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14. ABSTRACT Poly- and perfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are man-made compounds that are widely used in numerous commercial and industrial applications. Perfluorocarboxylic acids (PFCAs) are a commonly used class of PFAS extensively used in aqueous film-forming foams (AFFFs). Due to both the environmental persistence and toxicity of these species, the removal and destruction of PFAS/PFCAs have garnered significant attention from the research community, specifically with a focus on long chain species such as perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA). The most common method of PFAS treatment is via adsorption onto granular activated carbon (GAC) followed by incineration at high temperatures. However, a fundamental chemical understanding of this thermal decomposition process as well as the byproducts formed is still not well known. This presentation will discuss the unimolecular decomposition of PFOA as well as some of its simpler analogues, trifluoroacetic acid (TFA) and perfluoropropanoic acid (PFPA) via theoretical gas phase kinetics studies utilizing potential energy surfaces (PESs) developed using density functional theory (DFT) methods.					
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U.S. AIR FORCE



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Theoretical Gas Phase Kinetics of Perfluorocarboxylic Acid(PFCA) decomposition

ROBERT BUSZEK, CTR

Jacobs, Edwards Air Force Base

RQRP 8/25/2021



Computational modeling and AI/ML for degradation, destruction and removal of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFASs)



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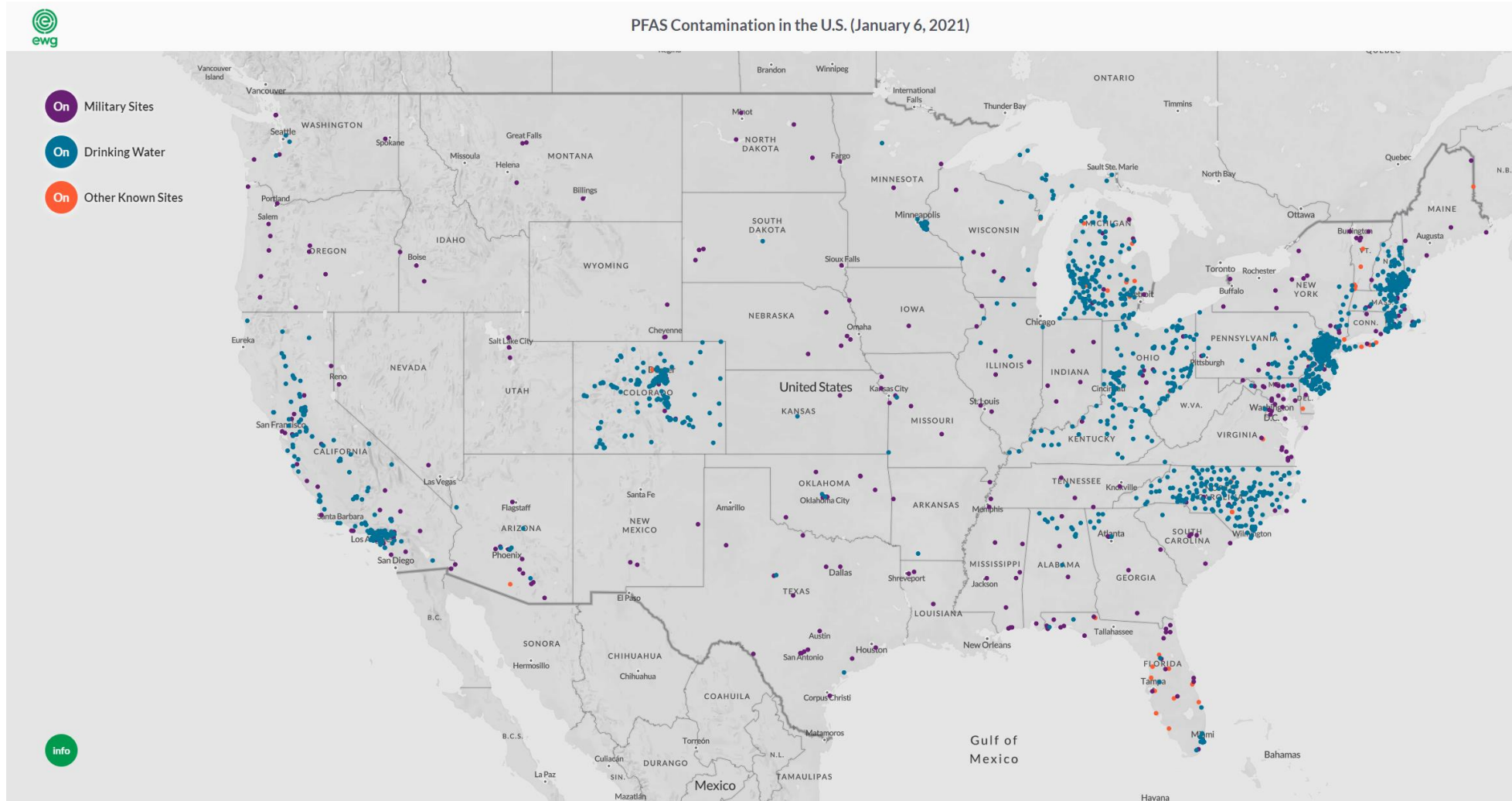
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This work is supported by the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering Defense (OUSD(R&E)) under the Applied Research for the Advancement of Science and Technology Priorities (ARAP) Program

PFAS Sources



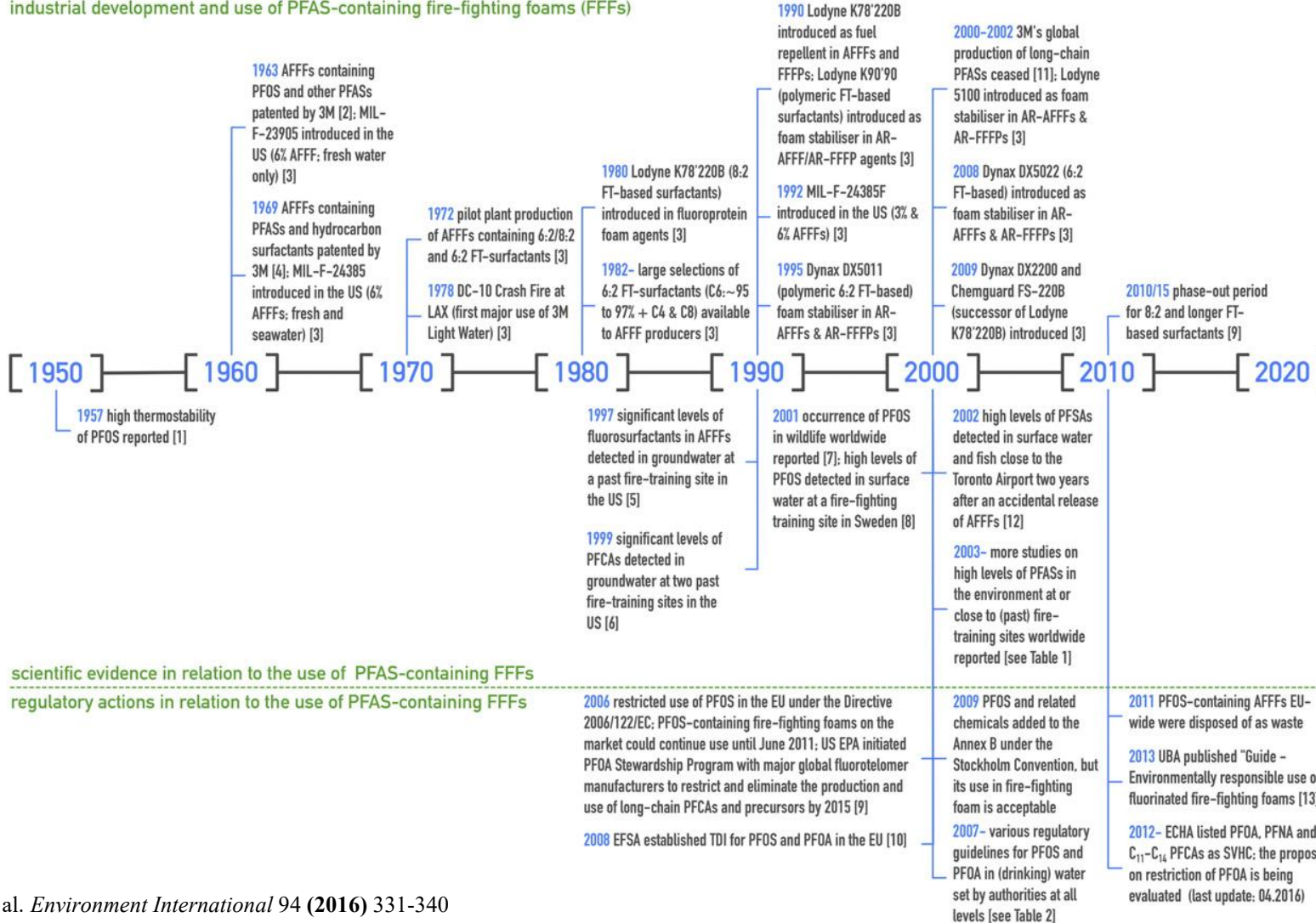
PFAS Contamination



https://www.ewg.org/interactive-maps/pfas_contamination/map/

Aqueous Film Forming Foams (AFFFs)

industrial development and use of PFAS-containing fire-fighting foams (FFFs)



scientific evidence in relation to the use of PFAS-containing FFFs
regulatory actions in relation to the use of PFAS-containing FFFs





In the News

Dangerous 'forever chemicals' found in drinking water of thousands of Illinois residents

More than 100 community drinking water sources in the Chicago suburbs and around the state show contamination from harmful PFAS that can pose serious health threats, records show.

By Brett Chase | Jul 30, 2021, 8:04am CDT

SHARE



John Guldage, the chief water plant operator of the City of Lake Forest, outside the Lake Forest Water Treatment Plant in Lake Forest. Trace amounts of PFAS chemicals were found in the city's drinking water. | Pat Nabong/Sun-Times

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More than 100 drinking water systems across Illinois, including some in the Chicago area, have tested positive for measurable levels of harmful contaminants known as "forever chemicals" that are linked to cancer, liver damage, high blood pressure and other health threats.

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Home Energy & Environment U.S. House Passes PFAS Bill Regulating 'Forever Chemicals' in Drinking Water

Energy & Environment Health Care

U.S. House Passes PFAS Bill Regulating 'Forever Chemicals' in Drinking Water

By Ariana Figueroa - July 21, 2021

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Pixabay.com photo.

The U.S. House Wednesday passed bipartisan legislation that would regulate toxic chemicals found in drinking water, as well as designate two types of those toxic chemicals as hazardous substances that would spark federal cleanup standards.

The bill, H.R. 2467, also known as the PFAS Action Act of 2021, passed 241-183, with 23 Republicans joining Democrats in voting for it.

The legislation would direct EPA to start the regulatory process for regulating per- and

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Local Leaders Grapple With Federal Red Tape As They Try To Quickly Distribute Rent Relief Funding

Wells in Santa Rosa County test for hazardous chemicals Navy

pensacola News Journal
July 2, 2021

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After Naval Air Station Whiting Field announced that three Santa Rosa County wells near the base tested positive for excessive amounts of a chemical commonly used by base firefighters, the Navy announced that it found additional wells in the area that tested positive for the substance.

On Thursday, NAS Whiting Field said its ongoing efforts to test for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (commonly referred to as PFAS) in a total of 11 residences that were found to have excessive amounts of the chemical in the water that residents use to drink, bathe and clean

PFAS is coming in kind of fast, it's a process every week and there are more to come in," said Julie Ziegenhorn, public affairs officer for NAS Whiting Field on Friday. "There have been nine exceedances found so far around the base and another two were at Barin (Naval Outlying Field in Foley, Ga.). I believe there's one more that just came in, so I believe there are

PFAS identified: Three private wells near Whiting Field test positive for hazardous chemicals

PFAS is a group of thousands of different chemicals that have been widely used in consumer products since the 1950s. In 2016, however, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency issued a health advisory cautioning that exposure to certain amounts could result in serious adverse health issues.

PFAS contamination cited by the EPA can include cancer, immune system issues and reproductive problems and newborn babies.

At Whiting Field in Milton, the PFAS chemicals were mostly found in the foam used by firefighters. Officials talked to former and current fire chiefs on base to see if the foam might have been used in the past, including at sites of structure fires, and used their knowledge of geology and hydrology to determine where the chemicals might have seeped into the ground.

We're always working to improve your experience. Let us know what you think.



PFAS Species

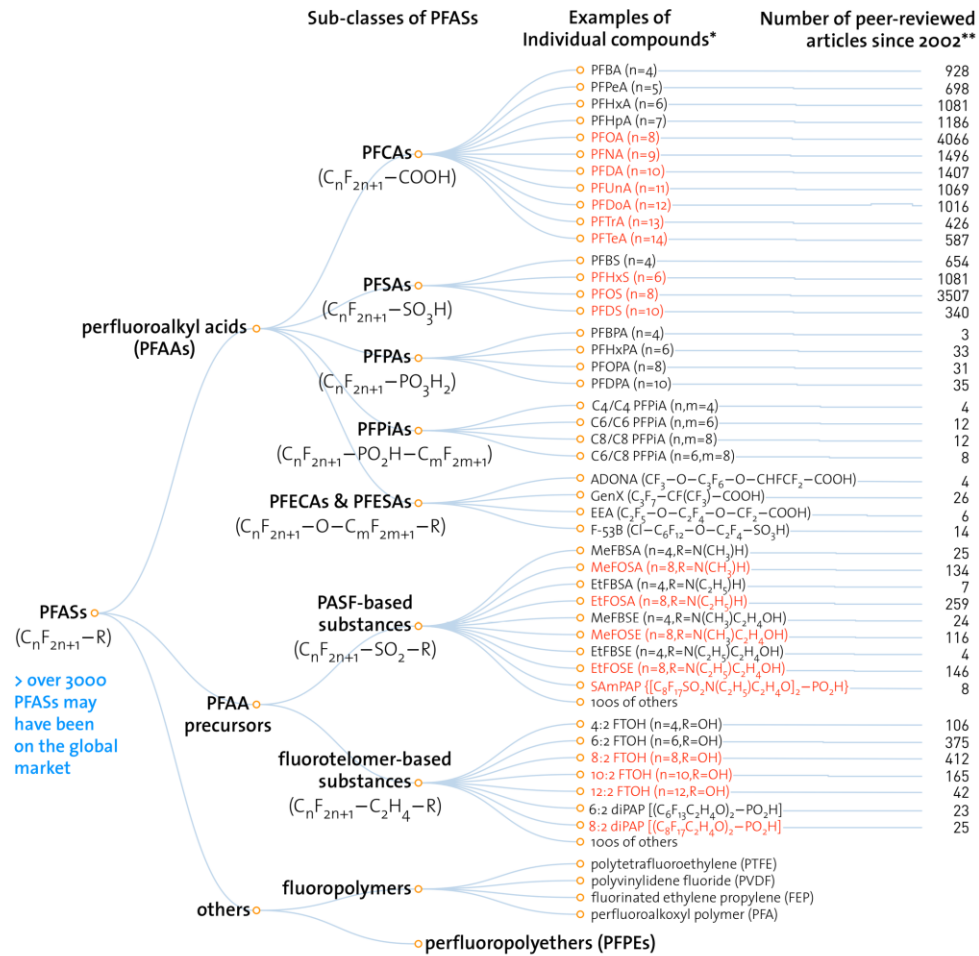


Table 1

Measured concentrations of selected examples of PFASs in the environmental media at sites where fire-fighting foams have been used or spilled. LOD = limit of detection.

Sampling sites	PFOA	PFOS	PFHxS	Ref.
<i>Surface water (ng/L)</i>				
Toronto Pearson Airport, Canada		29-690		Awad et al. (2011)
Toronto Pearson Airport, Canada	<LOD-11,300	<LOD-995,000	<LOD-134,000	Moody et al. (2002)
Schiphol Airport, The Netherlands		20-490		Kwadijk et al. (2014)
Hamilton International Airport, Canada	7.4-62.4	7-458		De Solla et al. (2012)
Air force base F18, Sweden	<1-8.8	<1-45.8	<0.5-25.1	Filipovic et al. (2015)
Flesland airport, Norway		1427-2078		Kärman et al. (2011)
<i>Groundwater (ng/L)</i>				
Wurtsmith Air Force Base, USA	<LOD-105,000	4000-110,000	9000-120,000	Moody et al. (2003)
Tyndall Air Force Base, USA	<LOD-116,000	147,000-2,300,000	107,000-920,000	Schultz et al. (2004a)
Fallon Naval Air station, USA	<LOD-6570	<LOD-380,000	<LOD-876,000	Schultz et al. (2004a)
Ellsworth Air Force Base, USA	400-300,000	5000-75,000		McGuire et al. (2014)
US military base, USA	12,000-220,000	15,000-78,000	36,000-360,000	Backe et al. (2013)
US military base, USA	8.6-57,000	88-65,000	81-1700	Backe et al. (2013)
Fire training area Cologne, Germany	<LOD-160	20-8350	<10-2360	WeiB et al. (2012)
Air force base F18, Sweden	<1-4470	<1-42,200	<0.5-3470	Filipovic et al. (2015)
Jersey Airport, UK		10,000-98,000		Rumsby et al. (2009)
<i>Soil (ng/g dw)</i>				
Ellsworth Air Force Base, USA	10-10,500	10-34,000		McGuire et al. (2014)
Air force base F18, Sweden		5-8300		Filipovic et al. (2015)
Flesland airport, Norway		<LOD-1905		Kärman et al. (2011)
<i>Sediment (ng/g dw)</i>				
Toronto Pearson Airport, Canada		1-13		Awad et al. (2011)
Schiphol Airport, The Netherlands		0.5-14		Kwadijk et al. (2014)

I.T. Cousins et al. *Environment International* 94 (2016) 331-340

* PFASs in RED are those that have been restricted under national/regional/global regulatory or voluntary frameworks, with or without specific exemptions (for details, see OECD (2015), Risk reduction approaches for PFASs. <http://oe.cd/1AN>).

** The numbers of articles (related to all aspects of research) were retrieved from SciFinder® on Nov. 1, 2016.

PFAS Treatment

- Incineration
 - Temperatures of 600 - 1000 °C¹
- Sorption onto Granular Activated Carbon (GAC)
- Extremely active research area generating many novel methods
 - Adsorption
 - Filtration
 - Sono-chemical Destruction
 - Electrochemical Oxidation
 - Photolytic Oxidation
 - e⁻ Beam destruction
 - Plasma Based Methods
 - Biological Methods
 - Treatment Trains
 - Others



¹Mills, Marc A., D. Bless, K. Dasu, D. P. Siriwardena, AND A. Dinal. Thermal Treatment of PFAS in Environmental Media: A review of the state-of-the-science. Workshop: Thermal state of the Science, Cincinnati, OH, February 25, 2020

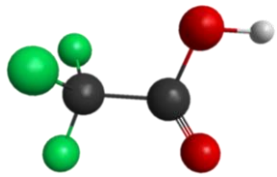


Objectives

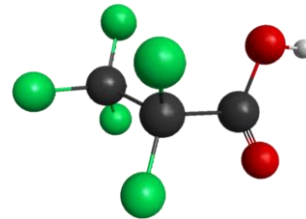
- What is the Mechanism for thermal Decomposition of PFCAs?
- What byproducts can we expect to be formed?
- Does this change with respect to chain length or temperature?

Theoretical Methods

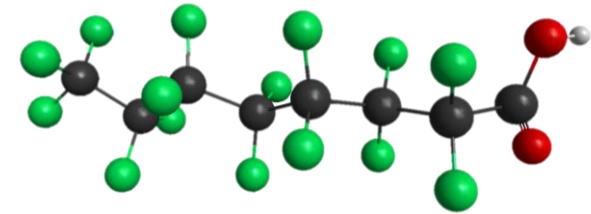
PFCA Models



C2 Trifluoroacetic Acid (TFA)



C3 Perfluoropropanoic Acid (PFPA)



C8 Perfluorooctanoic Acid (PFOA)

Energetics

- Density Functional Theory (DFT)
 - *M06-2X-D3alt/def2TZVPP
- All ground state minima and transition states are confirmed via the diagonalization of the mass weighted hessian matrix
- Transition states are further verified to connect products and reactants through intrinsic reaction coordinate (IRC) computations

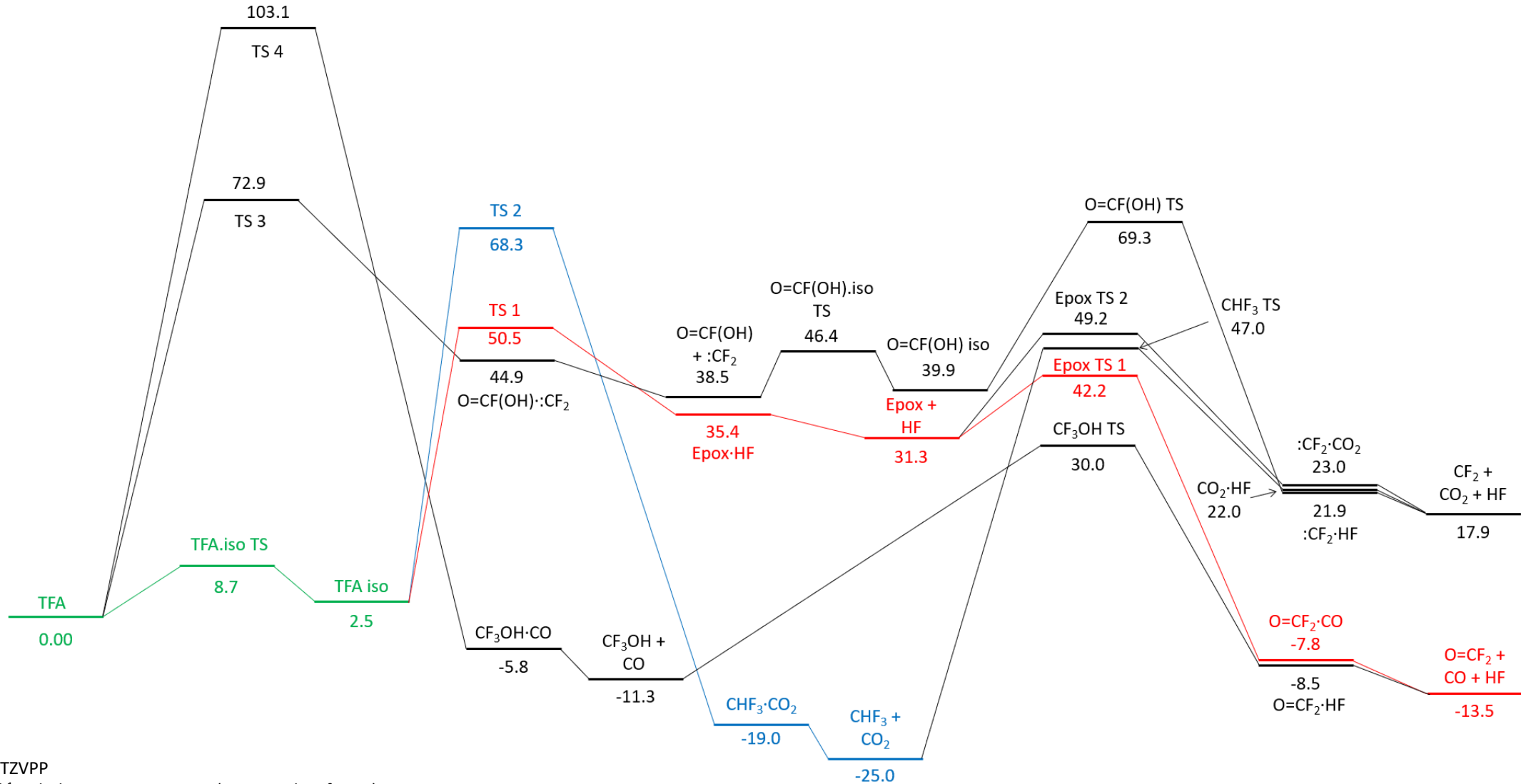
Kinetics

- Transition State Theory (TST)
 - Arkane (RMG)
- Calculated at temperatures ranging from 298 -1500 K at 50K intervals
- Tunneling corrections included based on the asymmetric Eckart model

*D3alt refers to D3 dispersion corrections with the parameters in GAMESS edited to resemble those in Gaussian16



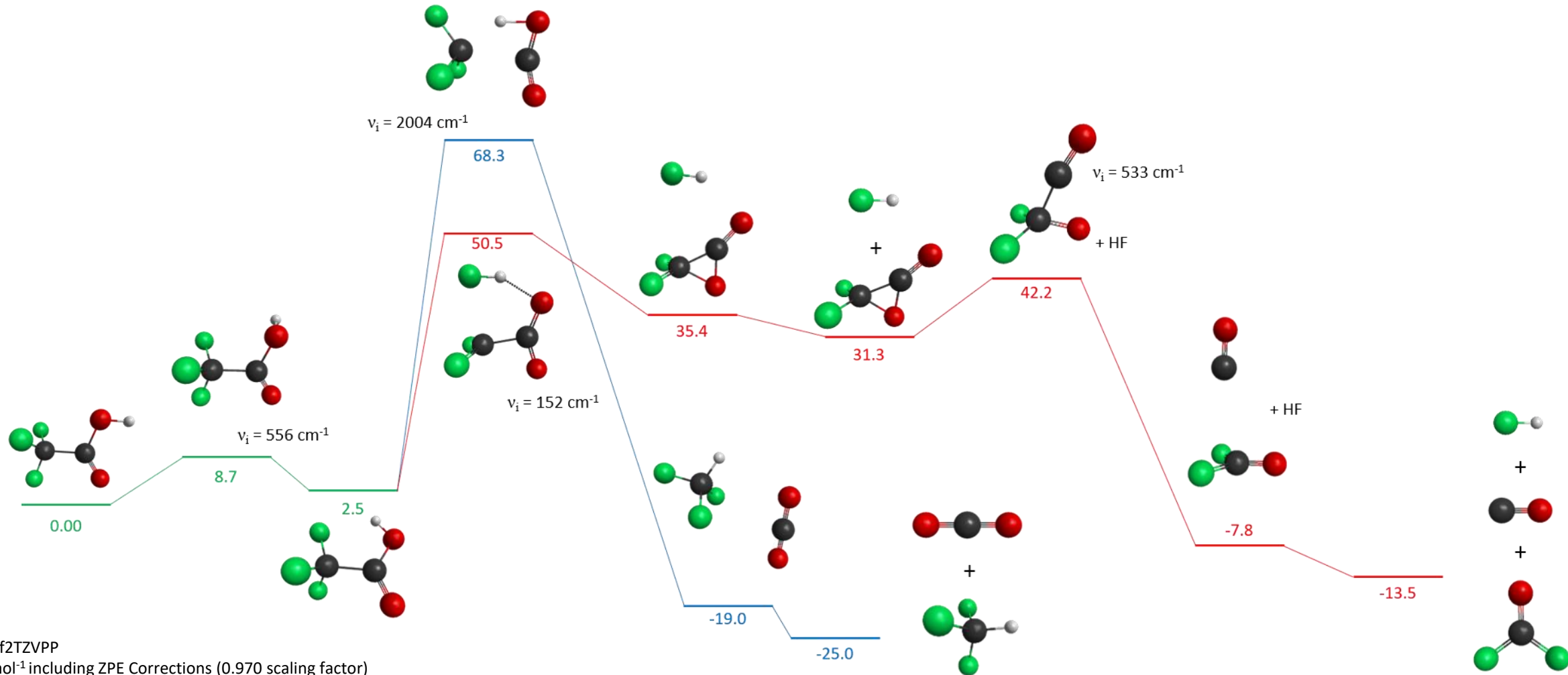
Favored Decomposition Pathways @ 298.15 K



M06-2X-D3alt/def2TZVPP
Energies in kcal mol⁻¹ including ZPE Corrections (0.970 scaling factor)

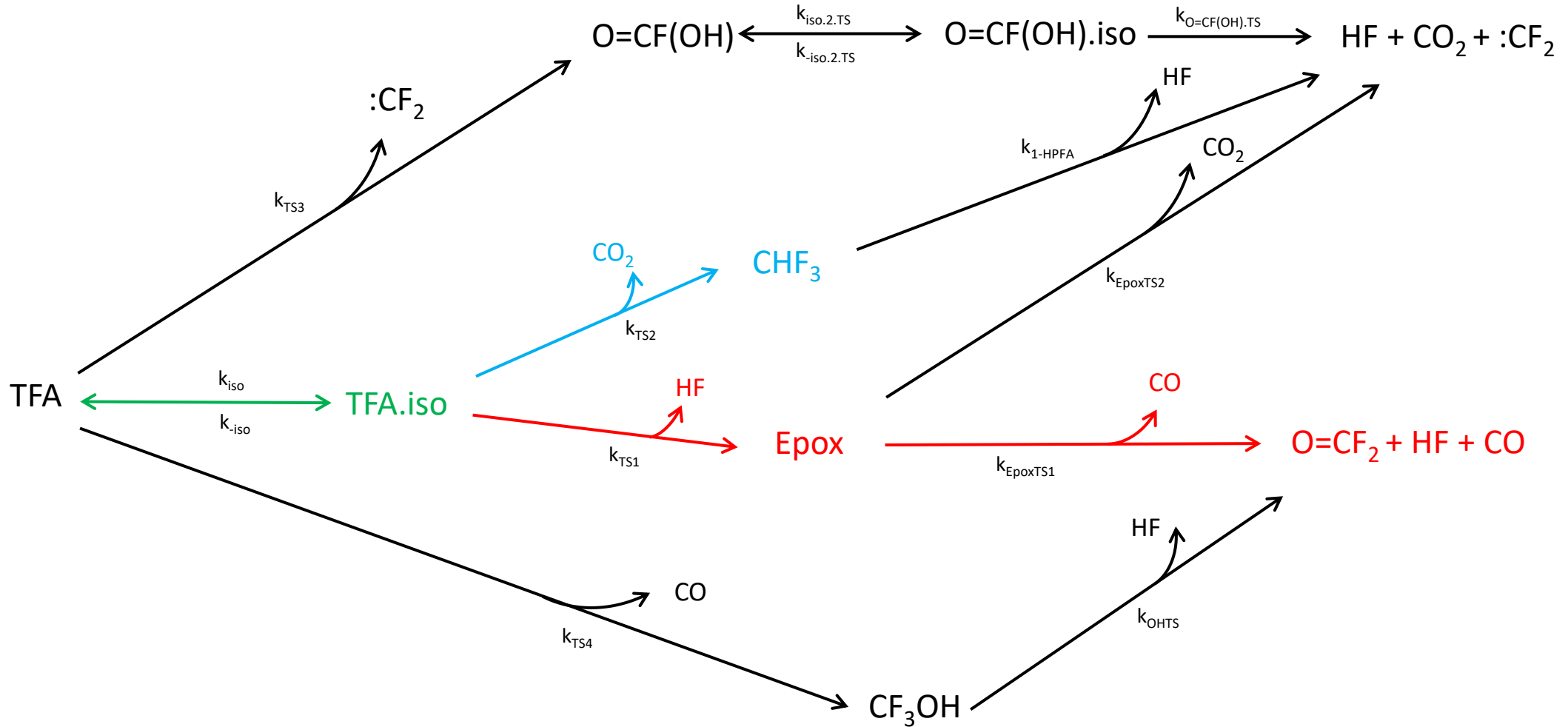
THE AIR FORCE RESEARCH LABORATORY

Favored Decomposition Pathways @ 298.15 K



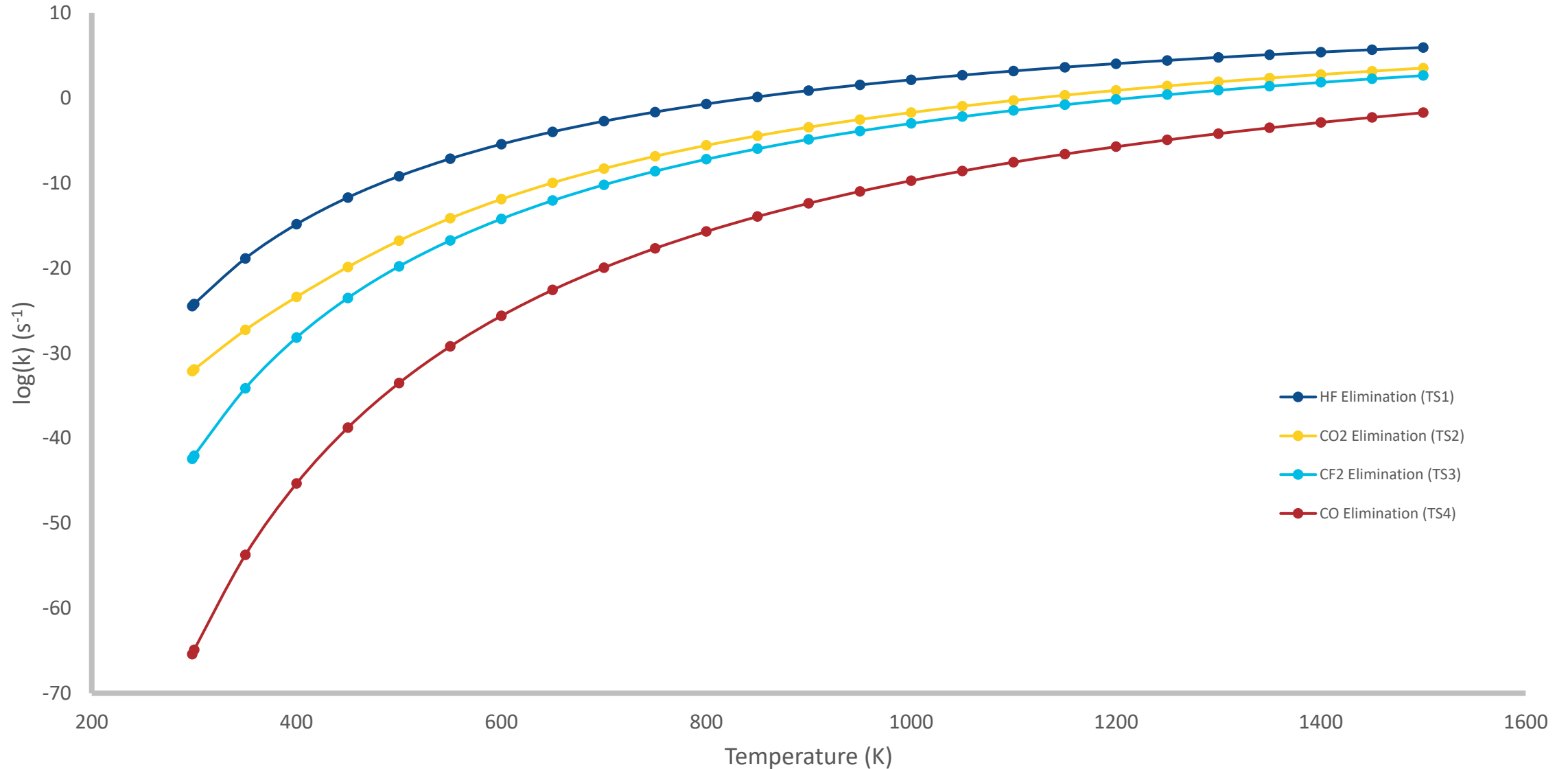


TFA Decomposition Model



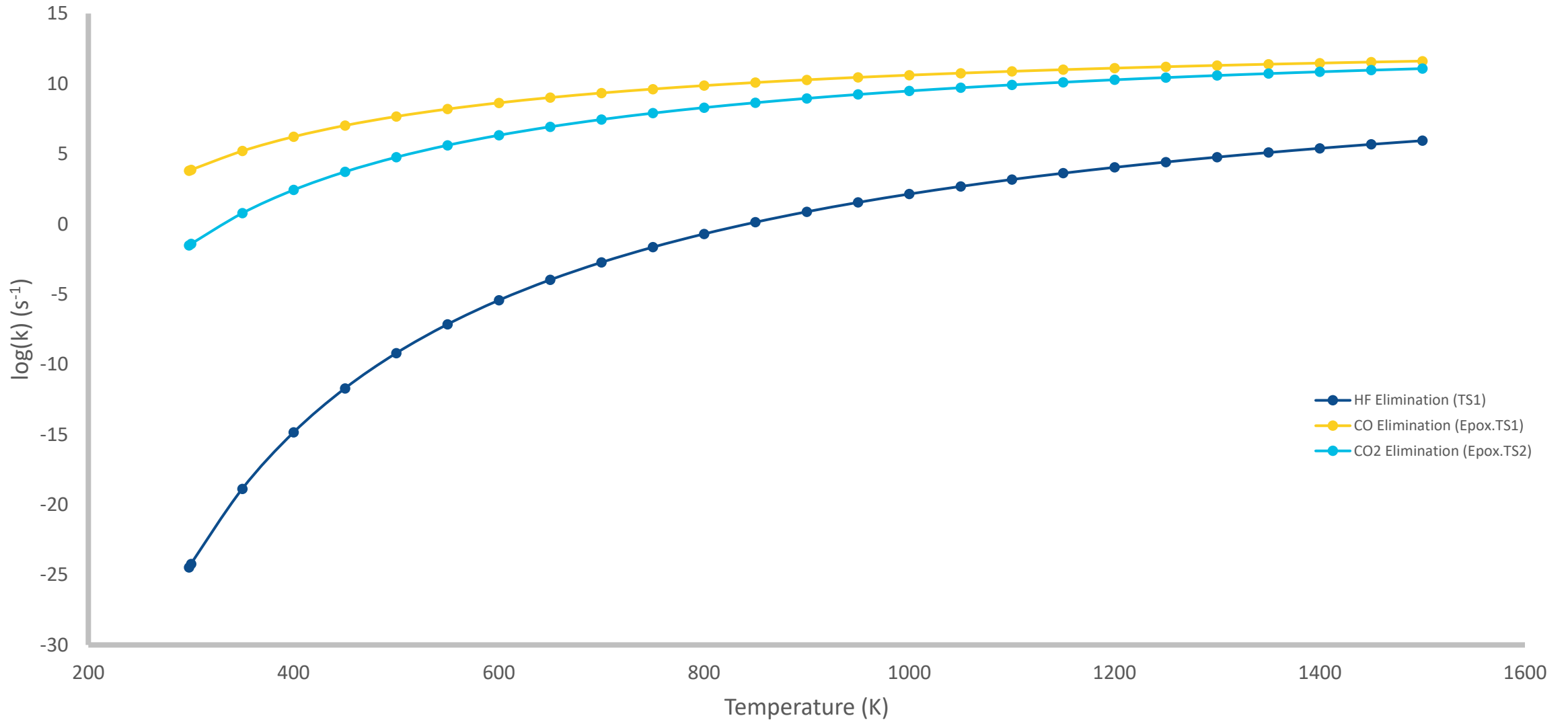


TFA Initial Decomposition Rates



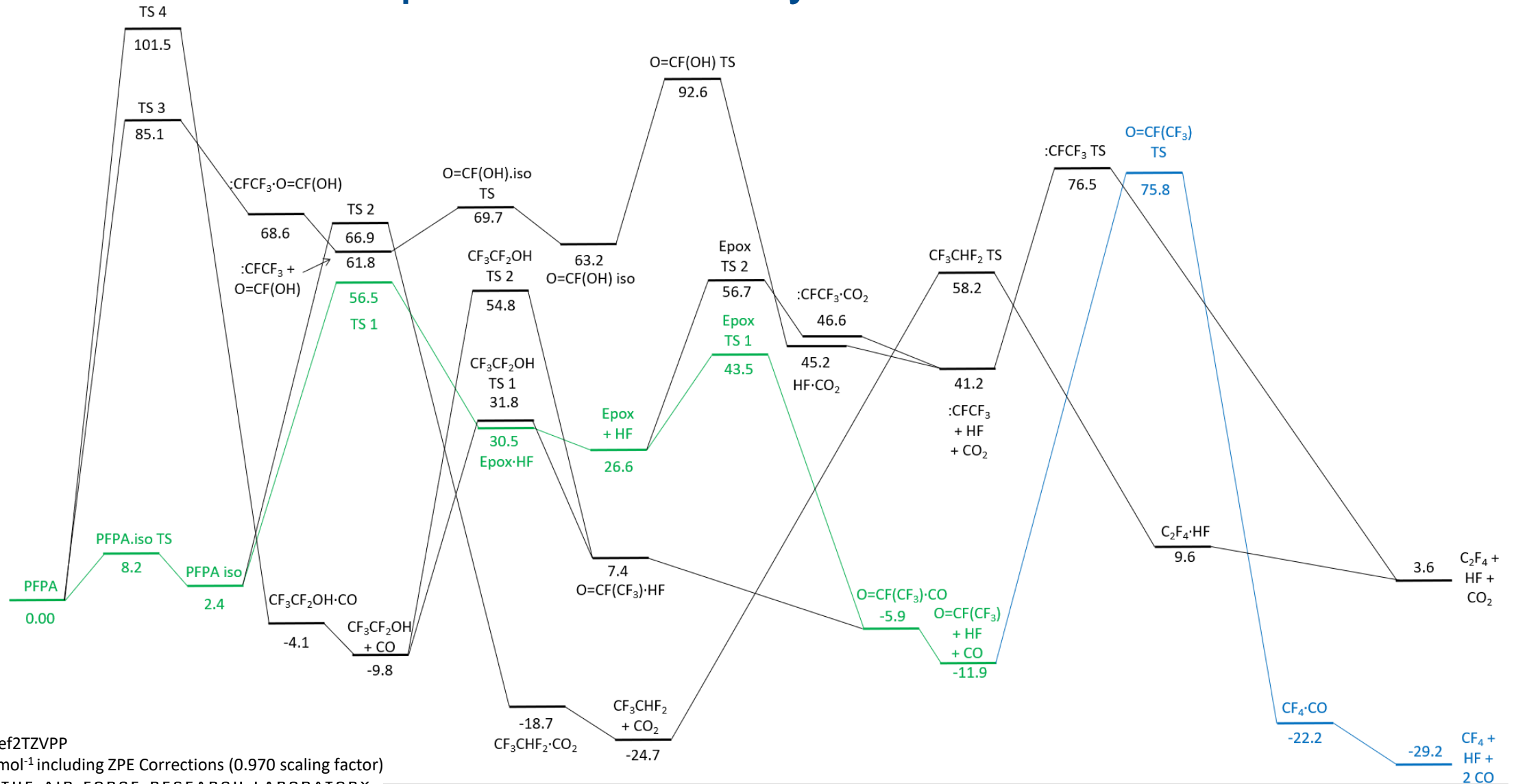


Kinetically Favored TFA Decomposition Rates





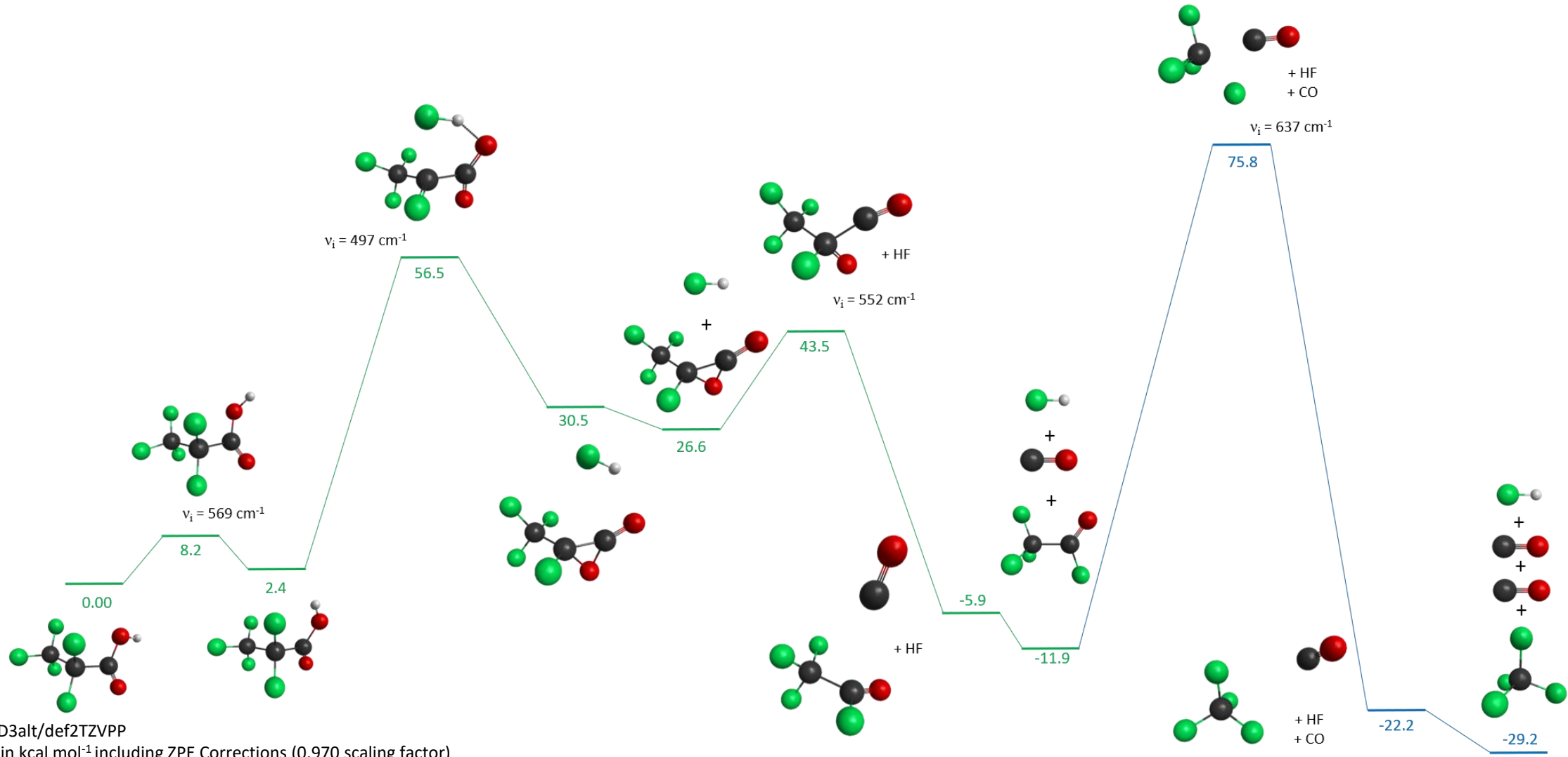
Favored Decomposition Pathways @ 298.15 K



M06-2X-D3alt/def2TZVPP
Energies in kcal mol⁻¹ including ZPE Corrections (0.970 scaling factor)

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Favored Decomposition Pathways @ 298.15 K

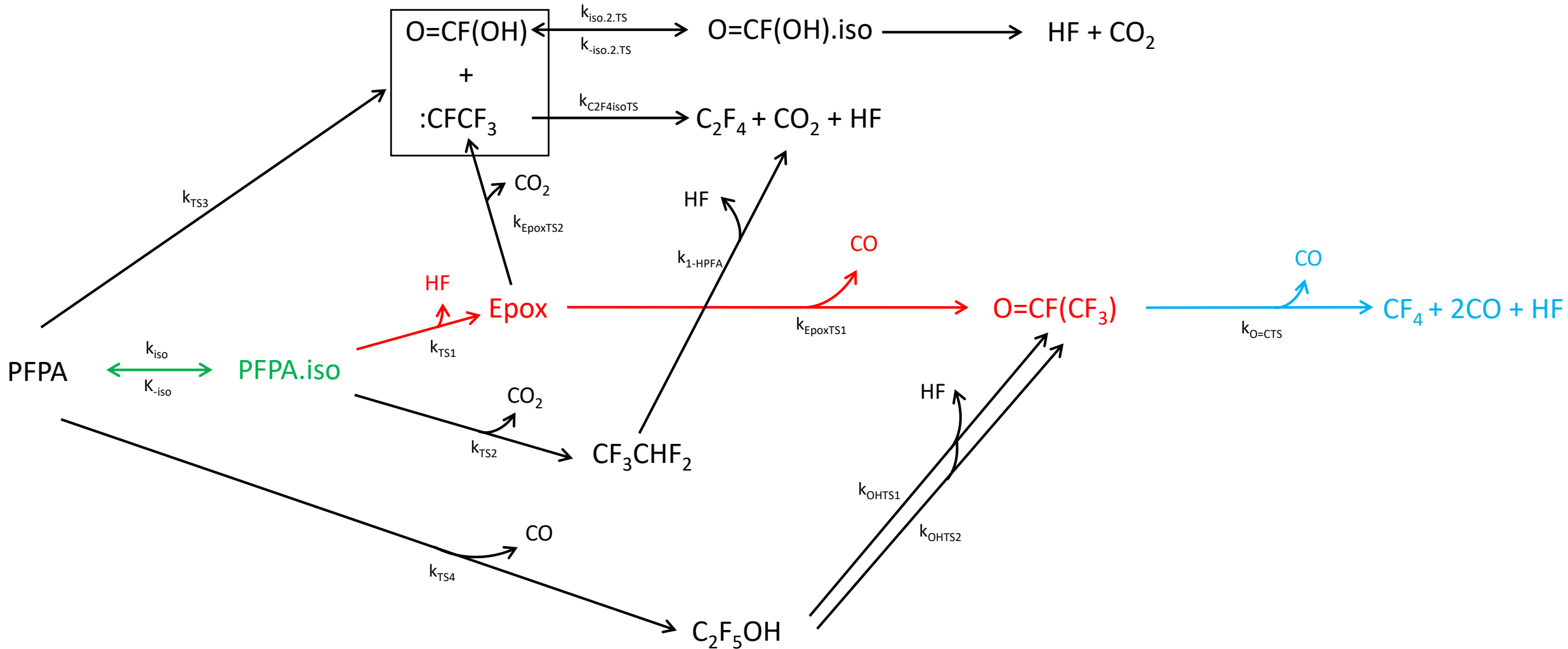


M06-2X-D3alt/def2TZVPP
Energies in kcal mol⁻¹ including ZPE Corrections (0.970 scaling factor)

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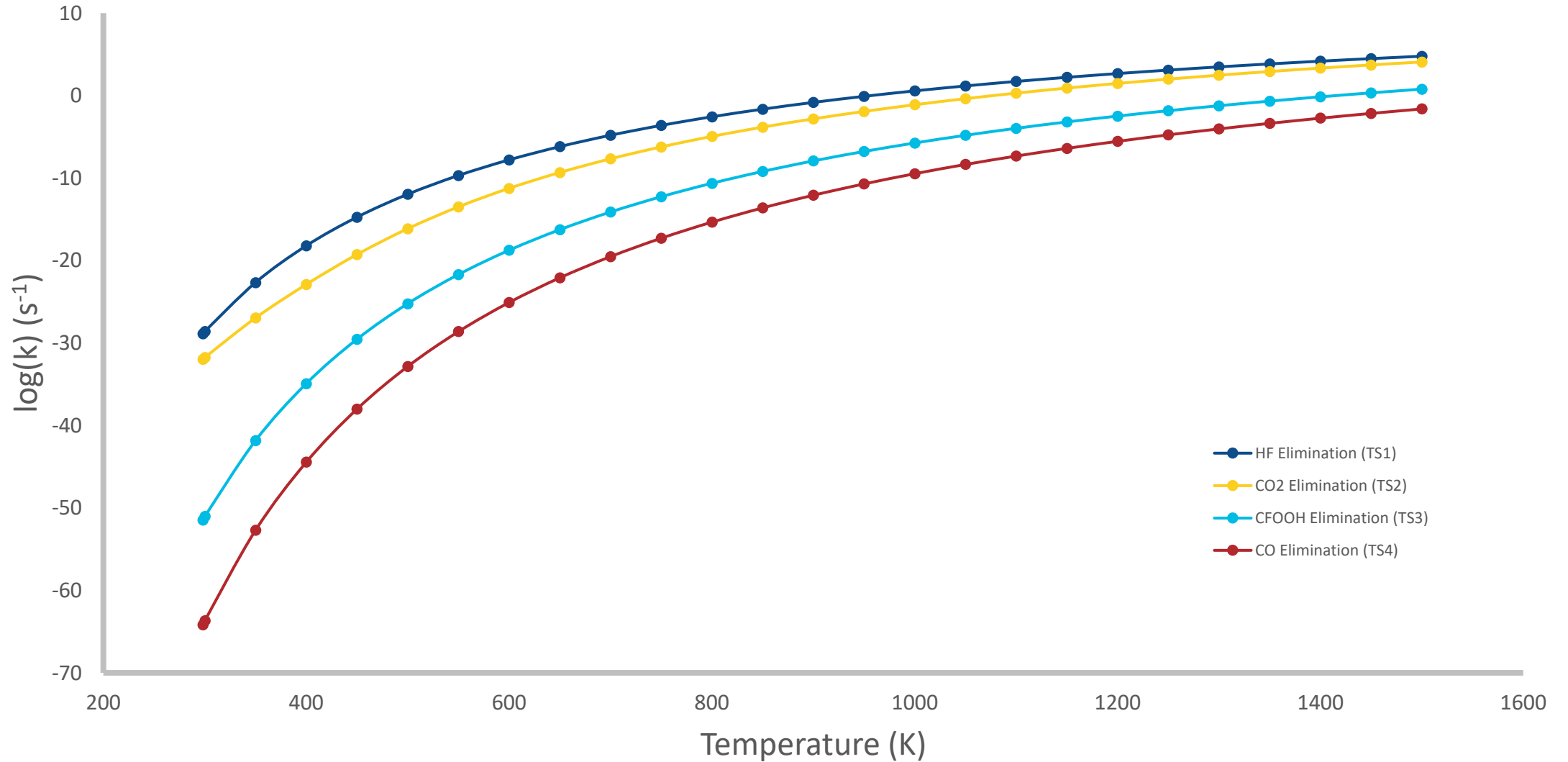


PFPA Decomposition Model



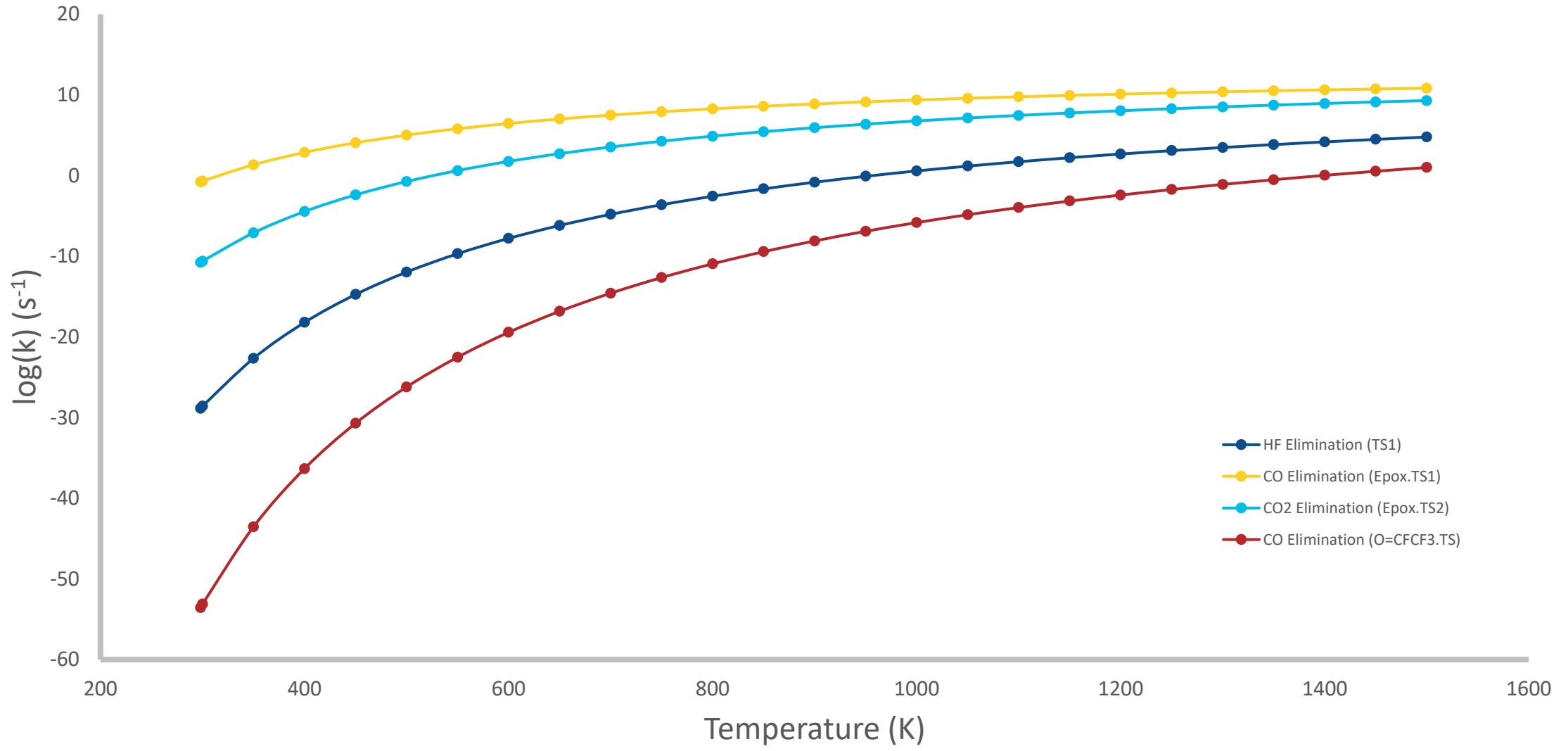


PFPA Initial Decomposition Rates



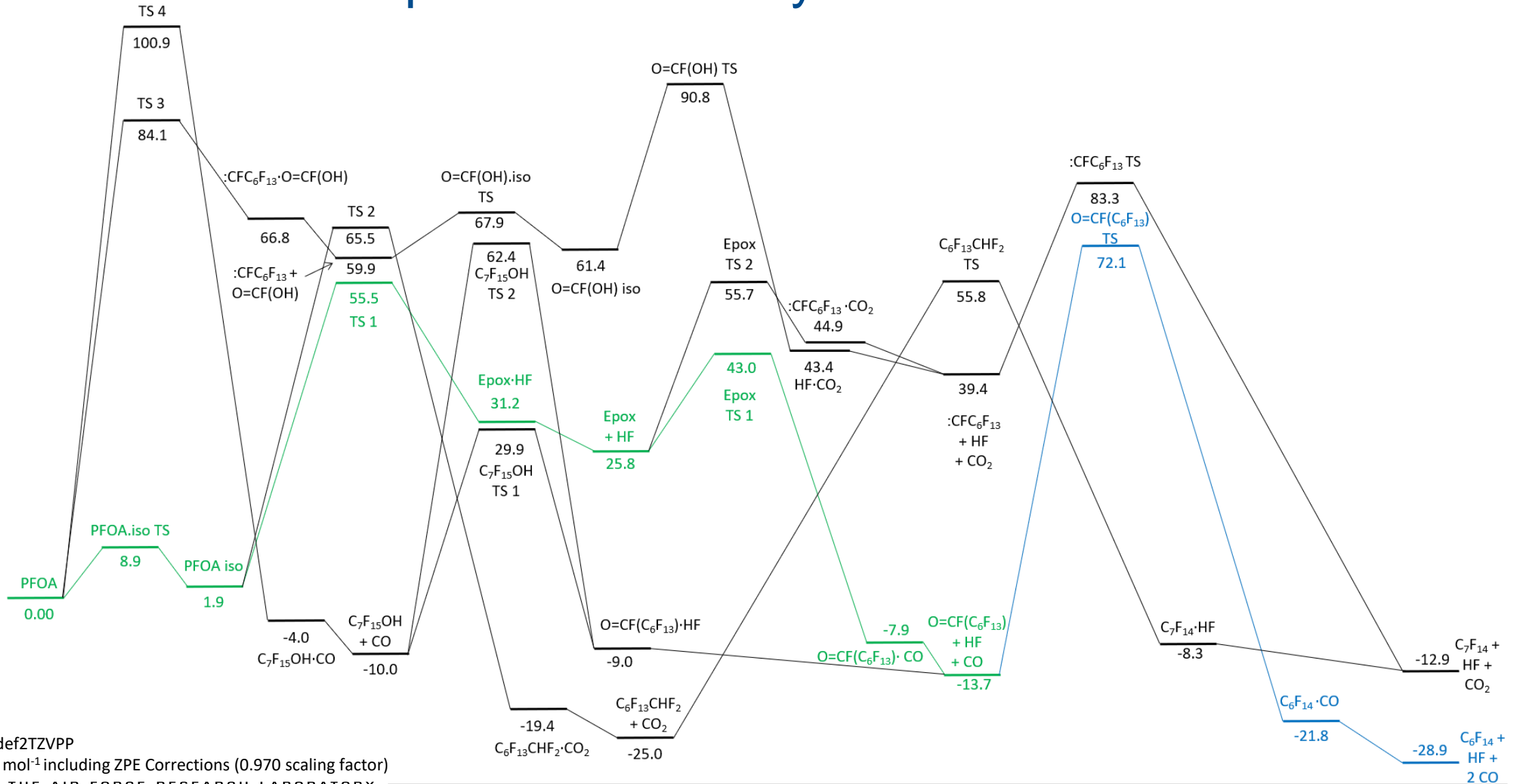


Kinetically Favored PFPA Decomposition Rates





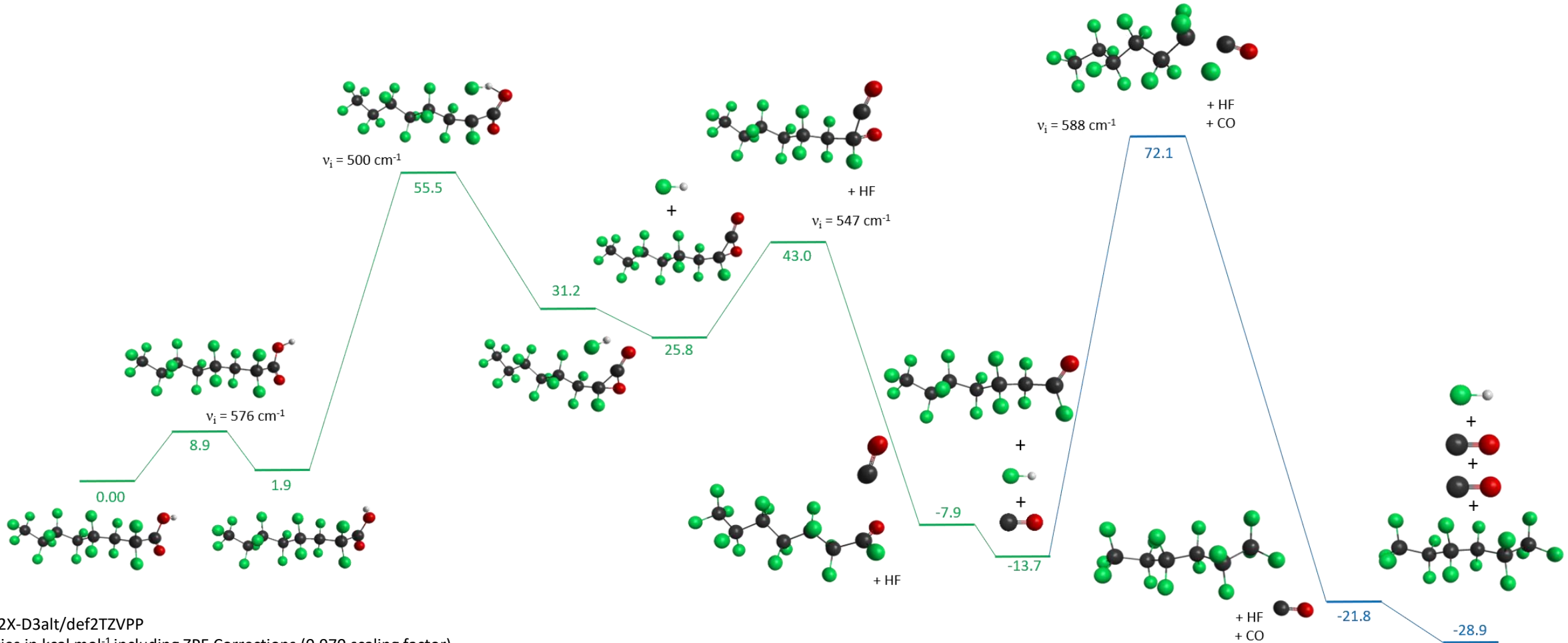
Favored Decomposition Pathways @ 298.15 K



M06-2X-D3alt/def2TZVPP
 Energies in kcal mol⁻¹ including ZPE Corrections (0.970 scaling factor)

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Favored Decomposition Pathways @ 298.15 K

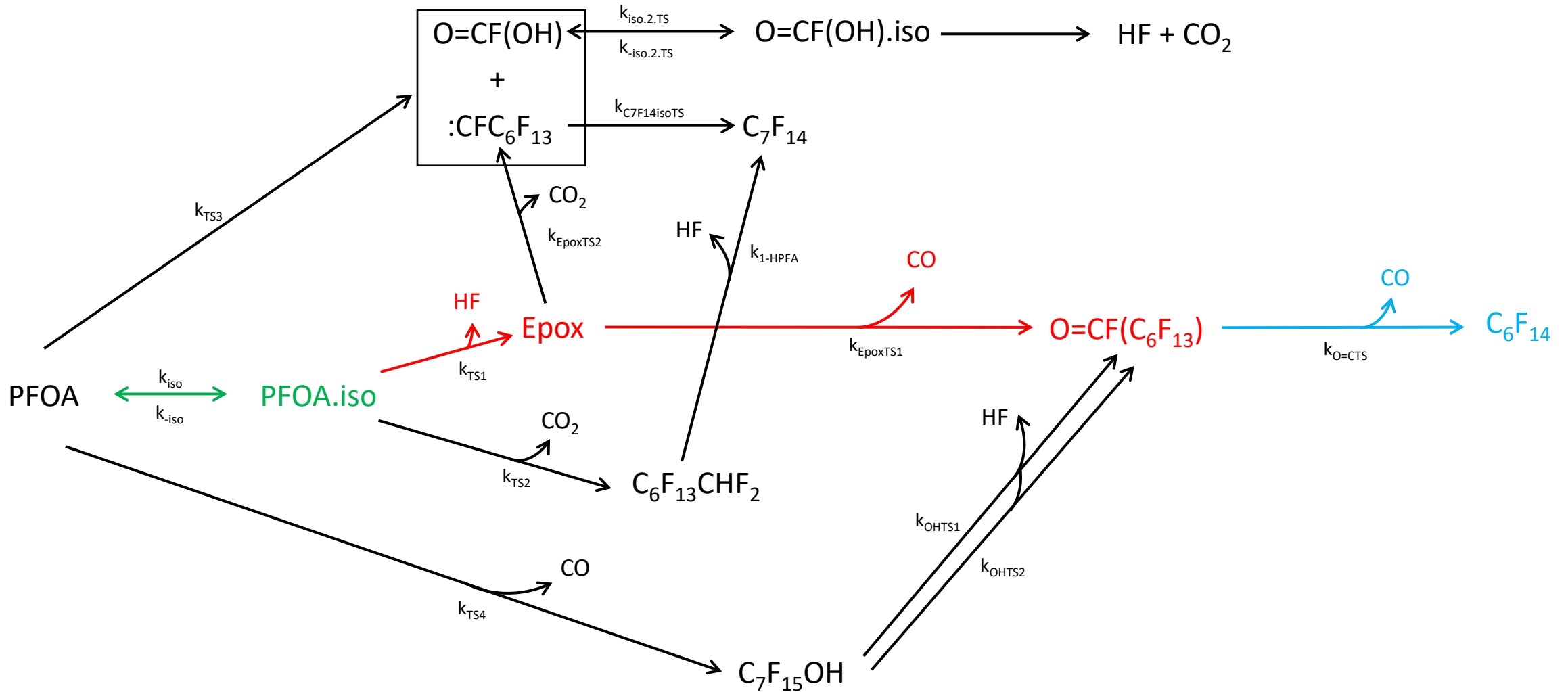


M06-2X-D3alt/def2TZVPP
 Energies in kcal mol⁻¹ including ZPE Corrections (0.970 scaling factor)

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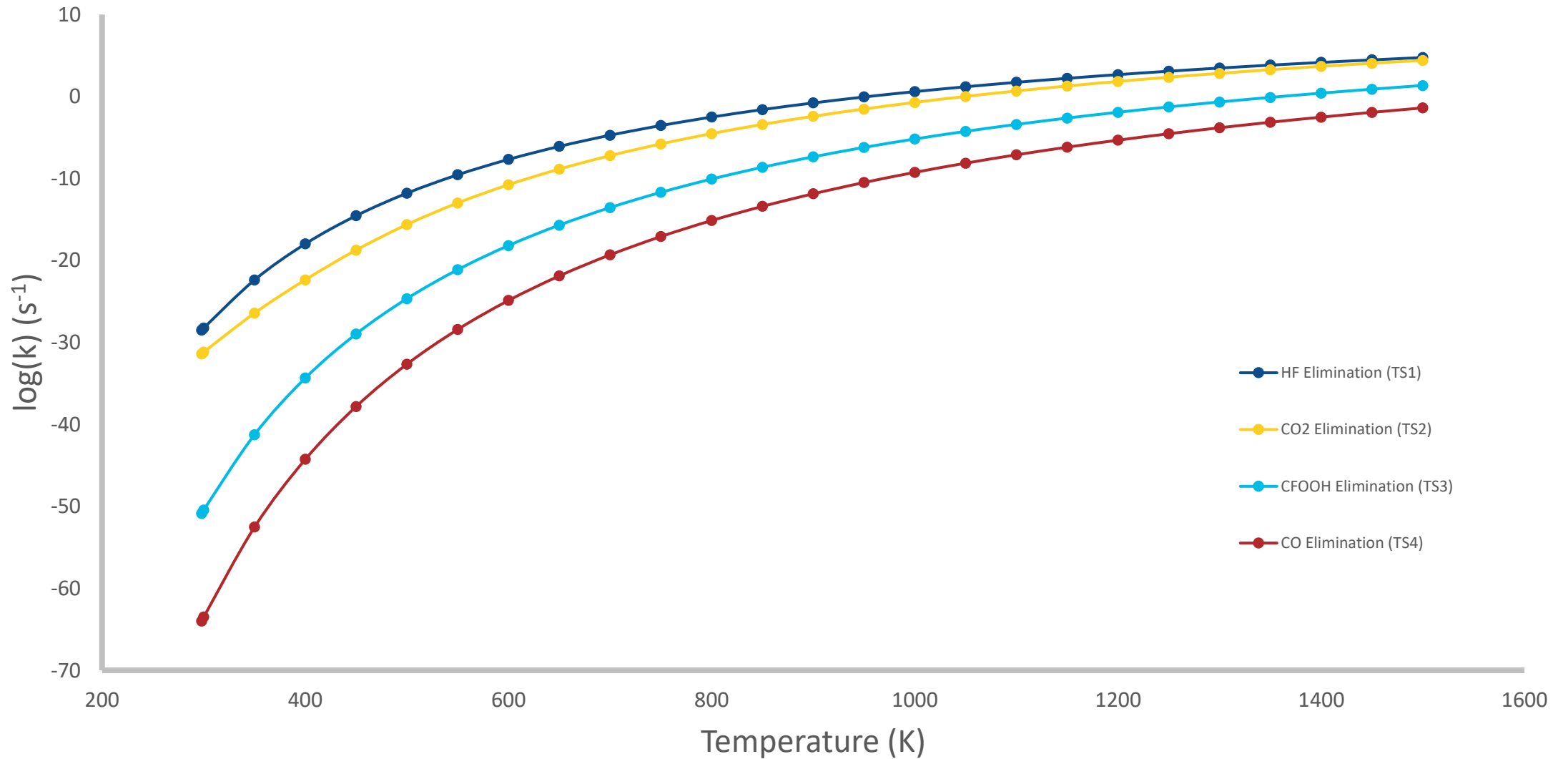


PFOA Decomposition Model



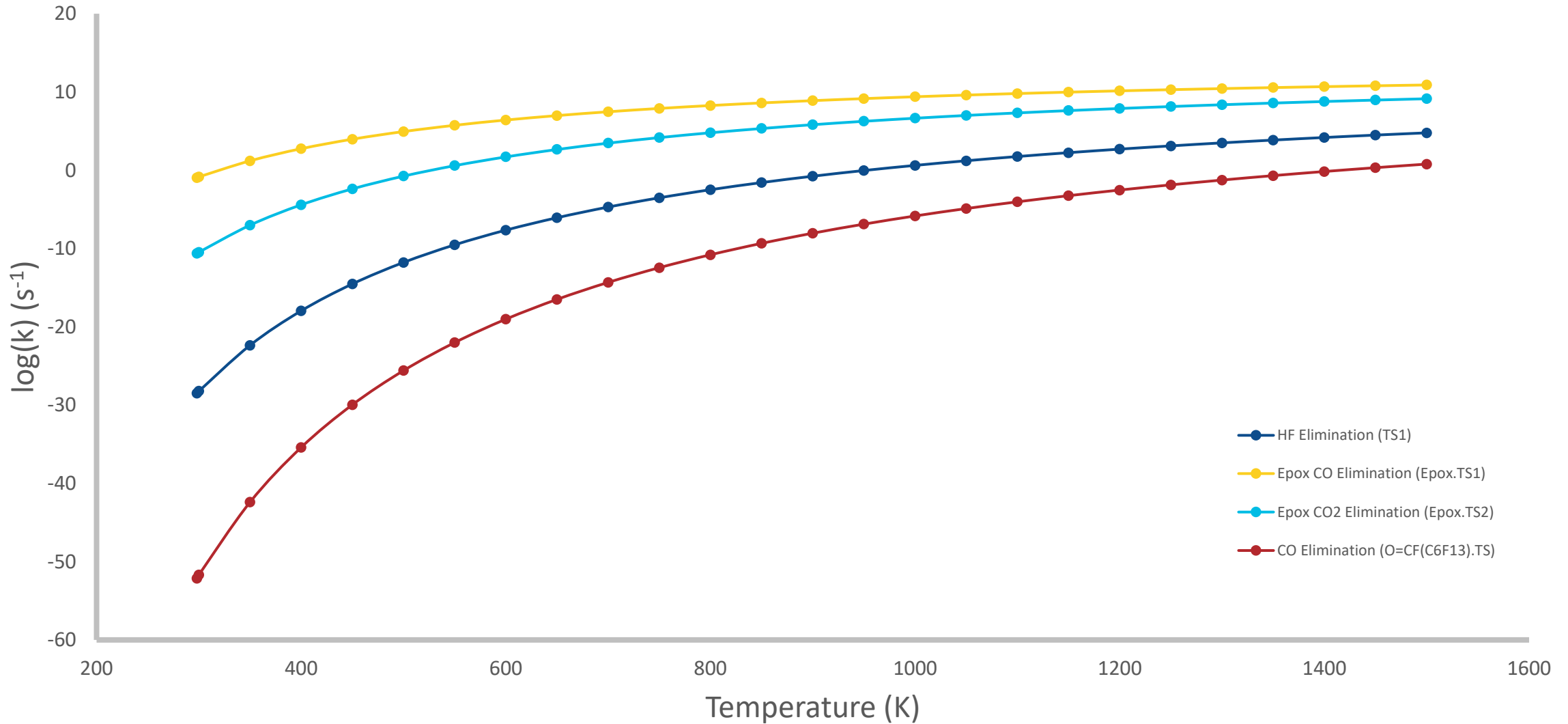


PFOA Initial Decomposition Rates



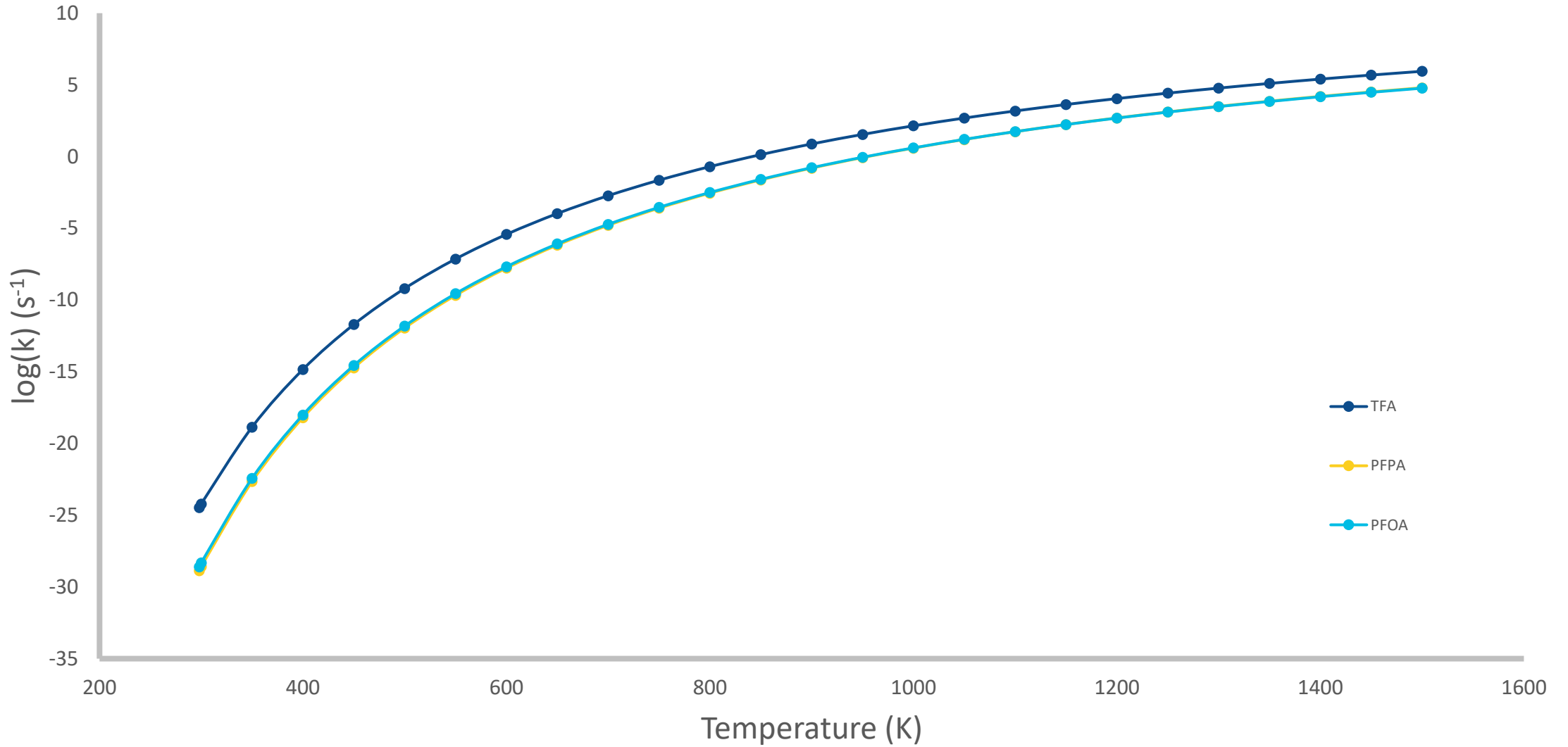


Kinetically Favored PFOA Decomposition Rates



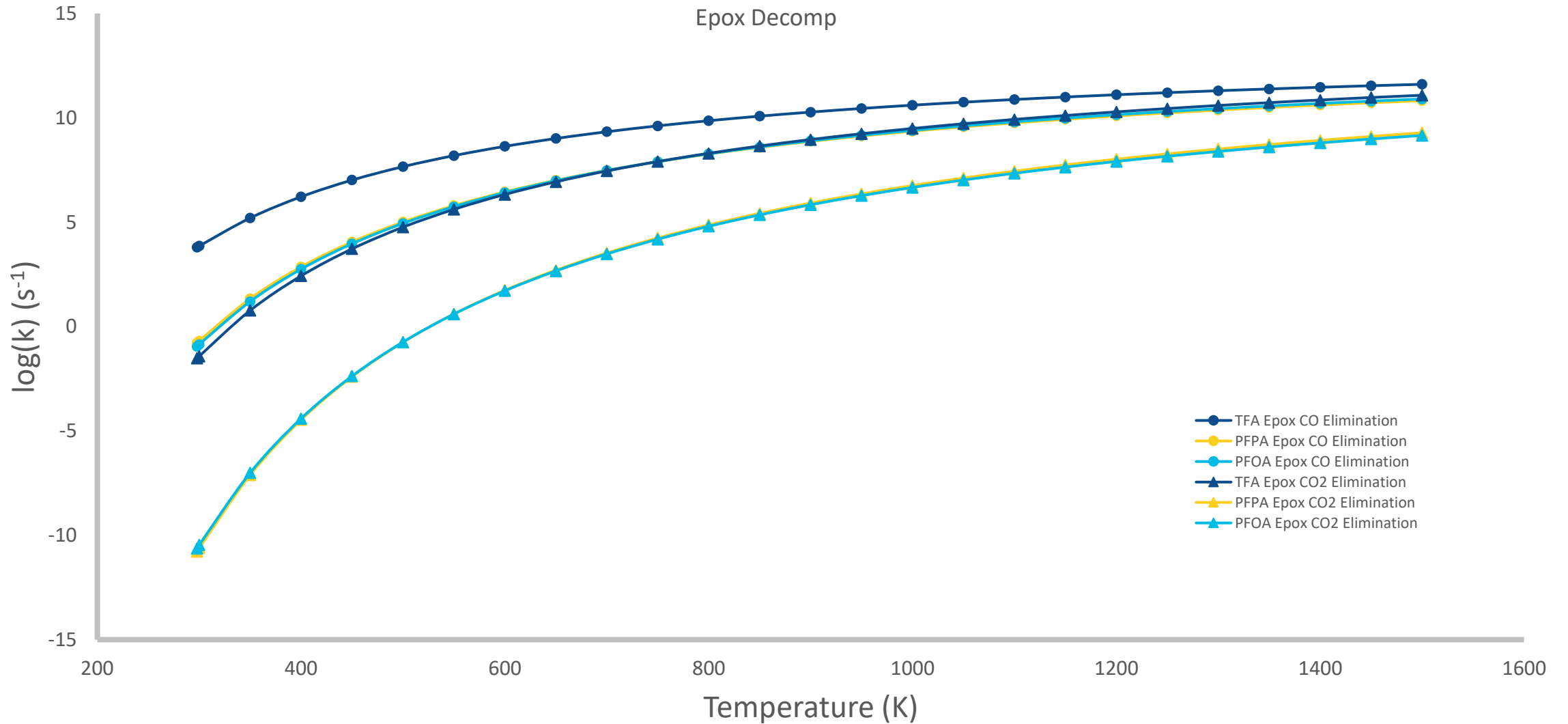


HF Elimination Rates





Epox Decomposition Rates





PFCA Homolytic Bond Cleavage

Carbon-Carbon Bond Cleavage	ΔG_{rxn} (kcal mol ⁻¹)		
	298.15 K (25°C)	873.15 K (600°C)	1473.15 K (1200°C)
TFA → CF ₃ + HO-CO	75.1	49.8	24.6
PFPA → CF ₃ + F ₂ C-C(O)OH	71.0	43.3	15.8
PFOA → CF ₃ + F ₁₂ C ₆ -C(O)OH	75.4	46.8	18.4
Carbon-Fluorine Bond Cleavage			
TFA → F + F ₂ C-C(O)OH	106.6	85.8	64.0
PFPA → F + F ₃ C-CF-C(O)OH	99.5	79.3	58.1
PFOA → F + F ₃ C-(C ₅ F ₁₀)-CF-C(O)OH	98.4	77.6	55.8
Carbon-Oxygen Bond Cleavage			
TFA → OH + CF ₃ CO ₂	95.0	71.7	47.6
PFPA → OH + CF ₃ CF ₂ CO ₂	94.0	69.4	44.0
PFOA → OH + CF ₃ (C ₅ F ₁₀)CO ₂	93.9	70.5	46.3
1,2 HF Elimination	ΔG_a (kcal mol ⁻¹)		
TFA → HF + F ₂ C-O-CO	50.5	49.8	49.6
PFPA → HF + F ₃ CCF ₂ -O-CO	56.5	57.7	59.6
PFOA → HF + F ₃ C(C ₅ F ₁₀)-O-CO	55.5	56.6	58.3

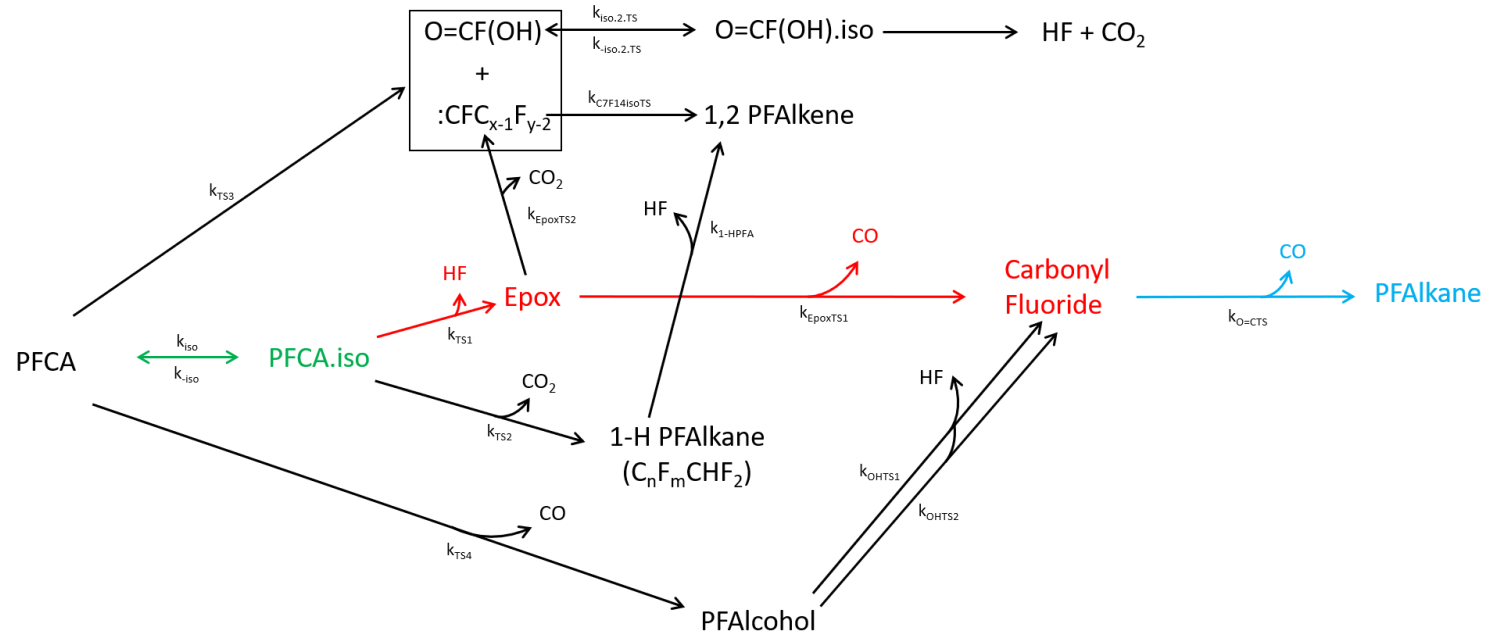


Objectives

- What is the Mechanism for thermal Decomposition of PFCAs?
- What byproducts can we expect to be formed?
- Does this change with respect to chain length or temperature?

Conclusions

- PFCAs Decompose similarly independent of chain length



- Entropic stabilization at high temperatures leads to favorable ΔG_{rxn} of Homolytic bond cleavages
 - TFA
 - C-C bond cleavage is competitive at 600 °C and favored at 1200 °C
 - PFPA
 - C-C bond cleavage is favored at both 600 °C and 1200 °C



Future Work

- Determine rates of bond cleavage reactions at relevant temperatures
 - Variational Transition State Theory (VTST)
- Investigate bimolecular decomposition mechanisms
- Investigate relevant radical reactions
 - Reactions with OH and H



Acknowledgements



Dr. Jerry Boatz



Dr. Manoj Shukla



This work is supported by the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering Defense (OUSD(R&E)) under the Applied Research for the Advancement of Science and Technology Priorities (ARAP) Program



Dr. Igor Schweigert
Dr. Daniel Fragiadakis
Dr. Daniel Gunlycke
Dr. Robert Balow





Questions?



Back-up Slides



Functional Benchmarking – ΔH_f with Aug-cc-PVDZ Basis

Species	B3LYP	B3PW91	PBE0	M05-2X	ω B97x-D	MP2	Experiment
CF ₄	-200.24	-208.35	-211.92	-215.95	-209.08	-212.59	-223.02
C ₃ F ₈	-368.84	-388.86	-401.37	-407.52	-391.85	-398.08	-426.55
CF ₃ OH	-214.03	-210.47	-211.82	-217.36	-213.29	-217.55	-220.70
HF	-60.67	-60.27	-58.56	N/A	-61.07	-61.62	-65.14
2F	33.50	33.44	31.34	26.55	32.75	33.50	37.95

Energies in kcal mol⁻¹



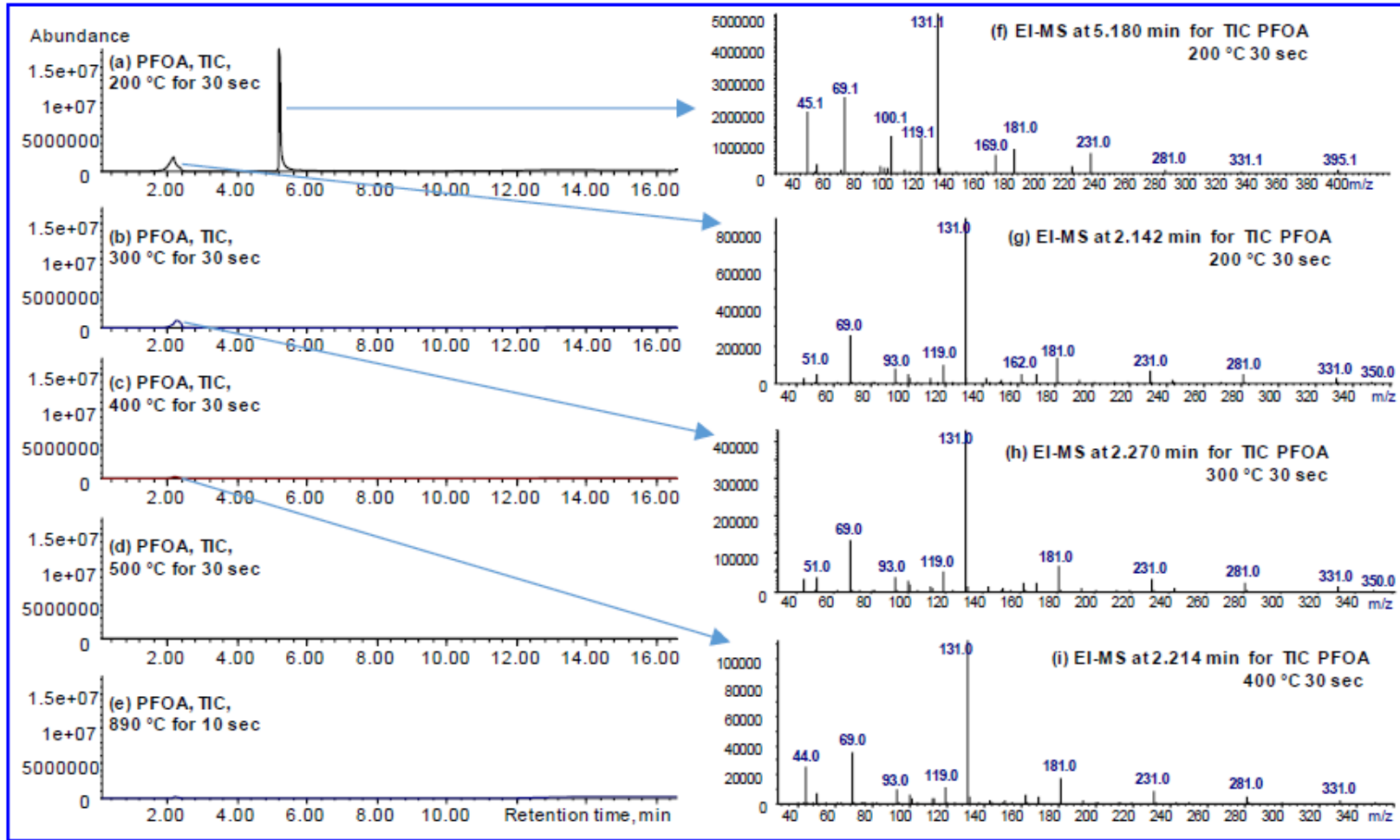
Basis Set Benchmarking with M06-2X-D3 functional

Basis Set	Mean	Max	Dev
def2TZVPP	0.77	1.68	0.45
6-311+G(d,p)	5.67	16.44	7.92
6-311+G(2df,p)	1.96	4.84	2.22
6-311+G(3df,2p)	1.27	3.07	0.87
Jun-CC-pVTZ	3.02	8.18	4.11
Aug-CC-pVTZ	3.13	8.32	4.12
Aug-CC-pVQZ	1.26	3.49	1.79
Aug-Pcseg-2	1.05	6.28	1.75
Aug-Pcseg-3	0.96	4.36	1.20
Aug-CC-pV5Z	0.00	0.00	0.00

Benchmarking done on set of 33 decomposition reactions of Perfluoromethanesulfonic Acid (PFMS) and Perfluoroethanesulfonic Acid (PFES) including activation and reaction energies. Energies in kcal mol⁻¹.



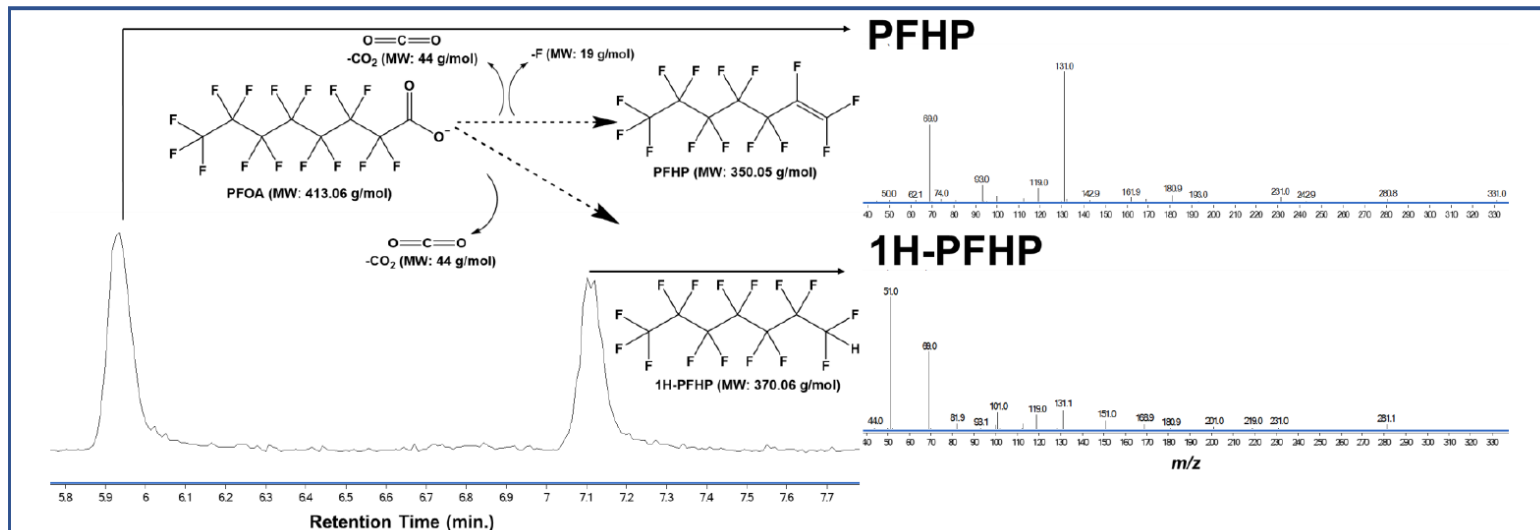
MS Data for Thermal Decomposition



Experimental Thermal Decomposition of PFCAs

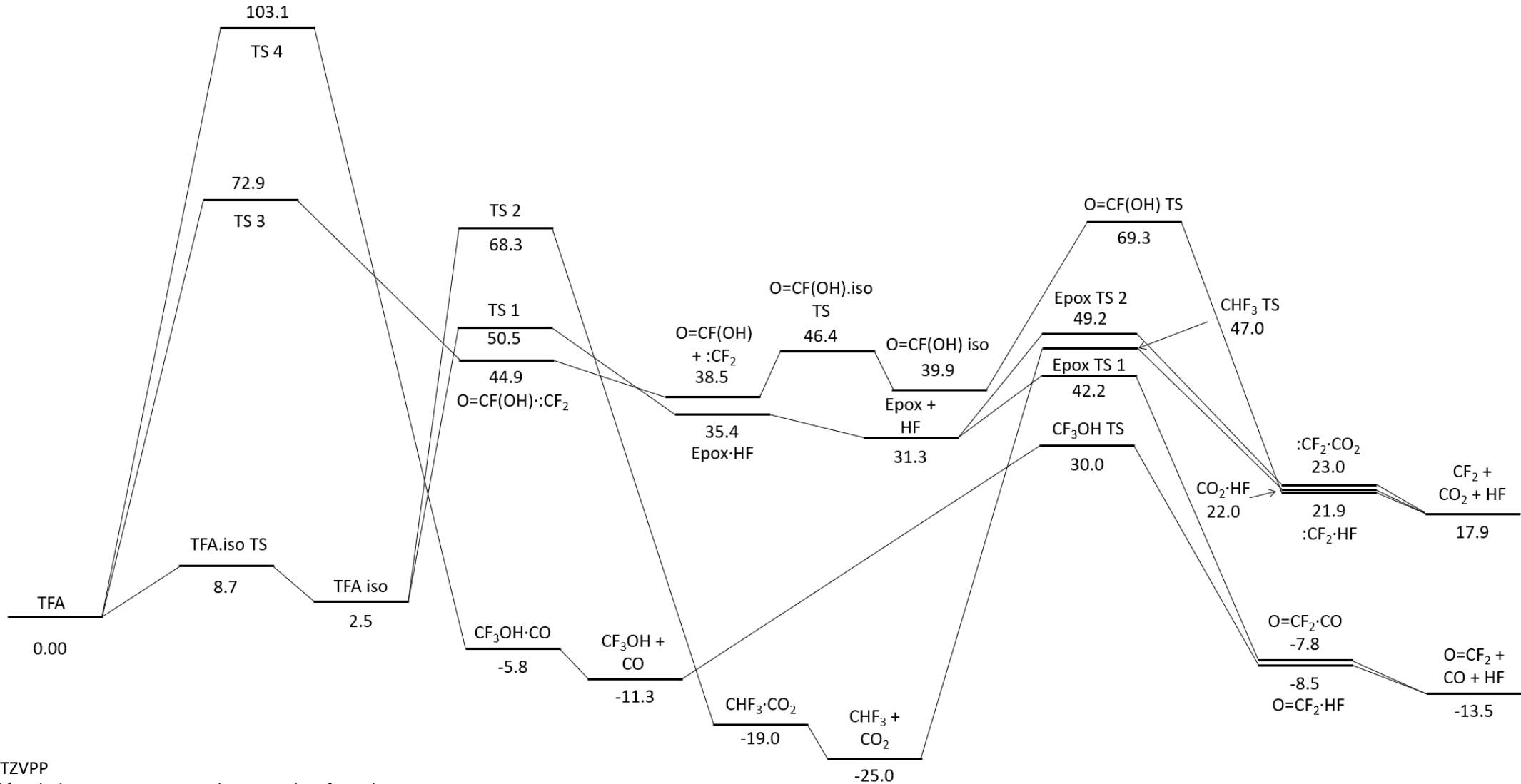
- Thermal byproducts of PFOA:
 - Perfluoroheptene (PFHP, fluoroalkene)
 - 1H-perfluoroheptane (1H-PFHP, fluoroalkane)
- PFHP is *predicted* by ECHA to be carcinogenic, mutagenic, or toxic
- Degradation of PFCAs to fluoroalkene and fluoroalkane has been previously mentioned (Kissa, 2001; Krusic *et al.*, 2005, Xiao *et al.*, 2020)

- Thermal byproducts predicted to be carcinogenic, mutagenic, or toxic by ECHA:
 - Perfluorooctene and 1H-perfluorooctane (PFNA products)
 - Perfluorohexene (PFHpA product)
 - Perfluoropentene (PFHxA product)
- Thermal byproducts of PFBA and PFPA were not observed





TFA Free Energy Surface @ 298.15 K

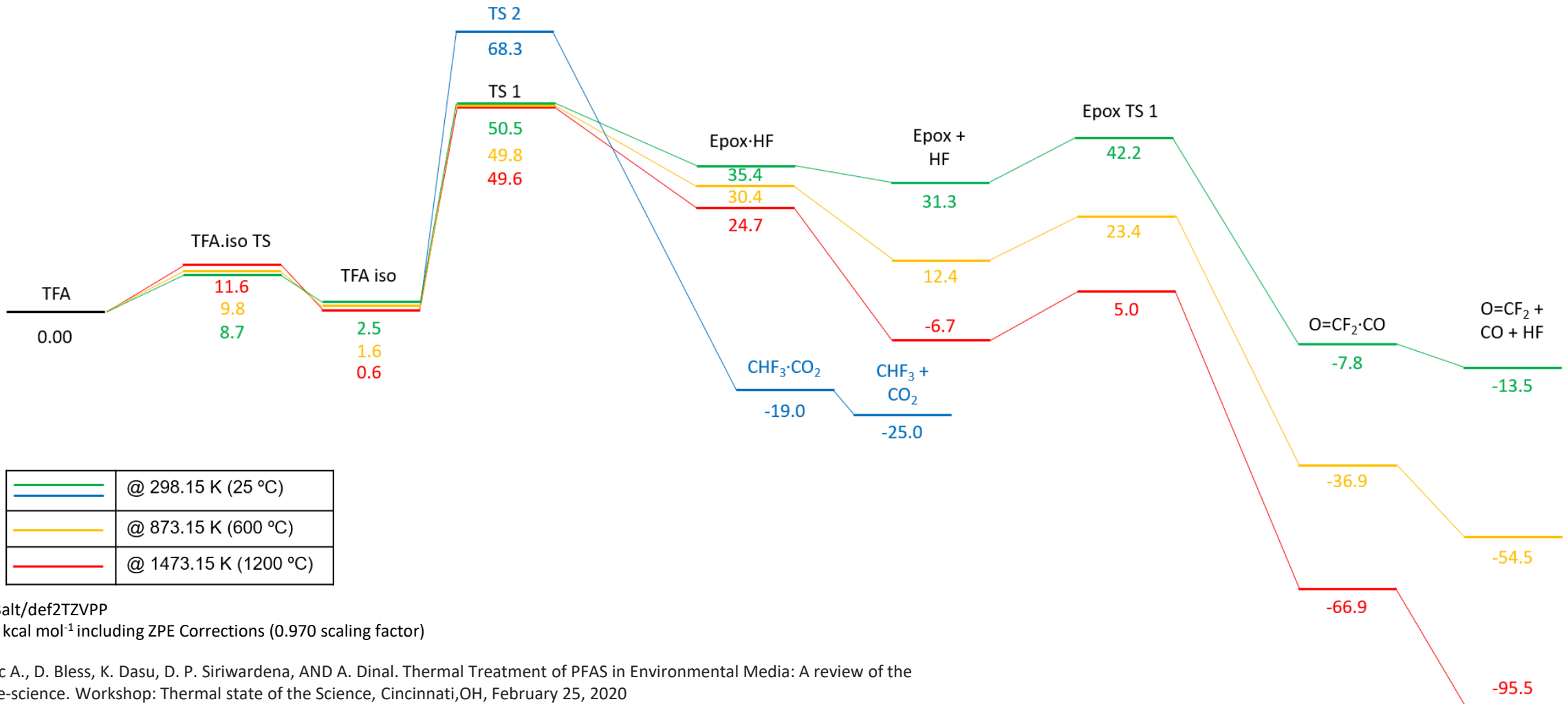


M06-2X-D3alt/def2TZVPP
Energies in kcal mol⁻¹ including ZPE Corrections (0.970 scaling factor)

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TFA Free Energy Surface @ Incineration Temperatures^{1,2}



—	@ 298.15 K (25 °C)
—	@ 873.15 K (600 °C)
—	@ 1473.15 K (1200 °C)

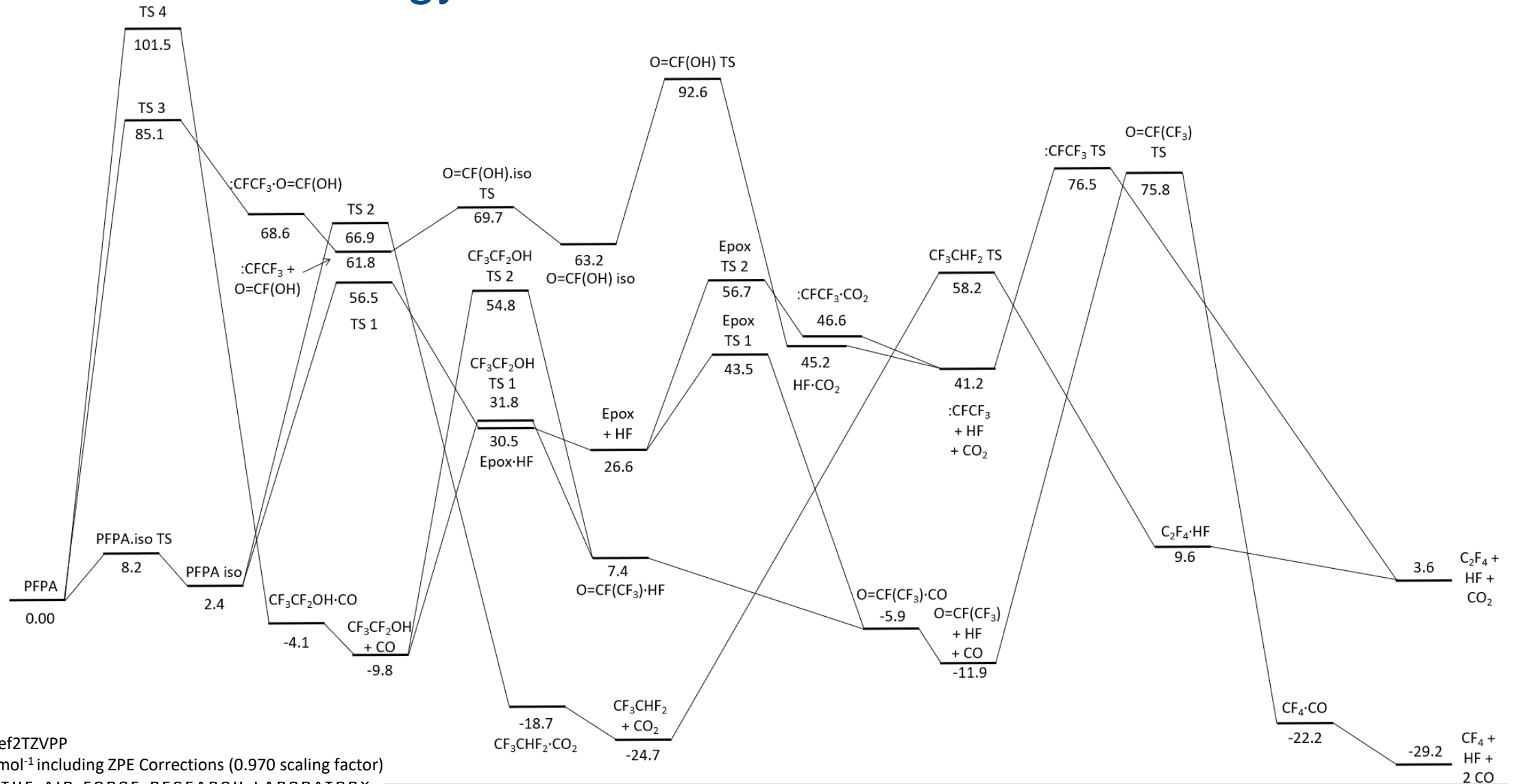
M06-2X-D3alt/def2TZVPP
 Energies in kcal mol⁻¹ including ZPE Corrections (0.970 scaling factor)

¹Mills, Marc A., D. Bless, K. Dasu, D. P. Siriwardena, AND A. Dinal. Thermal Treatment of PFAS in Environmental Media: A review of the state-of-the-science. Workshop: Thermal state of the Science, Cincinnati, OH, February 25, 2020

²Kucharzyk, K. H. et al. *Journal of Environmental Management* **2017**, *204*, 757-764.



PFPA Free Energy Surface @ 298.15 K

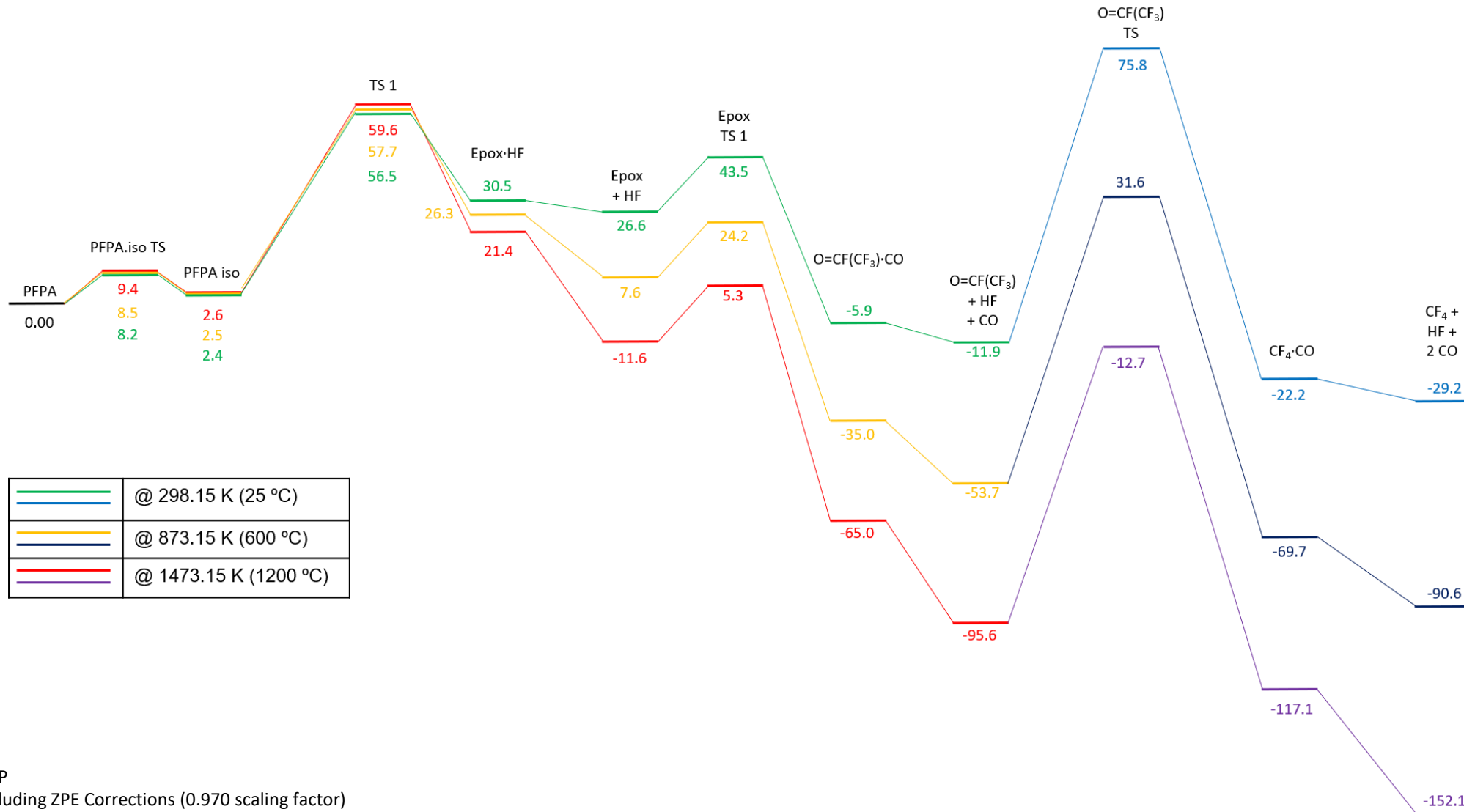


M06-2X-D3alt/def2TZVPP
Energies in kcal mol⁻¹ including ZPE Corrections (0.970 scaling factor)

THE AIR FORCE RESEARCH LABORATORY



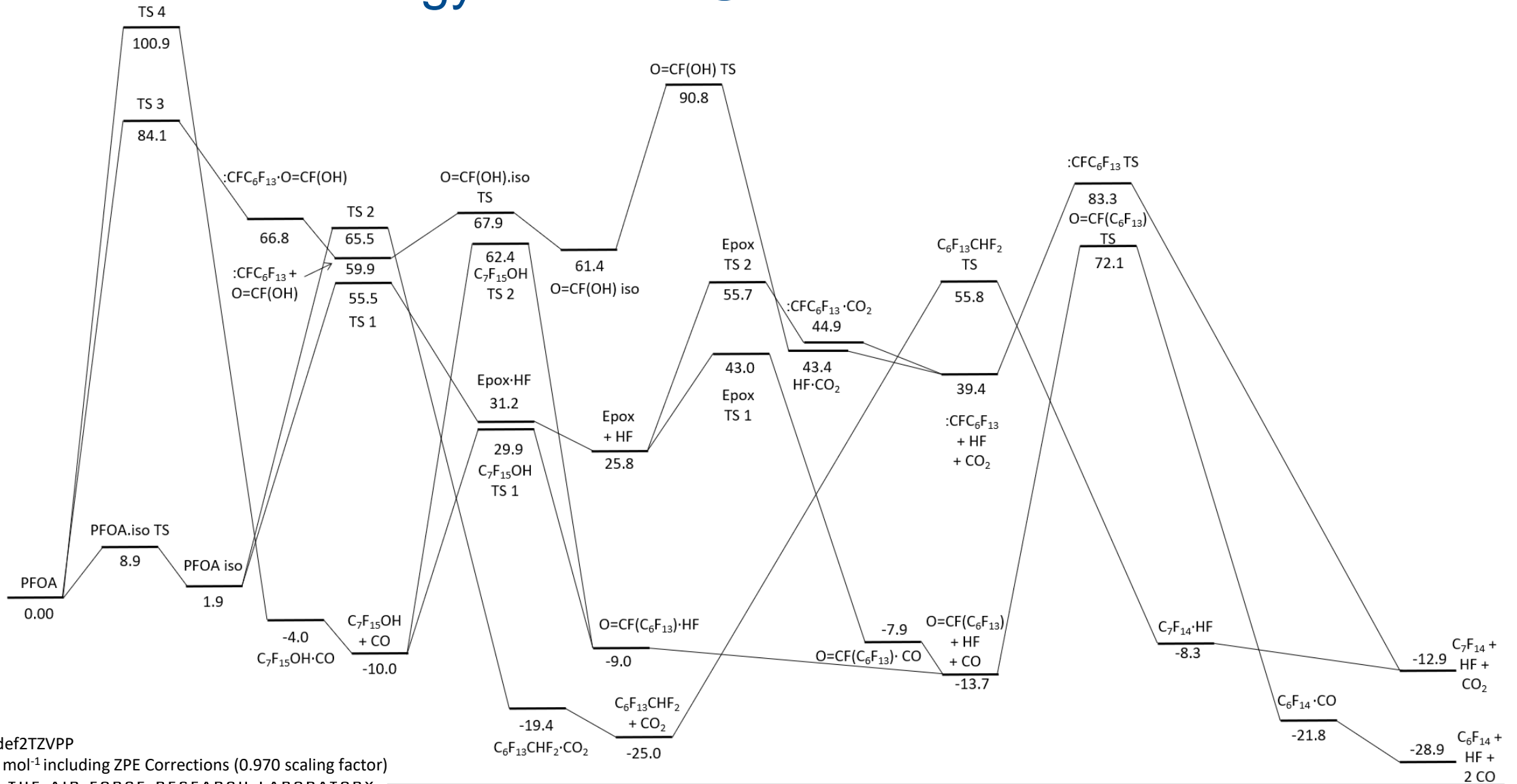
PFPA Free Energy Surface @ Incineration Temperatures



	@ 298.15 K (25 °C)
	@ 873.15 K (600 °C)
	@ 1473.15 K (1200 °C)



PFOA Free Energy Surface @ 298.15 K

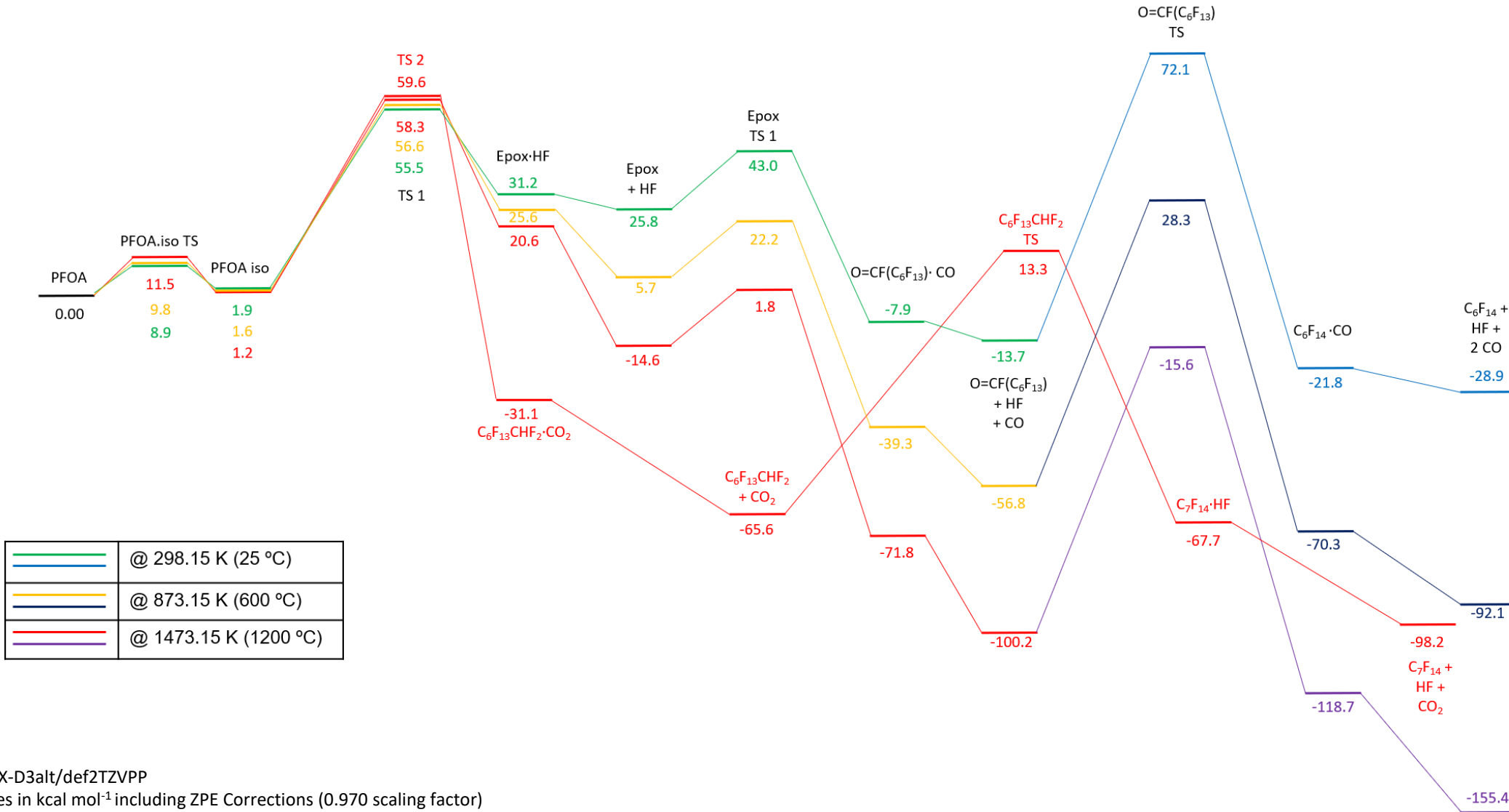


M06-2X-D3alt/def2TZVPP
Energies in kcal mol⁻¹ including ZPE Corrections (0.970 scaling factor)

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PFOA Free Energy Surface @ Incineration Temperatures



	@ 298.15 K (25 °C)
	@ 873.15 K (600 °C)
	@ 1473.15 K (1200 °C)

