



Contribution ID: 14

Type: Oral

MagLIF performance on the Z-machine: simulations of present and future experiments

Monday 19 June 2017 15:45 (15 minutes)

The MagLIF (Magnetized Liner Inertial Fusion) concept [S.A. Slutz et al. Phys. Plasmas 17, 056303, 2010] has produced 3×10^{12} DD neutrons on the Z-machine [M.R. Gomez et al. Phys. Rev. Lett. 113, 155003, 2014]. 2D simulations using the measured fuel preheat, 800 J, and drive current, 17 MA, predict 6×10^{12} DD neutrons. We show that even better agreement is obtained when the effect of electrode material mixed into the fuel is included. Calculations indicate that mix should have only a small effect on the yield if all electrode surfaces are constructed of beryllium, lithium or frozen isotopes of hydrogen. Numerical simulations indicate that much higher yields should be possible on Z if the current and fuel preheat can be increased [S.A. Slutz et al. Phys. Plasmas 23, 022702, 2016]. The existing MagLIF experiments had low drive currents (< 18 MA) due to the high inductance of the power feed, which induces current loss in the device that adds current from four magnetically insulated transmission lines. We present simulations of low inductance MagLIF designs, which indicate that the drive current should be increased to 22 MA with a predicted fusion yield of 2×10^{14} DD neutrons. This would correspond to a 50 kJ DT yield and a fuel gain greater than unity.

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Session Classification: Oral session 4 - Fusion Research, Large High-Current and High-Energy Systems - Session Chair : Sergey Garanin

Track Classification: High-Energy Density Physics and Technology