Characterizing Inverted Coaxial Detectors' Low-Energy Performance in the MAJORANA DEMONSTRATOR

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Neutrino 2026, University of California, Irvine

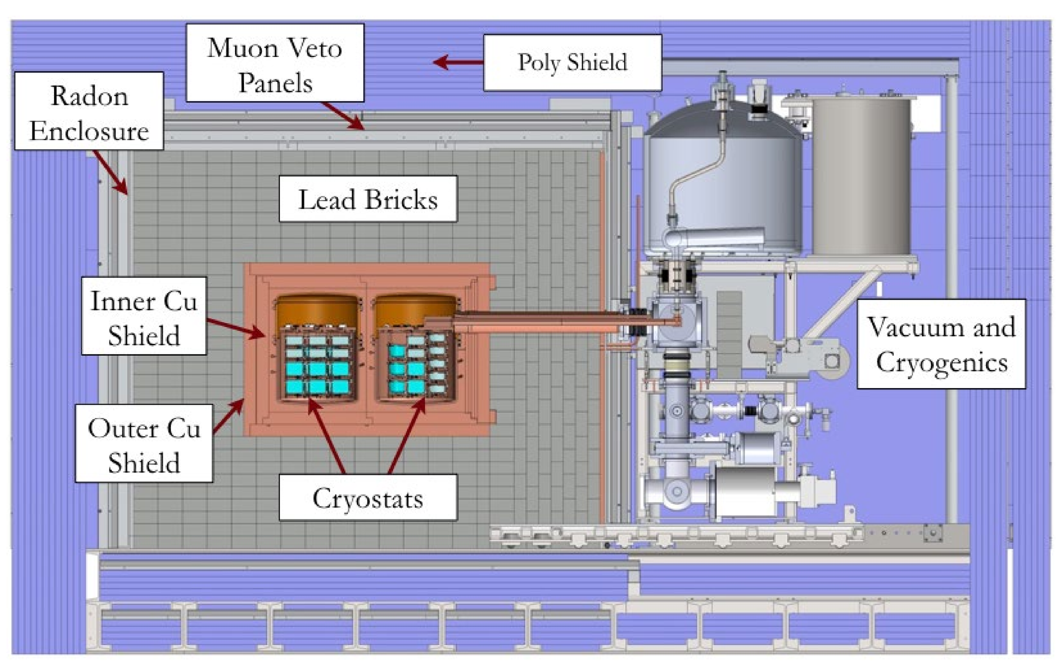
Introduction

The MAJORANA DEMONSTRATOR (MJD)

- Searched for neutrinoless double-beta decay (**0νββ**) in **^{76}Ge** [1]
  - Operated 2015-2025
  - Final result: $T_{1/2} > 8.3 \times 10^{25}$ yr (90% C.L.)
- Sanford Underground Research Facility (SURF)
  - **4850 ft** level (4300 m.w.e.)
- Primarily utilized enriched p-type point contact (**PPC**) detectors

Goals

1. Evaluate the **low-energy** (<100 keV) performance of inverted coaxial (**IC**) detectors
2. Verify usability for beyond Standard Model (**BSM**) searches in LEGEND-200 and LEGEND-1000
   - Including fundamental symmetries, dark matter, trinucleon decay, quantum mechanical wavefunction collapse
3. Identify signatures in the low-energy spectrum to assist in **data cleaning** and pulse-shape discrimination (**PSD**) efforts



MAJORANA DEMONSTRATOR experimental design.

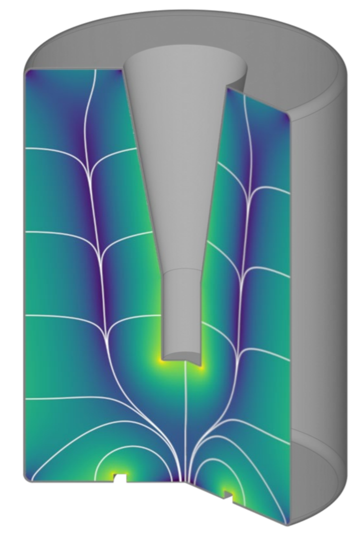
Data

- **Four ICs** operated for 2.82 kg·yr exposure in MJD.
- **Vacuum cryostat**
  - Largest **low-background**, **low-threshold** dataset currently available for ICs
- **Minimized cuts** to improve statistics and demonstrate ICs fundamental capabilities
  - Applied cuts remove rapid bursts of non-physical events (~25 events within several seconds)
  - Survival fraction = 96%

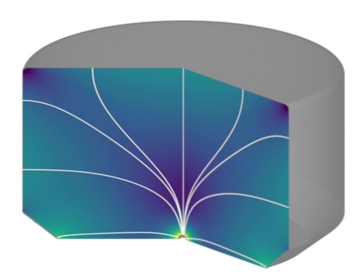
Parameter Estimation

- Energy (**E**)
  - Trapezoid filter with **4 μs** integration time, **2.5 μs** gap time
  - Fixed-time pickoff
- Maximum current (**T**)
  - Measures **max charge collection speed**, indicative of event topology
  - **Maximum value** of triangle filter convolution with 100 ns integration time, 10 ns gap time
  - Normalized by total energy to produce T/E

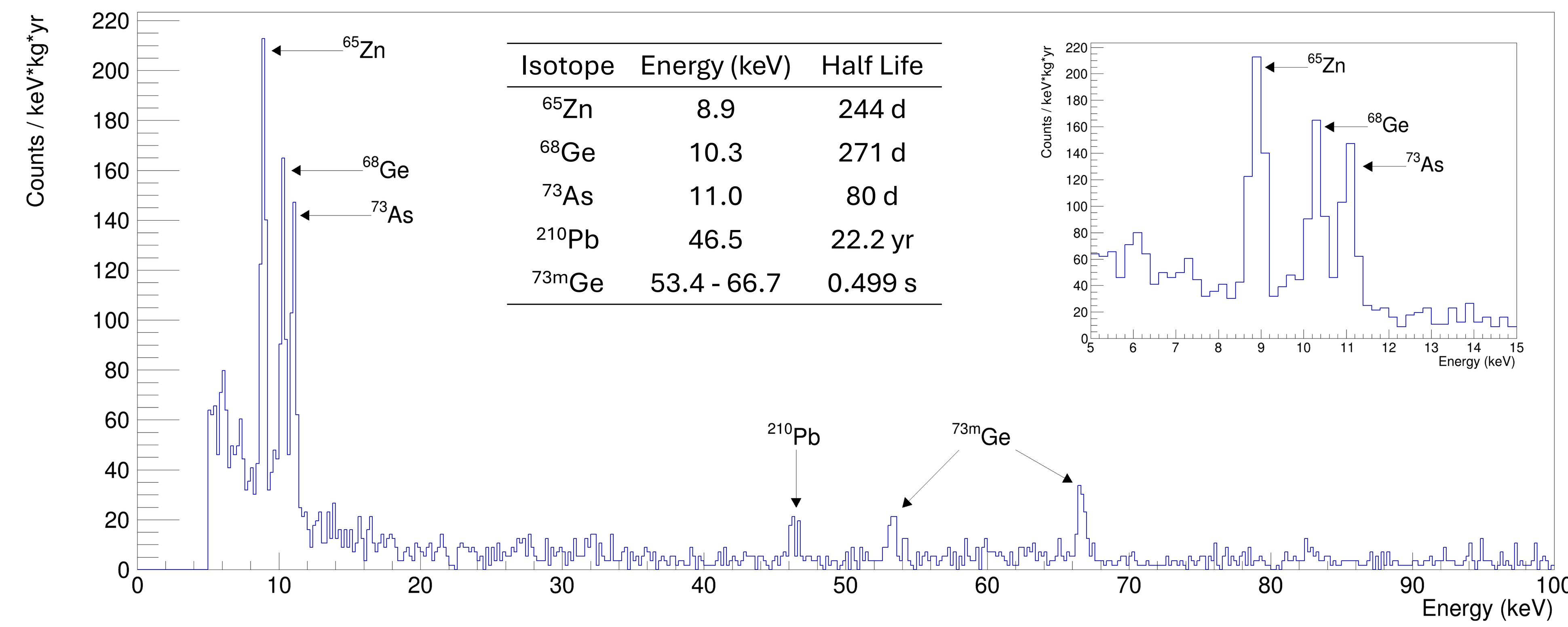
This material is supported by the U.S. Department of Energy, Office of Science, Office of Nuclear Physics, the Particle Astrophysics and Nuclear Physics Programs of the National Science Foundation, and the Sanford Underground Research Facility.



IC detector geometry

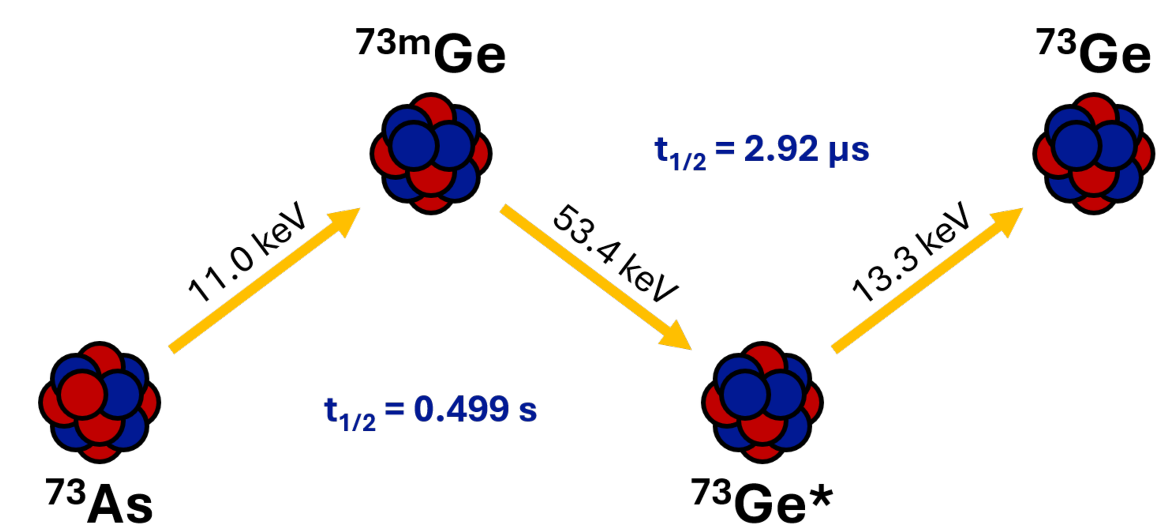


PPC detector geometry



Isotope	Energy (keV)	Half Life
^{65}Zn	8.9	244 d
^{68}Ge	10.3	271 d
^{73}As	11.0	80 d
^{210}Pb	46.5	22.2 yr
^{73m}Ge	53.4 - 66.7	0.499 s

Full IC low-energy dataset.



Energy Spectrum

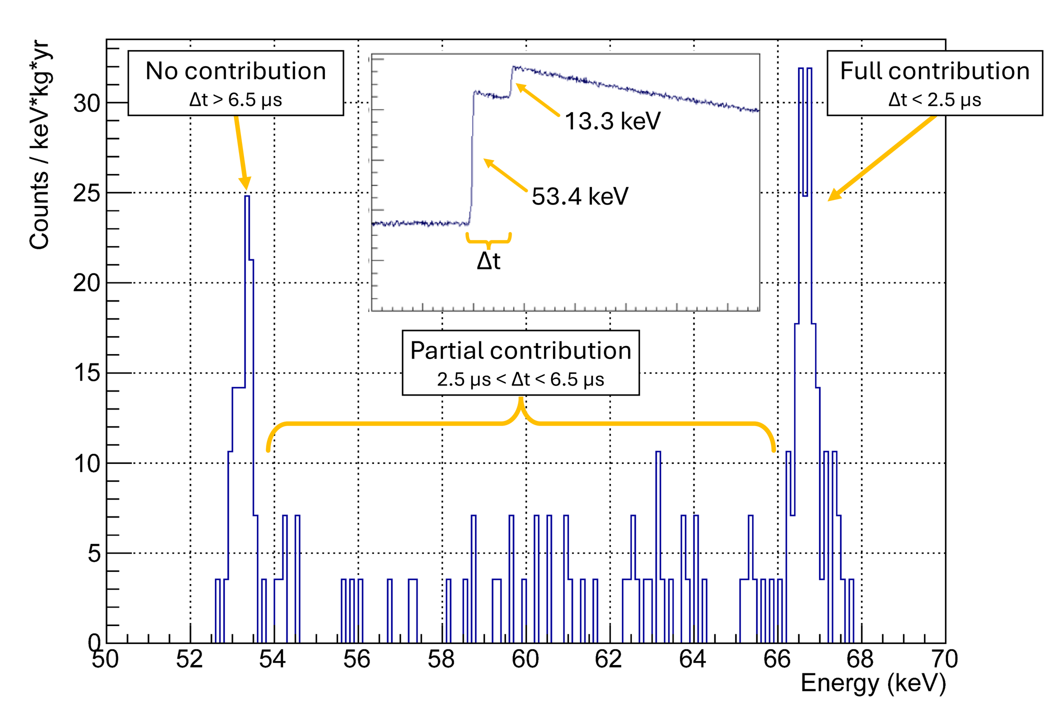
The energy spectrum (*above*) features several notable signals. The most prominent are peaks from **cosmogenic isotopes** produced in the bulk of the detector during surface exposure.

^{73}As → ^{73m}Ge → ^{73}Ge (*right*) produces distinct spectral signatures.

- MJD's low event rate allows a 5-second **time-coincidence** cut to isolate this population
- ^{73m}Ge de-excitations separated by a half-life of 2.92 μs
  - On the order of the trapezoid filter timescale (4 – 2.5 – 4 μs)
- 13.3 keV signal's energy contribution depends on **Δt** (*below*)
  - **Full contribution** (Δt < 2.5 μs): peak at sum energy (66.7 keV)
  - **Partial contribution** (2.5 μs < Δt < 6.5 μs): near-flat continuum [2]
  - **No contribution** (Δt > 6.5 μs): peak at first signal energy (53.4 keV)

^{210}Pb decay produces 46.5 keV γ and **10.8 keV x-ray** photons

- Using time-coincidence, the overlapping ^{73}As peak is removed
- The resulting spectrum is **consistent with background** at 10.8 keV while retaining the 46.5 keV γ signal
  - A peak fit on the remaining spectrum sets a limit of < 4 cts/kg·yr
- Contamination on detector **surface** or in **nearby material**
  - γ **penetrates** dead layer and is detected
  - X-ray interacts in dead layer or transition layer, degrading signal



^{73m}Ge de-excitation pile-up spectrum.

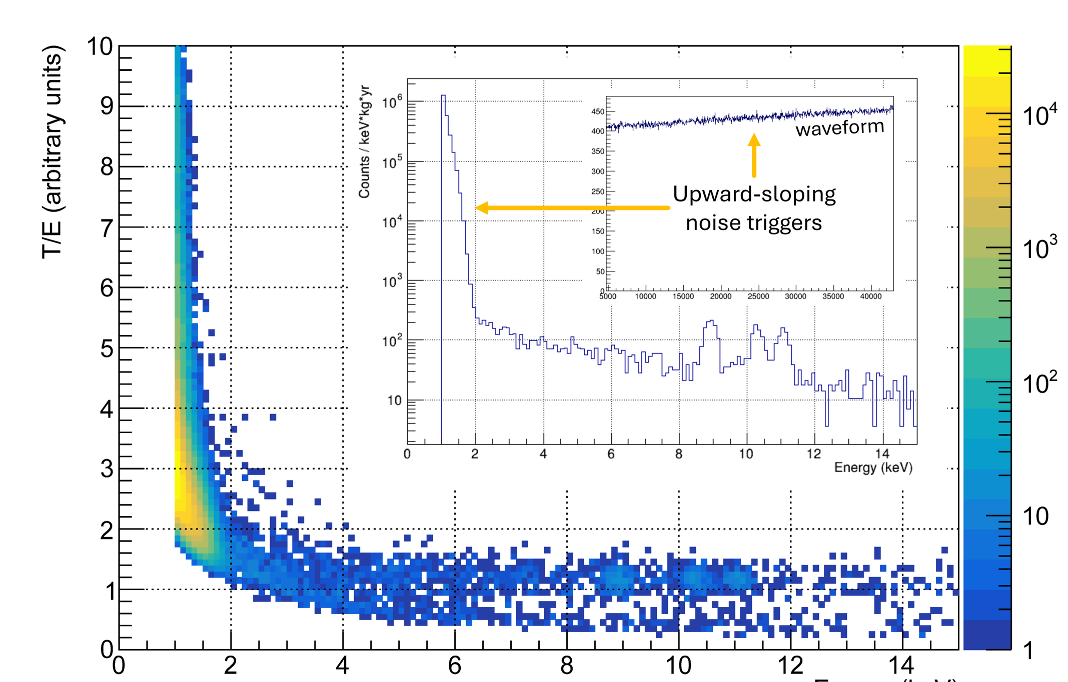
Backgrounds

Below 20 keV

- Cosmogenic **tritium β-decays** in the detector bulk
- Large cosmogenic peaks (^{65}Zn, ^{68}Ge, and ^{73}As) will decay after three years of underground cool-down
- Noise triggers on slowly rising waveforms dominant below 2 keV
  - Noise fluctuations produce constant T values, forming a reciprocal-shaped population in the T/E plot (*below*)

Above 20 keV

- Dominated by **2νββ** and **Compton scatters** from natural radiation in nearby materials



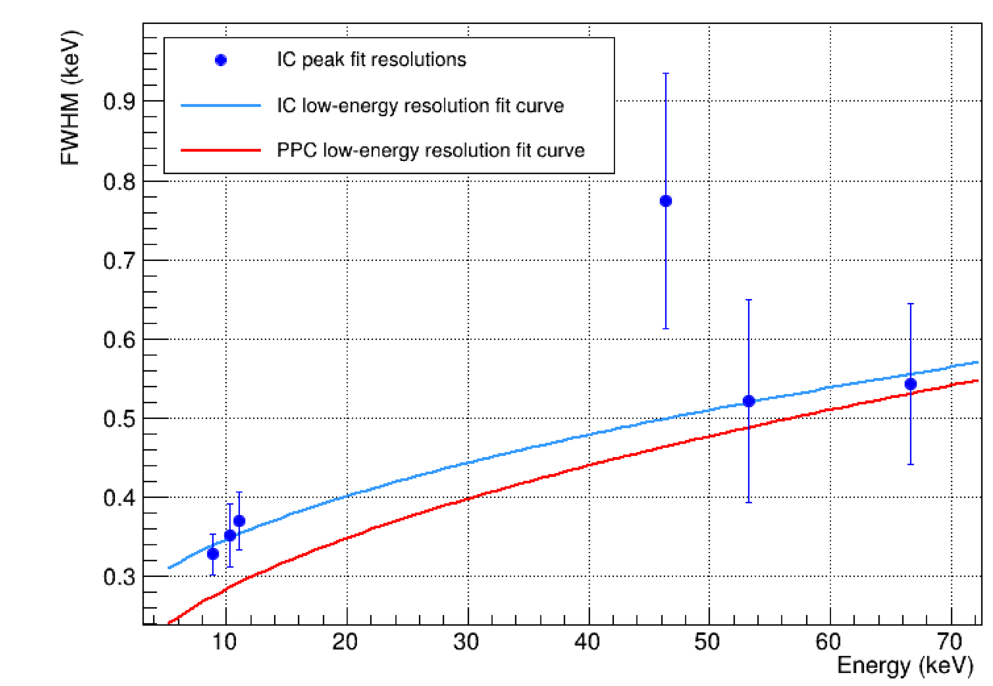
Low-threshold T/E with inset energy spectrum and sample waveform.

Energy Resolution

IC resolution expected to be worse compared to PPCs.

- ^{65}Zn, ^{68}Ge, and ^{73}As peaks **20-27% larger FWHM** than PPCs
- ^{73m}Ge no- and full-contribution peaks near consistent with PPCs

- IC detector geometry 2-3x capacitance compared to PPC
- **Simplified data selection** process to preserve statistics
- Lacking optimization by **energy corrections**



Energy resolution comparison.

Note: ^{210}Pb peak at 46.5 keV omitted from both resolution curves.

Conclusions

IC detectors **performed well** in the low-energy region and are **suitable for BSM searches**.

- Predictable **energy spectrum**
- Low **backgrounds**
- Excellent **energy resolution**

These detectors were deployed in LEGEND-200 and contributed to LEGEND's first 0νββ result. [3]

Following internal review, this work will be published alongside the 0νββ analysis for IC detectors.

Future work

- Cosmogenic signatures may be useful as markers for further low-energy characterization, data cleaning, and PSD
- Reduced cosmic ray exposure and underground cool-down time will limit cosmogenic backgrounds
- This analysis on ^{73m}Ge has already proved useful to LEGEND trinucleon decay studies

^{39}Ar dominates the low-energy background in LEGEND-200

- Gathering low-threshold data will enable background mitigation efforts
- LEGEND-1000 will utilize **underground-sourced liquid argon** to dramatically reduce low-energy backgrounds

References:
[1] I.J. Arnquist et al., PRL 130, 062501 (2023)
[2] T. Ahsan et al., Plasma 6, 58 (2023)
[3] H. Acharya et al., PRL 136, 022701 (2026)