SUMMARY

- A hydrogen-halogen based unitized regenerative fuel cell (URFC) comprised of a molten-salt electrolyte operating at high temperature gas-phase chemistry
- The cell stores energy by electrolyzing HBr to H₂ and Br₂ and releases it by generating HBr as a H₂-Br₂ fuel cell
- The molten salt serves a dual role of the electrolyte and the catalyst solvent.
- Innovative ceramic porous supports reduce battery internal resistance and extend unit lifetime

BACKGROUND

For renewable electric power to make inroads into the US electric utility market, new technologies for grid-scale electrical energy storage are needed that are efficient, cost effective, fast, reliable, scalable, and broadly deployable. Electrochemical energy storage for this purpose is appealing in principle but elusive in practice. In today’s market, batteries are bulky and/or expensive, while the hydrogen-oxygen proton-exchange membrane (PEM)-unitized regenerative fuel cell (URFC) is expensive, insufficiently durable, and inefficient because of the sluggish oxygen electrode reaction.

A revised URFC involving Br₂, a much more reactive oxidant than O₂, operating at high temperature (250 – 450 ºC) can be more efficient and more durable. Previous attempts at creating H₂-Br₂ URFCs were low-temperature, PEM-based, dilute aqueous phase systems, plagued by internal crossover, low Faradaic efficiency, and catalyst poisoning that make them impractical. We expect the proposed SMSEC-URFC to be twice as efficient, half as expensive, and longer lasting, compared to conventional URFCs, as well as be competitive with conventional battery energy storage solutions

ADVANTAGES

- Inexpensive reactants and construction materials
- Double efficiency over traditional H₂-O₂ URFC
- Ceramic support is more durable than polymer membrane
- Scalable up to and beyond kW models
- Bromine can be stored as liquid, reducing unit size and cost
- Reaction kinetics are fast, reducing system response time

INVENTORS

Ravindra Datta
Drew J. Martino

PATENT STATUS:
Provisional:
US: 61647672

LICENSING STATUS:
US only

Contact:
Todd Keiller, Director
Technology Transfer
WPI
100 Institute Rd
Worcester, MA 01609
tkeiller@wpi.edu
+1 508 831 4907