

Experimental and ReaxFF-based molecular dynamics studies of the reaction of oxygen with DR-2 as a low global warming potential working fluid

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Abstract

The *cis*-1,1,1,4,4,4-hexafluoro-2-butene (DR-2 or HFO-1336mzz(Z)) is a novel environmentally friendly working fluid with appropriate physicochemical characteristics. The present work firstly investigates decomposition mechanism and thermal stability of DR-2 under the atmosphere containing oxygen (O₂) and high temperature experimentally. The oxidative degradation features of DR-2 were explored at the temperature of 473-1073 K and the products were monitored by GC-MS and IC. The experimental and ReaxFF-based molecular dynamics results demonstrated the promotion effects of O₂ on the DR-2 decomposition. The participation of O₂ molecules was supposed to lower the initial thermal decomposition temperature by 240 K approximately and also would increase the number of products such as hydrogen fluoride (HF), but the enhancement effect was weakened by the increasing reaction temperature. The reasonable Arrhenius parameters calculated from the first-order kinetic analyses-based reactive molecular dynamics (RMD) simulations. Combined with density functional theory, the pathways of initial oxidation decomposition product firstly observed in the experimental and RMD simulations were proposed in this study. These results may pave the way for further study of DR-2 as a working fluid with lower global warming potential.

1 **Experimental and ReaxFF-based molecular dynamics studies of the**
2 **reaction of oxygen with DR-2 as a low global warming potential**
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10 **Abstract**

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23 kinetic analyses-based reactive molecular dynamics (RMD) simulations. Combined
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27 global warming potential.

28 **Keywords: ReaxFF MD; DR-2; DFT; oxidation thermal decomposition; HF**

29 1. Introduction

30 Due to the acceleration of the global warming, hydrocarbons with lower global
31 warming potential (GWP) and zero ozone depletion potential (ODP) are of increasing
32 interest nowadays [1]. As a novel working fluid with low GWP, DR-2, also
33 abbreviated as HFO-1336mzz(Z), is one of the promising alternatives for HFC-245fa
34 in the organic Rankine cycle (ORC) systems [2] and R134a in the Ejector Cooling
35 Cycle systems [3]. In comparison with the first commercially available
36 hydrofluoroolefins (HFOs) such as HFO-1234yf and HFO-1234ze-E, DR-2 shows the
37 features of non-flammability at both 333 K and 373 K and chemical stability at high
38 temperatures [4]. Moreover, DR-2 exhibited superior thermal properties to
39 HCFO-1233zd (E) in the systems of ORC and vapor compression cycle [5]. Both the
40 environmental friendliness and the extremely low acute toxicity of DR-2 will not
41 cause irritation to human skin and eyes [6].

42 Previous studies mainly focused on the thermal stability, thermal decomposition
43 mechanism and basic physical and chemical parameters of DR-2, and very
44 meaningful results were obtained through experiments and theoretical calculations.
45 Tao et al. [7] evaluated the production of hydrogen fluoride (HF) of pure DR-2 at
46 873–1073 K in experiments. Huo et al. [8] studied the effect of pressure (2.1, 3.1 and
47 4.0 MPa) on DR-2 for 24h, and the dissociation temperature was 583 K to 603 K, 563
48 K to 583 K, and 543 K to 563 K, respectively. Huo et al. [9] investigated the pyrolysis
49 process and product of DR-2 at 2000-3000 K with ReaxFF simulations, and the DR-2
50 decomposition was divided into three phases. The same research group also discussed
51 the impacts of copper (Cu), oxygen (O₂), water (H₂O) and polyol ester (POE)
52 lubricants on the decomposition of DR-2 [10-13]. Except for a working fluid, DR-2
53 was considered to be a promising fire extinguishing alternative for halon [14, 15].

54 The ReaxFF reaction force field was used to explore the complicated phenomena
55 containing bond formation and breakage [16]. Therefore, the pyrolysis and oxidation
56 decomposition of working fluids was extensively studied with ReaxFF simulation [11,

57 12, 17]. Moreover, the density functional theory (DFT) calculation was frequently
58 conducted to investigate the chemical reactions of organic working fluids. Wang [18]
59 et al. explored the further reaction of DR-2 products with active radicals such as OH·
60 and H· radicals by DFT. Zhang [19] et al. reported the decomposition mechanism by
61 DFT for the first time by studying the main pathways of the $\text{CF}_3\text{CF}=\text{CH}_2$
62 decomposition. Huang[20] et al. investigated the formation mechanisms of the main
63 products (CO , CO_2 and CH_4) in the thermal decomposition of lignin.

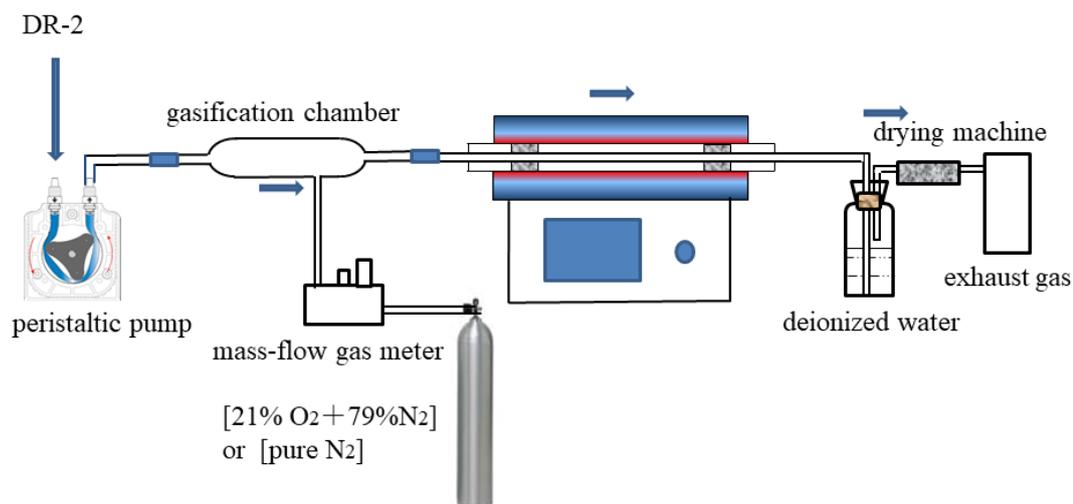
64 The heat sources are usually divided into both high-temperature and
65 low-temperature heat sources according to different temperature ranges [1]. The
66 working temperature of high-temperature heat sources can reach 873 K. At a higher
67 operating temperature, the organic working fluid used in a supercritical ORC could be
68 thermally decomposed, resulting in the changes in the thermal characteristics of the
69 working fluid and the deviation of the parameters from the design conditions. The
70 non-condensable gases and polymers produced from the thermal decomposition may
71 cause the deterioration of heat transfer and blockage of the pipeline, which could lead
72 to the safety problems in the ORC system. DR-2 was used as a working fluid with
73 lower GWP in the ORC system for the experimental evaluation of micro-scale
74 cryogenic applications[21]. Thus, it is of great importance to study its thermal
75 decomposition features under high temperature and oxygen-containing conditions.
76 Although the physicochemical properties of DR-2 have been extensively reported, its
77 thermal decomposition products in the presence of O_2 at high temperatures are still
78 unclear.

79 In this study, we investigate the initial decomposition temperature, main product
80 such as HF and the related kinetics of DR-2 in the presence of O_2 experimentally and
81 RMD simulations under high temperature. It is expected to benefit the environment
82 protection and the industry application security of DR-2.

83 2. Methodologies

84 2.1 Experimental apparatus and procedures

85 In the experimental system (Fig 1), the pyrolysis process of DR-2 was studied in
86 the atmospheres of two gases (pure N₂ and synthetic air) from 473 to 1073 K. The
87 CF₃CH=CHCF₃ with a purity of above 99.5% (Kemu Fluoride Technology Co., Ltd.)
88 was used directly without purification. The nitrogen with a purity of above 99.99%
89 and the synthetic air with a composition of 21% O₂ and 79% N₂ employed in the
90 experiments were provided by the local commercial suppliers. Prior to the thermal
91 degradation experiment, the preheating of each quartz tube was conducted at 1123 K
92 under argon flow for 1 h. The argon gas (purity \geq 99.99%) was used to purge the
93 impurity gases in the experimental pipeline. The gasification of pure DR-2(l) was
94 realized by preheating it to 343 K. At the same time, the reactor temperature was set
95 to 473-1073 K with a constant temperature zone length of 225 mm (\pm 5 K). The quartz
96 tube in the tube furnace could be replaced with a new one at a varying decomposition
97 temperature. The length and inner diameter of the quartz tubular reactor were 1100
98 mm and 10 mm, respectively. In the experiment, the temperature of the furnace was
99 set to 473-973 K with an interval of 100 K and 973-1073 K with an interval of 20 K,
100 respectively. After the temperature was kept at the above-mentioned set points for 2 h,
101 the vaporization setup was heated with a peristaltic pump flow rate of 0.41 mL/min
102 and a mass flowmeter value of 100 mL/min. The pyrolysis time was 0.5 h. The
103 thermal degradation products of DR-2 were collected by the gas-collecting pockets
104 and 400 mL of deionized water. Finally, the exhaust gases at the end of the experiment
105 were disposed by sodium hydroxide (NaOH) aqueous solution before discharge. The
106 fluoride concentration in the solution was measured by the ion chromatography (IC)
107 after the adsorption of gas products in 400 mL of deionized water. Finally, the exhaust
108 gases were analyzed by GC-MS.



109

110

Fig 1. Scheme of the DR-2 oxidation pyrolysis system.

111 2.2 ReaxFF MD simulations

112 Although part of the thermal decomposition products was detected in the thermal
 113 decomposition experiment, the intermediate products and the product formation
 114 mechanism are still unknown. The quantum chemistry calculation by the simulation
 115 method of ReaxFF-MD could be in good consistence with corresponding
 116 experimental results. This method was widely used in various reaction systems, such
 117 as the thermal decomposition of fossil fuels, the oxidation or combustion processes of
 118 alkanes and hydrocarbons, and the explosion of energetic materials [17, 22-24]. The
 119 bond formation and breakage in the molecular dynamic simulation could be described
 120 by ReaxFF, a reactive force field based on the bond order firstly proposed by van
 121 Duin [25, 26].

122 The ReaxFF energy function was expressed by Equation (1).

$$123 \quad E_{system} = E_{bond} + E_{over} + E_{under} + E_{val} + E_{pen} + E_{tors} + E_{conj} +$$

$$124 \quad E_{vdWaals} + E_{Coulomb} \quad (1)$$

125 Where E_{bond} is the bond energy, E_{over} is the over-coordinated atom in the
 126 molecular energy contribution (MEC), E_{under} is the under-coordinated atom in the
 127 MEC, E_{val} is the valence angle terms, E_{pen} is the penalty energy, E_{tors} is the

128 torsion energy, E_{conj} is the conjugation effects in the energy contribution, $E_{vdWaals}$
129 is the non-bonded van der Waals interactions, and $E_{Coulomb}$ is the non-bonded
130 Coulomb interactions.

131 In order to accelerate the reaction speed within the simulation time range, the
132 simulation temperature range was set to 1000-3400 K (higher than experimental
133 temperature in this work) to study the pyrolysis mechanism of DR-2. In a reasonable
134 time, the simulated temperature should be higher than the actual temperature in
135 average to speed up the dynamic simulation of the activation process [27, 28].
136 According to Arrhenius equation [29], temperature will only change the reaction rate
137 to a certain extent, but will not change the reaction path.

138 2.3 Density functional theory (DFT) calculations

139 To investigate the initiation mechanism of DR-2 oxidation and dissociation, the
140 DFT approach was used to compute the initial reaction energy barriers based on the
141 products of the experimental results. By the B3LYP method, based on 6-311 ++ G (d,
142 p), the reactant geometric structure, the transition state and the initial decomposition
143 pathway were optimized at 298 K and 0.1 MPa. The Gaussian 09 suite of programs
144 was employed for the calculation of all the reactions [30].

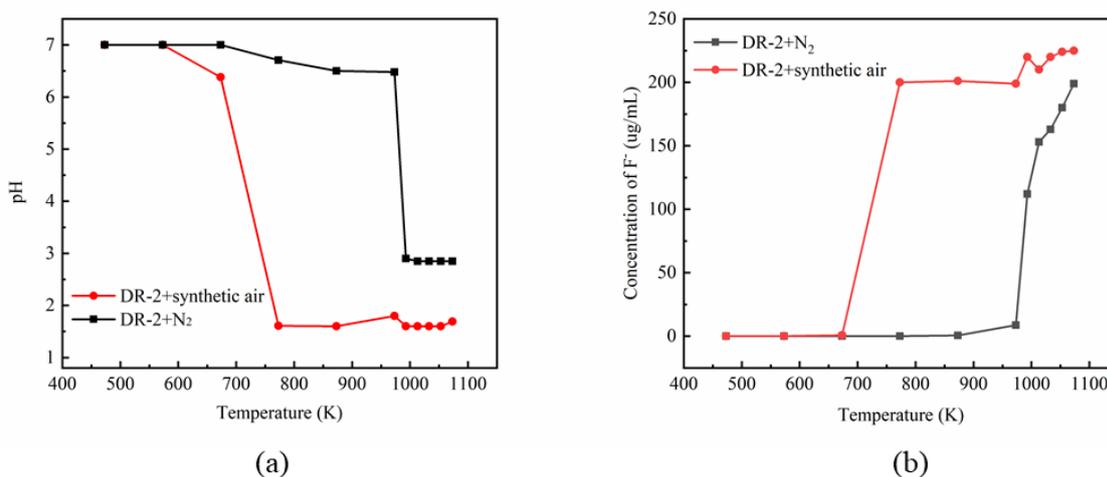
145 3. Results and discussion

146 3.1 Experimental Section

147 3.1.1 The Trend of Hydrogen Fluoride Concentration

148 Due to the toxicity of HF, it is noteworthy of monitoring the content variation of
149 HF generated during the DR-2 decomposition. The gradual increases in the hydrogen
150 ion concentration ($[H^+]$) and the fluoride ion concentration ($[F^-]$) were accompanied
151 by the increasing pyrolysis temperature (473-1033 K), and the tendency of increase
152 was finally stabilized (Fig. 2). Under different gas atmospheres, drastic changes in $[H^+]$

153 and $[F^-]$ were observed at varying temperatures. In the pure nitrogen atmosphere,
 154 great changes in the pH and $[F^-]$ of the solution were seen due to the absorption of the
 155 thermal decomposition products at 1013 K. However, in the atmosphere of synthetic
 156 air, the sharp concentration variations were found at 773 K. Obviously, the amount of
 157 HF produced in synthetic air was higher than that in pure N_2 . Thus, the presence of O_2
 158 would facilitate the DR-2 decomposition. On the one hand, O_2 would lower the
 159 degradation temperature of DR-2 from 1013 K to 773 K. On the other hand, the
 160 increased HF content generated under oxygen-containing conditions would enhance
 161 the thermal decomposition degree of DR-2. When the temperature reached a certain
 162 level, the decomposition rate of DR-2 would quickly change, but the effect of
 163 increasing the temperature on thermal decomposition would weaken or disappear. It is
 164 easy to find that the pH value remains unchanged when a certain temperature is
 165 reached, but the fluoride ion concentration ($[F^-]$) continues to increase, because the
 166 deionized water also absorbs other fluorine-containing products. This would result in
 167 a lower concentration of HF released from the experiment, since the silicon
 168 tetrafluoride was detected on the surface of the reaction quartz tube.

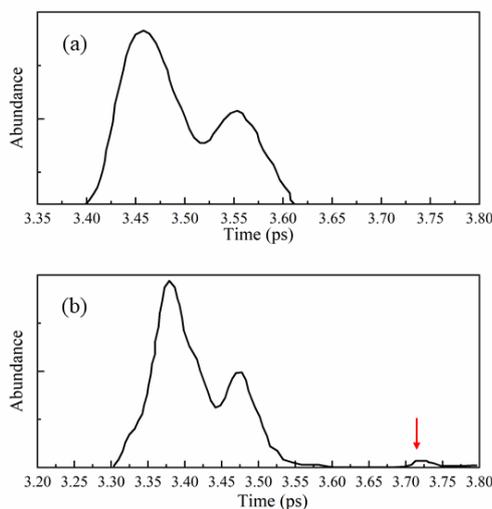


169 **Fig 2.** The change of pH and $[F^-]$ formed in the DR-2 decomposition at different temperatures.

170 3.1.2 GC-MS analyses of the gaseous products

171 The gaseous products generated by the oxidation thermal decomposition were

172 collected in the solution. The DR-2 oxidation products were identified by the GC-MS
 173 method. Two main peaks were seen in the GS-MS analysis (Fig. 3), indicating the
 174 undecomposed synthetic air and DR-2 in the collected gases. Upon higher thermal
 175 decomposition temperature, a small peak in Fig. 3 (b) was observed, which was
 176 identified as $C_4H_2OF_6$ based on the standard mass spectrum library.



177
 178 **Fig 3.** GC-MS results of the exhaust gas of DR-2 oxidation Pyrolysis
 179 (a: 673 K; b: 1103 K)

180 3.2 ReaxFF-MD simulation

181 To simulate the actual conditions, the initial densities of the system containing
 182 DR-2 and O_2 were set as 1.36 g cm^{-3} (the actual liquid density at 300 K and 0.1 MPa)
 183 and $0.00538 \text{ g cm}^{-3}$ (the actual vapor density at 300 K and 0.1 MPa) [5]. Therefore,
 184 the initial densities of the system containing DR-2 set in this work were of great
 185 importance. Such densities in previous work was 1.3595 and 0.015 g cm^{-3} (Table 1).

186 **Table 1**

187 Initial densities and ensemble of ReaxFF simulation about DR-2.

	Molecules	Initial density ($\rho/\text{g} \cdot \text{cm}^{-3}$)	Ensemble
Ref.[9]	50 DR-2	1.3595	NVT
Ref.[11]	150 DR-2 + 450 O_2 (1)	0.015 (1)	NVT
	75 DR-2 + 450 O_2 (2)		
	300 DR-2 + 450 O_2 (3)		

	150 DR-2 + 450 O ₂ (1)		
	150 DR-2 + 450 O ₂ + 37 H ₂ O (2)		
Ref.[12]	150 DR-2 + 450 O ₂ + 75 H ₂ O (3)	0.015	NVT
	150 DR-2 + 450 O ₂ + 112 H ₂ O (4)		
	150 DR-2 + 450 O ₂ + 150 H ₂ O (5)		
	100 DR-2 + 50 O ₂ (1)		
This work	45 DR-2 (2)	0.00538 (1)	NVT
	45 DR-2 + 5 O ₂ (3)	1.36 (2-3)	

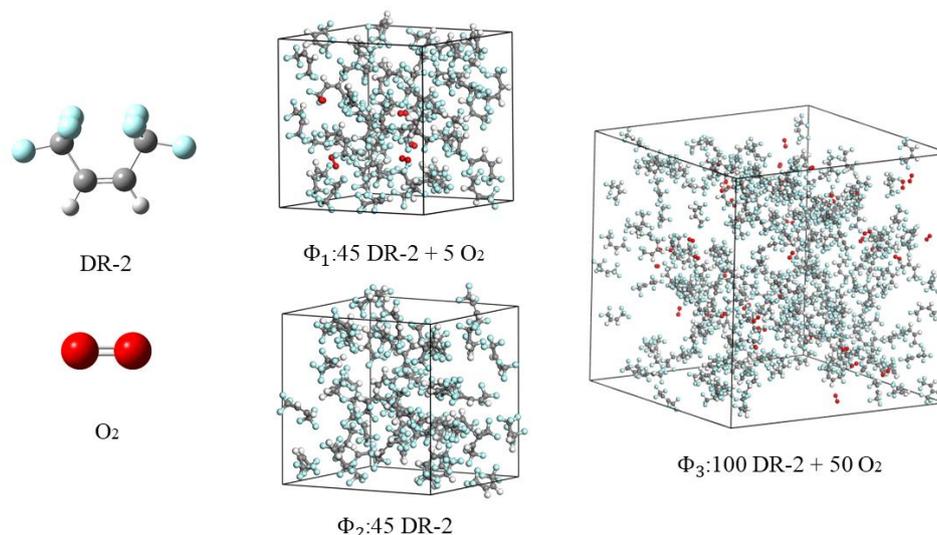
188 To understand the pyrolysis process induced by the temperature, the RMD
189 simulations at varying temperatures were carried out on the pure DR-2 system and the
190 system including DR-2 and O₂ for the first time. The pure 45 DR-2 or 45 DR-2 and 5
191 O₂ were placed in two periodic boxes measuring 20.81 Å × 20.81 Å × 20.81 Å (Φ_1)
192 and 20.96 Å × 20.96 Å × 20.96 Å (Φ_2) with a system density of 1.36 g · cm⁻³ (Fig.
193 4). The system Φ_1 and Φ_2 were first minimized via MD at a low temperature (5 K)
194 with the NVT ensemble and then were equilibrated with the NVT ensemble for 50 ps
195 at 300 K using a time step of 0.1 fs. The temperature was elevated from 1000 K to
196 3400 K with a ramp of 9.6 K · ps⁻¹ for 250 ps, followed by maintaining for 50 ps at
197 3400 K.

198 To study the kinetic analysis of the pure DR-2 and the system containing DR-2
199 and O₂ at elevated temperatures, the RMD simulations were employed with NVT
200 (constant particle number, constant volume, and constant temperature) ensemble at
201 2600-3400 K with an interval of 200 K and a reaction time of 100 ps. Prior to the
202 desired RMD simulations, the systems Φ_1 and Φ_2 were equilibrated for 50 ps
203 (picosecond) at 300 K.

204 To study the pyrolysis product distribution of the system including DR-2 and O₂,
205 the oxidation decomposition process was analyzed by the RMD simulations. The 100
206 DR-2 and 50 O₂ were placed in unit cells and the molecules structure were optimized
207 (Fig. 4). The sides of unit cells were 177.11 Å × 177.11 Å × 177.11 Å (Φ_3) with a
208 density of 0.00538 g · cm⁻³.

209 For all the ReaxFF simulations, the ReaxFF parameters [31] for C, H, O and F
210 atoms were adopted in this work. Recent studies [11, 12] used in this ReaxFF

211 parameters have revealed that the outcomes at high temperatures of ReaxFF MD
212 simulations on DR-2 were in good agreement with those of experiments [14, 18]. And
213 the reaction temperature was adjusted by a Berendsen thermostat with a damping
214 constant of 200 fs.

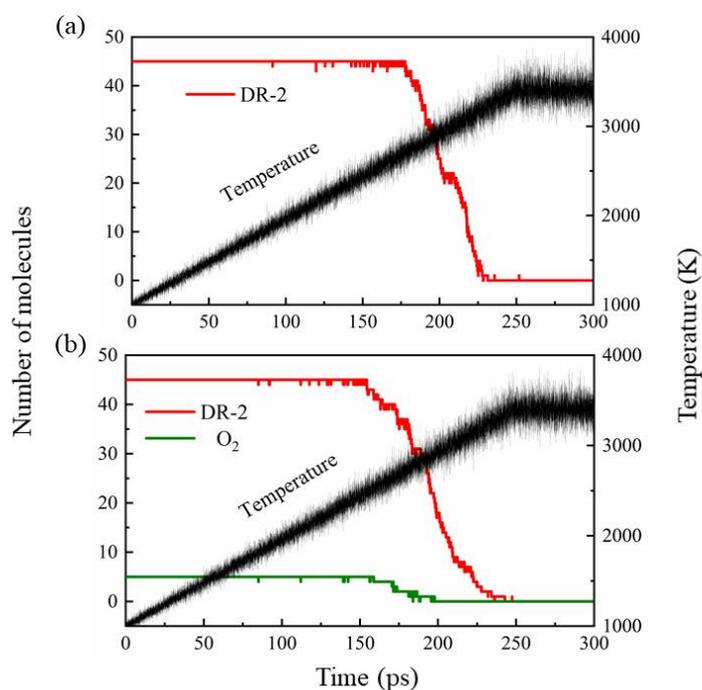


215
216 **Fig 4.** The snapshots of optimized molecular structure and the equilibrated unit cells of the DR-2
217 with O₂
218 (The colors of gray, white, red, and blue spheres represented the C, H, O, and F atoms,
219 respectively.)

220 3.2.1 Initial decomposition temperature and kinetic analysis of DR-2 (liquid) 221 decomposition in the absence and presence of O₂

222 To obtain the initial decomposition temperature of DR-2 (liquid), the RMD
223 simulations in the absence and presence of O₂ were conducted at the temperature of
224 1000-3400 K and a density of 1.36 g·cm⁻³. Clearly, the initial dissociation
225 temperature of pure DR-2 was about 2713 K at 178 ps (Fig. 5(a)), and the DR-2 in the
226 presence of O₂ began to decompose at 2484 K and a time of 178 ps (Fig. 5(b))
227 approximately. The initial degradation temperature of DR-2 was reduced from 2723 K
228 to 2484 K in the presence of O₂ molecules. It also can be found that DR-2 and O₂
229 molecules start to dissociate almost simultaneously. When the temperature reaches

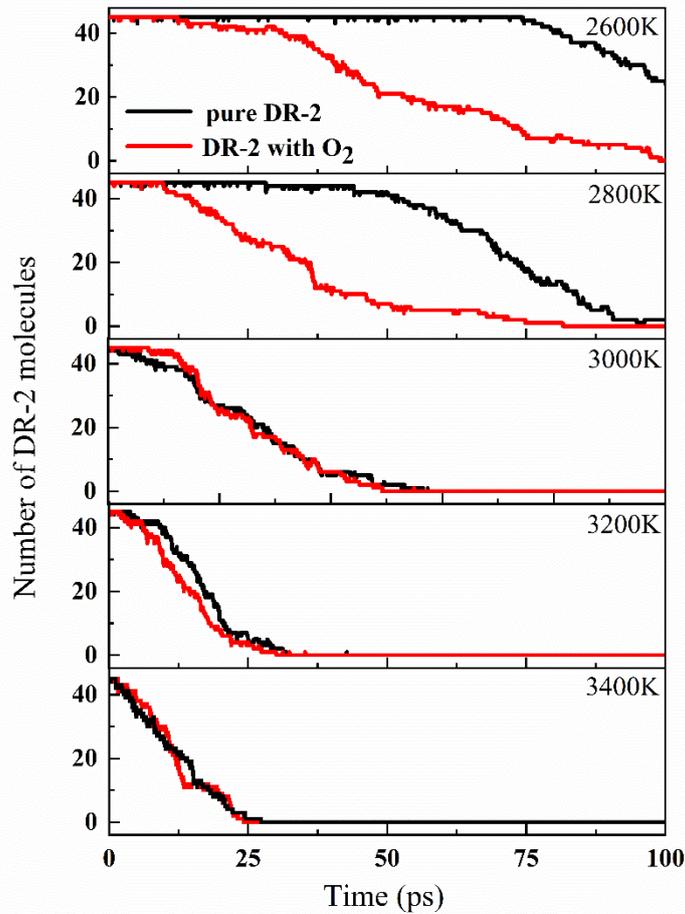
230 3400 K, the reactant molecules would be consumed completely



231

232 **Fig 5.** The time evolutions of the DR-2 (a) in the absence and (b) presence of O₂ at a density of
233 1.36 g·cm⁻³ and a temperature of 2600-3400K in RMD simulation

234 According to the consumption rate and the initial decomposition temperature of
235 DR-2 in Fig. 5, the temperature-dependent NVT-MD simulations were carried out for
236 kinetic analysis of the DR-2 degradation in the absence and presence of O₂ at 100 ps
237 and a temperature of 2600-3400 K with an interval of 200 K. The increasing
238 temperature was accompanied by the obvious increase of decomposition rates of
239 DR-2 (Fig. 6). In addition, the dissociation of DR-2 was especially accelerated by 5
240 O₂ molecules at lower temperatures of 2600 K and 2800 K, and this impact became
241 insignificant at the temperature higher than 3000 K. Because the high energy
242 self-dissociation pathway became accessible for DR-2 when the temperature up to
243 3000K. At the same time, the presence of O₂ molecules became insignificant at higher
244 temperature.



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Fig 6. Comparison of time evolutions of DR-2 in the absence and presence O₂ in NVT-MD simulation at a density of 1.36 g·cm⁻³ at 2600K, 2800k, 3000K,3200K and 3400K, respectively.

The rate constant k at each temperature was calculated by the relation of the number of DR-2 molecules over time through first-order kinetics:

$$\ln N_t - \ln N_0 = -kt \quad (2)$$

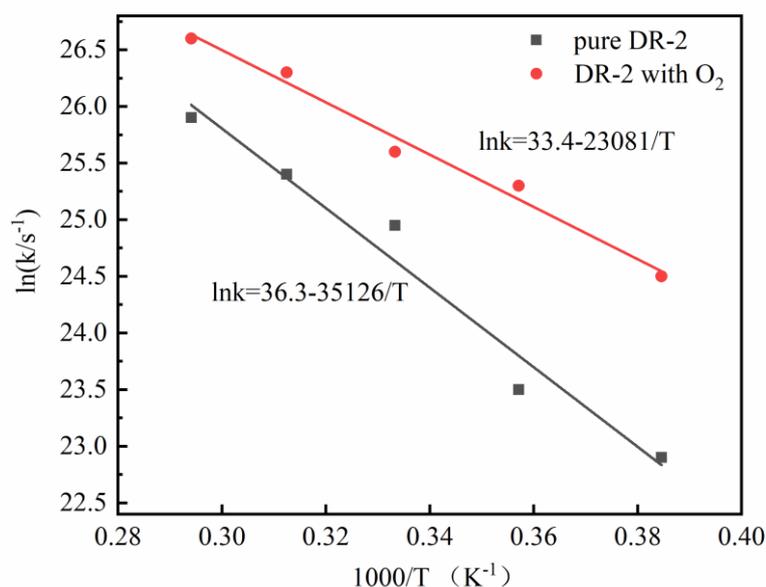
where N_0 and N_t are the number of DR-2 molecules at the beginning and at time t , respectively.

$$\ln k = \ln A - E_a/Rt \quad (3)$$

where R is the universal gas constant and T is the pyrolysis temperature. The fitted Arrhenius plot of the DR-2 decomposition process in the absence and presence of O₂ were shown in Fig. 7. The activation energy (E_a) of thermal decomposition of DR-2 in the presence of O₂ was calculated to be about 191.9 kJ/mol, being about 100 kJ/mol lower than that for pure DR-2.

Based on the effect of O₂ molecules on the initial decomposition temperature and

260 kinetics during the DR-2 degradation, the DR-2 decomposition could be strongly
261 promoted by a small amount of O₂ molecules at high temperatures in a liquid state.
262 Thus, it was of great significance to exclude O₂ or air when DR-2 was acted as a
263 high-temperature working fluid. However, there is no experimental data on liquid
264 DR-2 decomposition with O₂ currently and the relevant experiments are needed to
265 compare with the theoretical results in this work for future research.



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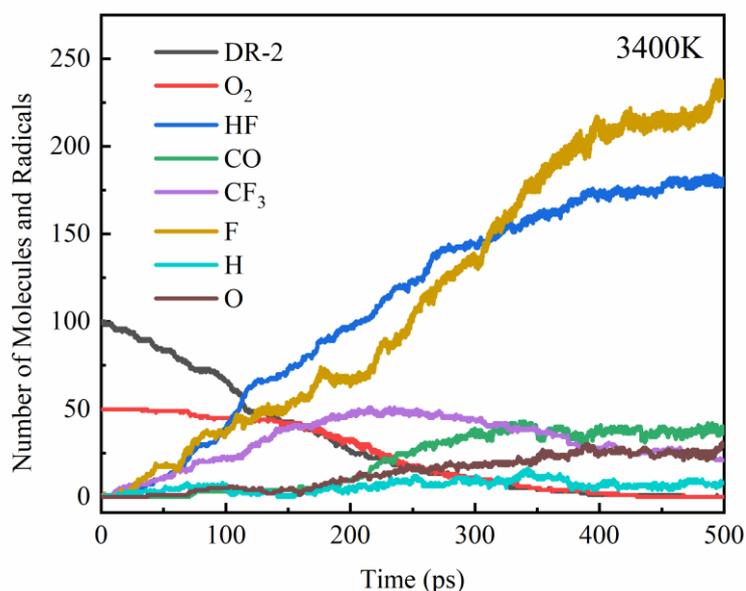
267 **Fig 7.** The fitted rate constant versus temperature (2600-3400 K) obtained from 100 ps
268 NVT-RMD simulations at a density of 1.36 g·cm⁻³ of DR-2 pyrolysis in the absence and presence
269 of O₂.

270 3.2.2 Temperature effects on DR-2 (vaporous) decomposition in presence of O₂

271 By considering the amounts of synthetic air and DR-2 in our experiment and
272 the vapor density of DR-2 (0.00538 g cm⁻³) at 300 K and 0.1 Mpa, a series of ReaxFF
273 simulations were conducted with NVT ensemble at 2600 K, 2800 K, 3000 K, 3200 K
274 and 3400 K and a reaction time of 500 ps to obtain the oxidation process and products
275 of DR-2.

276 The oxidation dissociation process of Φ_3 for 500 ps at 3400 K was
277 investigated (Fig. 8). Clearly, HF and CO were the main products of thermal

278 decomposition of DR-2. The thermal degradation process of the system could be
279 divided into 3 phases. In the first stage (0-175 ps), the consumption of oxygen
280 molecules was relatively low, and DR-2 molecules underwent self-thermal
281 decomposition to produce radicals. In the second phase (175-325 ps), the number of
282 O₂ was equal to that of DR-2 molecules at the beginning. The collision of radicals and
283 O₂ molecules with DR-2 resulted in the decomposition and final consumption of
284 DR-2 together with O₂. The number of CF₃ radicals was increased up to the maximum
285 value, followed by the slow consumption. The reaction of O₂ with DR-2 molecules
286 was accompanied by the breakage of the C-F bond and the production of more F
287 radicals. The CO molecules and O radicals reached their maximum values at this stage
288 as the thermal decomposition continued. In the third stage (325-500 ps), the numbers
289 of HF and F were increased to the maximum.



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Fig 8. The oxidation decomposition of DR-2 at 3400K

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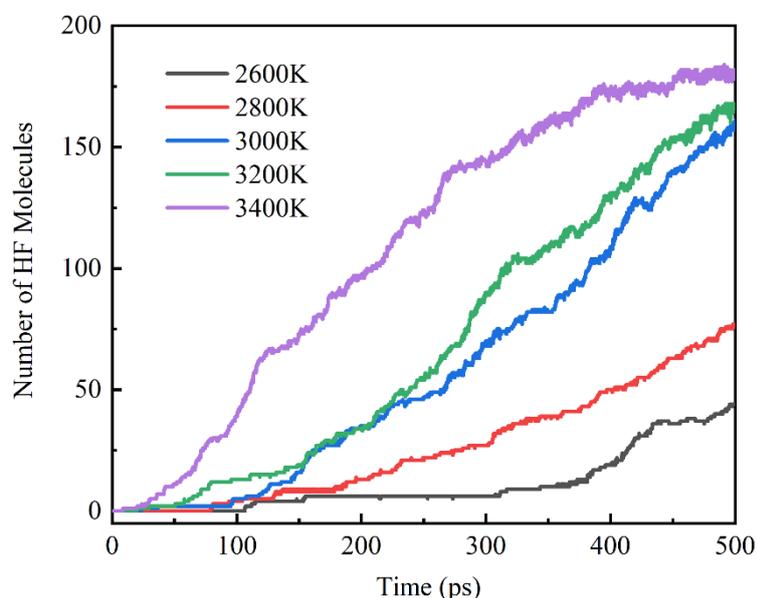
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In RMD simulations and experiments, HF was obviously the main product of the oxidative decomposition reaction of DR-2. The evolution of the number of HF at 2600-3400 K over the time in the ReaxFF simulations was studied (Fig. 9). The increasing temperature was accompanied by the obviously increasing amount of HF.

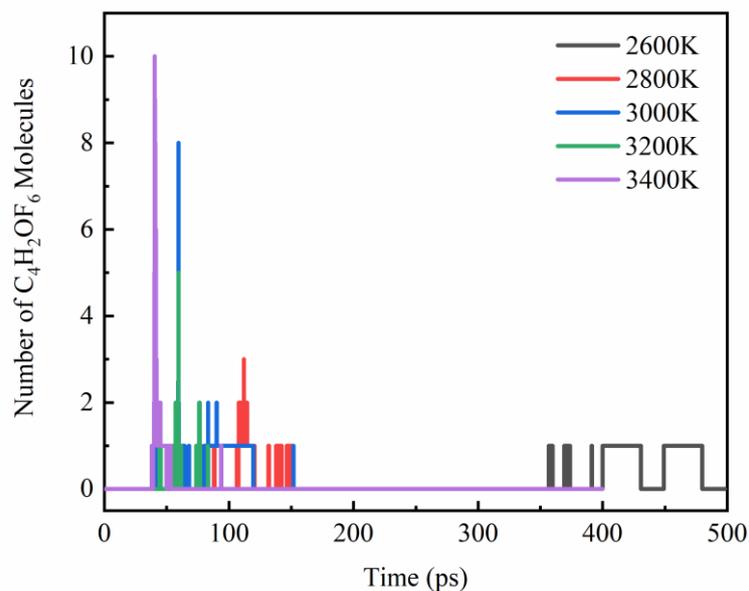
296 At 3000 K, the number of HF molecules was increased by 2-3 times. This
297 phenomenon was consistent with previous experiment. At the temperature of 2600 K,
298 the production of HF occurred at around 300 ps and reached around 40 at 500 ps. At
299 the temperature of 2800 K, the time for the production of HF was advanced, and
300 finally the production reached about 60. At 3000-3400 K, the HF generation rate was
301 significantly improved, and the final HF amount was 150-200. At this time, the
302 increase in temperature demonstrated a small effect on the production of HF. This was
303 consistent with the experimental results.



304

305 **Fig 9.** The evolution of the HF production at different temperatures over time

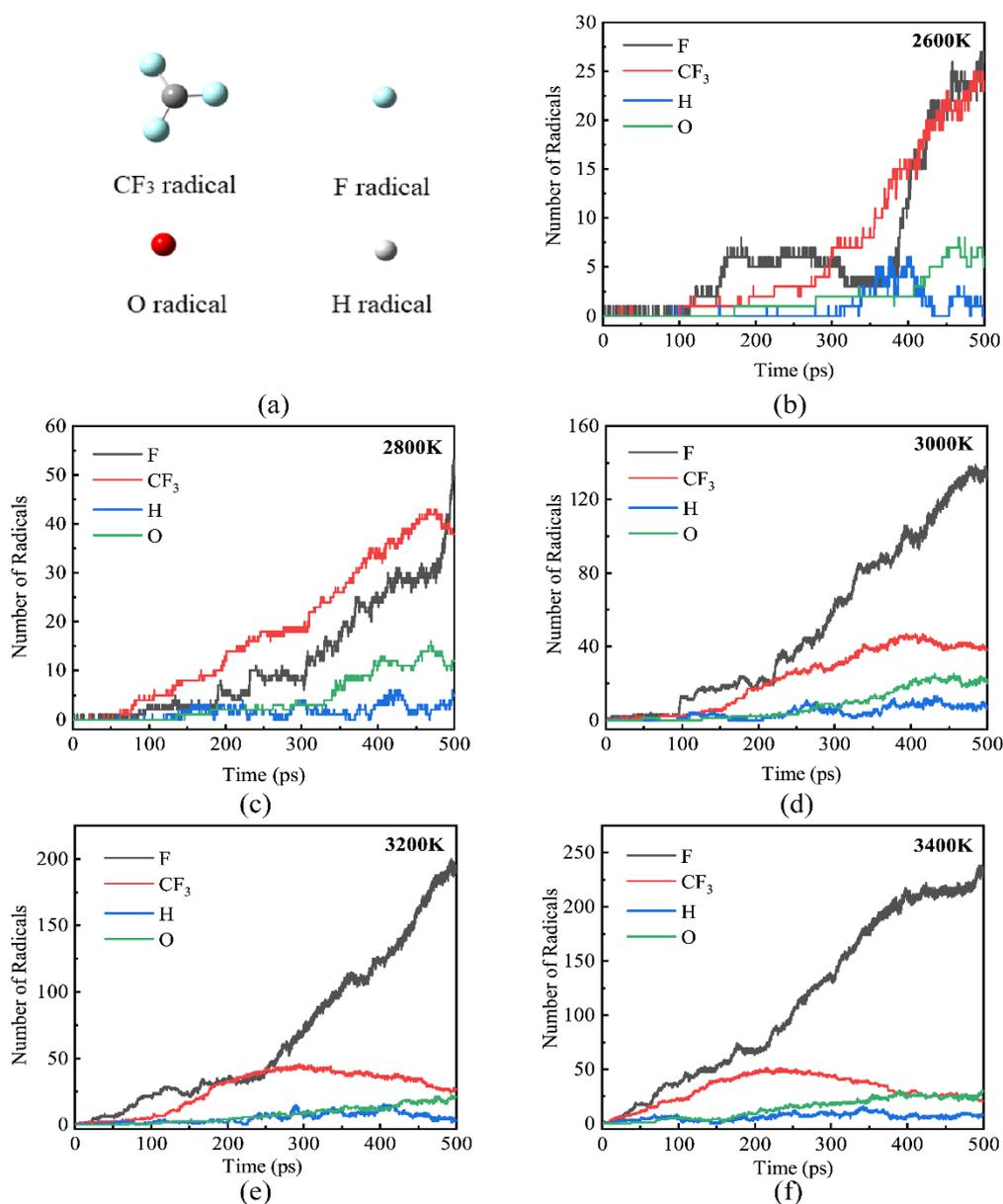
306 As detected to be the principal product by GC-MS in Section 3.1,
307 $\text{CF}_3\text{CHOCHCF}_3$ was also found in the ReaxFF-MD simulation at 2600-3400 K (Fig.
308 10). At 2600 K, the production of $\text{CF}_3\text{CHOCHCF}_3$ molecule occurred at 350-500 ps
309 and the number of the molecule was just one. At 2800-3400 K, the production of
310 $\text{CF}_3\text{CHOCHCF}_3$ molecule occurred at 50-150 ps and the number of this molecule was
311 just 1-10. Thus, the $\text{CF}_3\text{CHOCHCF}_3$ molecule was an intermediate and its residence
312 time in the system was relatively short.



313

314 **Fig 10.** The evolution of the number of $C_4H_2OF_6$ molecule at different temperatures over
 315 time

316 The radicals were generated during the collision reaction between O_2 and DR-2
 317 and the DR-2 self-decomposition, thereby promoting the completion of the reaction.
 318 The evolution of the number of small radicals containing F, CF_3 , H and O radicals at
 319 different temperatures over time was shown in Fig. 11. The constant increase of the F
 320 radical number was accompanied by the rising temperature. At lower temperatures of
 321 2600 K and 2800 K, the continuous increase in CF_3 radicals and F radicals was
 322 observed over time, and the final production amounts were equivalent. However, at
 323 3000-3400 K, the increase in the number of CF_3 radicals was followed by a decrease,
 324 and the time to reach the maximum was continuously shortened. The numbers of O
 325 and H radicals were less in the whole reaction.



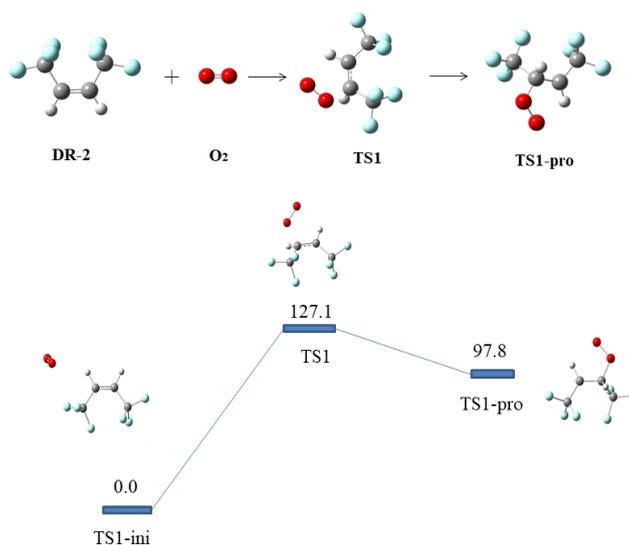
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Fig 11. The evolution of the number of small radicals at different temperatures over time (The colors of gray, white, red, and blue spheres represented the C, H, O, and F atoms, respectively.)

330 3.3 Initiation oxidation decomposition reactions of DR-2

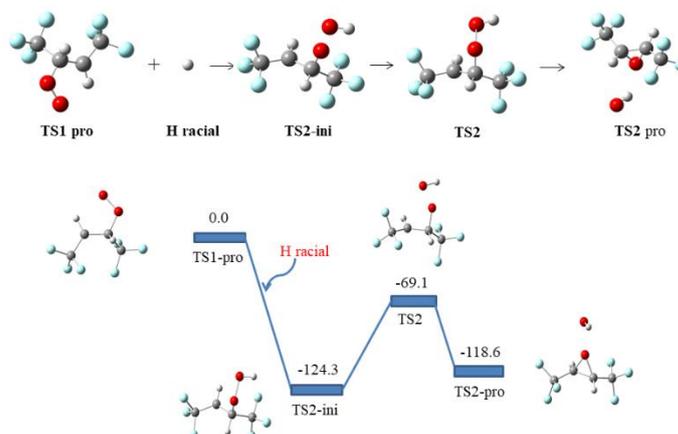
331 In both the experimental and the ReaxFF simulation parts, extremely lower
332 content of $\text{CF}_3\text{CHOCHCF}_3$ was found than HF, indicating that it may be an
333 intermediate product of the oxidation thermal decomposition of DR-2. The DFT
334 approach was used to compute the formation process and energy barrier of

335 $\text{CF}_3\text{CHOCHCF}_3$. The O_2 molecules attacked C atoms in $\text{C}=\text{C}$ bonds, forming TS1
 336 with an energy barrier of 127.1 kJ/mol (Fig. 12). This energy barrier was lower than
 337 the bond dissociation energy of DR-2, so the O_2 molecule could promote the
 338 decomposition of DR-2 at high temperatures. As described in the ReaxFF simulation,
 339 the self-oxidative decomposition of DR-2 may generate CF_3 , F, H and O radicals. For
 340 example, the H radical oxidative thermal decomposition system would react with
 341 TS1-pro and form TS2-pro (OH radical and $\text{CF}_3\text{CHOCHCF}_3$) and release 124.3
 342 kJ/mol, implying the promotion effect of H radical on the progress of the reaction (Fig.
 343 13). Meanwhile, the CF_3 , F and O radicals also would react with TS1-pro to form
 344 $\text{CF}_3\text{CHOCHCF}_3$.



345

346 **Fig 12.** The proposed pathways and energy profiles of the collision of between oxygen and DR-2
 347 (The colors of gray, white, red, and blue spheres represented the atoms of C, H, O, and F,
 348 respectively.)



349

350 **Fig 13.** The proposed pathways and energy profiles of DR-2 and H radical
351 (The colors of gray, white, red, and blue spheres represented the atoms of C, H, O, and F,
352 respectively.)

353 **4. Conclusion**

354 The oxidation thermal decomposition of DR-2 was investigated experimentally
355 and theoretically at high temperature in this study. The experimental investigated
356 main DR-2 decomposition products under high temperature (from 473K to 1073K) in
357 a tubular reactor detected by IC and GC-MS. A series of the reactive molecule
358 dynamics (RMD) simulations were conducted to figure out the effect of O₂ molecules
359 on the decomposition of DR-2 at liquid and vaporous state. The possible pathways of
360 the initial decomposition products of C₄H₂OF₆ were proposed by DFT method. The
361 conclusions can be summarized as follows:

362 (1) The promoting effect of O₂ molecules on DR-2 was manifested in two
363 aspects. The thermal decomposition degree and decomposition products such as HF
364 increased by lowering the initial thermal decomposition temperature of DR-2 (from
365 993 K to 673 K). However, this promoting effect would be weakened when a certain
366 temperature was reached.

367 (2) HF was one of the main products of thermal decomposition of DR-2 with O₂
368 under high temperature, and the ReaxFF MD simulation were in good agreement with
369 the experimental results.

370 (3) The activation energy (E_a) of thermal decomposition of DR-2 in the presence
371 of O₂ was calculated from RMD simulations based on kinetic analysis to be about
372 191.9 kJ/mol, being 100 kJ/mol lower than that for pure DR-2 approximately.

373 (4) Both the GC-MS and ReaxFF MD simulation results detected the oxidation
374 product of the double bond in DR-2, and the process of O₂ molecule attacking DR-2
375 to form the oxidation products was deduced in combination with the DFT method.

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377

378 **Acknowledgments**

379 The quantum chemical calculations were conducted through ADF software and
380 the supercomputing system at State Key Laboratory of Fire Science of USTC.

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Table 1

Initial densities and ensemble of ReaxFF simulation about DR-2.

	Molecules	Initial density ($\rho / g \cdot cm^{-3}$)	Ensemble
Ref.[9]	50 DR-2	1.3595	NVT
Ref.[11]	150 DR-2 + 450 O ₂ (1)	0.015 (1)	NVT
	75 DR-2 + 450 O ₂ (2)		
	300 DR-2 + 450 O ₂ (3)		
Ref.[12]	150 DR-2 + 450 O ₂ (1)	0.015	NVT
	150 DR-2 + 450 O ₂ +37 H ₂ O (2)		
	150 DR-2 + 450 O ₂ +75 H ₂ O (3)		
	150 DR-2 + 450 O ₂ +112 H ₂ O (4)		
	150 DR-2 + 450 O ₂ +150 H ₂ O (5)		
This work	100 DR-2 + 50 O ₂ (1)	0.00538 (1)	NVT
	45 DR-2 (2)	1.36 (2-3)	
	45 DR-2 +5 O ₂ (3)		