technology



Limiting Mechanisms: 1) Rough lithium surface during cycling 2) Li/electrolyte depletion.

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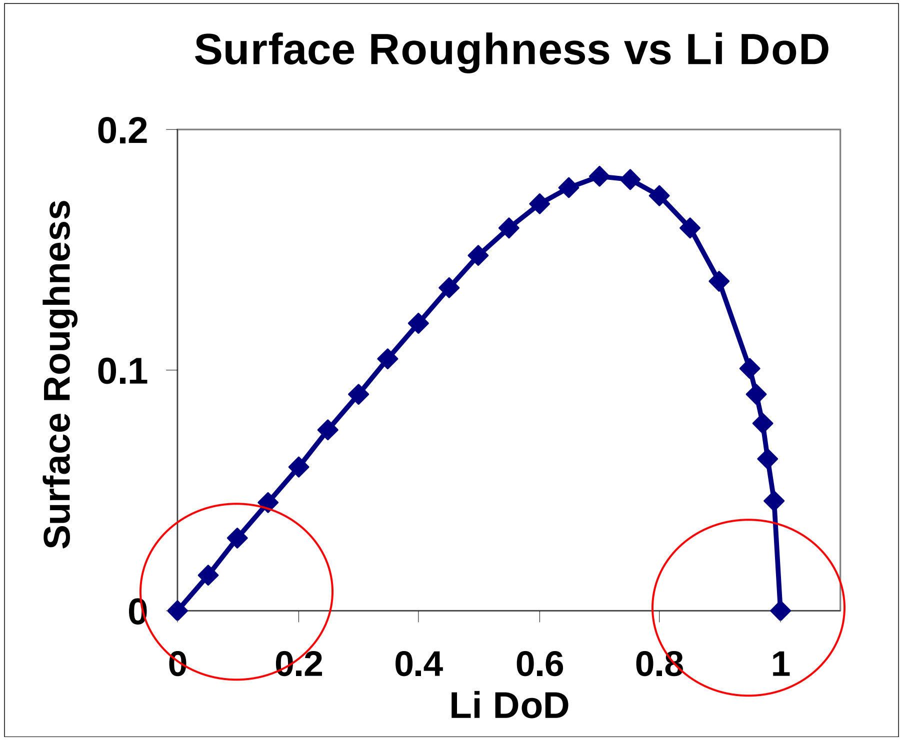
Addressing the Challenges

Keys to the EV Market for Lithium-Sulfur

- Challenges - cycle life and high temperature stability:
  - Dynamics of lithium surface roughness and cycling.
  - Solvent depletion chemistry.

The Dynamics of Lithium Surface Roughness

Monte-Carlo Simulation



- Initially, surface roughness increases in direct proportion to Li depth of discharge (DoD).
- Maximal surface roughness can be observed at ~50-70% of Li DoD.
- The typical scenario is cycling at low Li DoD.
- The best scenario is cycling Li anodes at 100% DoD – <u>but only with a current collector</u>.

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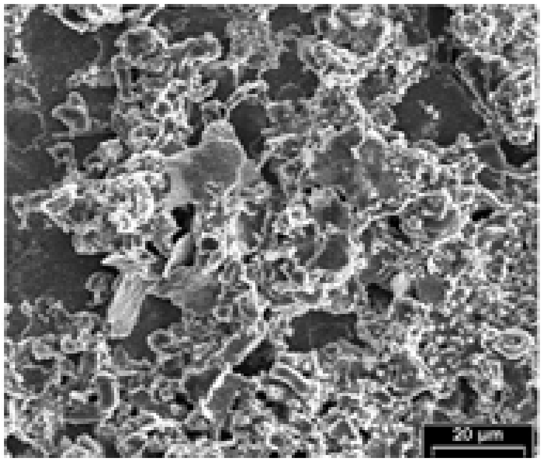
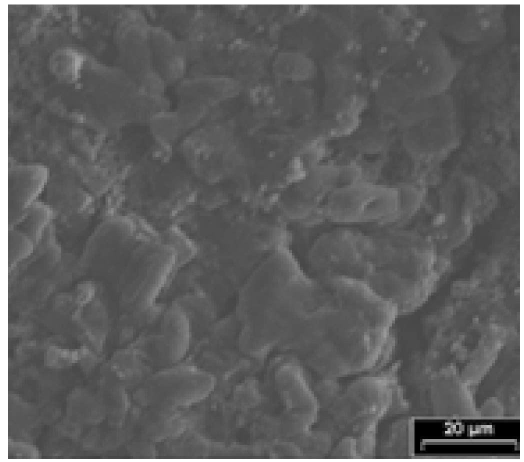
The Dynamics of Lithium Surface Roughness

Experimental Observations



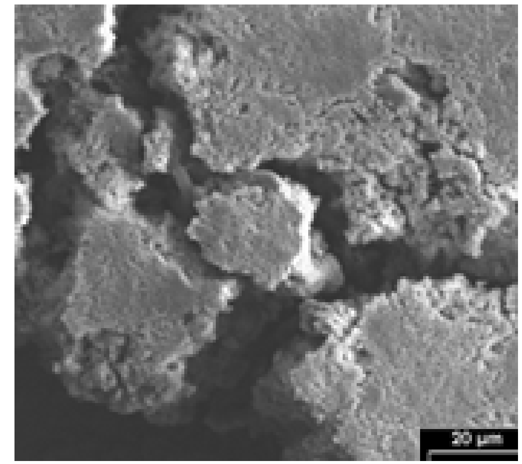
30 cycles

26% Li DoD



330cycles

100% Li DoD



352 cycles

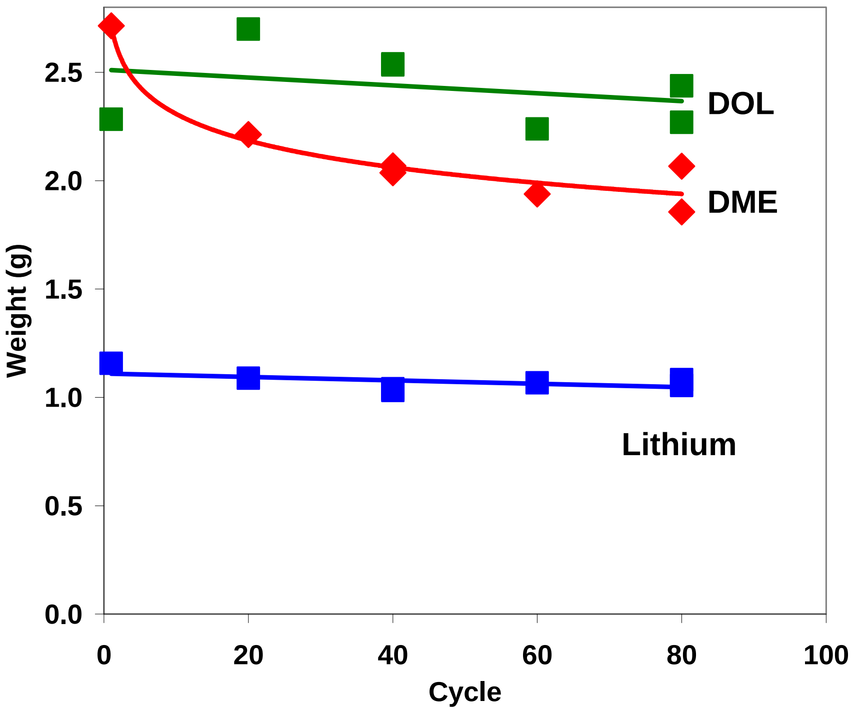
100% Li DoD

Cycling at 100% DOD of lithium prevents surface roughness but lithium/electrolyte depletion still occurs.

The Chemistry of Solvent Depletion

Experimental Observations

Solvent and metallic Li mass vs. Cycle Number (2.5 Ah Li-S battery).



- 1,2-Dimethoxyethane(DME) is mainly responsible for depletion.
- Mass of metallic Li in the cell did not change dramatically.
- However, visually Li looks completely depleted at 60-80 cycles due to roughening and disintegration of Lithium foil.
- The slopes suggests that Lithium and DME may react in a molar ratio of 1:1 to 1:2. Several Lithium alcoholates can form by reaction with DME.

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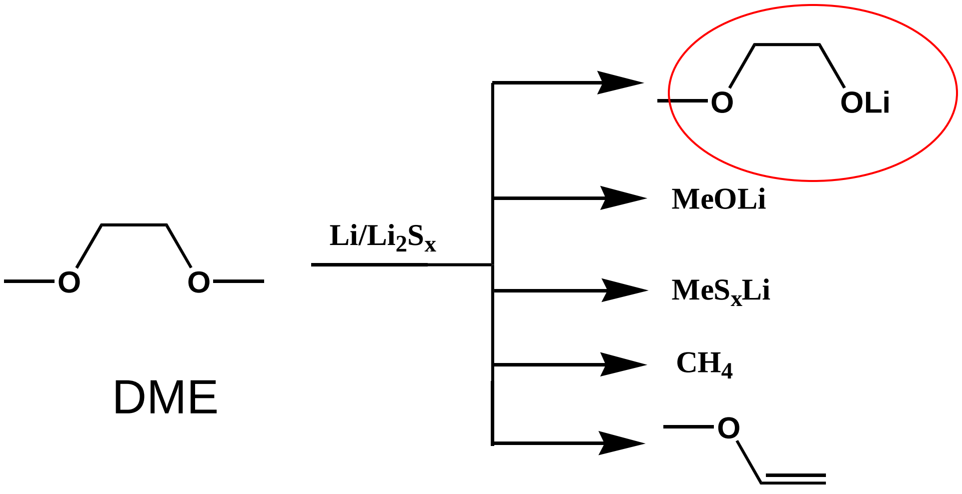
The Chemistry of Solvent Depletion

Products and Effects

Identified depletion products and their impact on battery performance.



High amount, highly soluble and highly detrimental for S cathode performance.

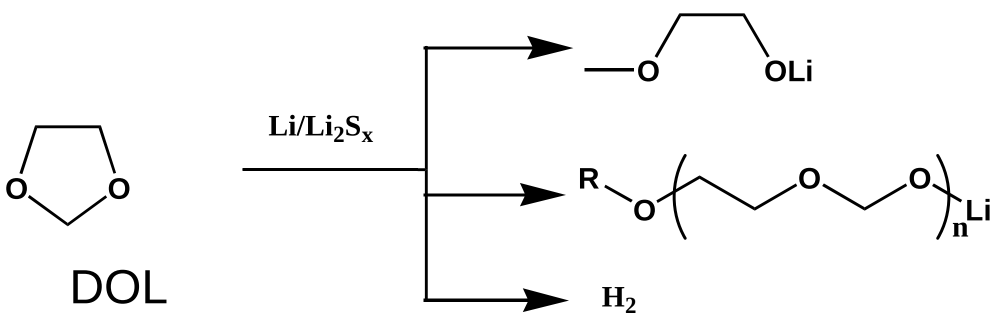
Moderate amount, low solubility, neutral.

Small amount, soluble, consumes S.

Traces.

Traces.

Identified at Sion Power



Highly soluble and highly detrimental for S cathode performance.

Increases anode polarization

Traces

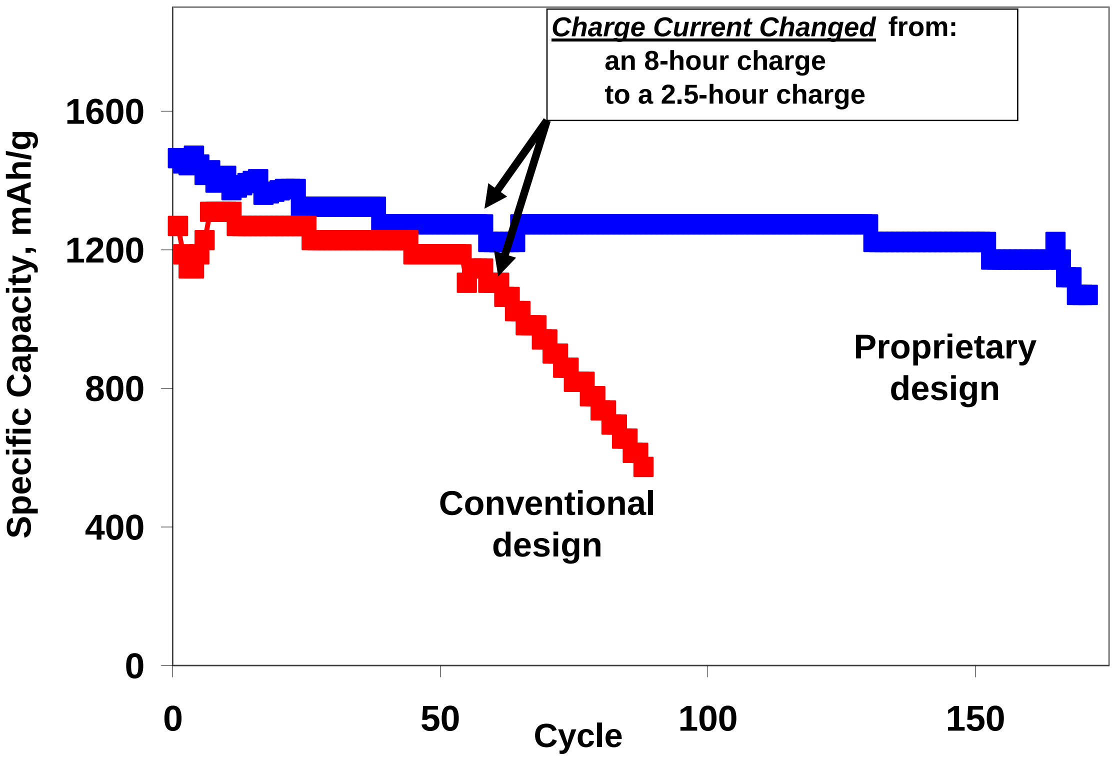
Identified at Sion Power and by D. Aurbach, *J. Electrochem. Soc.*156,8. 2009.

New Approaches Pursued by Sion in Collaboration with BASF for EV Application

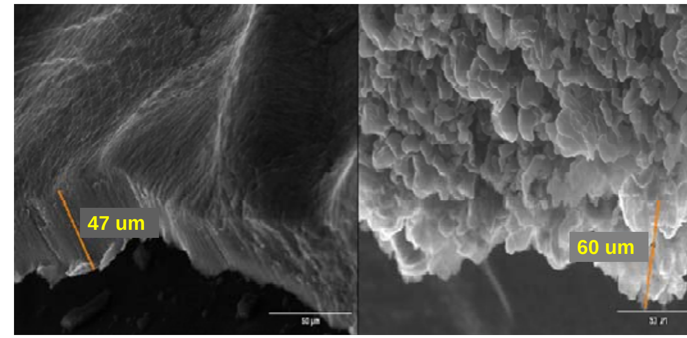
- Reduction of lithium roughness.
  - Proprietary anode design.
- Development of innovative materials
  - Structurally stable cathodes.
- Materials developed by Sion/BASF
  - Physical protection of lithium with multi-functional membrane assemblies.

Lithium Roughness Development

Proprietary Anode Design



Experimental batteries cycling behavior



Proprietary design **Conventional design**

Proprietary design allowed for increased charging rate without increase in surface roughness.

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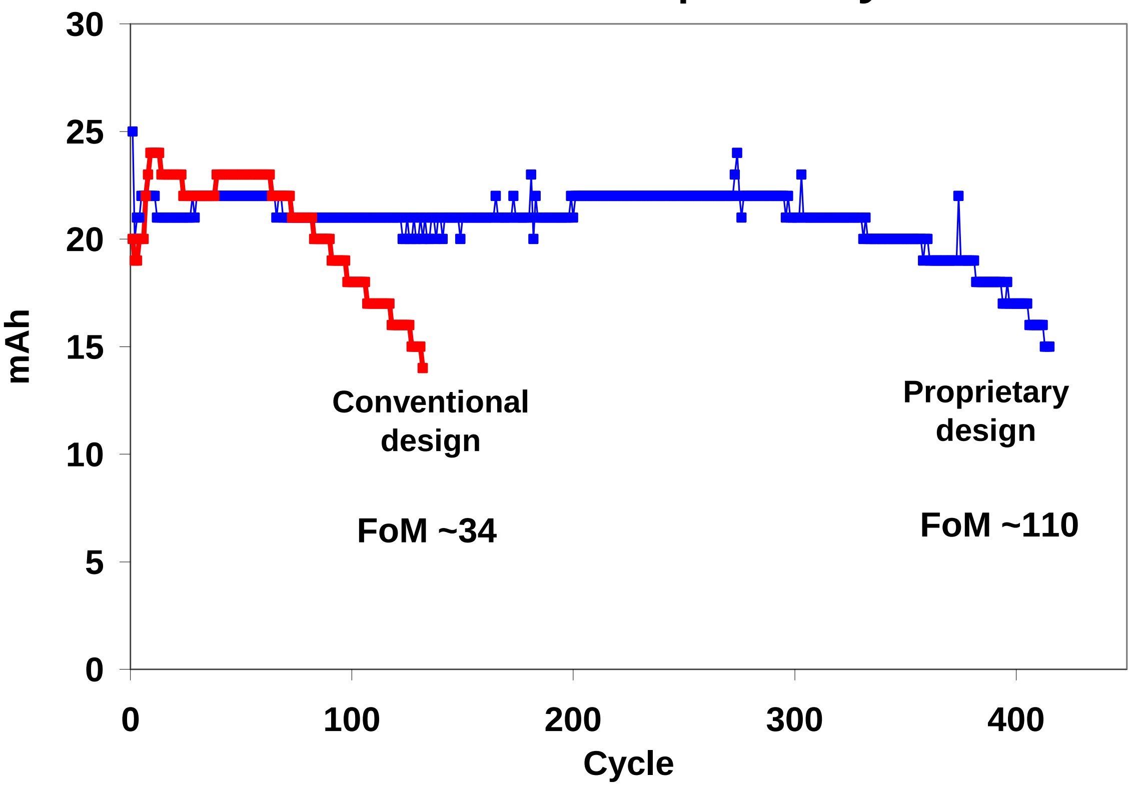
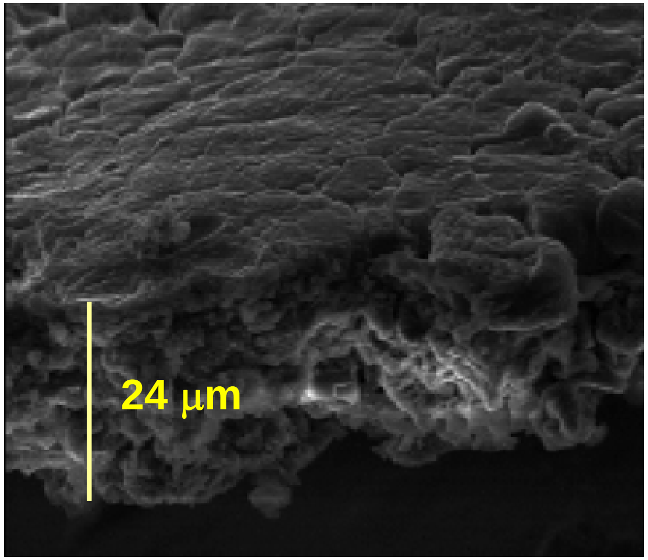
Lithium Roughness Development

Proprietary Anode Design



Experimental batteries cycling behavior



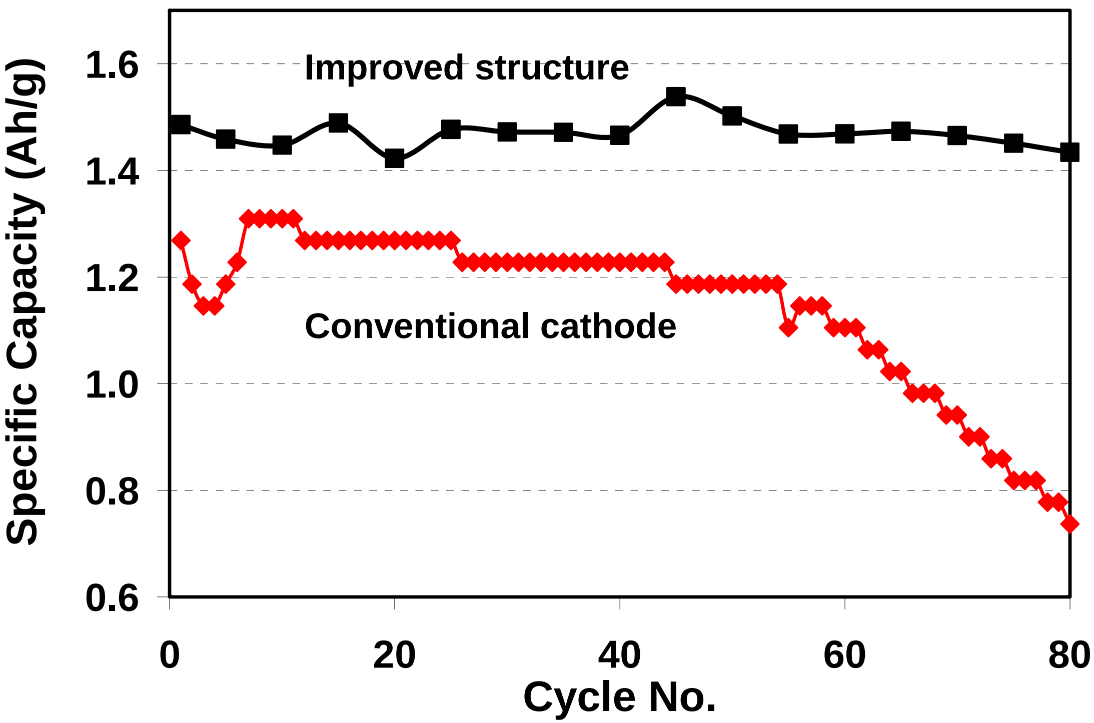
Li anode after 450 cycles. Initial and final Li thickness ~24 µm.

Li Figure of Merit (FoM) exceeds 100 at Li DoD ~26-30%.

FoM = DoD x Number of Cycles.

Development of Innovative Material

Structurally Stable Cathodes



Experimental batteries cycling behavior

- Cathode structure improvement resulted in sulfur utilization increase from 1.2 Ah/g to 1.45 Ah/g.
- This development paves the way to increasing specific energy from the current 350 Wh/kg to the 550 Wh/kg needed to achieve a 500 km EV range

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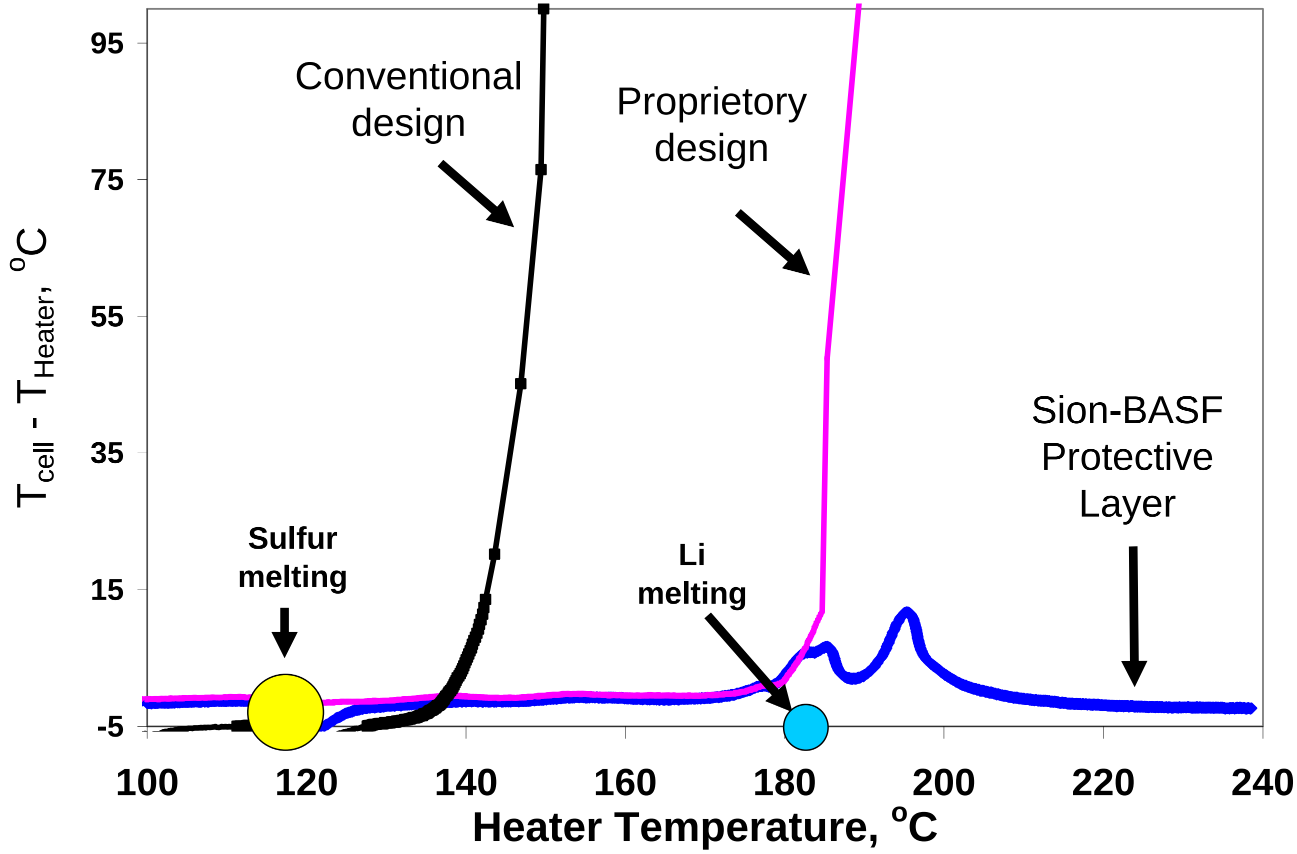
Development of Innovative Material

Multi-functional Membrane Assemblies

Thermal Ramp Test of Fully charged Li-S batteries after 20 cycles at 5 ºC/min.



With Sion-BASF protective layer on anode, there is no thermal runaway.

Conclusions

Reduction of lithium surface roughness with new anode design, and better cathode structure, resulted in:

- Recharge time reduced to less than 3 hours.
- Substantial cycle life increase if lithium surface roughness suppressed.
- Sulfur utilization increased to 87%, or 1.45 Ah/g, paving the way to 550 Wh/kg Li-S battery.

Innovative anode design, and Sion Power-BASF protective membranes, increased thermal stability of Li-S cells – eliminating thermal runaway. Batteries passed the melting point of the Li without violent events.

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Takeaway

Sion Power Corporation, in collaboration with BASF, is very optimistic that the future of all electric EV applications will be dominated by Sion Power's lithium-sulfur technology.


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