

Urea Decomposition and SCR Performance at Low Temperature

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**10th Annual DEER Workshop
Coronado, CA
September 2, 2004**

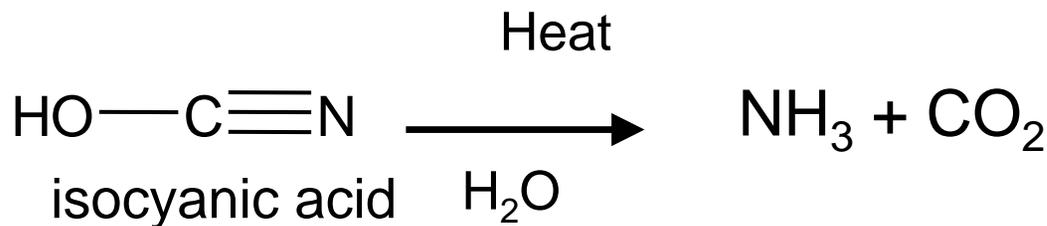
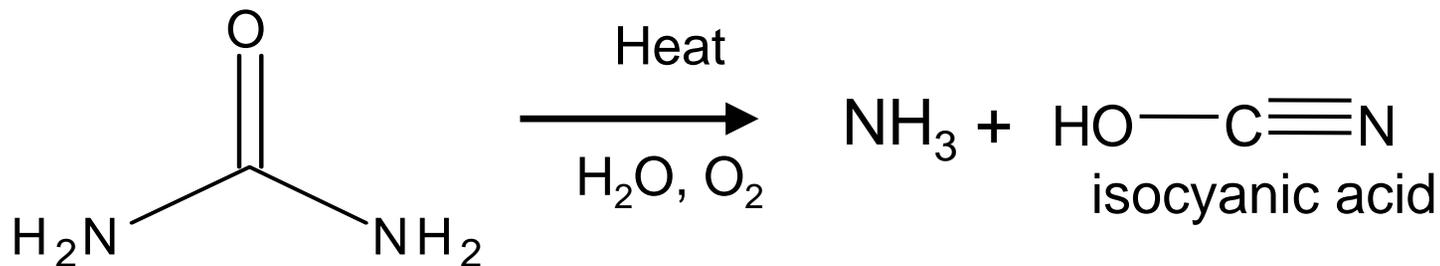
Sponsors: DOE-OFCVT, Steve Goguen and Kevin Stork

Why study urea decomposition?

- **Under light-duty conditions (< 250 °C), there is negligible urea decomposition in the gas phase. Current models assume NH₃ as input to catalyst.**
- **It appears that urea decomposition kinetics on catalyst surfaces has to be understood. This will affect the length of the catalyst that is used for urea decomposition.**

Urea/SCR Chemistry

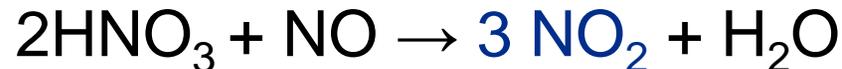
Ideally, injected urea decomposes to NH_3



then reacts with NO_x to form N_2 .



Unusual things can happen, such as ammonium nitrate formation and decomposition at $T < 200\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$.

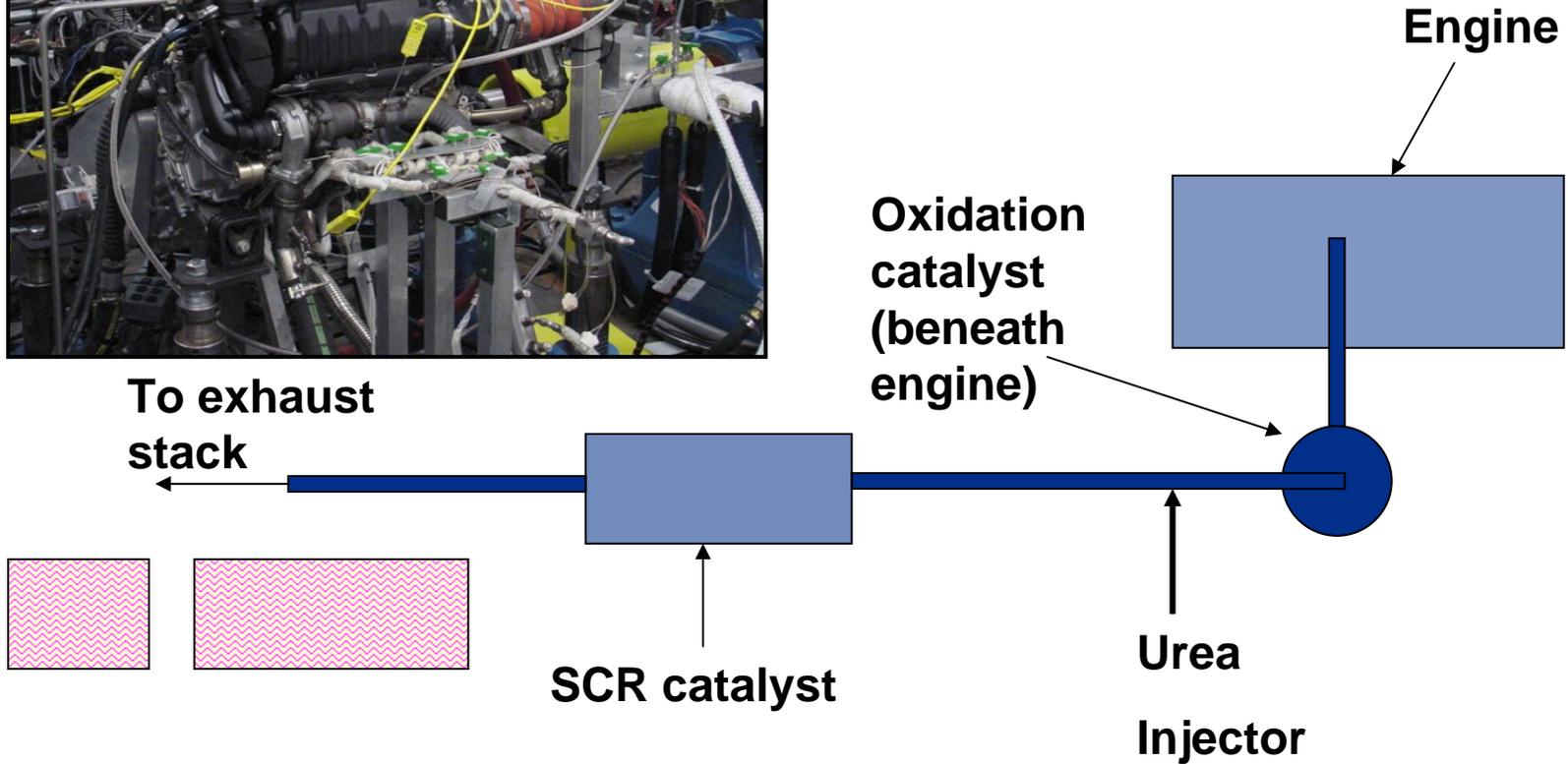
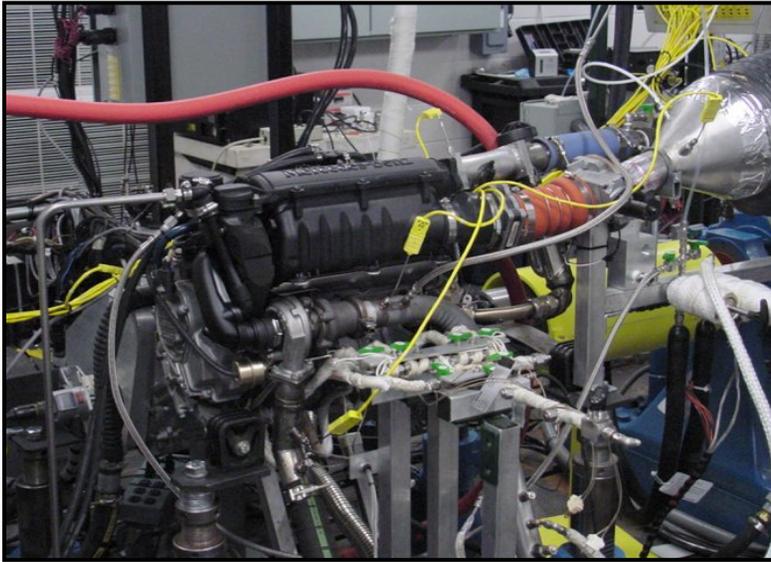


M. Koebel *et al.* in *Ind.Eng.Chem.Res.*:
39,p. 4120; **40**, p. 52; **41**, p.4008; **42**, p.2093
Also in *Catal.Today*, **73**, p.239

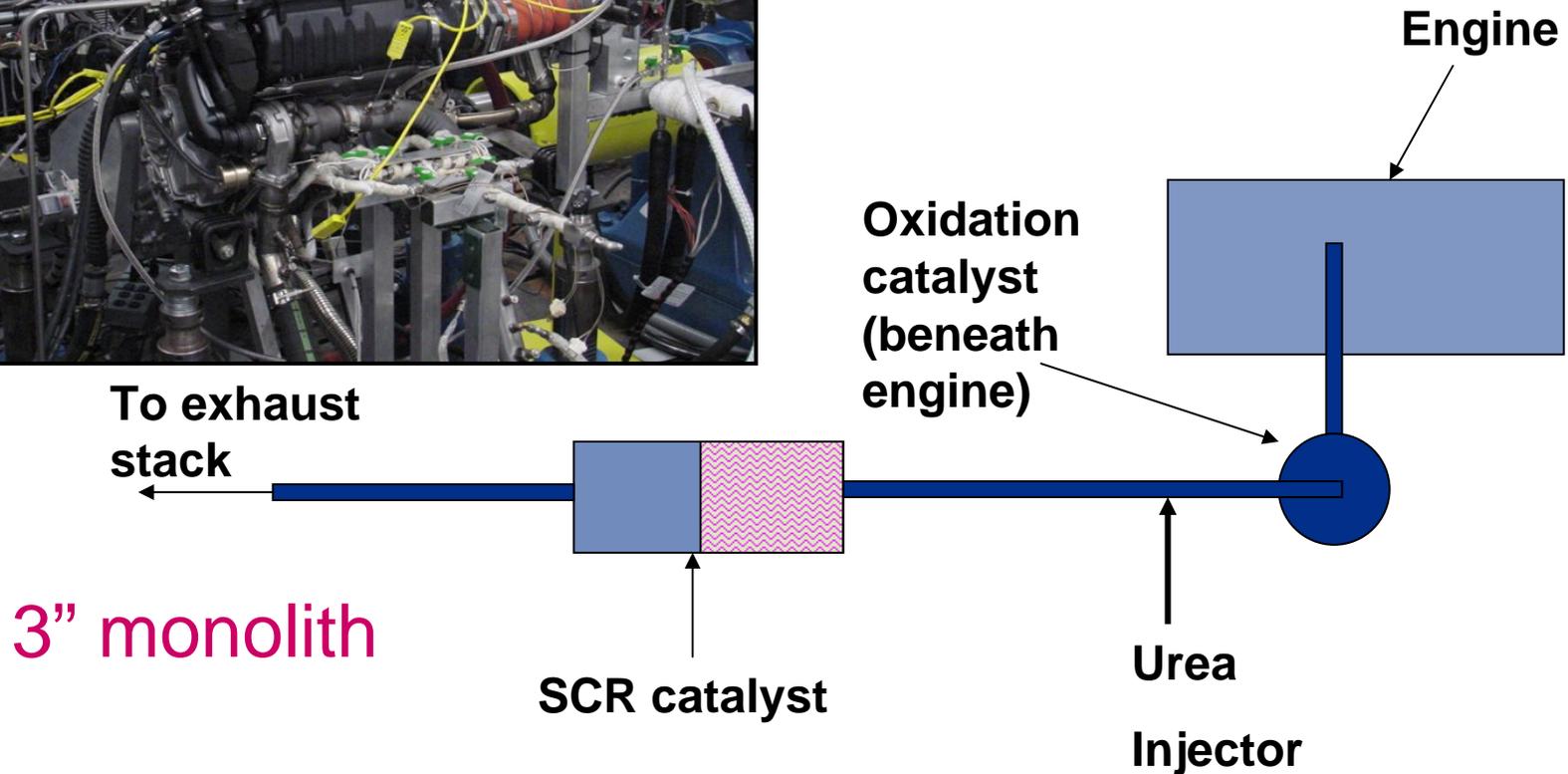
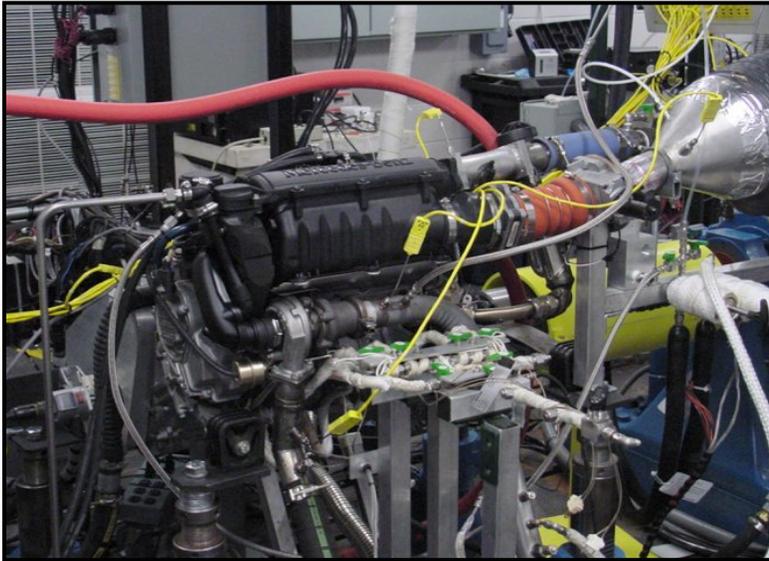
Experimental Approach

- Use engine controls to:
 - Vary temperature
 - Keep constant: NO_x and exhaust flow.
- Investigate urea decomposition (*if any*) upstream of SCR catalyst.
- Analyze exhaust products exiting undersized monoliths to elucidate urea decomposition
 - 3" and 6" monoliths = space velocities of 25K and 50K
 - const. urea residence time in the exhaust stream. (~0.1 sec)
 - From clean condition, begin injecting urea:
Wait 20 minutes (3" monolith) or,
40 minutes (6" monolith),
Then collect data and samples.

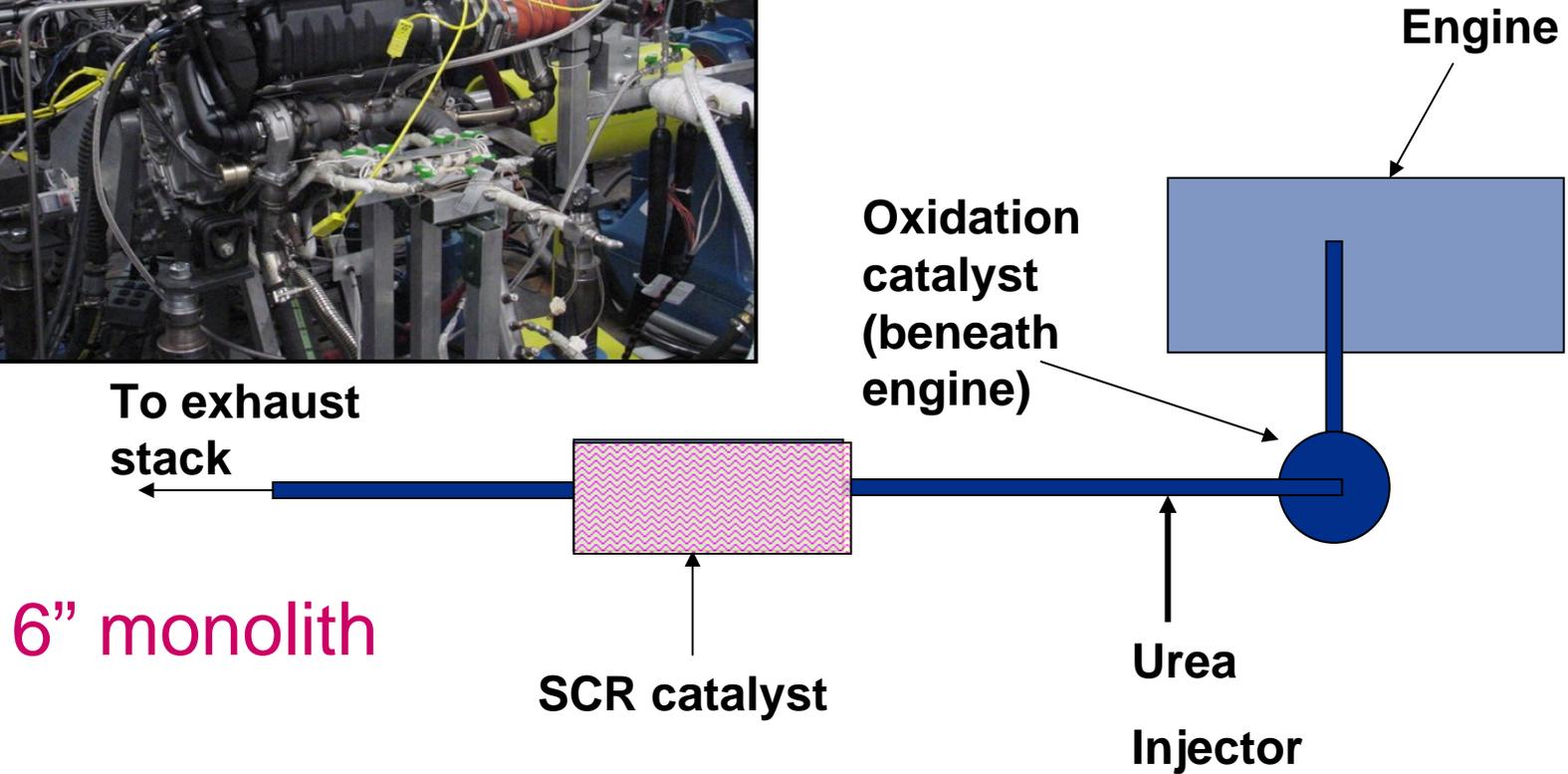
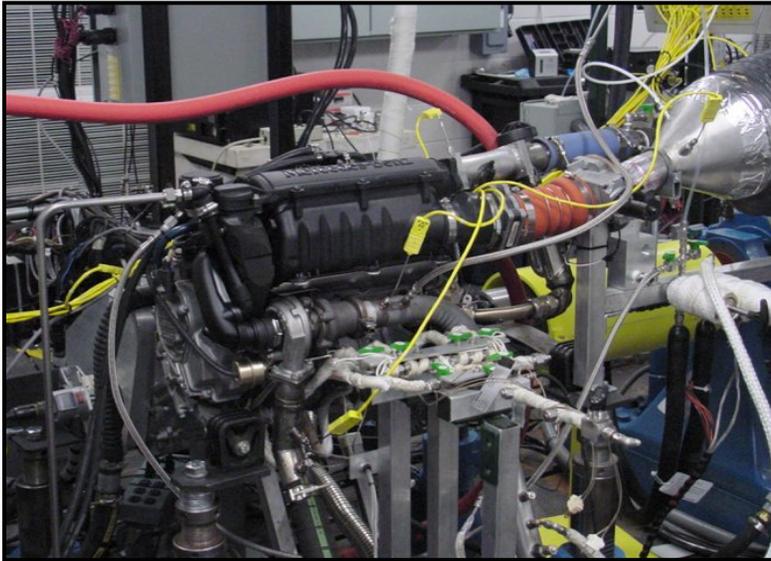
Experiments conducted at NTRC cell 4 using Mercedes engine and BP15 fuel.



Experiments conducted at NTRC using Mercedes engine and BP15 fuel.



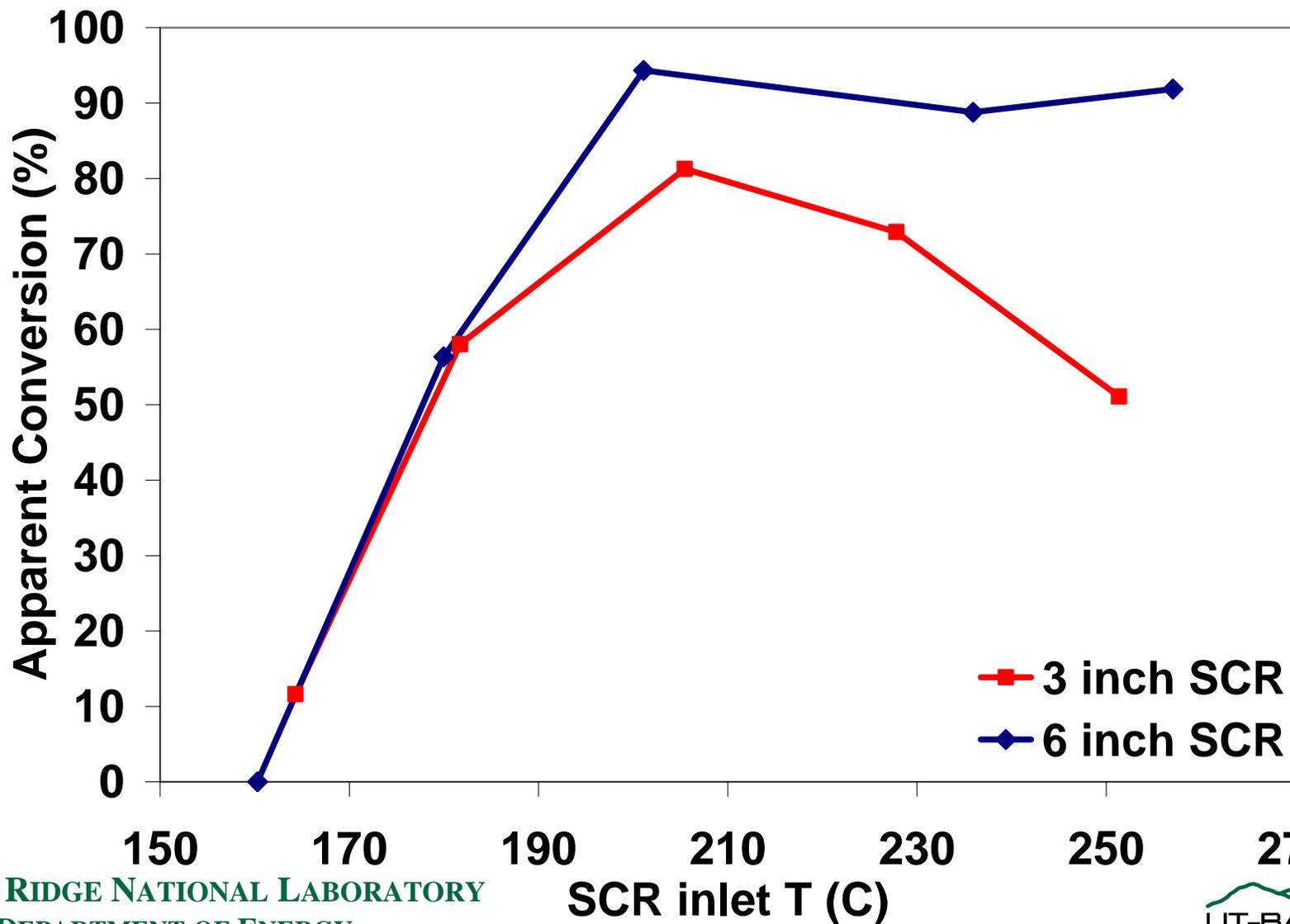
Experiments conducted at NTRC cell 4 using Mercedes engine and BP15 fuel.



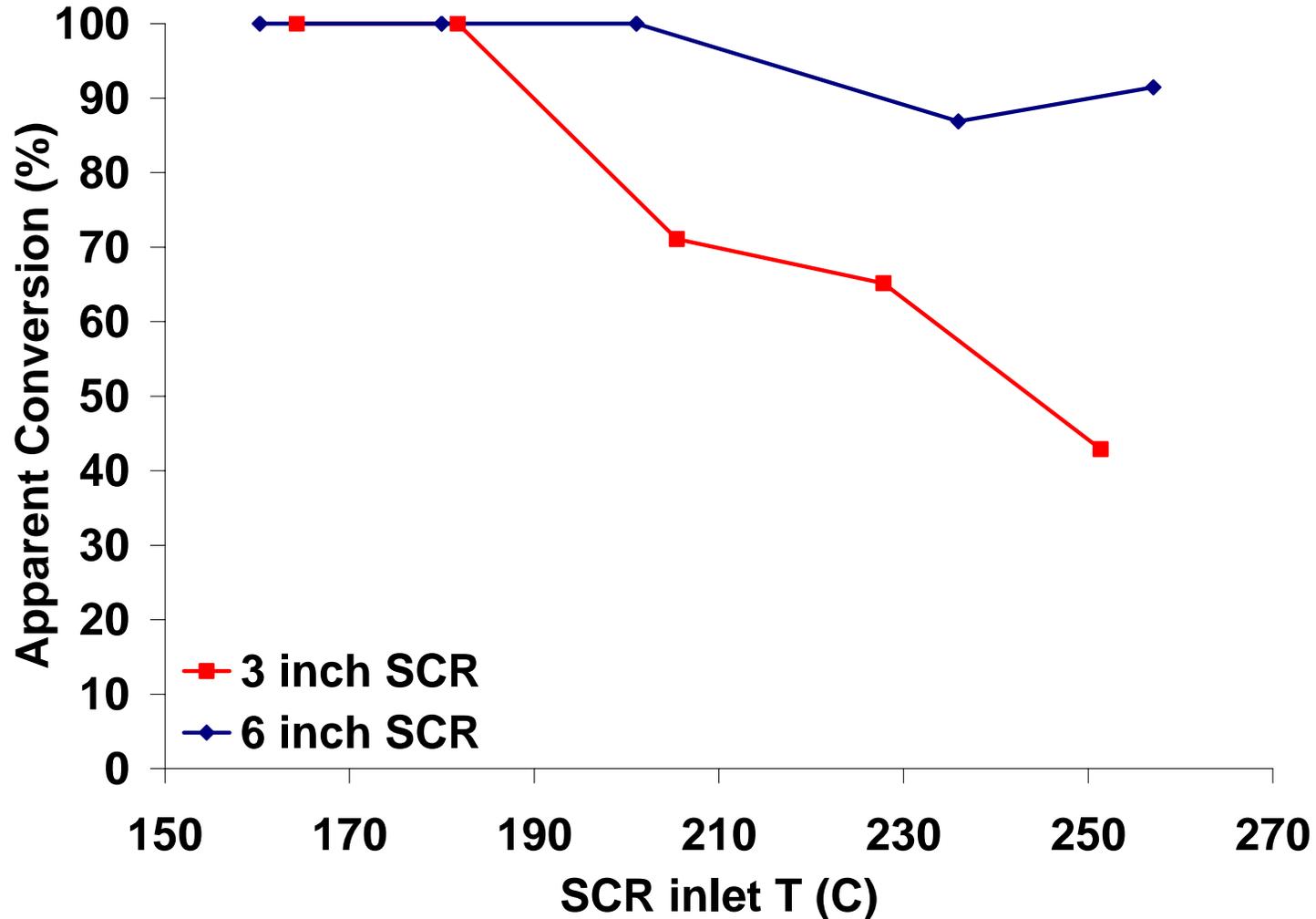
Measurement of actual NH_3 in the presence of urea and isocyanic acid is difficult.

- **Problematic if making measurements of urea decomposition products.**
- **Short experiments showed that urea decomposed (to ammonia) on instrument filter at T as low as 80 °C.**
- **Filters are required for sampling PM-laden exhaust gas.**
- **Instrument filter T is typically > 100 °C to prevent condensation and loss of water soluble NH_3**
- **Using 60 °C filter allows measurement of NH_3 without decomposition of precursors, but precludes same stream from being used for HC measurements.**

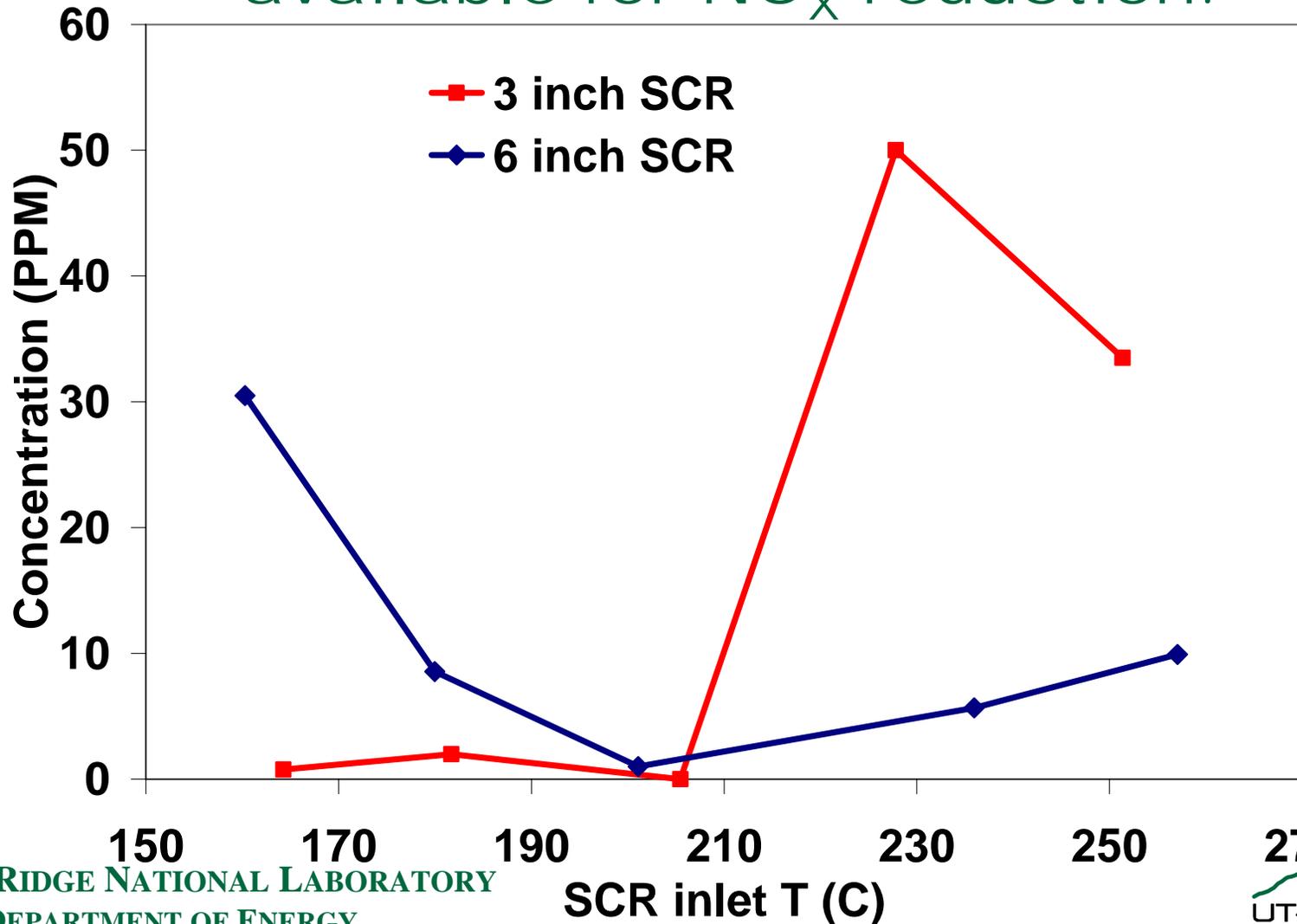
Higher T decrease in NO_x conversion (for 3" brick) implies competing processes....



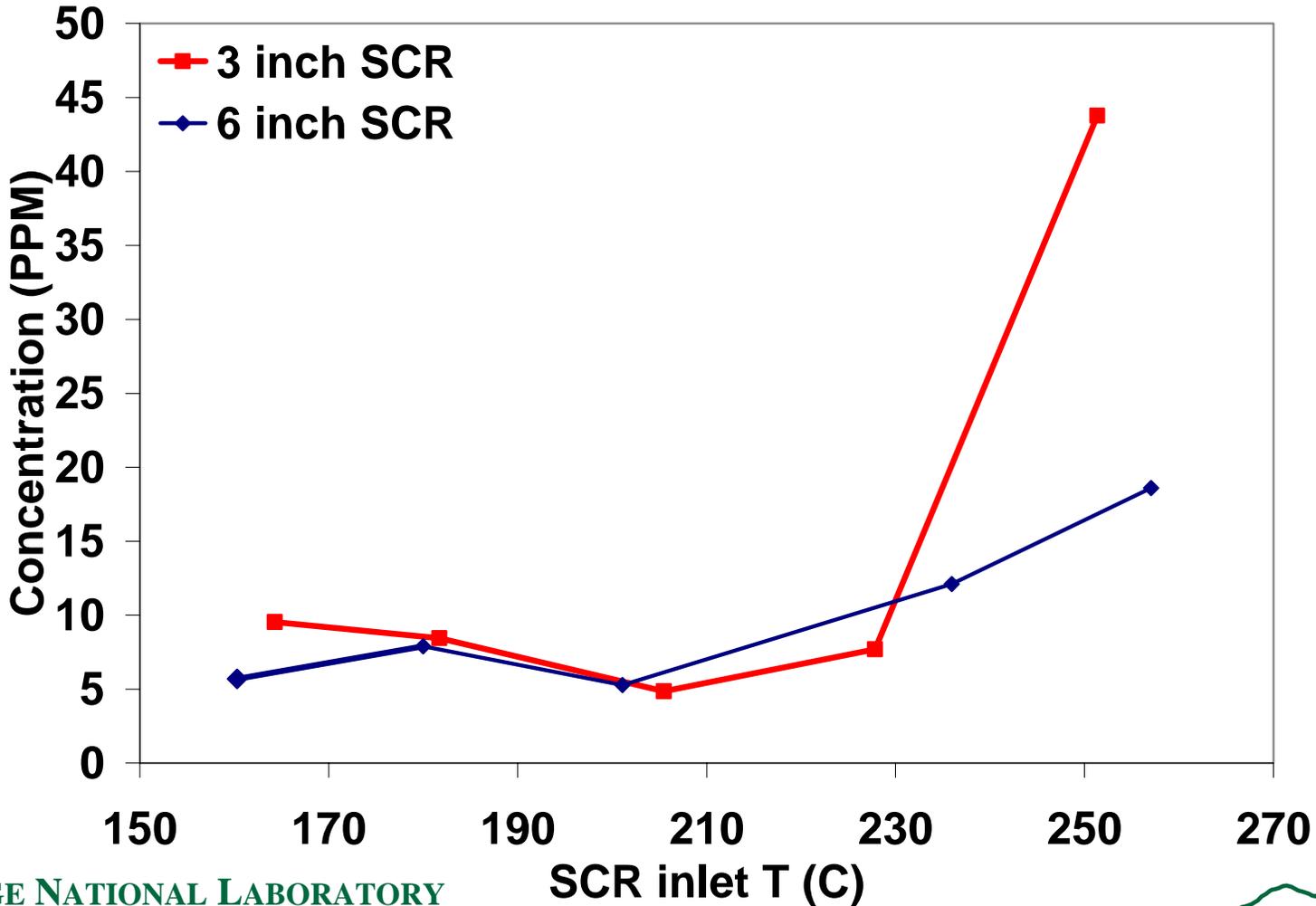
The lower conversion of NO_x is due at high temperature is due to lower NO_2 conversion.



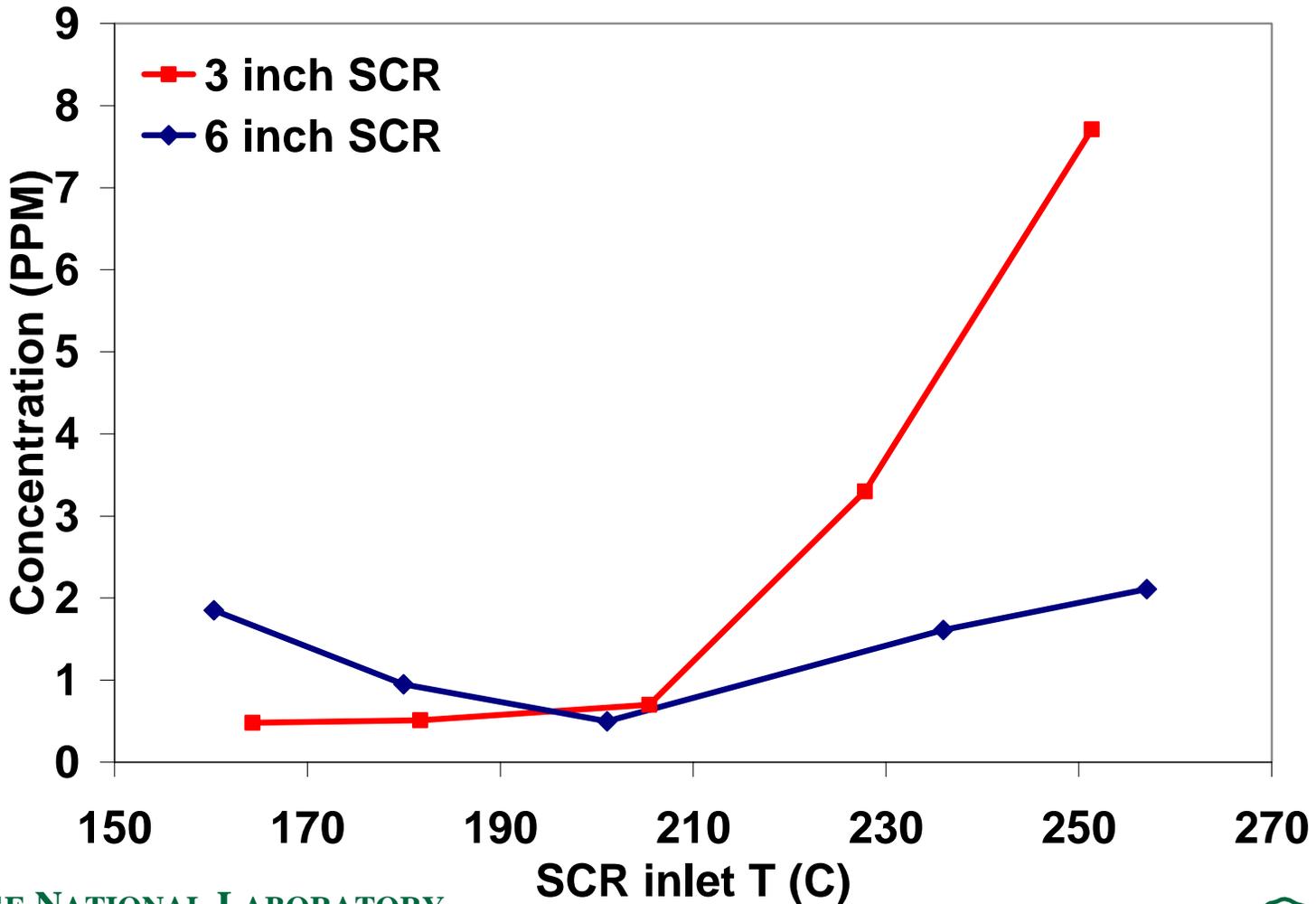
Undersized SCRs slipped some NH_3 at all conditions, indicating ample reductant available for NO_x reduction.



N₂O slip indicates incomplete reduction in the shorter catalyst



HCN was also formed as an intermediate at low concentrations at the temperatures studied.

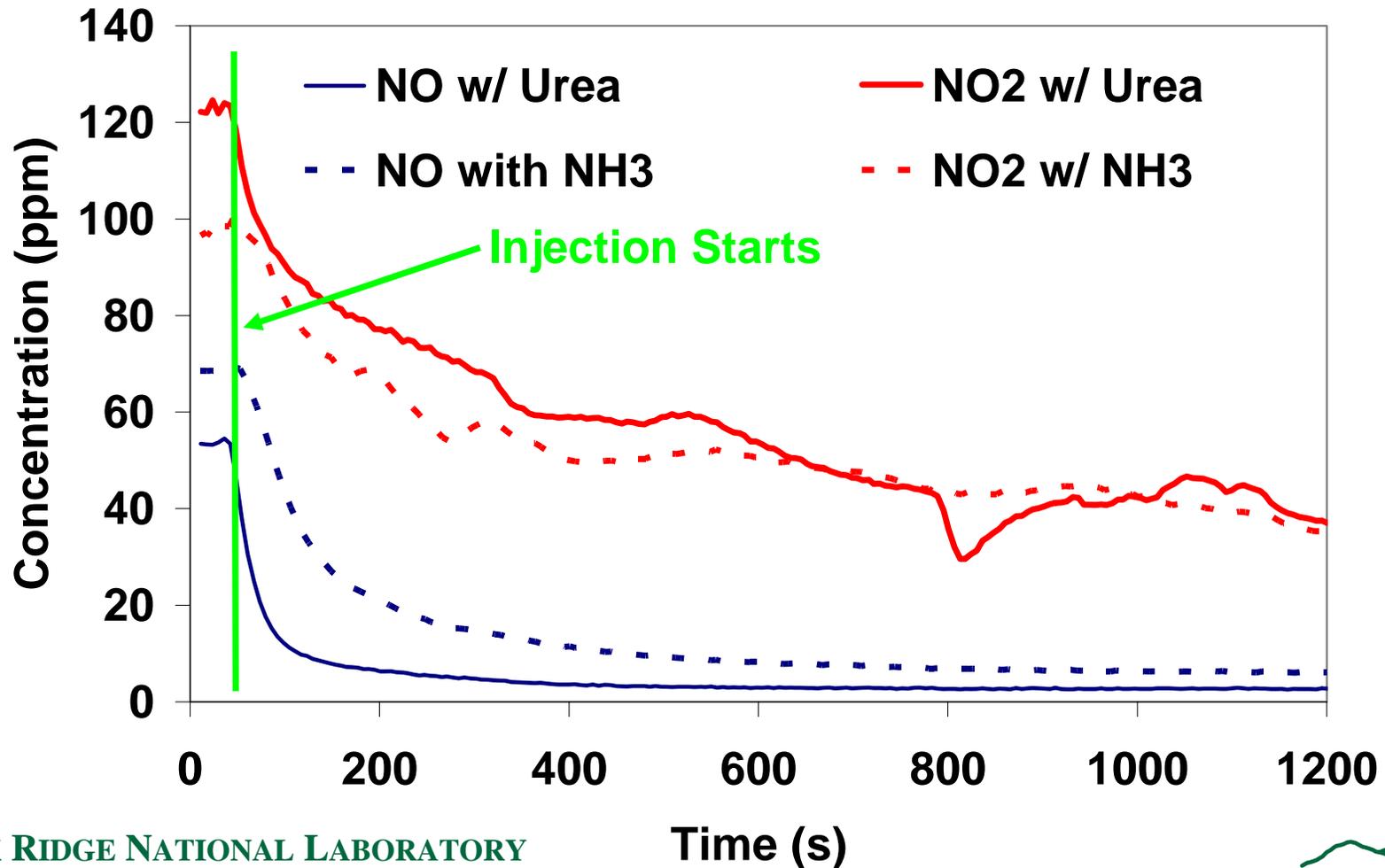


Steady-state data suggest urea decomposition competes with NO_x reduction processes.

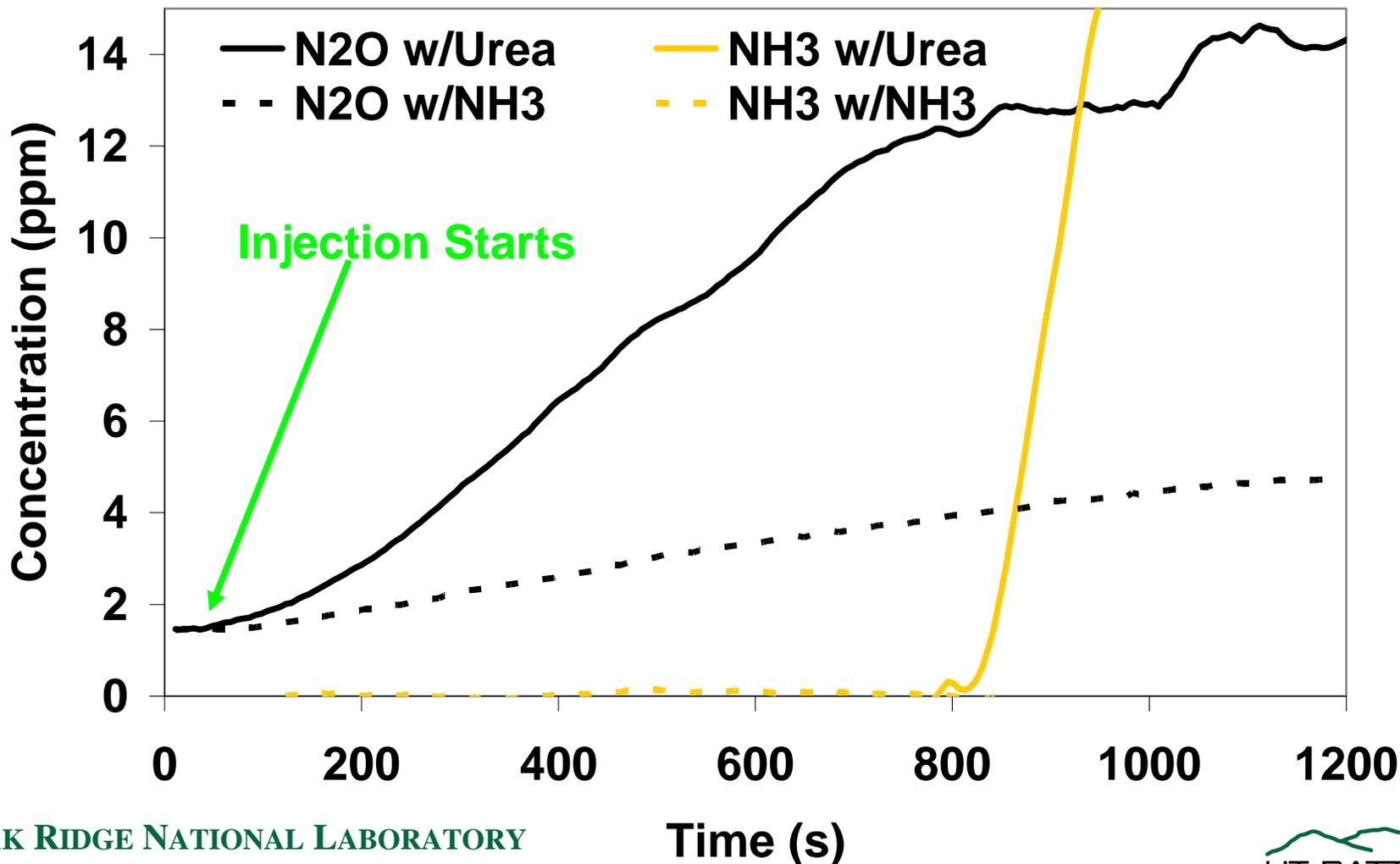
- **NO_2 not converted as efficiently at high temperatures with the 3" SCR.**
- **High concentration of intermediate N_2O in the 3" SCR could account for most NO_x disappearance.**
- **Concentrations of intermediates drop with longer catalyst.**
- **NH_3 slip indicates available reductant.**
- **Temperature gradients associated with urea decomposition and NO_x reduction were too small to measure.**

Results from onset of injection

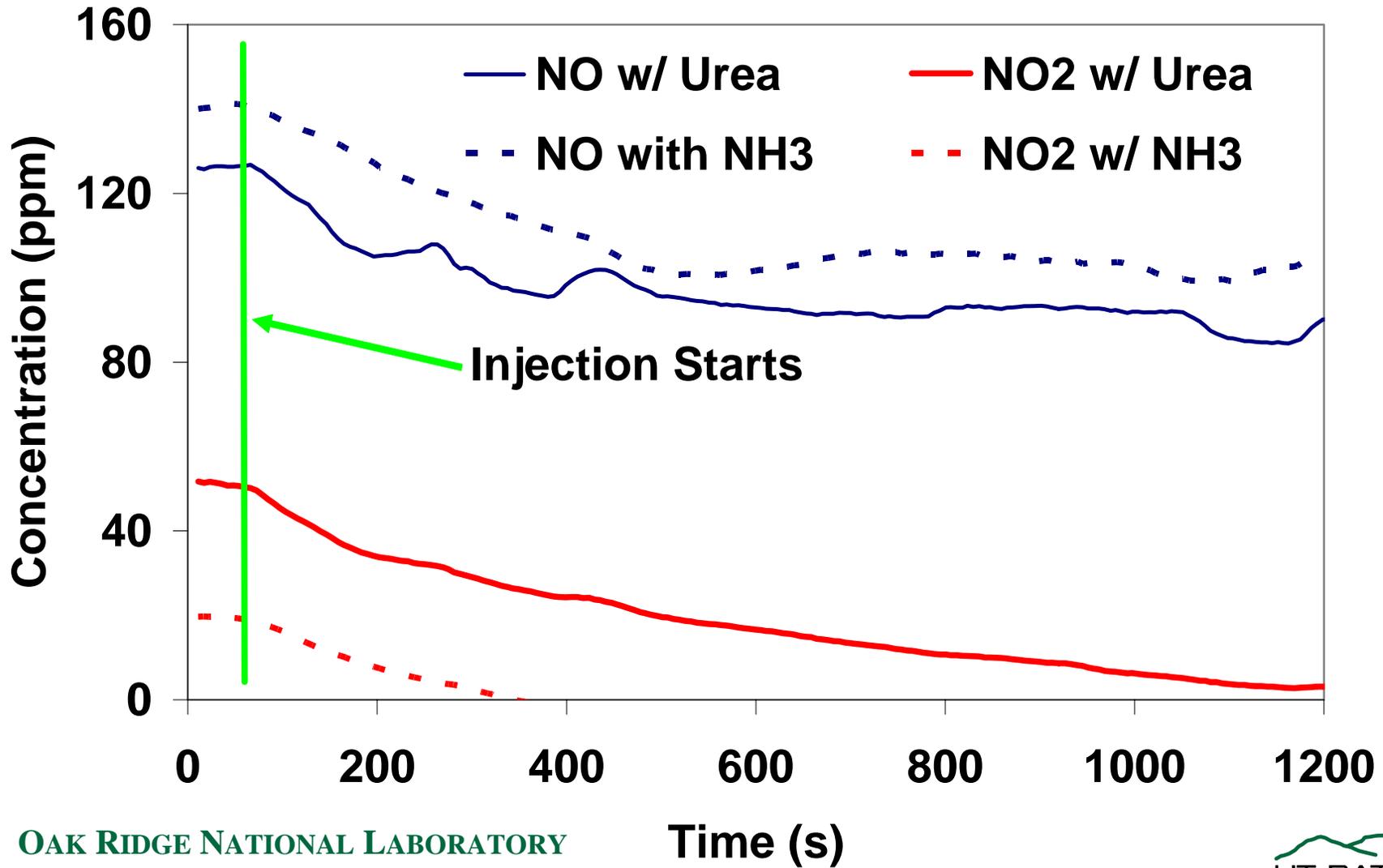
NO, NO₂ disappearance at 250 °C using urea and ammonia as reductants suggests similarity of reduction processes.



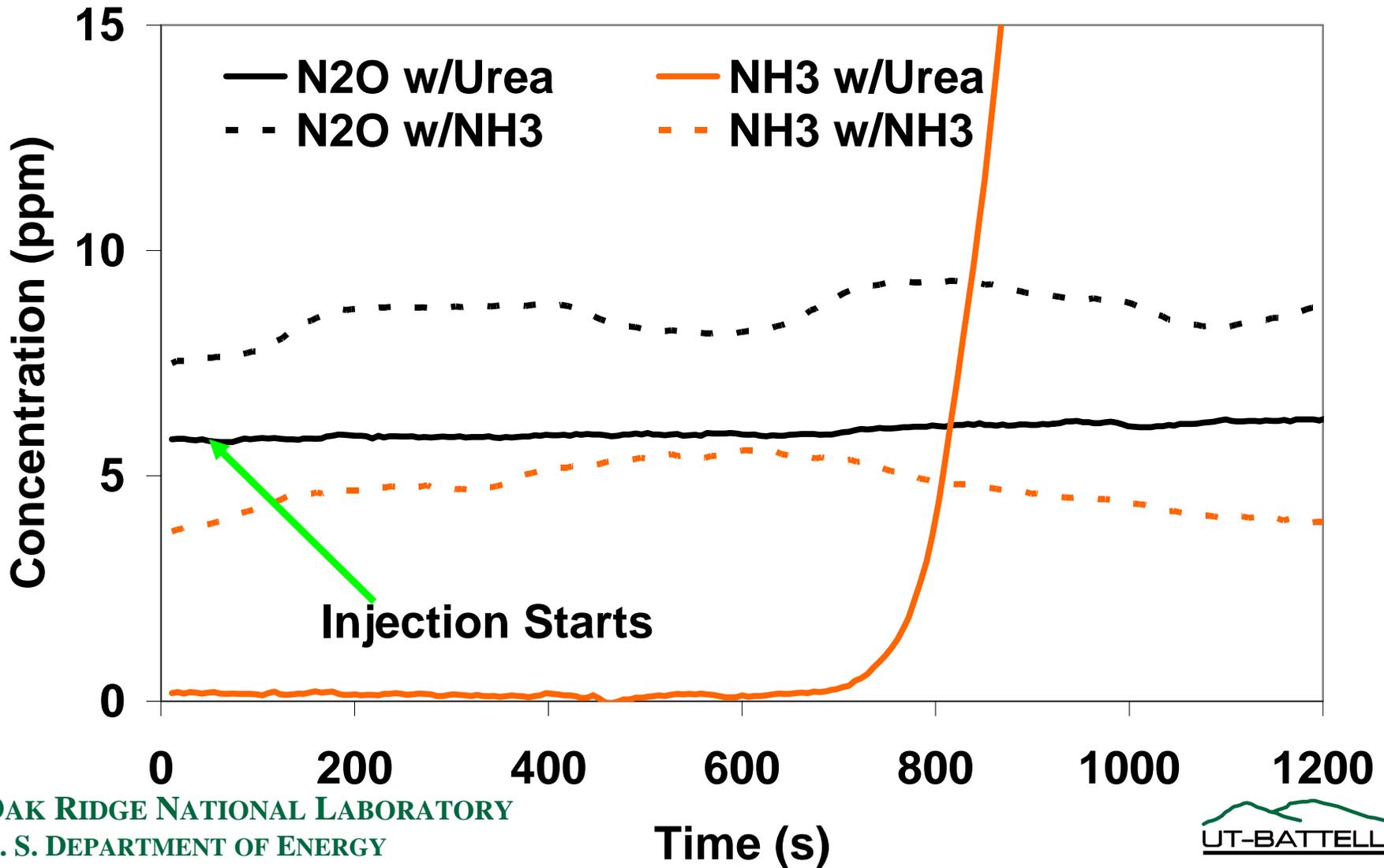
Onset of N₂O slip and NH₃ slip at 250 °C is due to competition of urea decomposition process



NO and NO₂ disappearance similar at 180 °C when using urea and ammonia as reductants.



Large NH3 slip again occurs much sooner with urea injection than with ammonia injection.



Urea decomposition hampers NO_x reduction in at least the first 3" of SCR catalyst.

- **Steady state data showed presence of NH_3 , intermediates downstream of 3" and 6" SCR.**
- **Transient data showed that NO , NO_2 disappearance were similar using both NH_3 and urea as reductants.**
- **Ammonia injection data showed intermediates (HCN , N_2O) at $\sim 1/3$ of concentration vs. urea**
- **Ammonia injection data showed longer NH_3 storage times before slip ($\sim 2X$) than when urea was used.**

Further investigation of the dynamics of urea decomposition is planned.

- **Confirmatory, direct measurements of urea, isocyanic acid downstream of SCR are forthcoming.**
- **Study 3”+6” SCRs together (as a 9”) to determine whether same trends are observed in rear 3” of 6” monolith.**
- **Comparisons of urea and ammonia injection at other conditions to confirm**