



*Alex Fridlyand is Senior Engineer within the Building Energy Efficiency group at GT Energy. His research has focused on novel combustion system design, emerging HVAC&R equipment, as well as building energy modeling. He has over ten years of experience in applied and theoretical research in combustion, heat transfer, and thermodynamics. He has a Ph.D. in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Illinois at Chicago and a B.S. in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.*



**Alex Fridlyand, Ph.D.**  
Senior Engineer  
Energy Delivery & Utilization  
GTI Energy



# Introduction of Hydrogen to North American Appliances

Alex Fridlyand, Ph.D., *Senior Engineer*

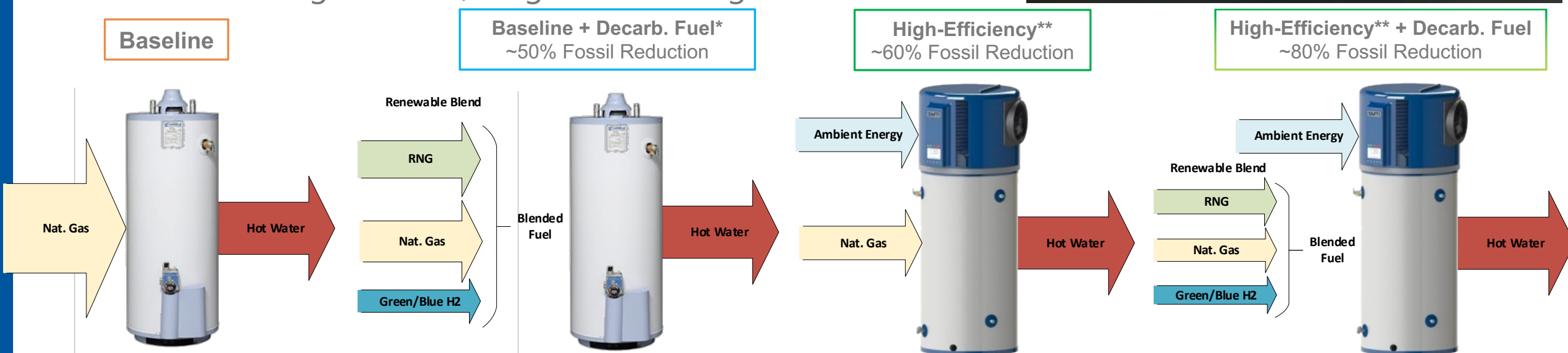
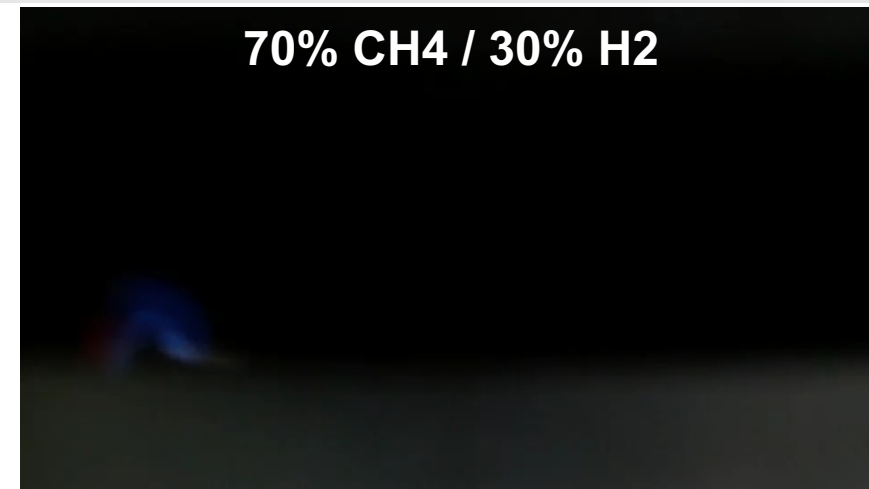
ASGE National Technical Conference| June 7<sup>th</sup>, 2022

# Agenda

- Introduction to Decarbonized Fuels
- Hydrogen's Role in Decarbonizing Energy Systems
- Challenges and Opportunities with Hydrogen as a Fuel
- H<sub>2</sub>-Blending in Industry Today
- Snapshot of GTI's Work and Projects
  - Blending Tests
  - Burner Design Fundamentals

# Energy Efficiency + Decarbonized Fuels

- **Energy efficiency** coupled with **decarbonized fuels** can drive GHG reductions
- As a fuel, Hydrogen (H<sub>2</sub>) emits no CO<sub>2</sub> and can be blended with natural gas or **biomethane** for standard products, or utilized directly (100% H<sub>2</sub>) by **specially-designed equipment**
  - Used for long duration, mega-scale storage of renewable



\*Assumes near-term achievable targets of H<sub>2</sub> & RNG blending / \*\* Fuel-fired GHPWH performance assumptions from Glanville, P., Fridlyand, A., Mensinger, M., Sweeney, M., Keinath, C. (2020) Integrated Gas-fired Heat Pump Water Heaters for Homes: Results of Field Demonstrations and System Modeling, ASHRAE Transactions; Vol. 126 325-332, image source: SMTI.



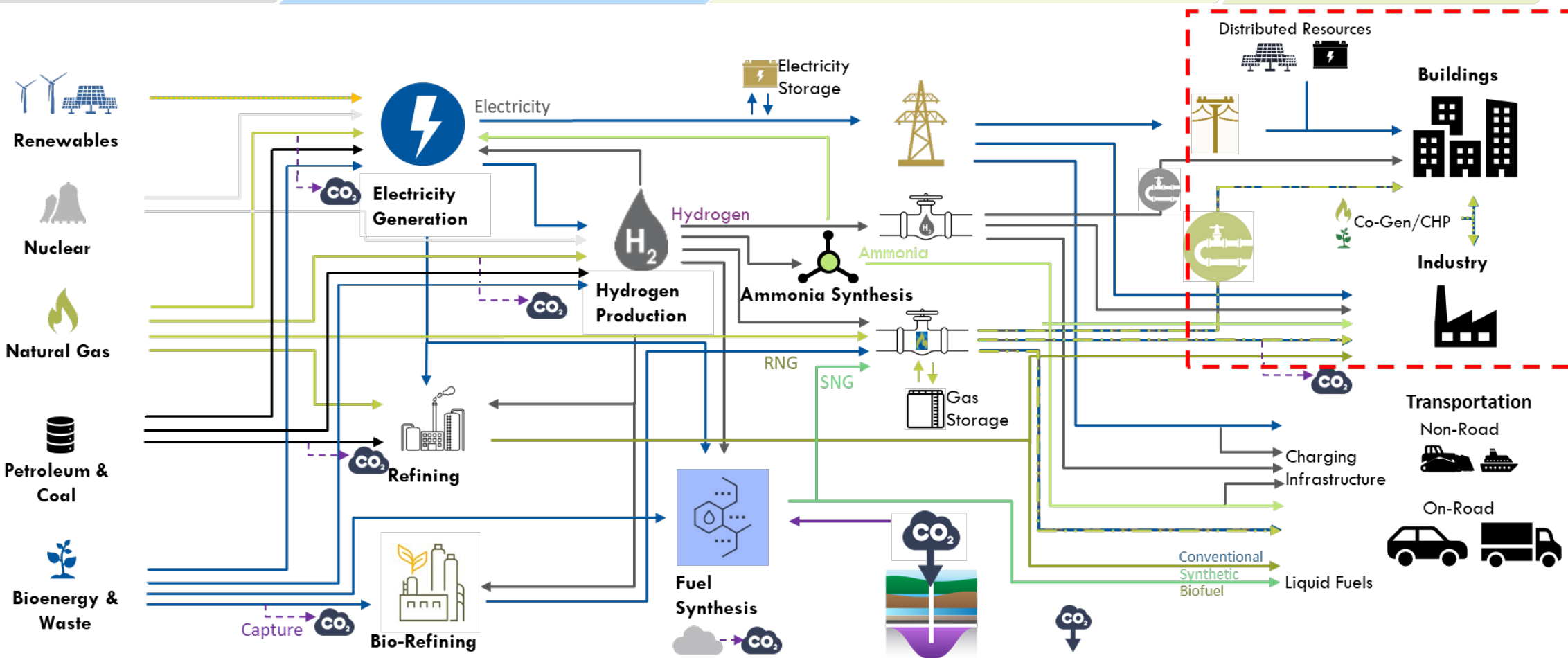
# Hydrogen: Where Does It Fit In?

## Primary Energy

## Conversion

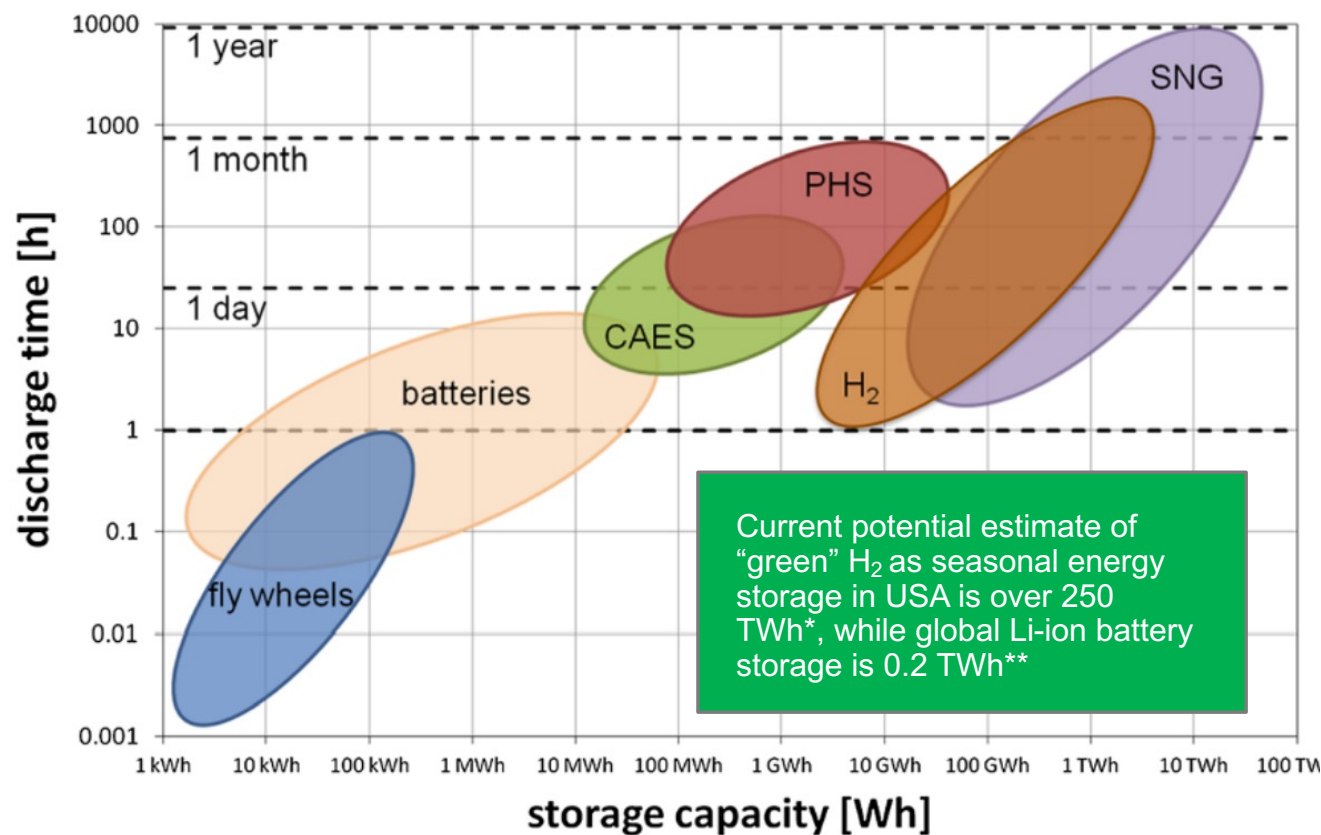
## Storage and Delivery

## Energy End-Use



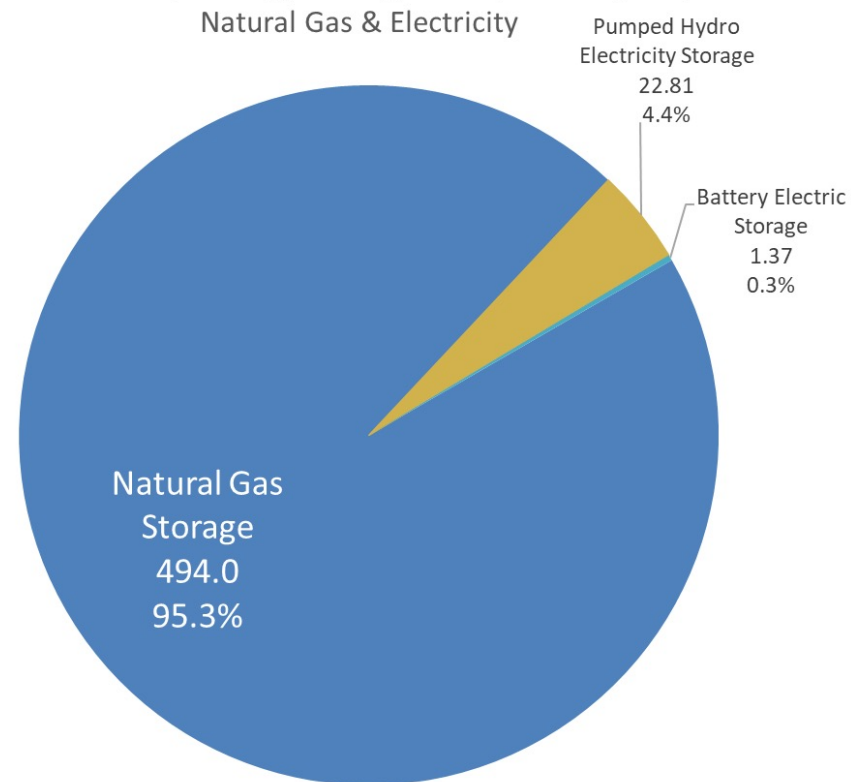
Hydrogen is envisioned to play an important role in economy-wide decarbonization, per the [Low-Carbon Resources Initiative](#) (LCRI), a five-year R&D effort to accelerate the deployment of low-carbon technologies, jointly led by [EPRI](#) and [GTI](#).

# Hydrogen: Where Does It Fit In?



Schaaf et al, Energy, Sustainability and Society, 2014, DOI 10.1186/s13705-014-0029-1.

## U.S. Utility Energy Storage Comparison (GW)



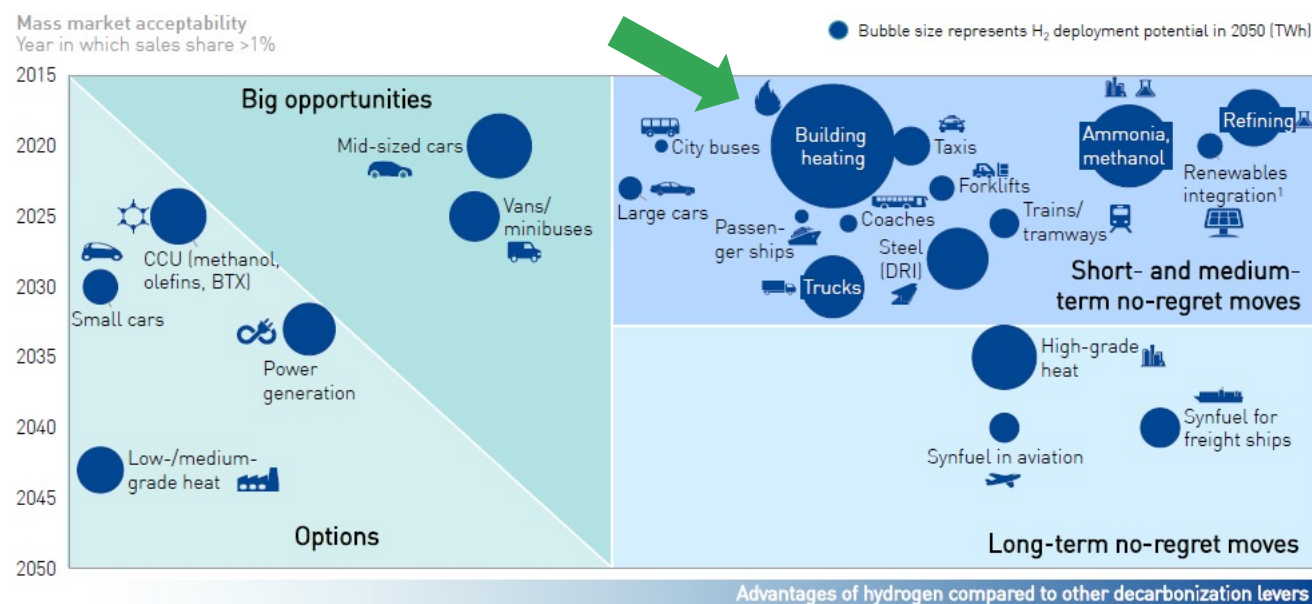
Natural gas underground storage comprises >95% of U.S. utility energy storage capacity. During peak cold spells, gas storage can flex up to 600 GW of sustained energy delivery capacity for a week or more.

Sources: DOE-EIA /\*NREL/TP-6A20-77610 (2020) / \*\* NREL/TP-5400-78461 (2020)

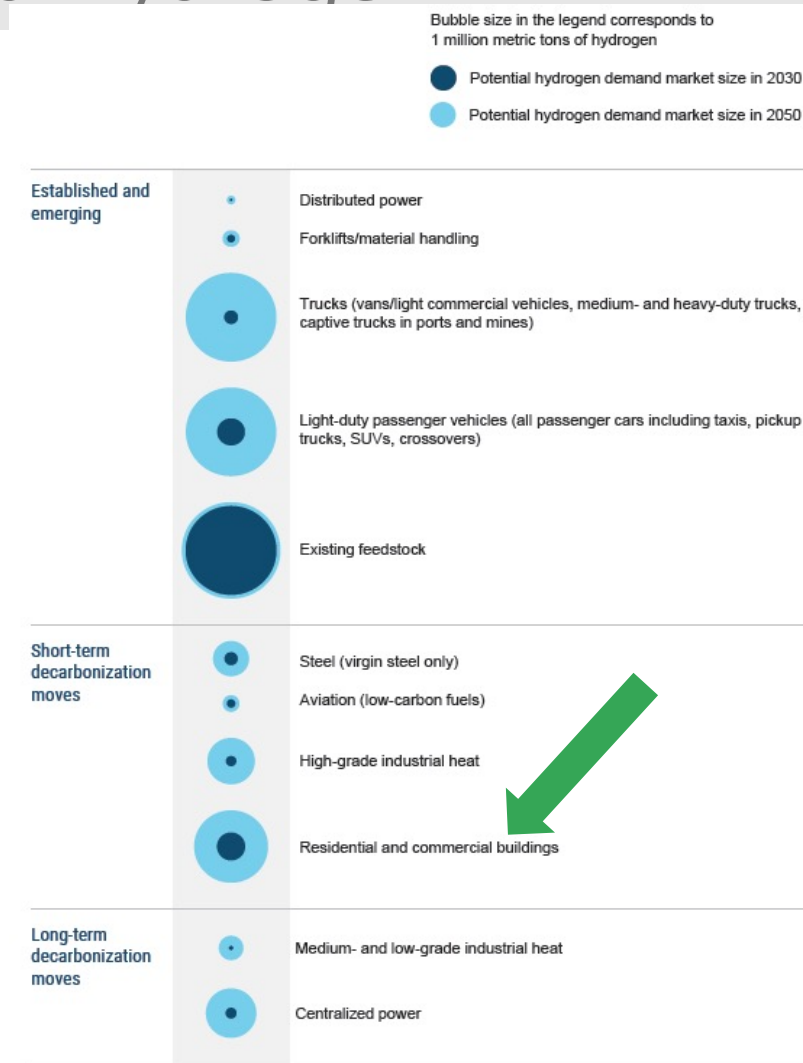
[http://web.ecs.baylor.edu/faculty/grady/13\\_EE392J\\_2\\_Spring11\\_AEP\\_Transmission\\_Facts.pdf](http://web.ecs.baylor.edu/faculty/grady/13_EE392J_2_Spring11_AEP_Transmission_Facts.pdf)

# Decarbonization Potential of Delivered Hydrogen

- **Feasibility:** Roadmaps emphasize near-term potential in buildings relative to other sectors
- **Scale-up:** With increasing scale (e.g. blend rates), delivered H<sub>2</sub> stimulates increasing demand, driving down generation/storage costs



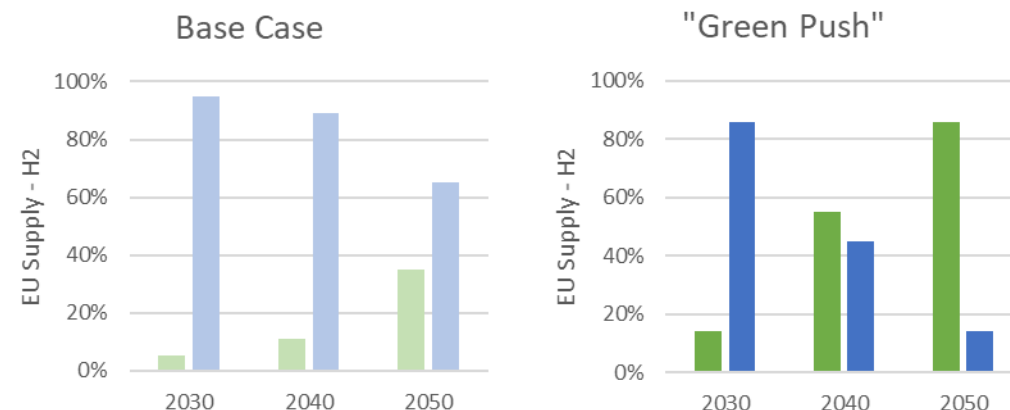
Source: Hydrogen Roadmap Europe, <https://www.fch.europa.eu/news/hydrogen-roadmap-europe-sustainable-pathway-european-energy-transition>



Source: FCHEA Hydrogen Roadmap (USA), <https://www.fchea.org/us-hydrogen-study>

# The Many Colors of Hydrogen

- **Brown hydrogen** is generated by gasifying solid fuels, generally coal, without CO2 capture, less common in North America than Europe/Asia
- **Gray hydrogen** is produced with steam methane reforming (SMR), commonly with natural gas as a feedstock. ~71% of delivered hydrogen is Gray in Europe vs. ~95% in North America
- **Blue hydrogen** is gray hydrogen with integrated carbon capture and sequestration, generally viewed as a bridge to 2050
- **Green hydrogen** is generated by electrolysis, powered by excess renewable electricity or from other renewable resources\*\*
- **Pink hydrogen** is generated by electrolysis powered by nuclear power plants



**Blue hydrogen** expected to play big role in EU near-term\*



But many high-profile **green hydrogen** production facilities are planned using renewable electricity or waste streams\*\*



# Can we blend hydrogen with natural gas?

## History Doesn't Repeat Itself, by it Rhymes...

- Public gas distribution begins in US in 1816 (Baltimore)
  - Pine tar, then coal, then oil gasified in municipal gas plants, ~1000 US plants at peak (1890s)
  - Fuel typically syngas ( $H_2/CO$ ), "water gas" and "coal gas", Useful byproducts also sold (tars, cokes, etc.)
  - In 19th century, 90% of revenues were lighting, then expand into domestic/commercial (via leasing), then industrial uses
- Between WWI / WWII, pipeline advances & leak abatement bring "Natural Gas" to major urban centers
  - Majority began with "enriching" mfd. gases by blending (NG ~2X HHV) – NOLA (1928), Chicago (1931), Minneapolis (1935)
  - Others did straight conversion – DC (1946), NYC (1949-51)
  - Overall conversion took **30-40 years** in US, "single largest task" was converting customer equipment (utility-led or contractor)
- Legacy of mfg. gas transition remains in appliance design/codes

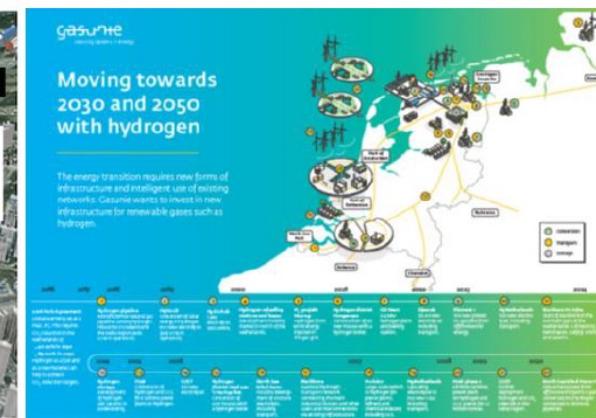


Source: Pacific Coast Gas Association – A Century of Progress - 1993



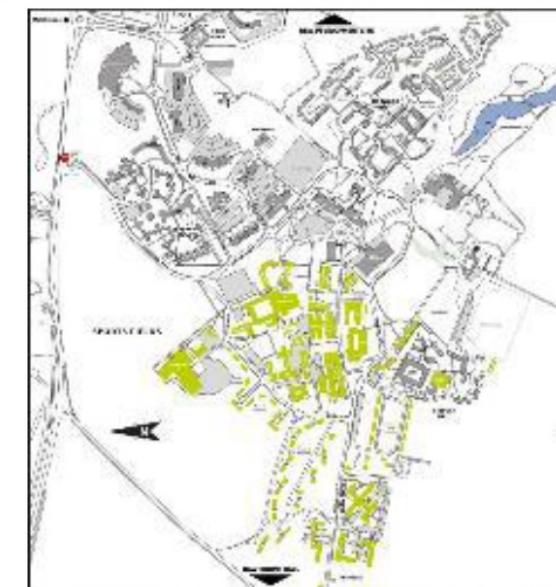


# Hydrogen Deployment Internationally



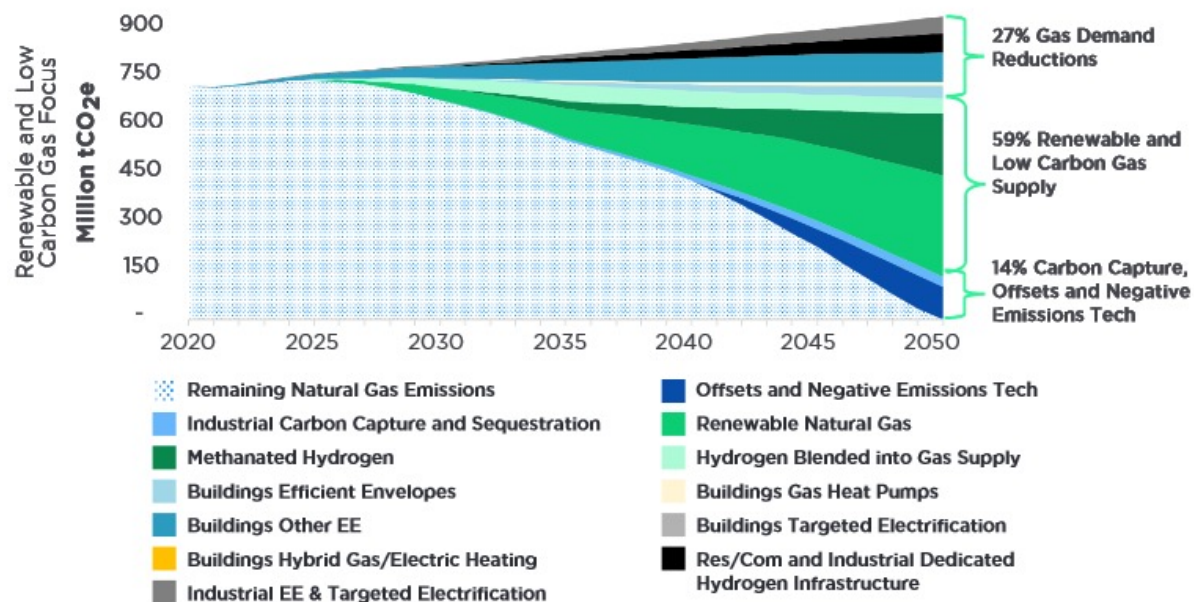
## Deployed Projects Examples:

- H21 – UK
- HyNET – UK
- HyDeploy – UK
- HYPOS – Germany
- HySynGas – Germany
- Hybridge - Germany
- Crystal Brook Energy Park - Australia
- FH2R Toshiba Tohoku Iwatani – Japan
- H2-Powered Cities by 2022 – S. Korea
- HyNetherlands – H2 passenger train
- Many more in various stages of development



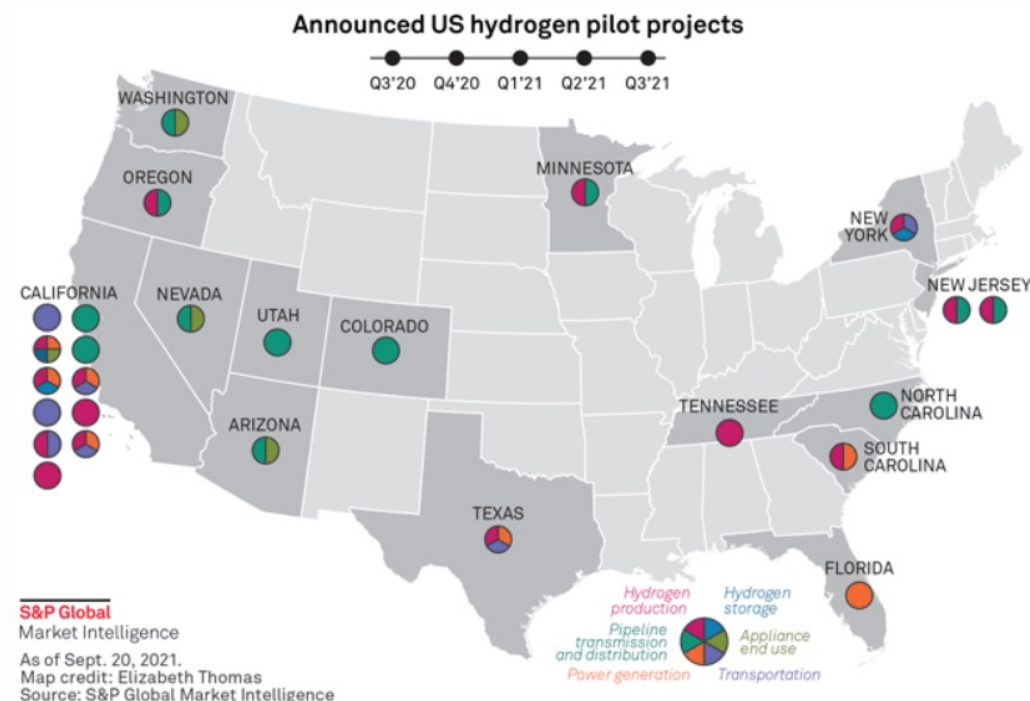
# Large-Scale Demonstrations in N. America

**Fossil-Free Gas:** Like efficiency and renewable methane, many utilities view **delivered H<sub>2</sub>** as essential to long-term net zero emissions goals



Source: American Gas Association (AGA), 2022. Net-Zero Emissions Opportunities for Gas Utilities, Report prepared for the AGA by ICF, link: <https://www.aga.org/globalassets/research--insights/reports/aga-net-zero-emissions-opportunities-for-gas-utilities.pdf>

**And They're Off!** Numerous pilots are underway *now* (typ. ≤ 20% H<sub>2</sub> by vol.) with more homes and businesses in receiving H<sub>2</sub>/natural gas over 2022.



Source: S&P Global. Add'l prominent pilots involving end users include those in Canada – British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario, and Quebec; and USA - California, Minnesota, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Utah, and others.

# Hydrogen Blending: Fuel Impacts

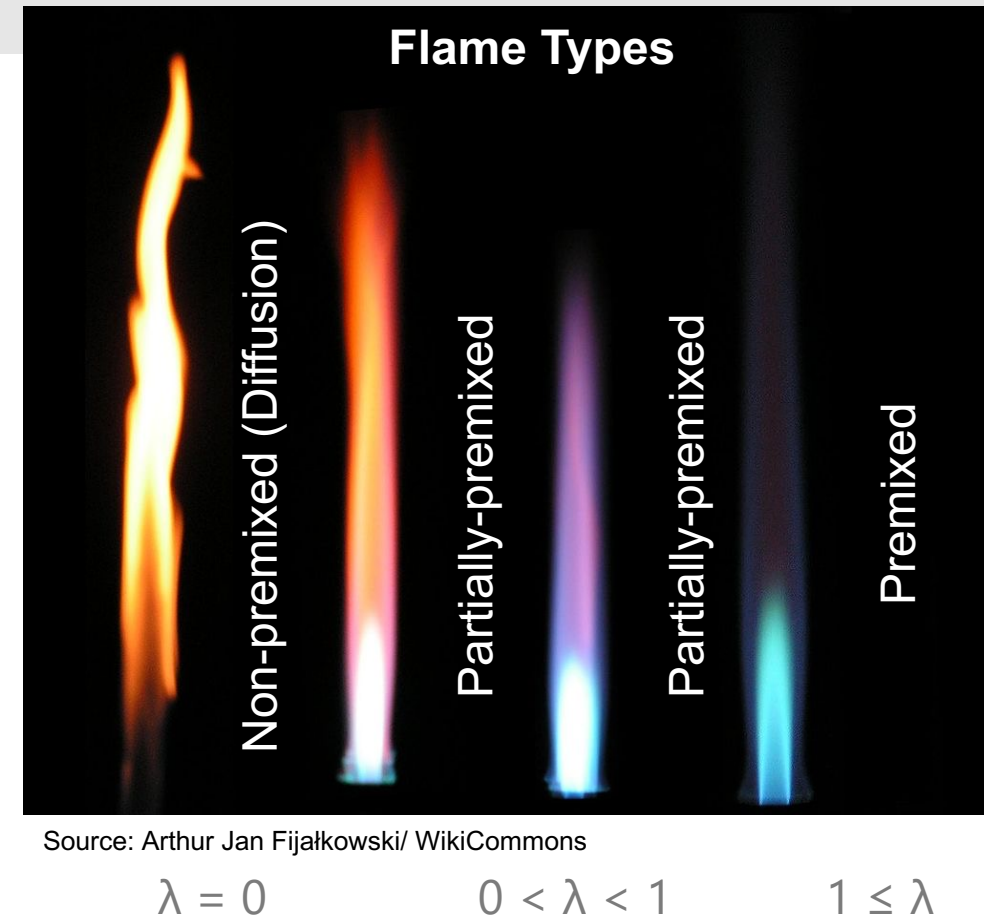
- Hydrogen has **very different** properties from natural gas
  - Lower volumetric density/smaller size (de-rating, embrittlement, etc.)
  - Greater reactivity (flammability, ignition, temperature)
  - No carbon (fewer emissions, humid exhaust, visibility)
  - Premixed vs. Partially-Premixed matters!
- For **typical, unadjusted equipment**, look for:
  - Startup issues: flashback/blowoff, ignition
  - Emissions impact: CO, NO<sub>x</sub>, etc.
  - Shift in heating: hot surfaces, de-rating, impact on efficiency

**Wobbe Index (WI)** used to define fuel interchangeability

**Combustion Air Requirement Index (CARI)** predicts air/fuel ratio impacts

**Fuel Composition** and  $\lambda$  can predict  $S_L$  and  $T_{\text{adiabatic, flame}}$

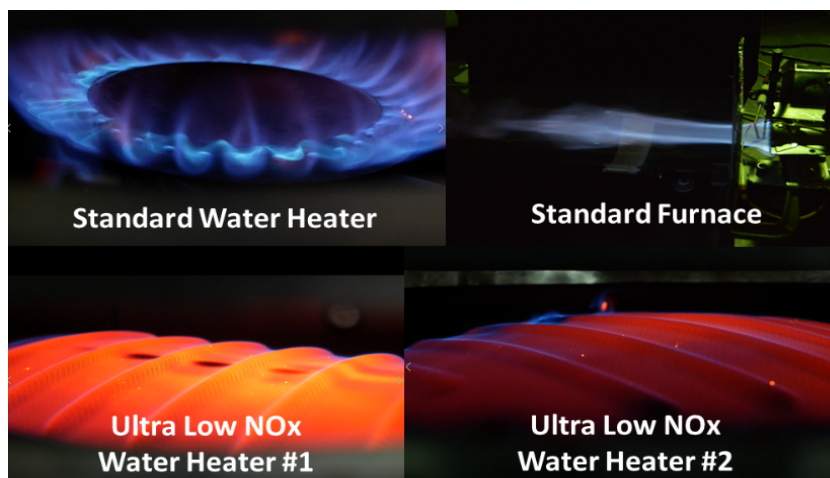
$$WI = \frac{HHV}{\sqrt{SG}} \quad CARI = \frac{\text{Air/Fuel Ratio}}{\sqrt{SG_{fuel}}} \quad \text{where } \lambda_1 CARI_1 = \lambda_2 CARI_2$$





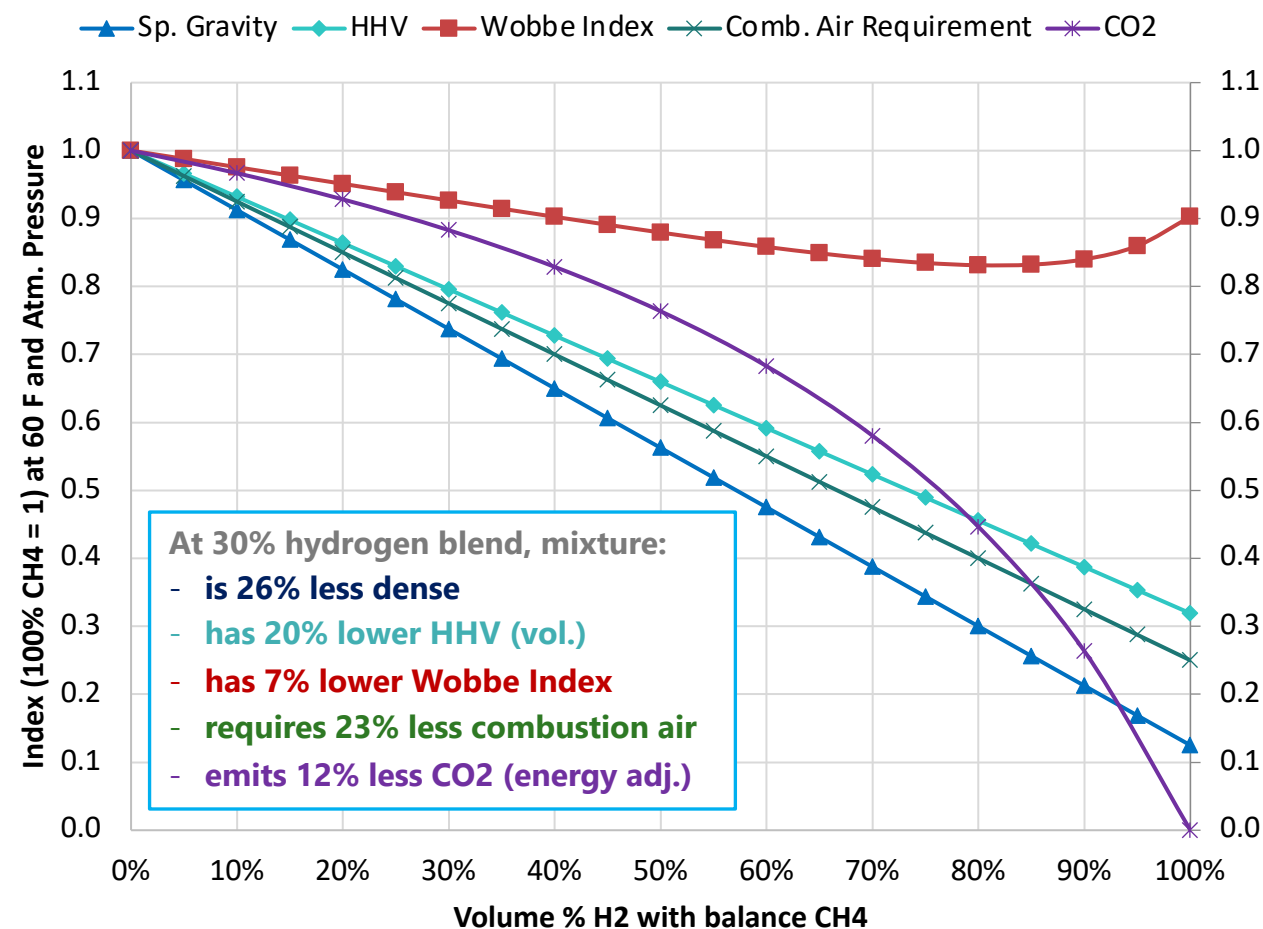
# Hydrogen Blending: Fuel Impacts

- While impacts vary, general blending levels are:
- **Low Blending:** < 10% H2 by vol.\*\*
  - No or minor equipment adjustments
- **Med. Blending:** 10%-30% H2 by vol.\*\*
  - Adjustments may be necessary for components/controls
- **High Blending:** > 30% H2 by vol.\*\*
  - Specially-designed equipment required (e.g. H2 Boiler)



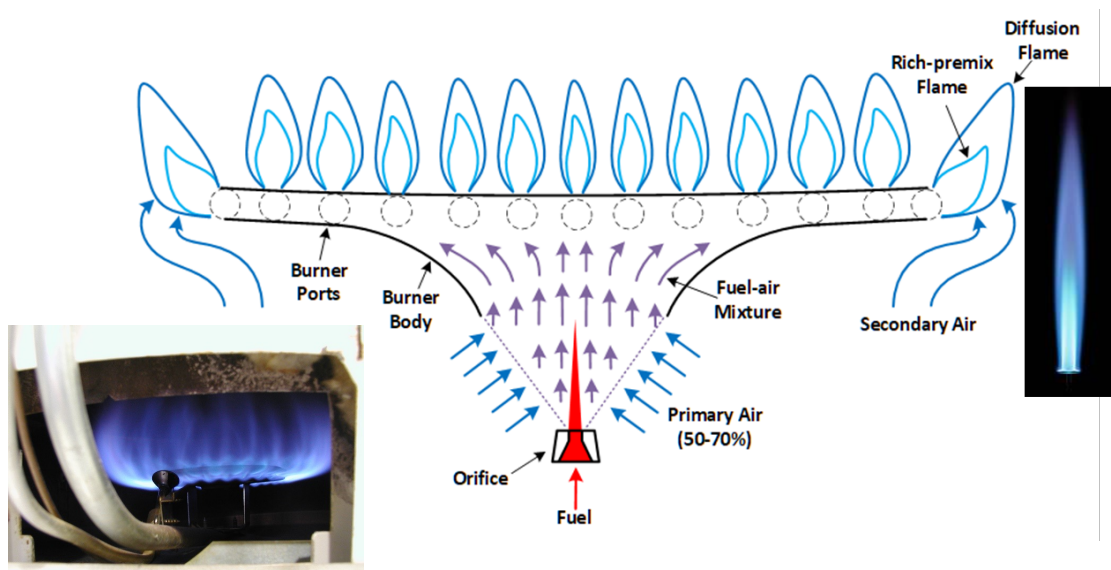
\*\*Unmodified Burners with 30% H2 Blends

## Hydrogen Blending as Gas Quality Issue



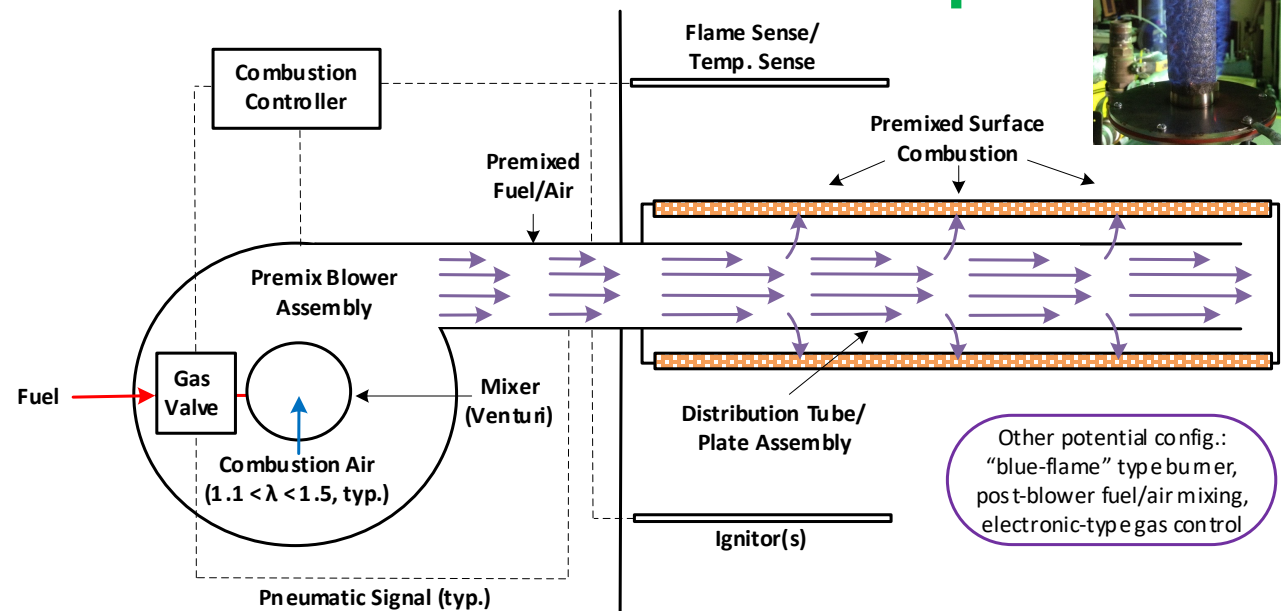
# H2 as a Fuel – Burner Impacts

## Partially-Premixed Example



**Majority of:** Furnaces/RTU, storage WH, cooking, hearth, outdoor  
**Most of:** Hot water/steam boiler, pool/process heater  
**Increasing H<sub>2</sub>:** Shifts  $\lambda_{\text{primary}}$  to 1.0, can increase  $T_{\text{flame}}/S_L$ , but impacts are equipment specific on flame, heat transfer, air flow, NOx emissions

## Premixed Example

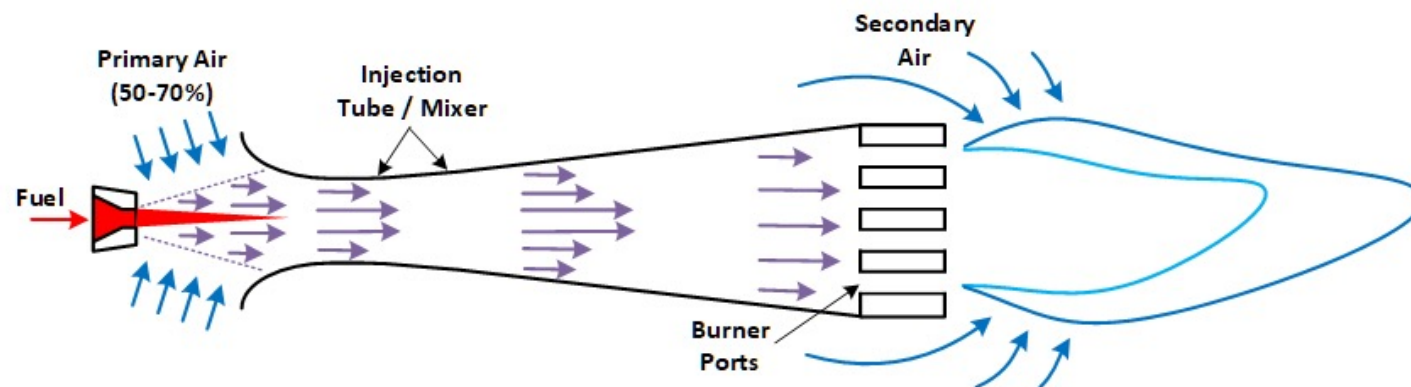


**Majority of:** Tankless WH, fuel-fired heat pump, boilers  
**Most of:** Low NOx versions of PP-type equipment  
**Increasing H<sub>2</sub>:** Can shift  $\lambda_{\text{overall}}$  leaner for pneumatic controls, but compensating electronic controls (constant  $\lambda$ ) result in increased  $T_{\text{flame}}/S_L$

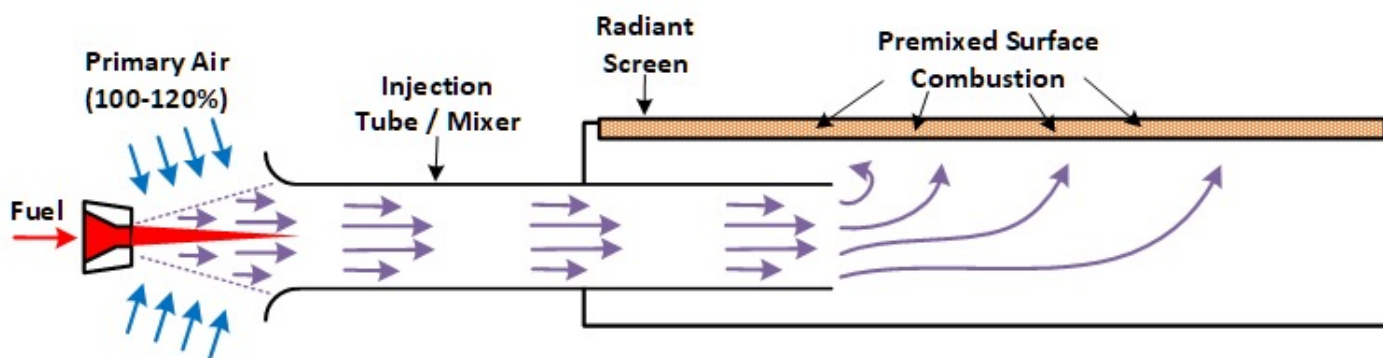


# Atmospheric Burners Anatomy

## Inshot (furnace) burner

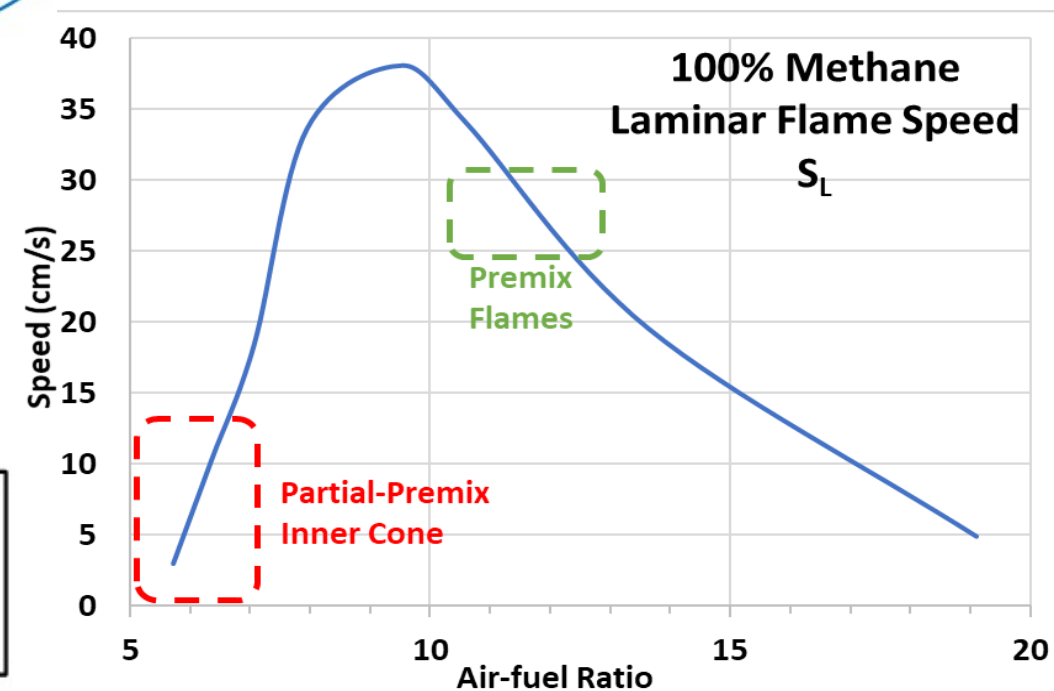


## ULNOx Premixed radiant (water heater) burner



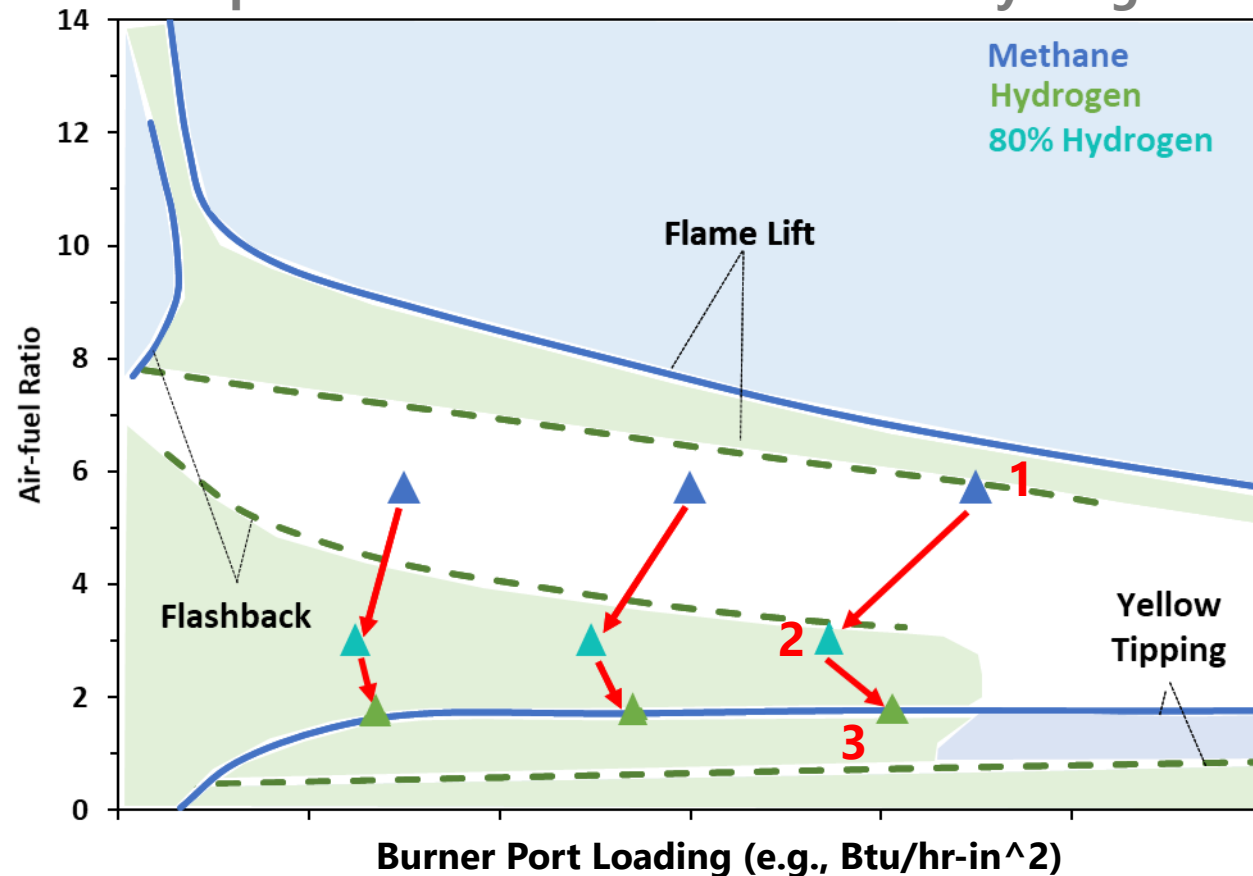
## Partial-premix burners:

- Stable, compact, high-turn down
- Efficient (low CO, ~NO<sub>x</sub>)
- Cheap, reliable (100+ years in use)



# Hydrogen Substitution into Methane/NG

Example PP Burner Combustion Stability Diagram



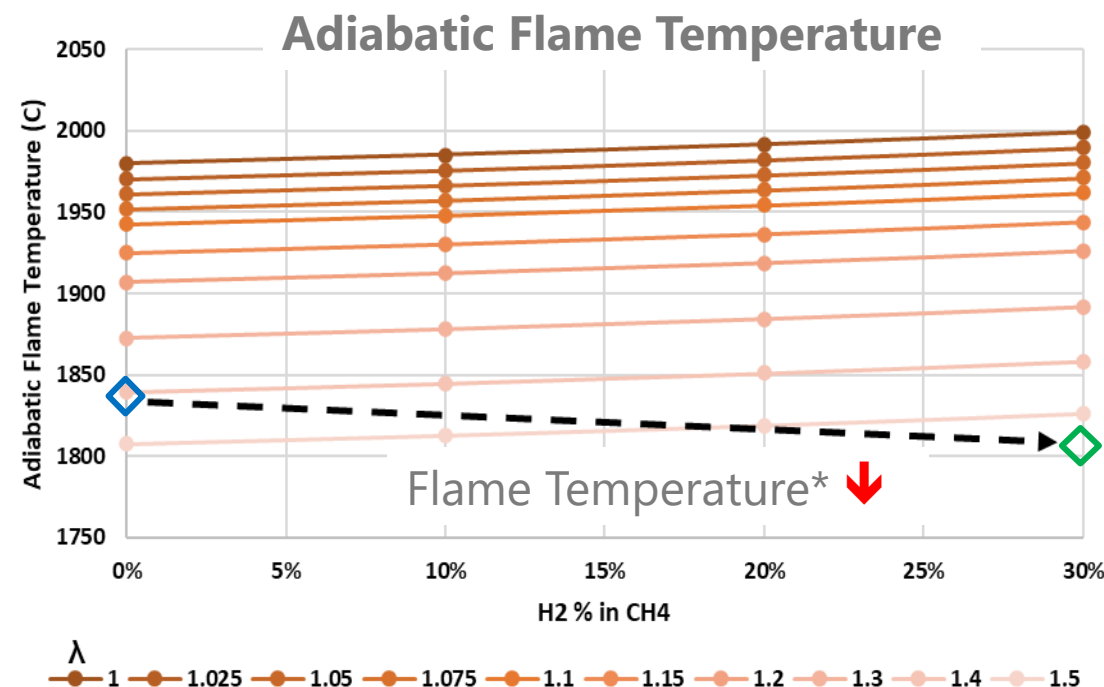
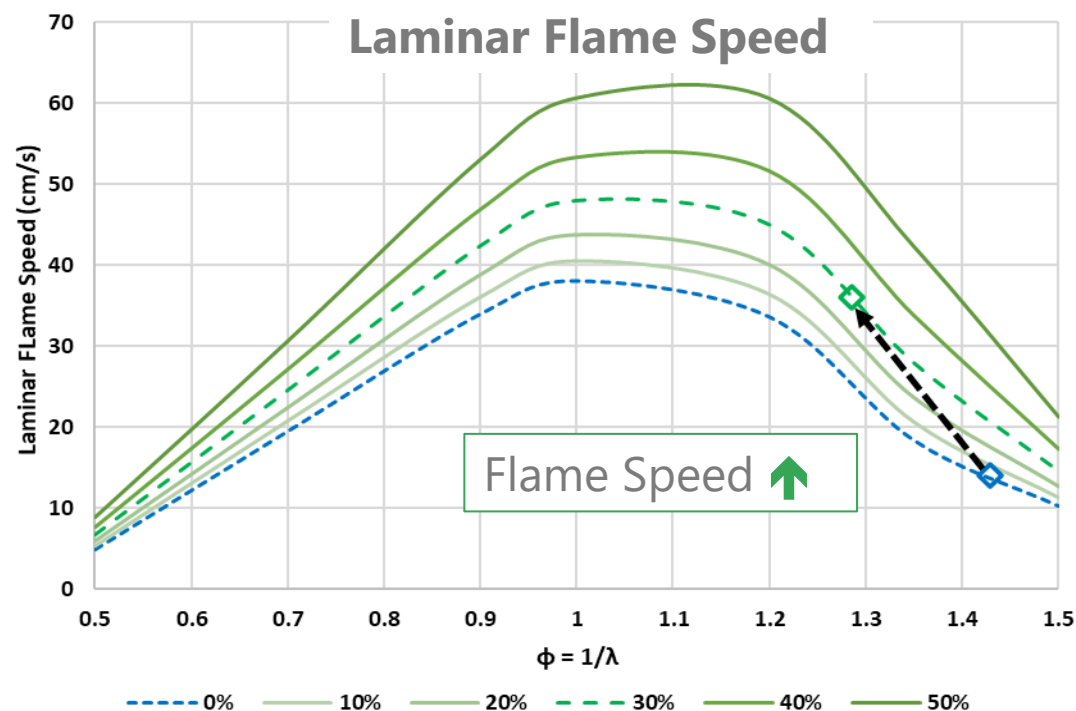
## NG designed burner – H<sub>2</sub> blending Steps:

1. **0% H<sub>2</sub>**, S<sub>L</sub> = 3 cm/s, 60% PA
2. **80% H<sub>2</sub>**, S<sub>L</sub> = 142 cm/s, 80% PA
3. **100% H<sub>2</sub>**, S<sub>L</sub> = 301 cm/s, 74% PA

- Port Velocity < 20 cm/s all cases
- With real burners, stability boundaries are “fuzzy”
- Burner features like flame holders, port size and spacing can modify stability regions
- Flashback more likely for low-firing rate burners (pilots, range tops, etc.)

Design NG burners for Flame Lift control  
Design H<sub>2</sub> burners for Flashback control

# Hydrogen Substitution into Methane/NG



## Partial Premix Burner Predictions (without any changes except for H<sub>2</sub> substitution\*)

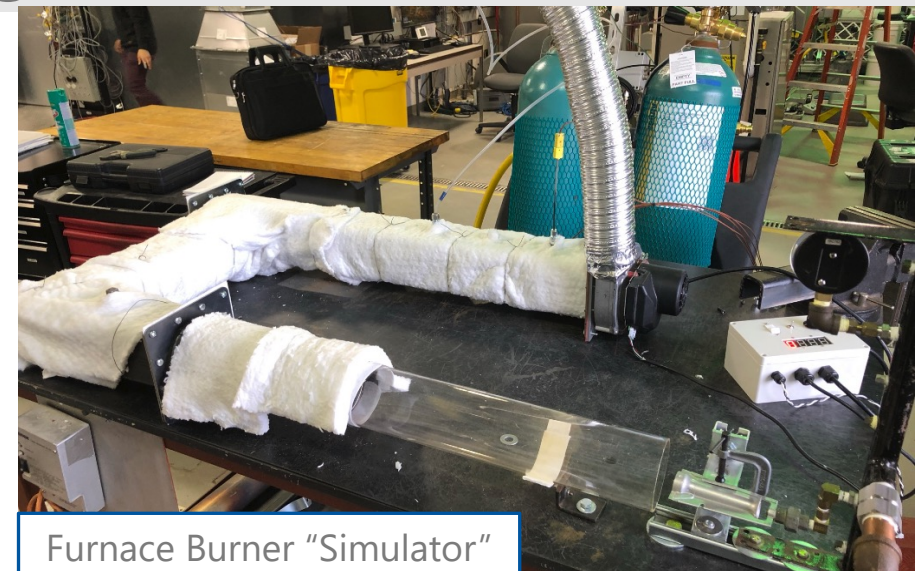
- Firing rate ↓ (volumetric flow ↑ but energy density ↓) – 7% theoretical derate at 30% H<sub>2</sub>
- Less air is injected as H<sub>2</sub> increases but less air is required for combustion (overall  $\lambda$  ↑)
- Combustion efficiency decrease\* ↓ (derate and flame temperature decrease)



# Overview of Efforts – Laboratory Testing

## Scope of Testing - “Simulator” testing and In-situ

- Natural gas, 0%-30% H<sub>2</sub> in CH<sub>4</sub> in 5% increments
- Simulator tests operated manually: Furnace (in-shot), Water heater burners: Standard NO<sub>x</sub> (2), Ultra Low NO<sub>x</sub> (2)
- For in-situ, appliances with automation of loads: Two furnaces (High/Std. eff.), Three water heaters (Standard NO<sub>x</sub>, ULN #1, ULN #2)



Furnace Burner “Simulator”



In-situ Furnace Testing



In-situ Water Heater Testing

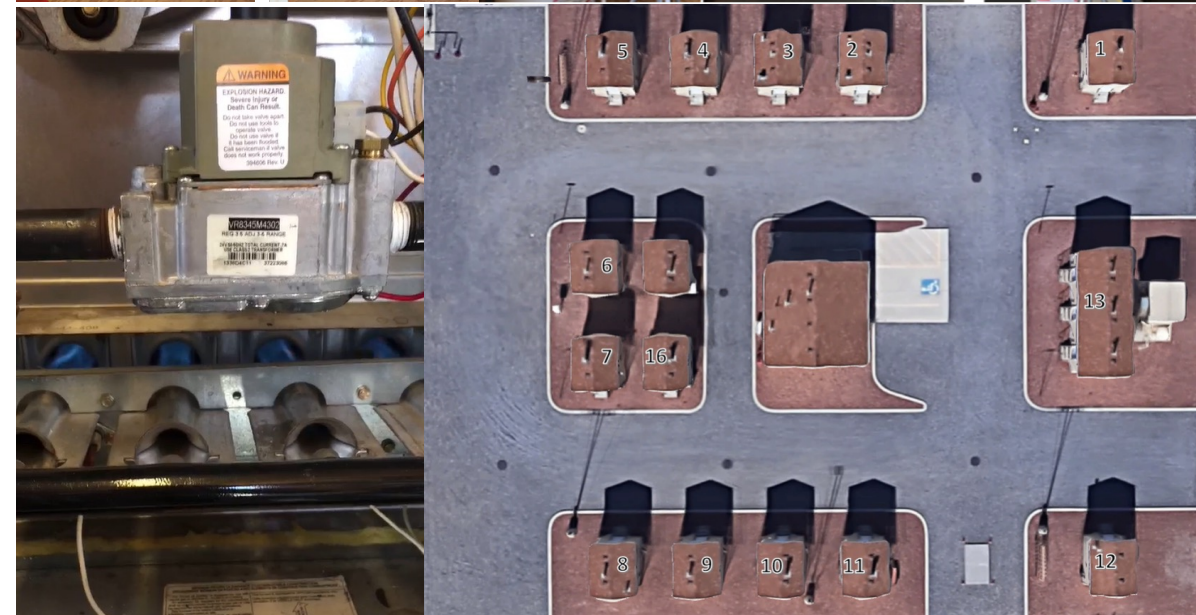


Water Heater Burner “Simulator”



# Overview of Efforts – Field Testing

- Coordinated with utility team in mid 2021, GTI sampled emissions from **15 appliances**
  - Pre/post measurement of emissions (0%-10%), material temperatures, observations on safety
  - Water heaters (standard, Ultra Low NOx), furnaces, ranges, dryers, fireplaces
- 2022 plans for three additional demonstrations, expanding equipment population



GTI sampling of residential furnace with 0% - 10% H<sub>2</sub> blends (left) at facility "village" (right)



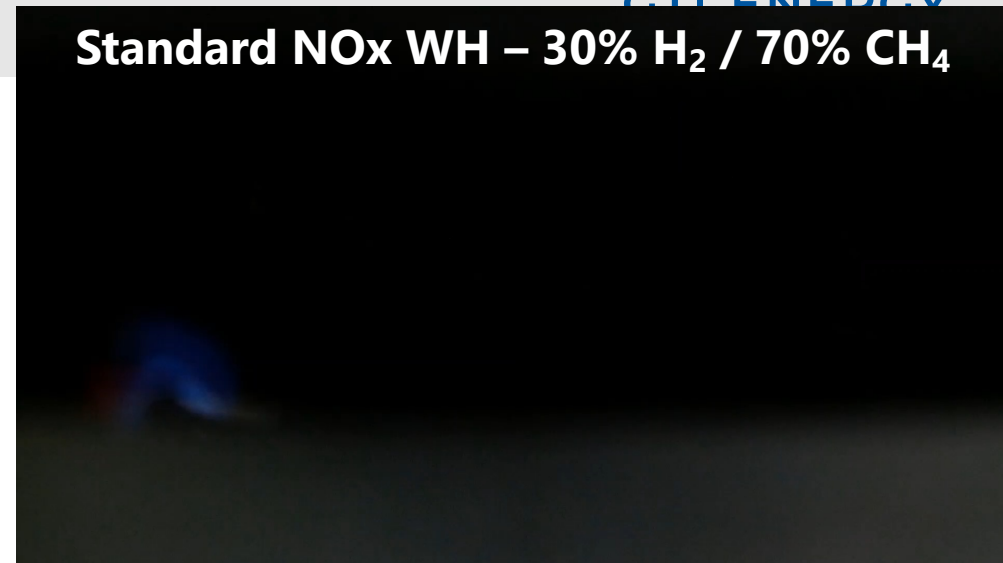


# Do Equipment Malfunction?

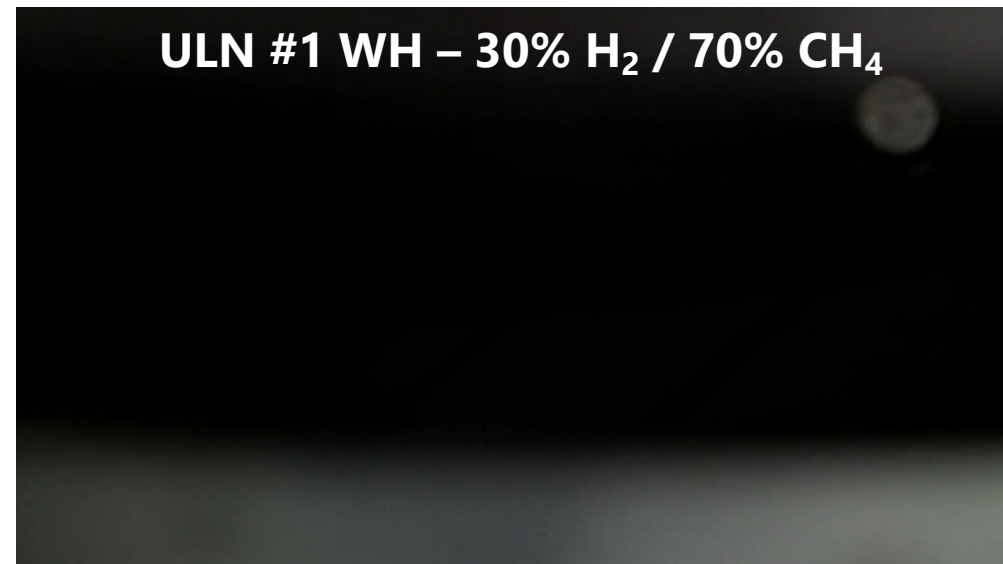
- Based on GTI Lab/Field Testing to date, **generally no** issues in normal operation
- Ignition & sustained operation successful over 0%-30% (lab), 0%-10% (field) for all equipment
- Minimal visual difference with “blue flame” burners, some dimming of radiant burners
- Limited issues seen with UCI/CSA tests (noted)



**Standard NOx WH – 30% H<sub>2</sub> / 70% CH<sub>4</sub>**

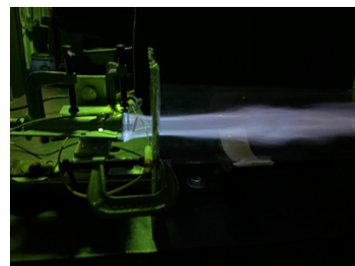
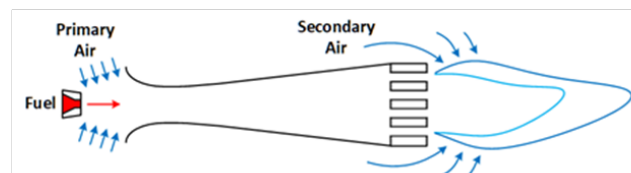


**ULN #1 WH – 30% H<sub>2</sub> / 70% CH<sub>4</sub>**

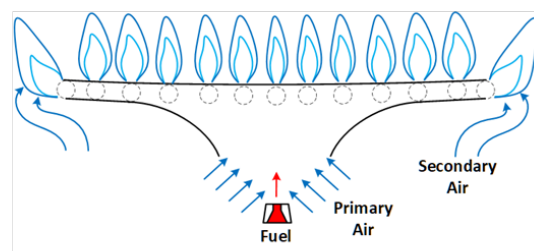


# Do Equipment Malfunction?

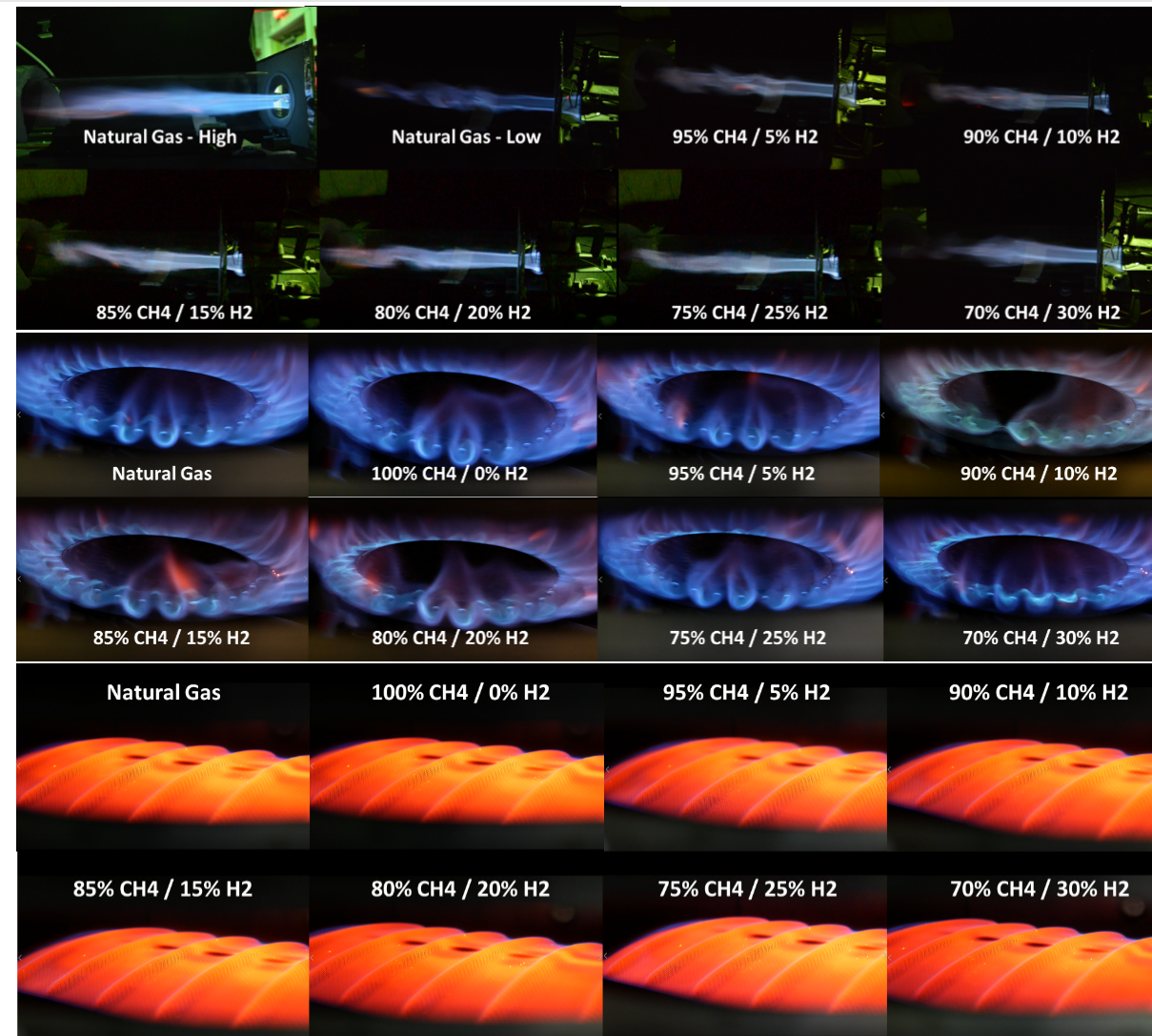
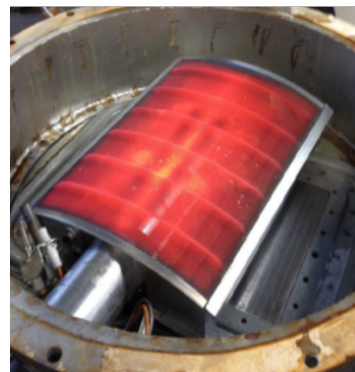
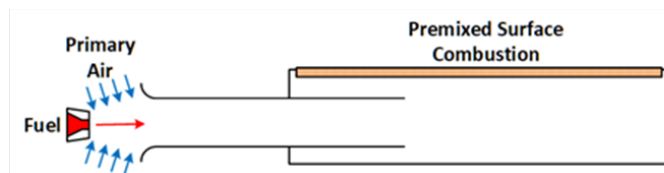
**“In-Shot” Warm-air Furnace Burner (< 40 ng NOx/J)**



**Standard NOx Water Heater Burner (< 40 ng NOx/J)**



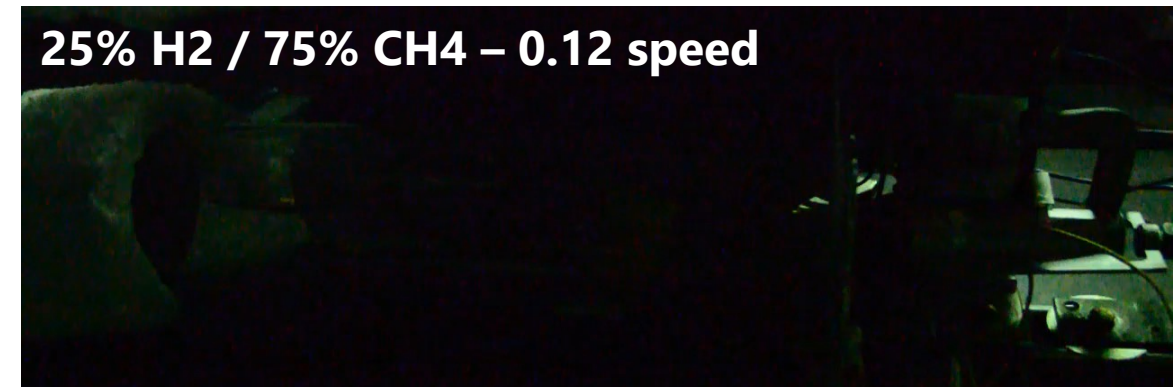
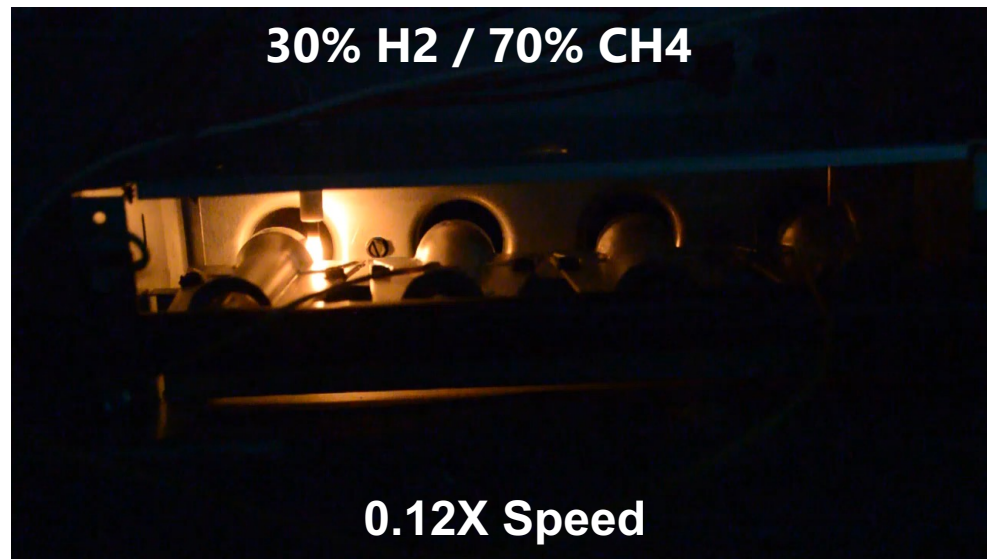
**Ultra-Low NOx Water Heater Burner (< 10 ng NOx/J)**





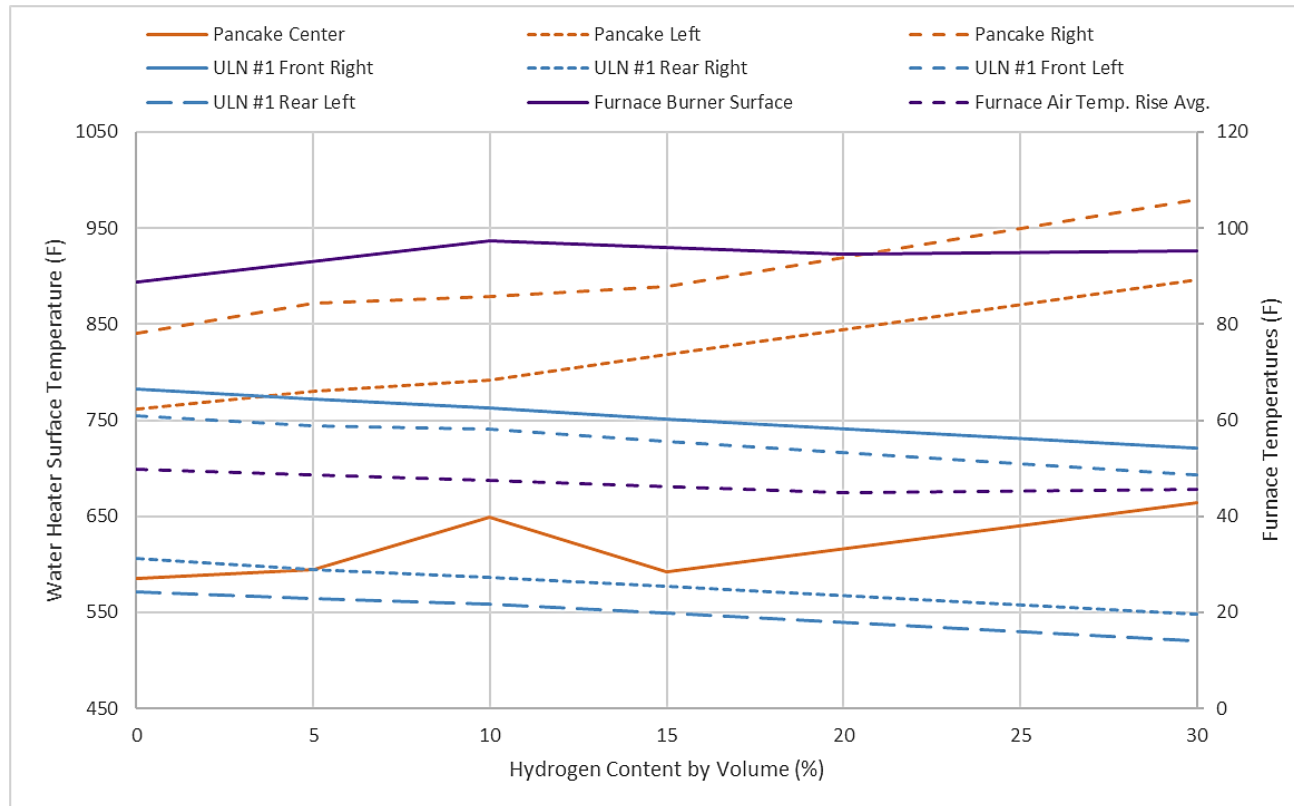
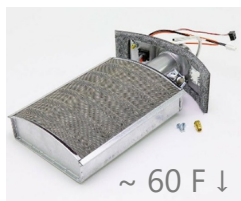
# Do Equipment Malfunction?

- Measurable delay in complete “rolling” ignition for furnaces, increase with H<sub>2</sub>, cold vs. hot start, low vs. high fire
- “Flashback” created outside of furnace testing plan, **significant uncertainty why**

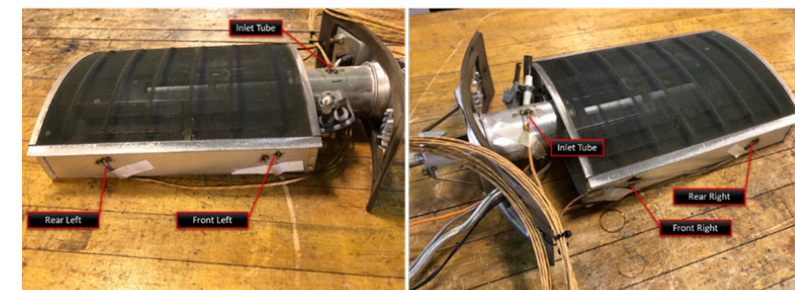


# Are Temperature Increases Unsafe?

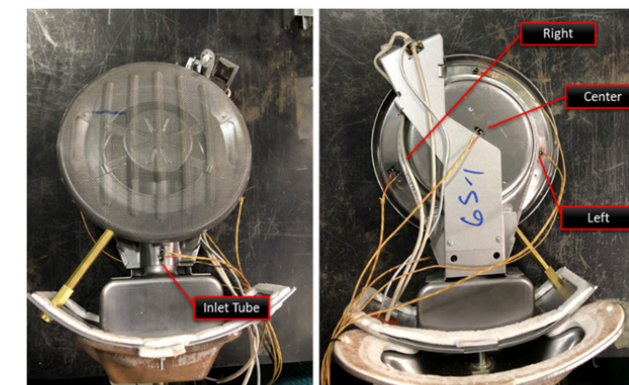
- **Likely no**, hydrogen's adiabatic flame temperature  $\sim 500^{\circ}\text{F}$  greater than  $\text{CH}_4$ , but flame-type & dilution/de-rate impacts matter, **CSA** HX measurements agree
  - GTI measurements of burner surface temperatures in-situ / simulator



Ultra Low NOx Burner #1

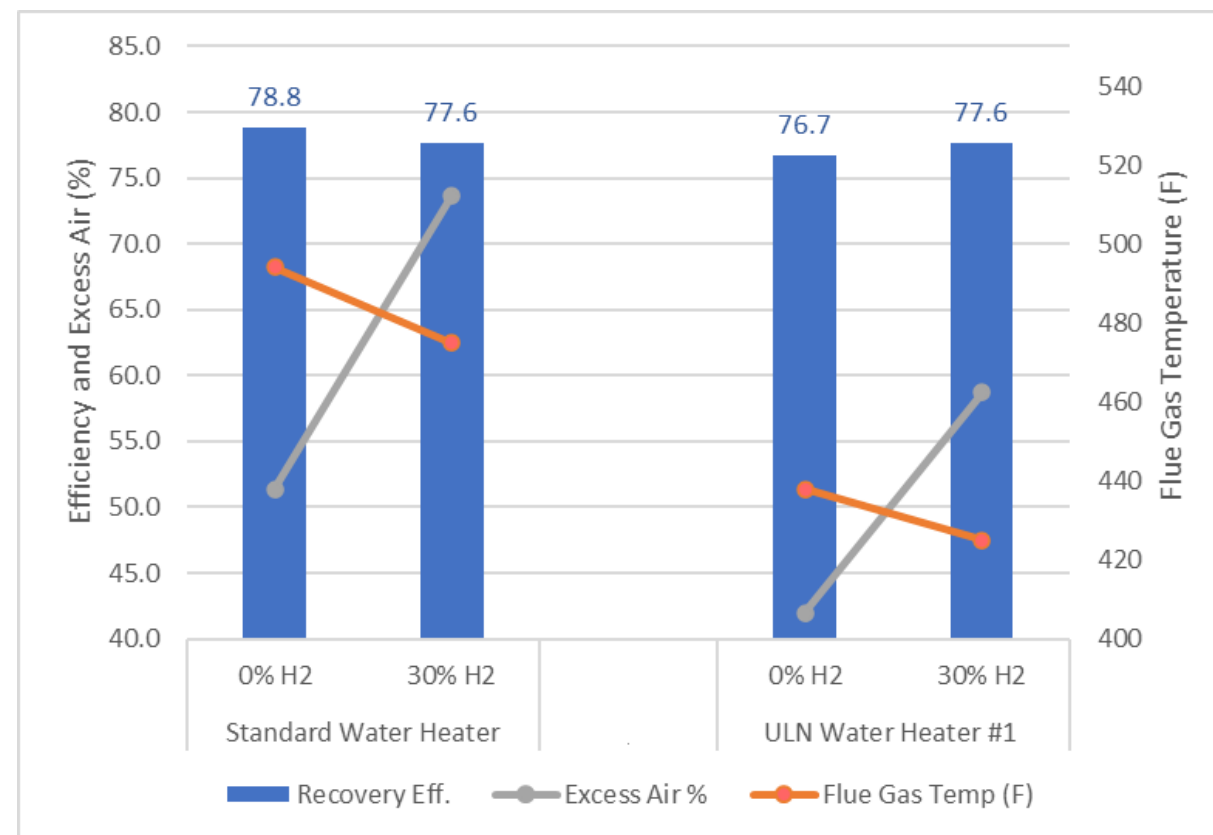


Ultra Low NOx Burner #2



# Is Efficiency Impacted?

- **Possibly, but not much**, results are small and product-dependent
  - Radiant vs. blue flame combustion
  - Level of de-rate, excess aeration
  - Other factors (HX temperatures)
- GTI data show impact for water heaters
- CSA estimates of *combustion efficiency* decrease from 0% to 15% hydrogen blends
  - Furnaces 0% (no change) to 0.5%
  - Boilers 0.3% to 1.5%
  - Water Heaters 0.3% to 0.9%

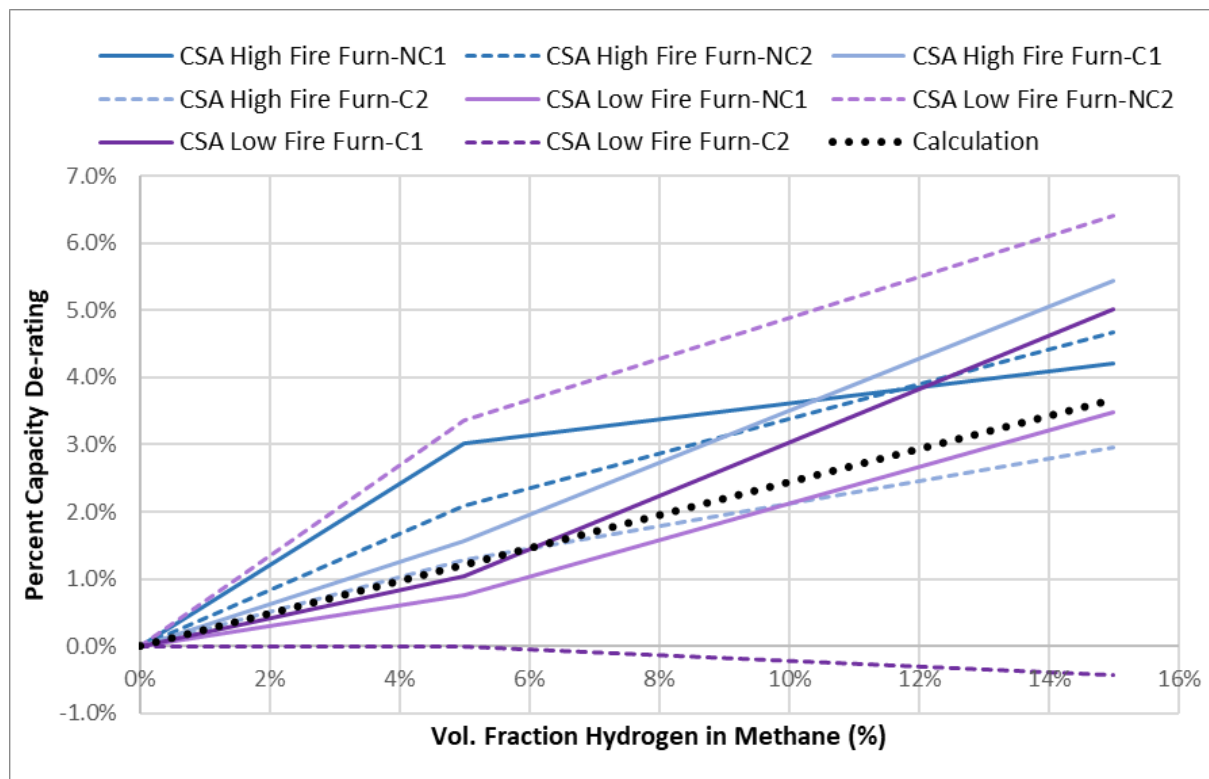


Using "recovery efficiency" DOE procedure, water heaters have *small but measurable* change in efficiency

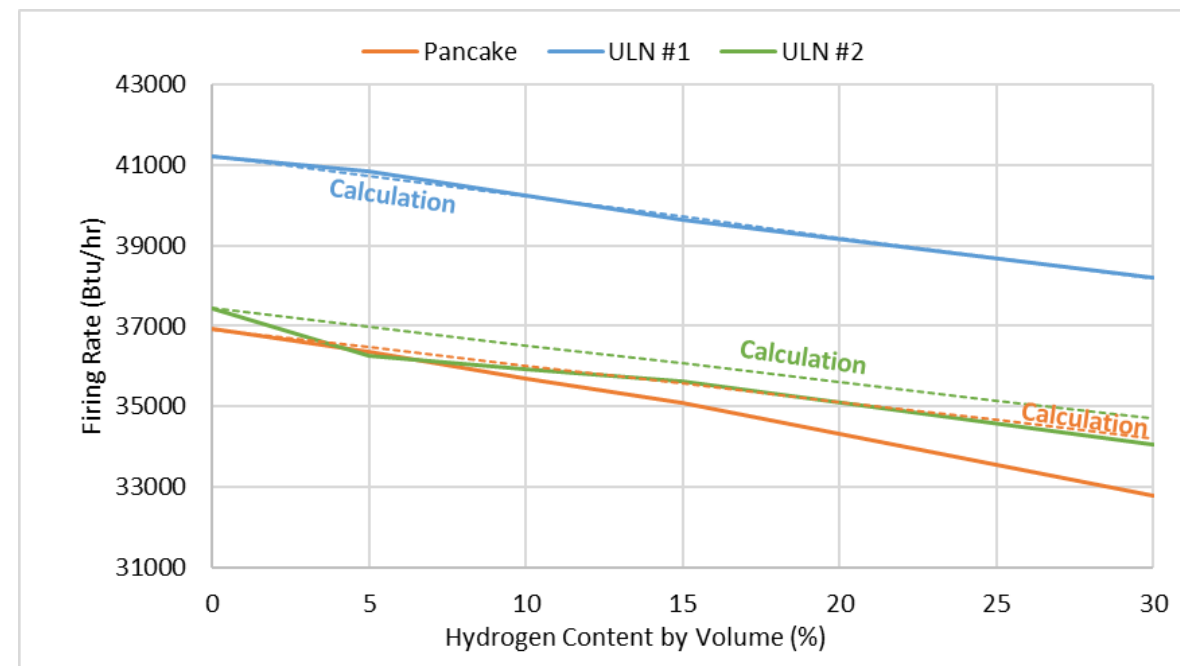


# How is Heat Output Impacted?

- **Reduced slightly in excess of Wobbe Index shift**, consistent result in literature
  - CSA data for furnaces, water heaters, and boilers, based on input



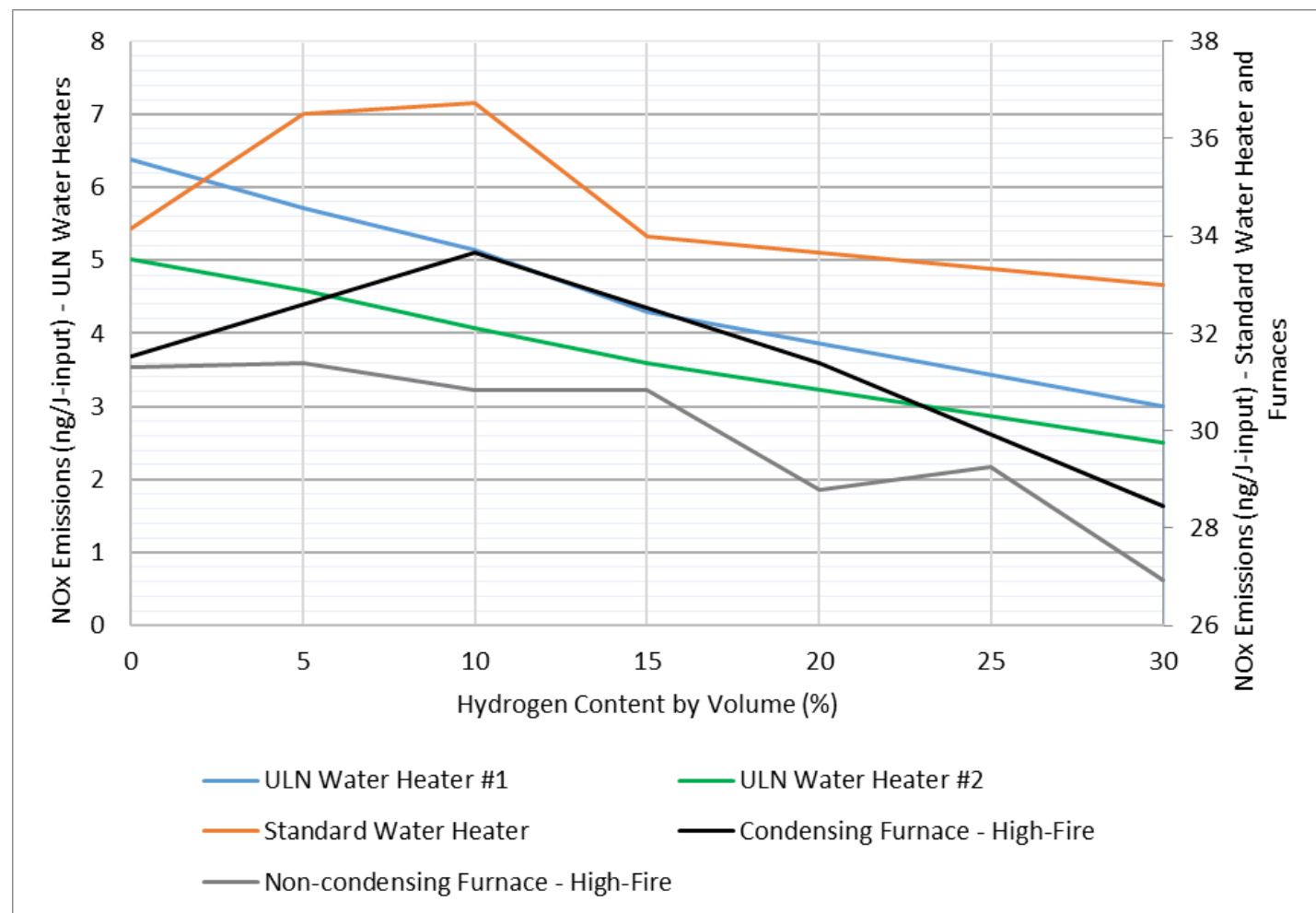
Data Source - CSA/AGA: <https://www.csagroup.org/article/research/appliance-and-equipment-performance-with-hydrogen-enriched-natural-gases>



For **GTI tests** water heater input results consistent, but nuanced results – ULN #1 near exact with Wobbe Index

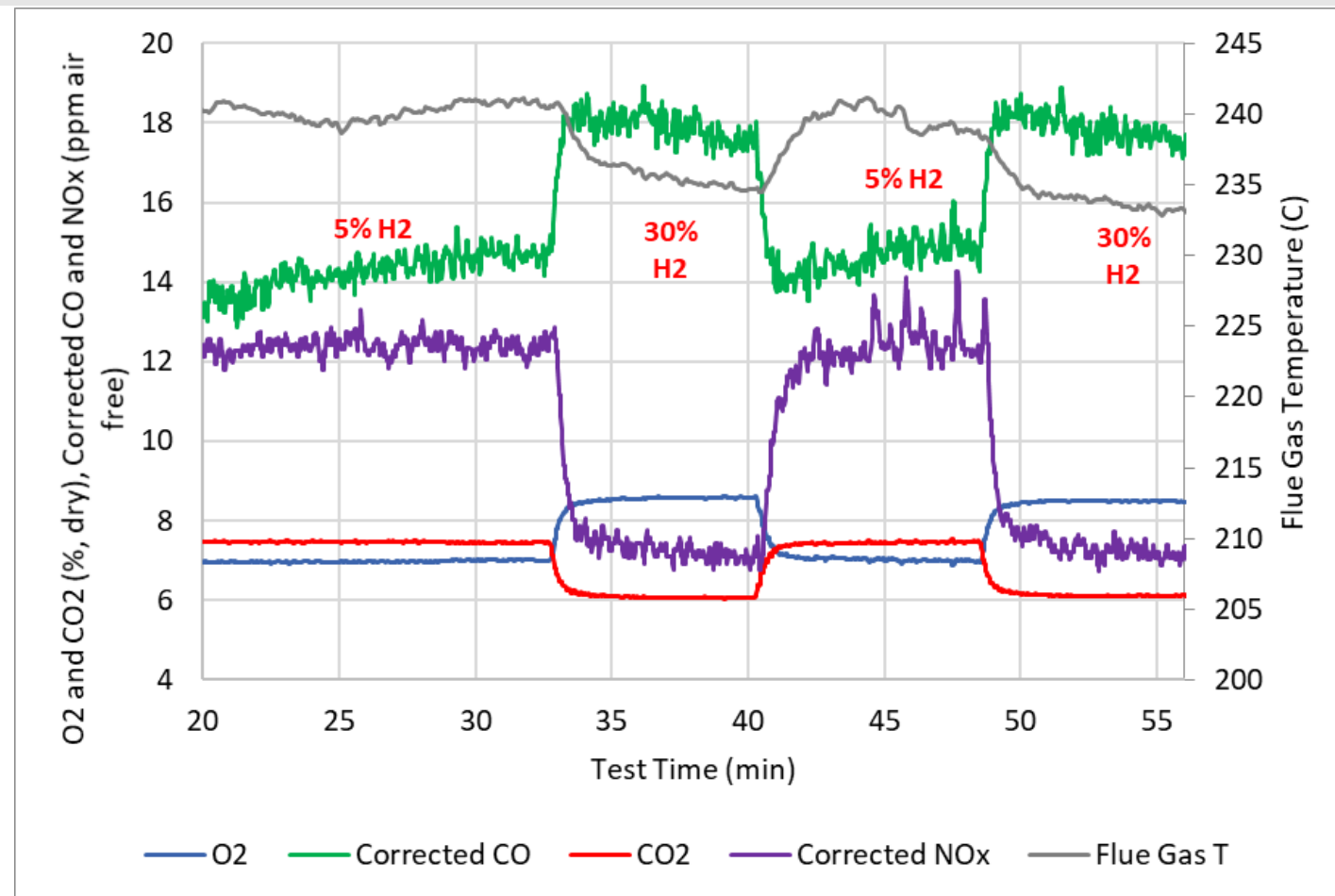
# Do NOx and CO Emissions Increase?

- **Generally no**, combustion air dilution/de-rating counter-act fundamentals for unadjusted, partially-premixed equipment
- GTI laboratory data show reduction in NOx across the board (energy input adjusted) and small change in CO emissions
- “Conventional wisdom” is NOx goes up, applies to some input-adjusted/premix-type equipment.
  - NOx formation largely, driven by  $T_{\text{flame}}$ , however increase is often offset by de-rate, shift in  $\lambda$
  - Other emissions (UHC, CO, etc.) influenced by equipment-specific combustion context



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  - NOx formation largely thermal NOx, driven by  $T_{\text{flame}}$ , however increase is often offset by de-rate, shift in  $\lambda$
  - Other emissions (UHC, CO, etc.) influenced by equipment-specific combustion context



Ultra Low NOx #1 “Slug Test”

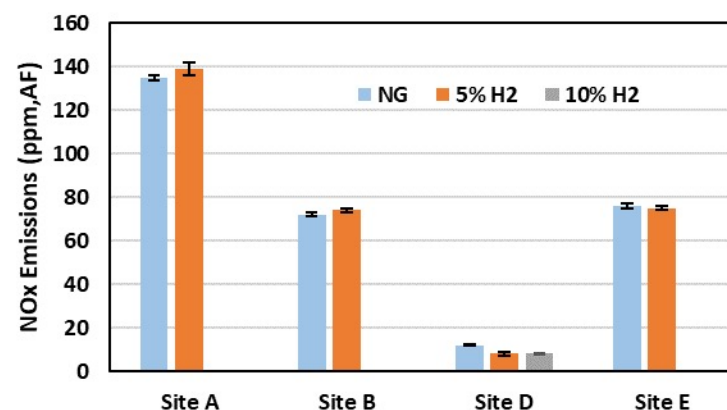


# Do NOx and CO Emissions Increase?

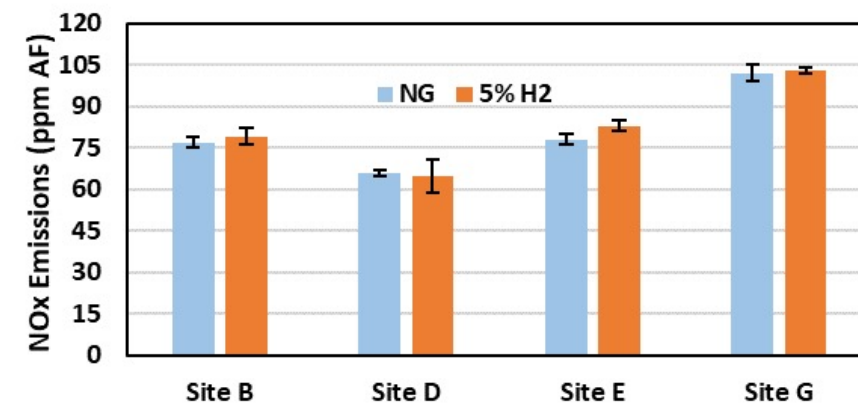
- **Generally no**, GTI field data show flat/reduction in NOx emissions (up to 10% H2, often within measurement error)

Location	Equipment Name	Burner Type
A	Water Heater #1	"Pancake" Burner
B	Water Heater #2	"Pancake" Burner
D	Water Heater #3	ULN Burner #2
E	Water Heater #4	"Pancake" Burner
D	Furnace #1	"In-shot" Burners
E	Furnace #2	"In-shot" Burners
B	Wall Furnace #1	"In-shot" Burners
G	Wall Furnace #2	"Ribbon" Burners
C	Fireplace #1	Perforated Burner
A	Range/Oven #1	Standard Range Burner
E	Range/Oven #2	Standard Range Burner
F	Range/Oven #3	Standard Range Burner

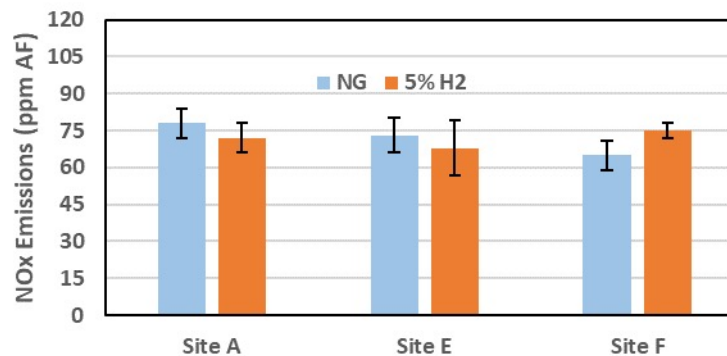
## Water Heater



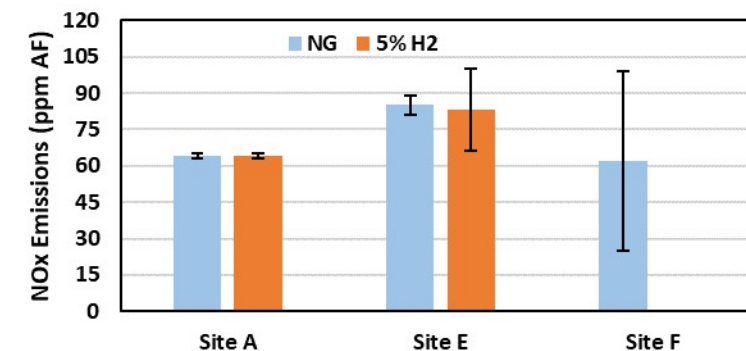
## Furnace



## Range



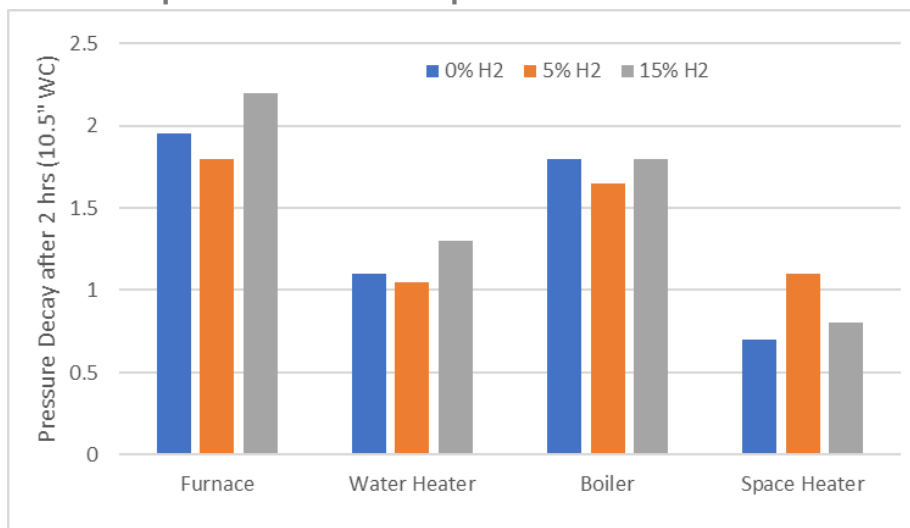
## Oven



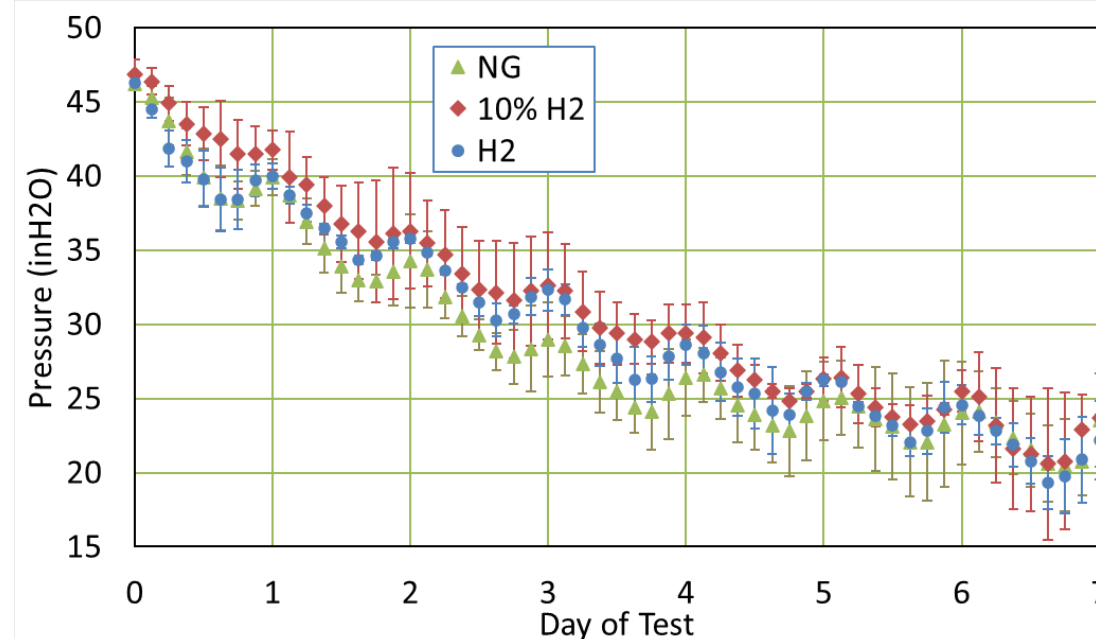
# What About Indoor Leakage?

- **Likely not worsened by hydrogen blending**, though limited data (non-GTI)
- CSA\* tested equipment components & manifolds (below), not sig. difference
- Also tested pipe segments per NFPA 54 @ 5/20 psi, Steel, Copper, CSST piping/connections passed for up to 15% H<sub>2</sub>

**Fun Fact:** The  $d_{\text{kinetic}}$  of H<sub>2</sub> is only ~30% smaller than CH<sub>4</sub>, difference between baseball & softball



\*Data Source - CSA/AGA: <https://www.csagroup.org/article/research/appliance-and-equipment-performance-with-hydrogen-enriched-natural-gases>



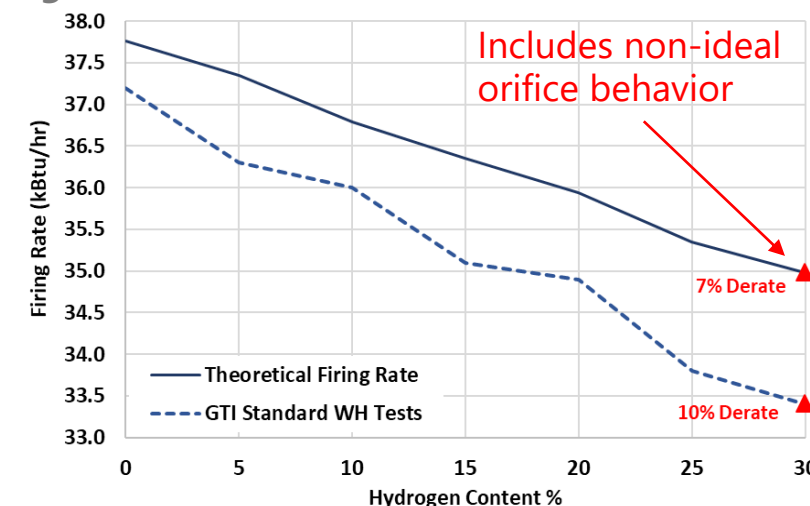
**UC Irvine\*\*** demonstrated that natural gas, hydrogen natural gas blends, and hydrogen leak at effectively the same rate in low pressure behind-the-meter distribution

\*\*Data Source: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0360319919347275>

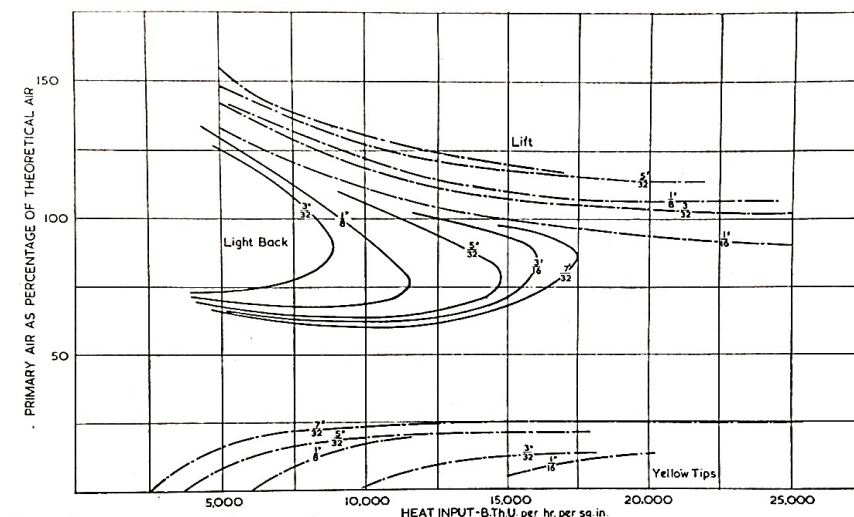
# Recent Results – Recap

- Based on data collected to date in typical, unadjusted customer equipment, with blended H<sub>2</sub>/NG up to 30% by volume...
  - Cause equipment to immediately malfunction? **Not likely**
  - Lead to unsafe operating temperatures? **Not likely**
  - Adversely impact efficiency? **Not likely**
  - Significantly reduce heat output? **In excess of Wobbe**
  - Increase NO<sub>x</sub> or CO emissions? **Generally no**
  - Increase leakage within building? **Not worsened by blending**
- But what about...
  - Higher blends/pure hydrogen? Long-term impacts? Testing to failure? ...**TBD**
  - Broader population of equipment (type, age, installation)? Emerging technologies and retrofit packages? ...**TBD**

## Higher Than Predicted Derate in Pancake Burners



## Combustion Stability Diagrams for “Real” Burners





# Limits of Burner H2/NG Blending

## What are the limits of hydrogen blending for existing burner designs?

- “Classic” burner design texts indicate burners can be designed for operation with NG, pure H<sub>2</sub>, and blends (semi-empirical models)
- What about burners designed for NG, what will their blending limits be without?
- Can’t test every burner...
- GTI Energy (SoCalGas funding) project looking at characteristics that make a burner more compatible with H<sub>2</sub>
  - Reduced order models (classic texts)
  - CFD methods development
  - Supplemental testing

## Semi-empirical burner design approach (H.R.N. Jones 1989)

1. Pick a firing rate and % Primary Air

$$Q = 12.78 A_j W C_d \sqrt{P_j}$$

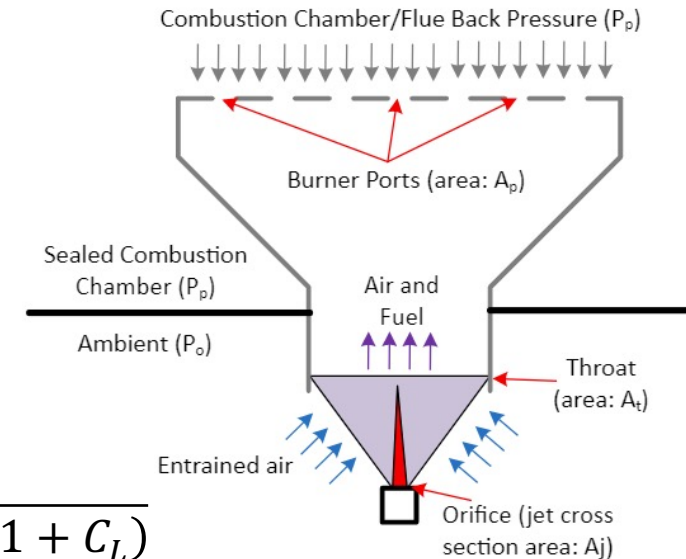
2. Calculate optimal throat to orifice area ratio

$$\frac{A_j}{A_t} = \frac{\sigma}{(\sigma + R)(1 + R)(1 + C_L)}$$

3. Calculate total burner port area

$$\frac{A_j}{A_p} = \frac{(\sigma C_{dp})}{(\sigma + R)(1 + R)\sqrt{1 + C_L}}$$

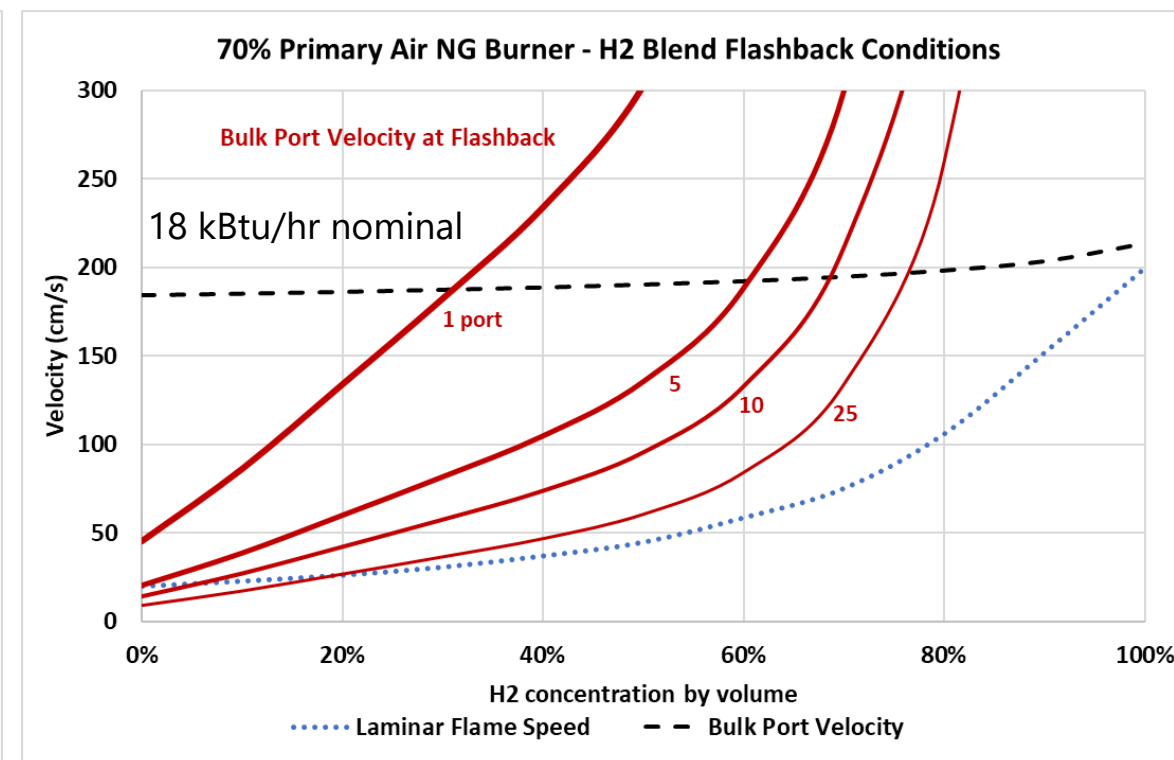
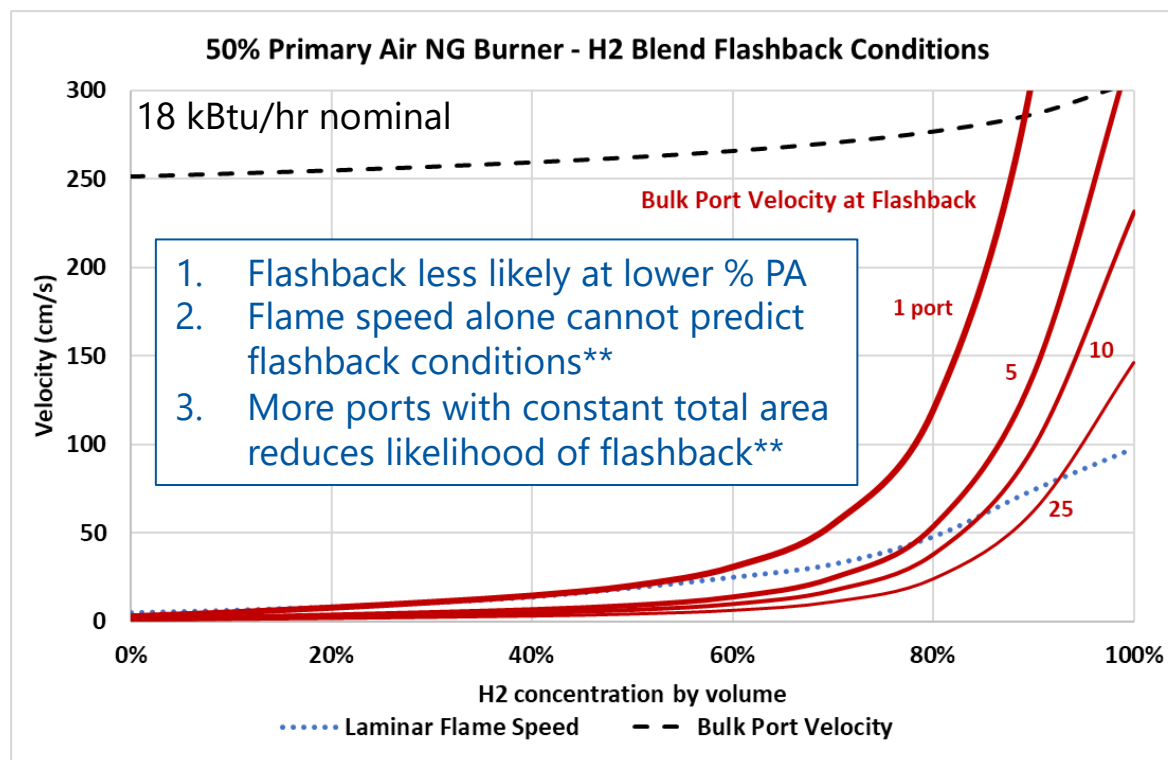
4. Design around flame lift, flashback, and yellow tipping (rules of thumb)



# Limits of Burner H2/NG Blending

## Predicting blending limits of NG burners (by classic means)

- Assuming NG optimally designed burner (maximize static pressure behind ports)
- For fully developed flow\*\*, flashback occurs in the boundary layer (critical gradient theory)
- Empirical relations for critical gradient values can be used to predict\*\* flashback conditions

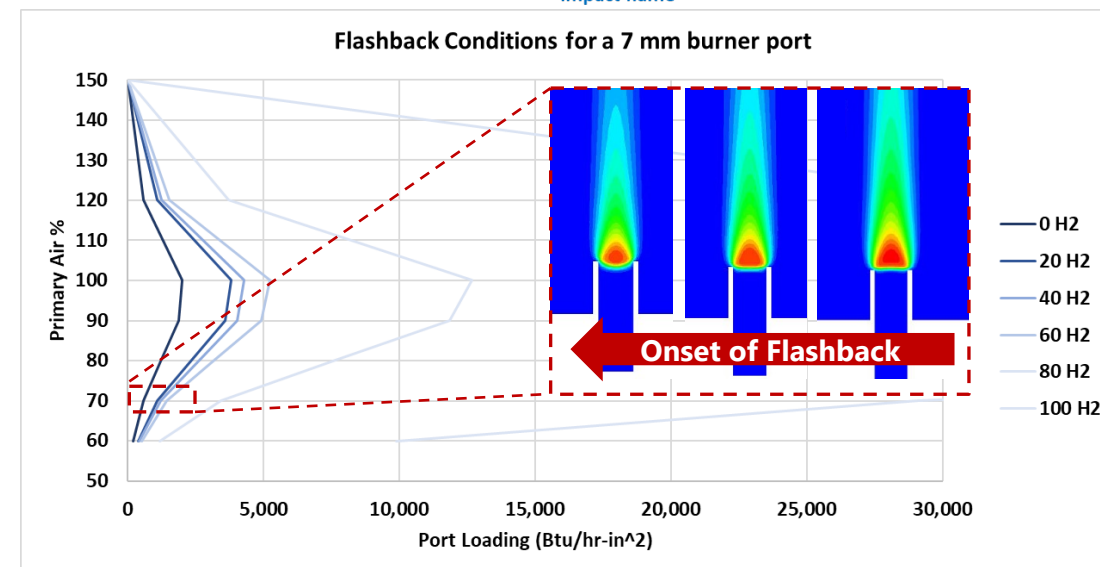
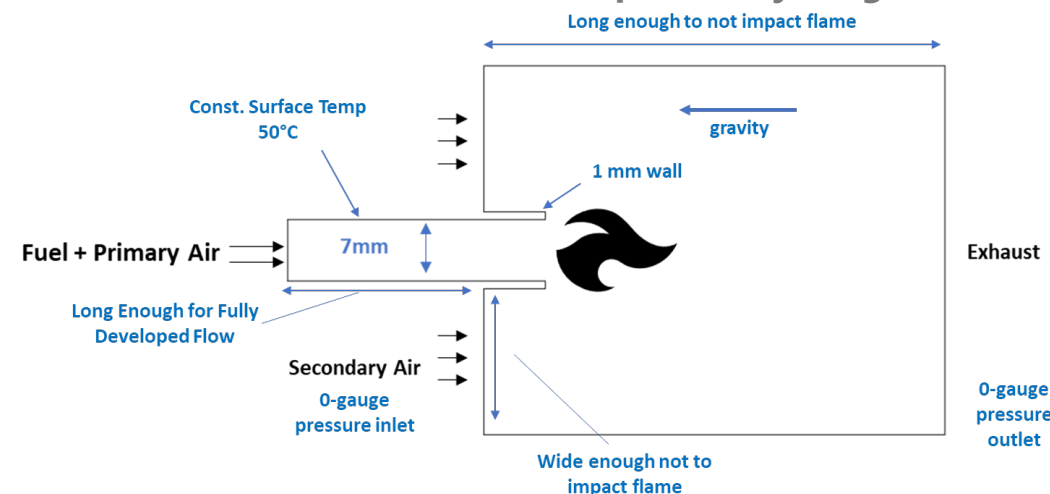


# Limits of Burner H<sub>2</sub>/NG Blending

## Predicting blending limits of NG burners (using CFD)

- Assessing the capabilities of different software packages and sub-models to predict flashback for H<sub>2</sub>+Methane blends
- Challenges and needs:
  - Need detailed chemistry (e.g., GRI-Mech 3.0) with good turbulence coupling
  - Good conjugate heat transfer and fine meshes
- Observations thus far:
  - “Easy” combustion models struggle
  - With above challenges met, able to predict onset of flashback (mass flow) at <16% difference compared to data
- Real burners** (stay tuned... work in progress):
  - Flow not fully developed, transition between laminar and turbulent, and real manufacturing defects have an impact
  - Uncertain impact of flame holders and unique port designs

## Research Burner to Develop Stability Diagrams



Data Source: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pecs.2017.03.001>



# Hydrogen Blending in Equip. – What's Next

- Continued testing/sampling of more diverse equipment (e.g. **heat pumps, dryers, hearths, etc.**), indoor distribution leakage, use of in-line H<sub>2</sub> sensors
- Coordinate/support update to **codes and standards** impacted by H<sub>2</sub>-based fuels
- Development of **mitigation tech.** and high-H<sub>2</sub> tolerant components/equipment
  - Detonation risks with increasing H<sub>2</sub> blending
- Recent ~\$3 million award to GTI-led team on H<sub>2</sub> in **large comm. and industrial applications**
  - Test/model H<sub>2</sub> tolerance of wide range of large equipment categories (e.g., boilers)
  - Material testing for long-term impacts, Air Quality simulation to quantify regional benefits/impacts



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# Q&A - Links and Further Reading

- GTI Energy – Hydrogen Technology Center:

<http://www.h2techcenter.energy/>

- Open Access Paper - Impact of Hydrogen/Natural Gas Blends on Partially Premixed Combustion Equipment: NO<sub>x</sub> Emission and Operational Performance

<https://www.mdpi.com/1996-1073/15/5/1706>

Research discussed supported by Utilization Technology Development (<https://www.utsd-co.org/>)

Research team on H<sub>2</sub> Impacts in Buildings: Paul Glanville, Brian Sutherland, Frank Johnson, Kaushik Biswas, Kris Jorgensen, Luke Bingham, Will Asher, Yan Zhao, and others



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