Wright Laboratory

Neutrinos
Dark Matter
Nuclear Structure
Relativistic Heavy Ions

PROSPECT: The Precision Reactor Oscillation and Spectrum Experiment

T.J. Langford
February 4, 2016

Neutrinos in the Standard Model

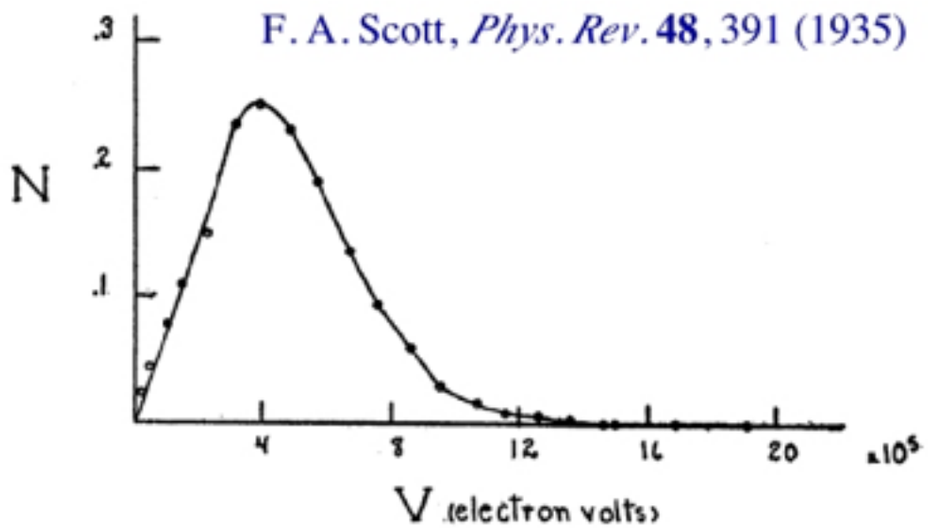
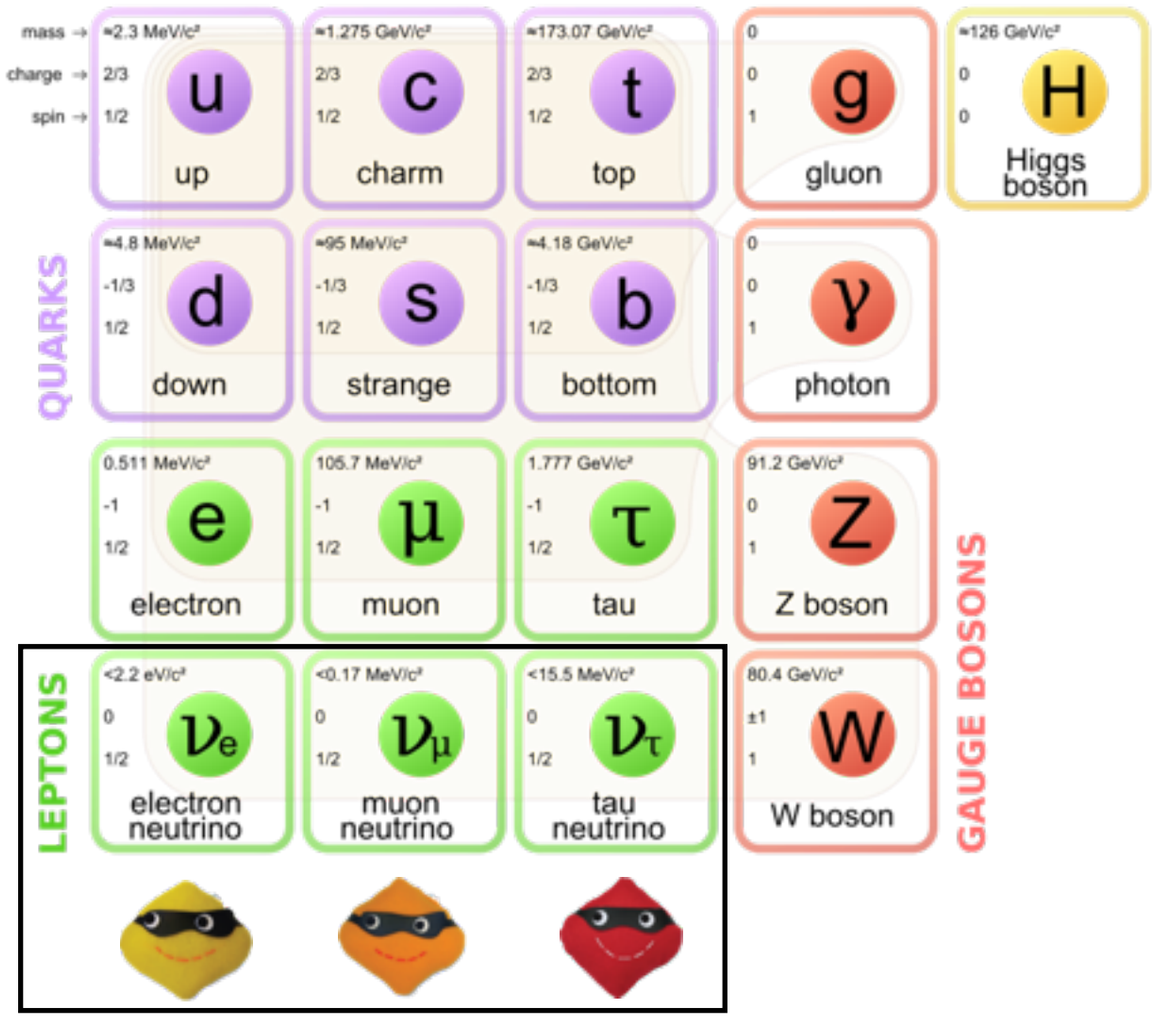


FIG. 5. Energy distribution curve of the beta-rays.

Pauli: "I have hit upon a desperate remedy to save…the law of conservation of energy."



20 July 1956, Volume 124, Number 3212 **SCIENCE**

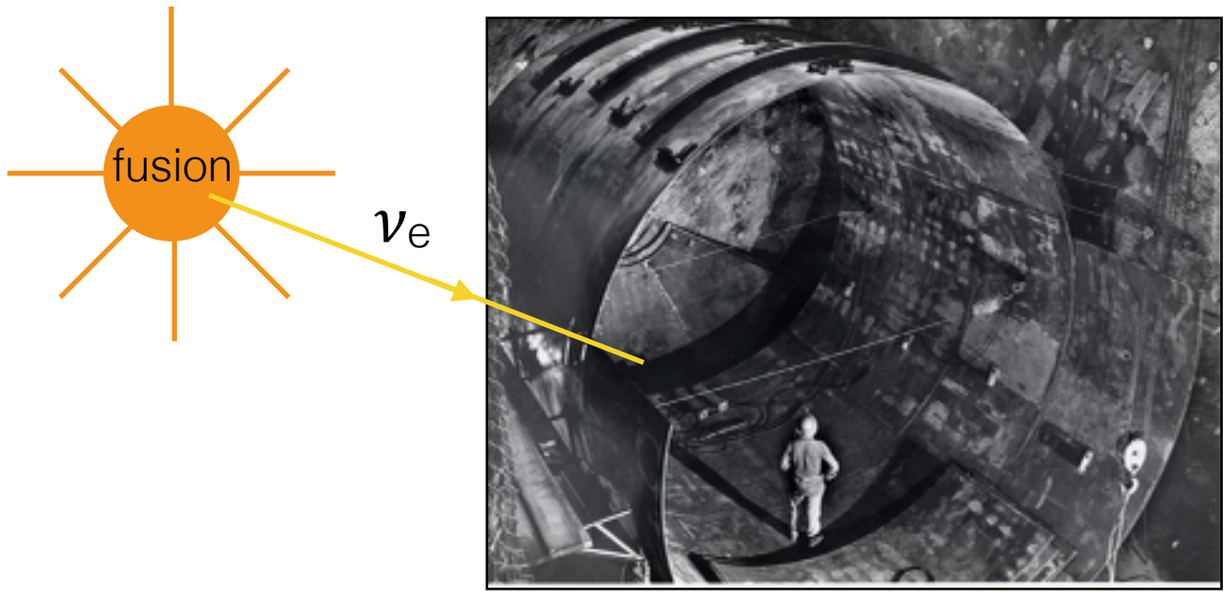
Detection of the Free Neutrino: a Confirmation

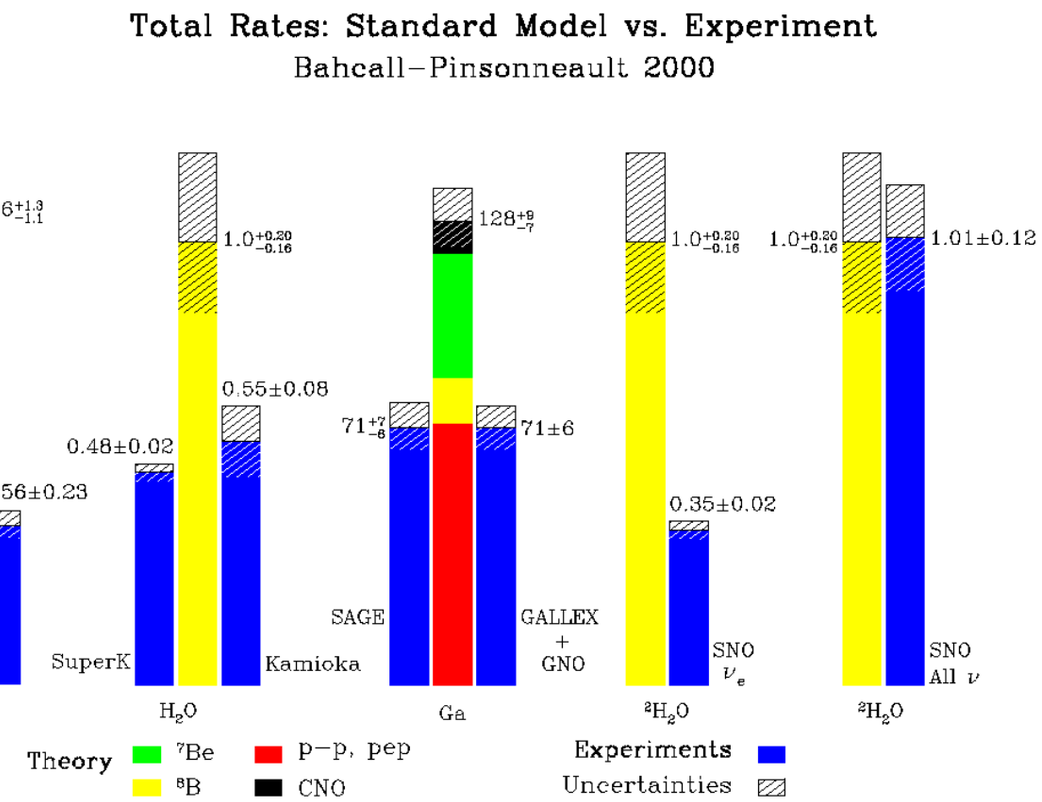
C. L. Cowan, Jr., F. Reines, F. B. Harrison,
H. W. Kruse, A. D. McGuire

- Neutrinos were added to the SM to address the beta-decay "anomaly"
- *Successfully detected 20 years later at the Savannah River Reactor*

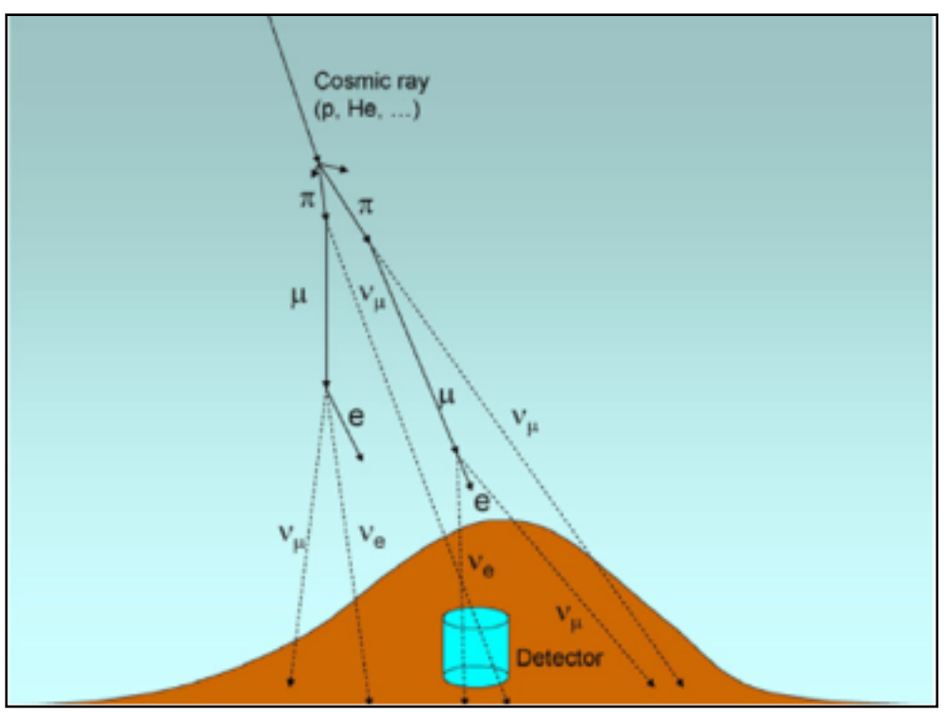
Neutrino Anomalies…

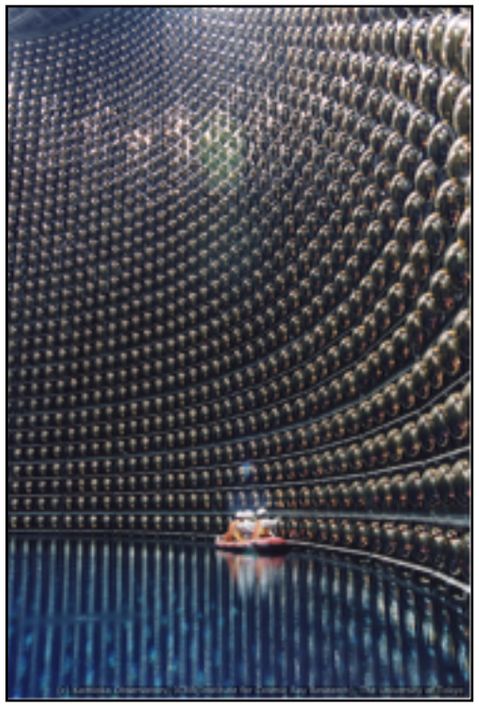
solar neutrino anomaly

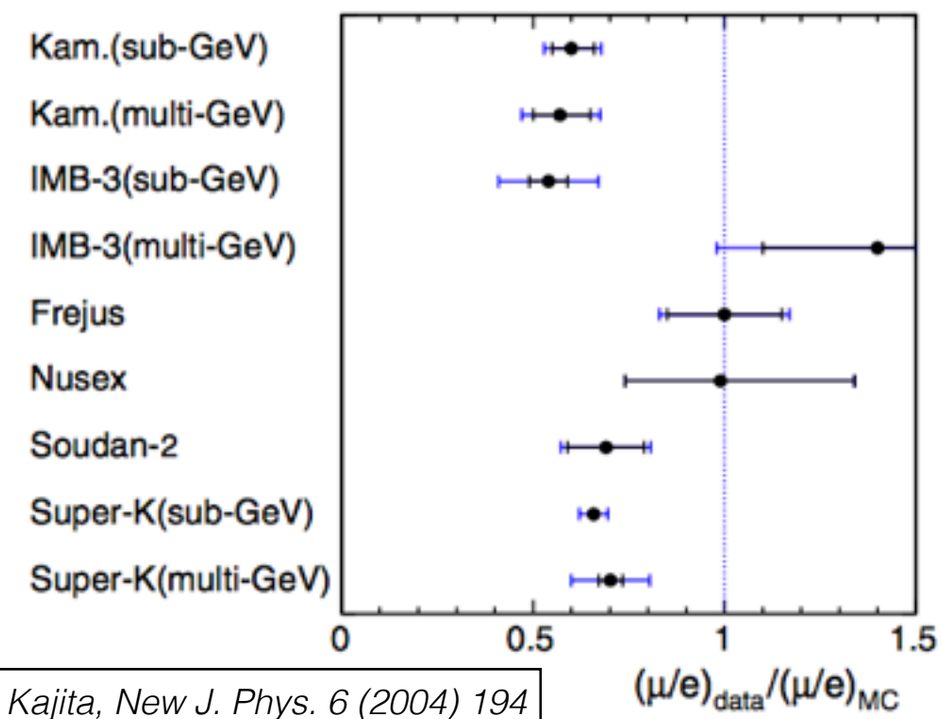




atmospheric neutrino anomaly



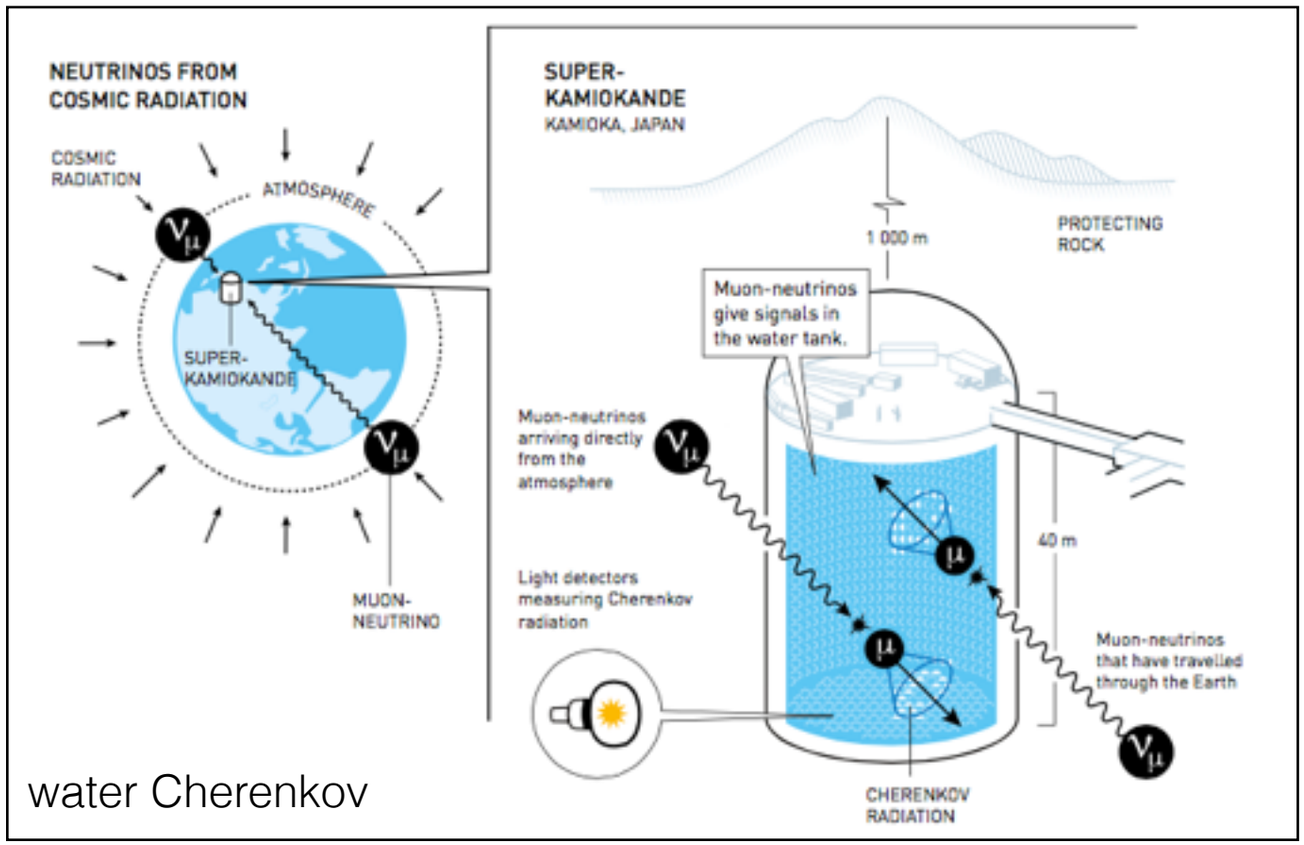




T. Kajita, New J. Phys. 6 (2004) 194

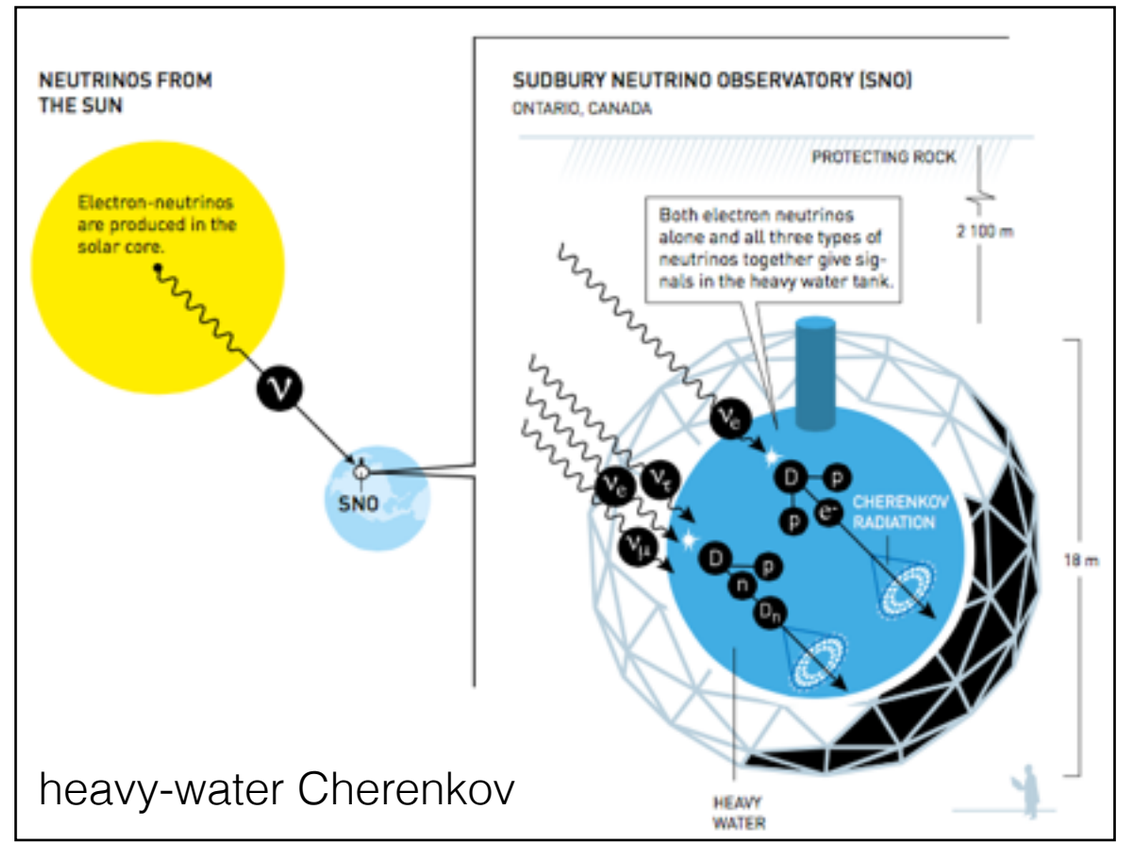
… Lead to Discoveries

Super-Kamiokande 1998: solved atmospheric anomaly

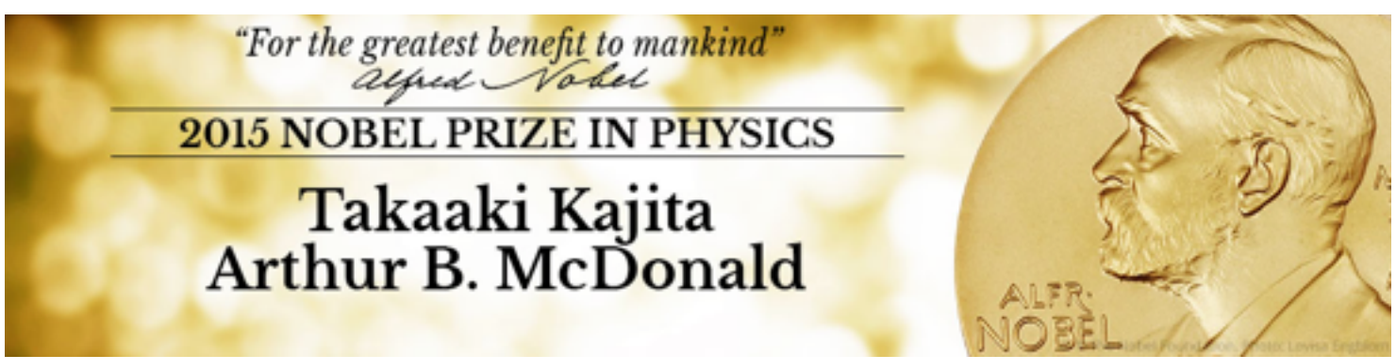


$\nu_\mu \rightarrow \nu_\tau$ **oscillation through the earth**

SNO 2001: solved solar anomaly



sum of all ν matched solar prediction



"for the discovery of neutrino oscillations which shows that neutrinos have mass"

Neutrino Oscillations

Neutrinos undergo oscillations between flavor and mass states, implying they are massive (although very light) particles.

flavor states *mass states*

$$\begin{pmatrix} \nu_e \\ \nu_\mu \\ \nu_\tau \end{pmatrix} = U \begin{pmatrix} \nu_1 \\ \nu_2 \\ \nu_3 \end{pmatrix}$$

$$where\ U = \begin{pmatrix} U_{e1} & U_{e2} & U_{e3} \\ U_{\nu 1} & U_{\nu 2} & U_{\nu 3} \\ U_{\tau 1} & U_{\tau 2} & U_{\tau 3} \end{pmatrix}$$

production *propagate* *PMNS mixing matrix*

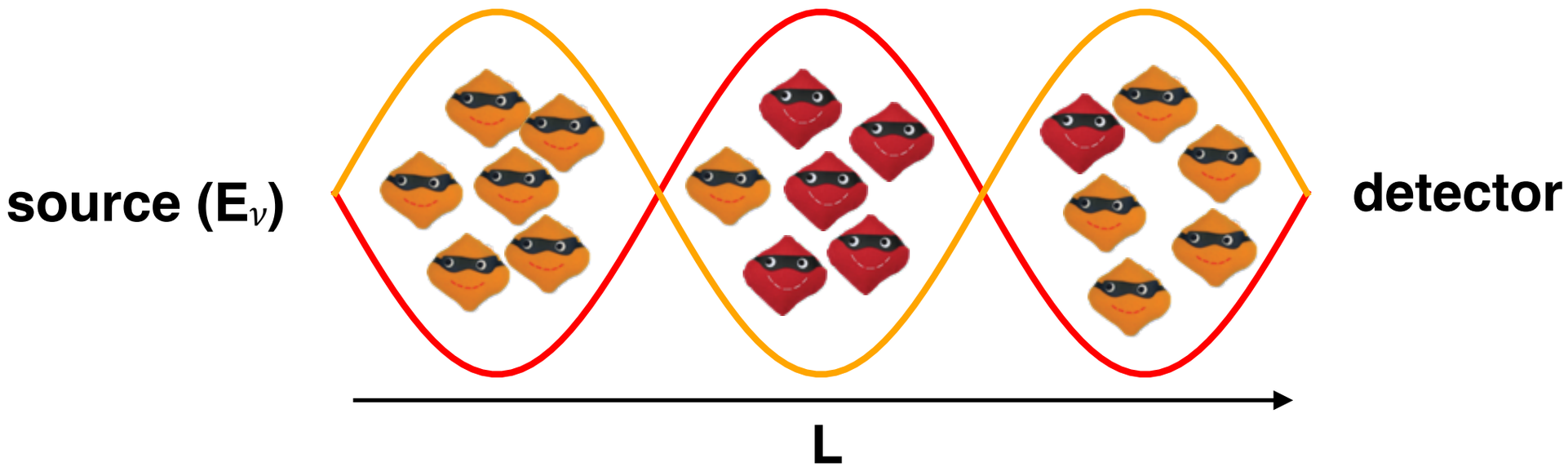
atmospheric/accelerator *reactor* *solar*

$$U = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & c_{23} & s_{23} \\ 0 & -s_{23} & c_{23} \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} c_{13} & 0 & s_{13}e^{-i\delta} \\ 0 & 1 & 0 \\ s_{13}e^{-i\delta} & 0 & c_{13} \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} c_{12} & s_{12} & 0 \\ -s_{12} & c_{12} & 0 \\ 0 & -0 & 1 \end{pmatrix}$$

$$where\ c_{ij} = cos(\theta_{ij})$$
$$s_{ij} = sin(\theta_{ij})$$
$$\delta = CP\ phase$$

Ex: Two Neutrino Oscillation

$$P_{\alpha\to\beta,\alpha\neq\beta} = sin^2(2\theta)sin^2\left(\frac{\Delta m^2 L}{4E_\nu}\right) \;\; where \;\; \alpha,\beta = \nu_e,\nu_\mu,\nu_\tau$$



Parameters θ (mixing angle - amplitude) and Δm^2 (mass splitting - frequency) are defined by nature. We can target specific Δm^2 measurements by designing our experiments to have a certain L/E.

Outline

- ~~Neutrinos in the Standard Model~~
- Reactor neutrinos and new anomalies
- **PROSPECT**: The Precision Reactor Oscillation and Spectrum Experiment
- Current efforts

Reactors: Tools for discovery

1950s: Reines and Cowan

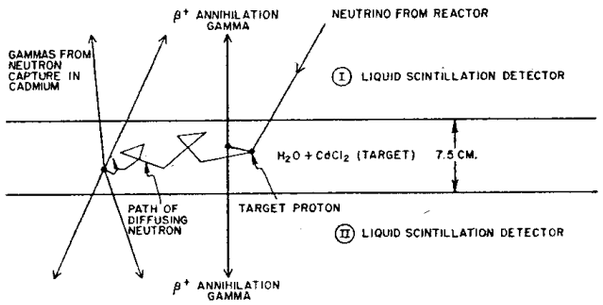
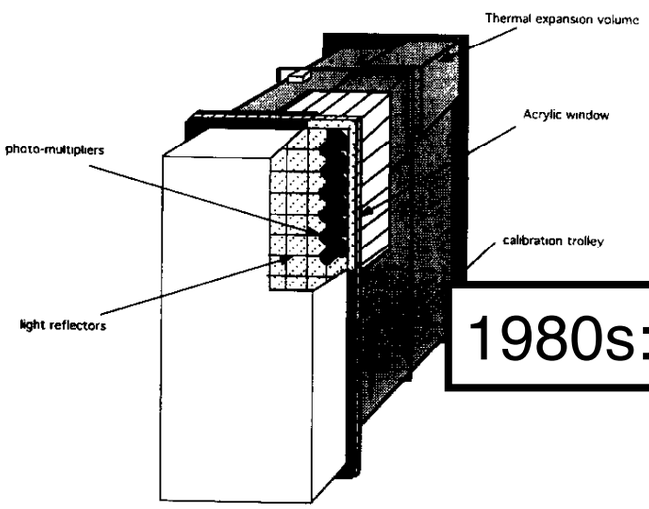
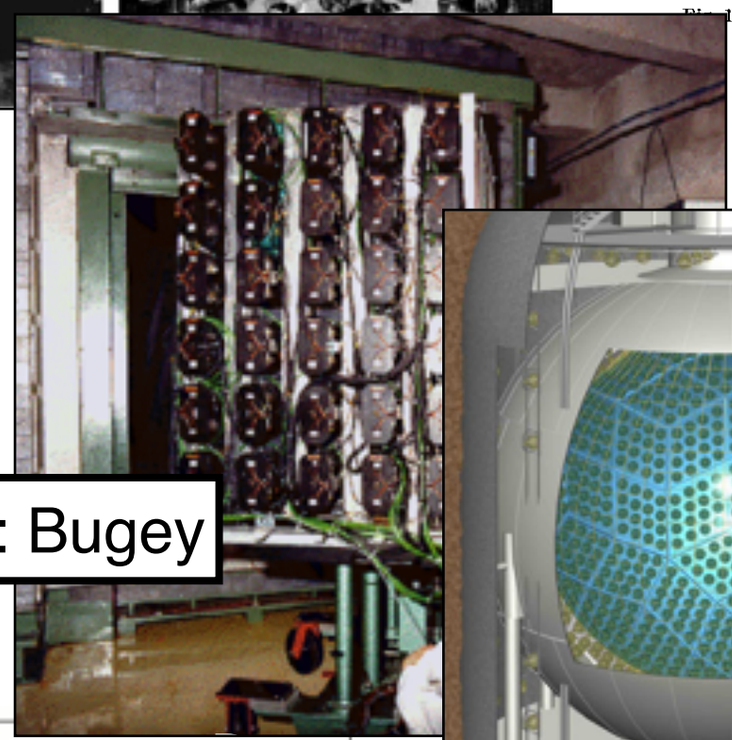
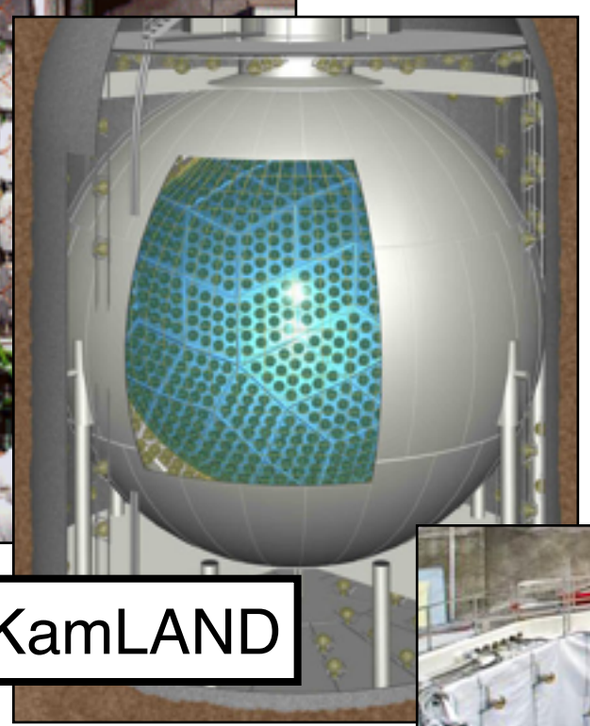


Fig. 1. Schematic diagram of neutrino detector

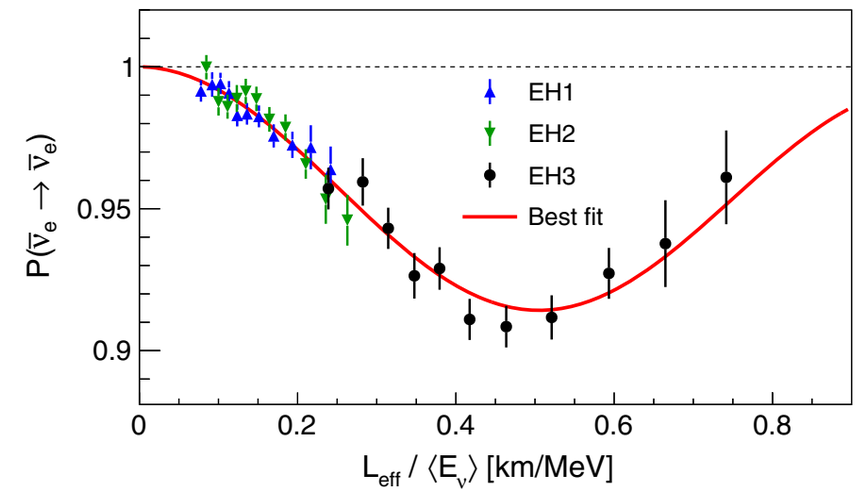




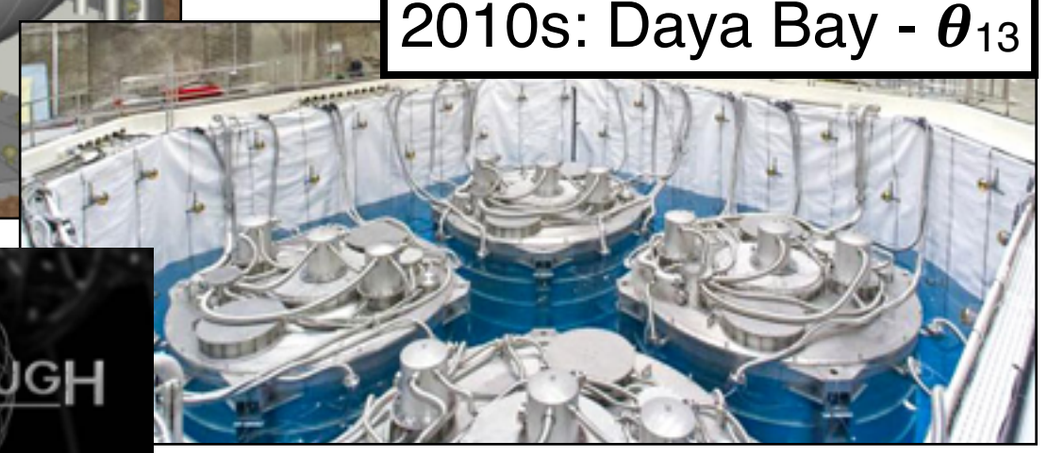
1980s: Bugey

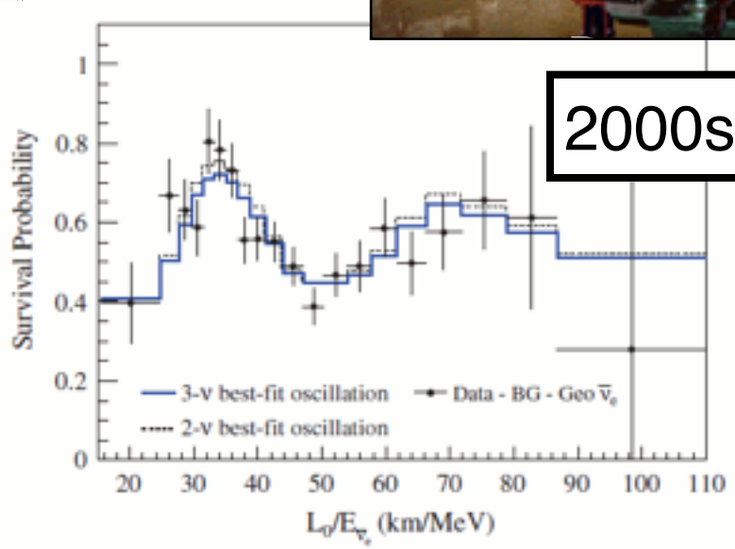


2000s: KamLAND



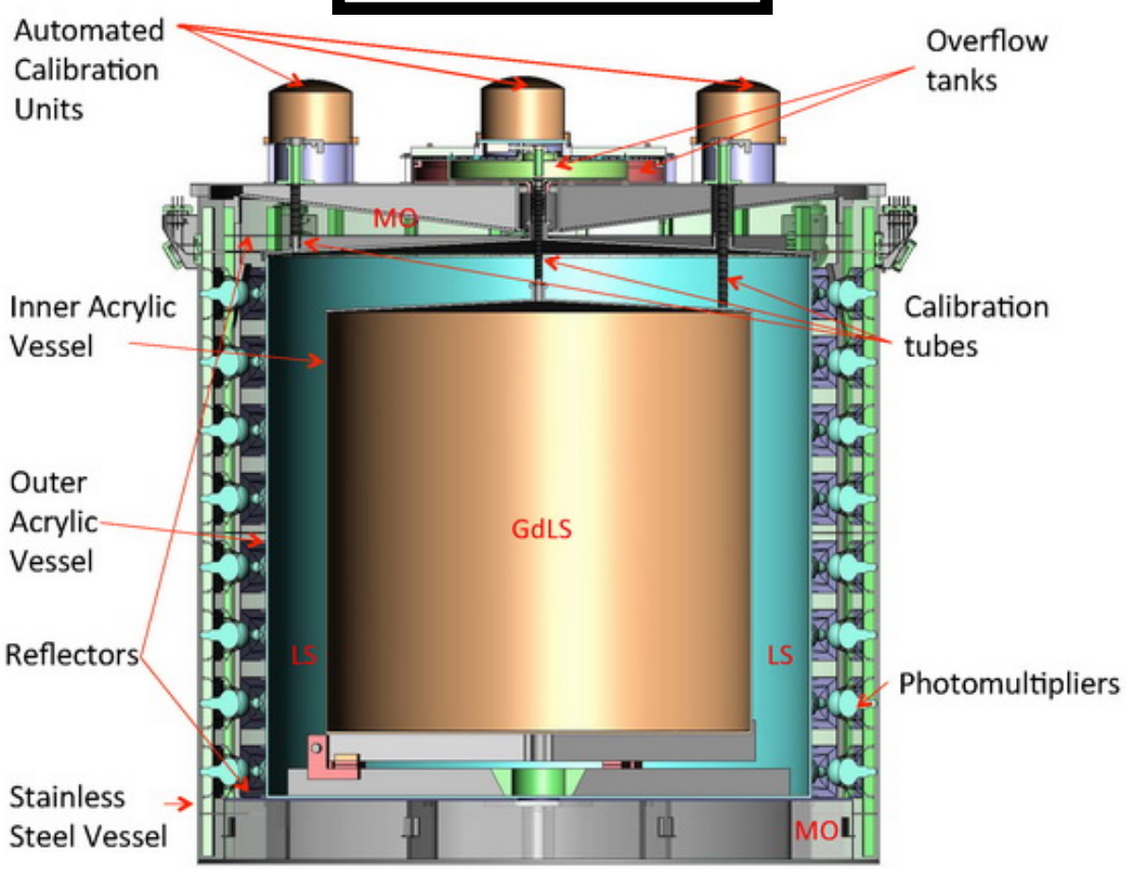
2010s: Daya Bay - θ_{13}

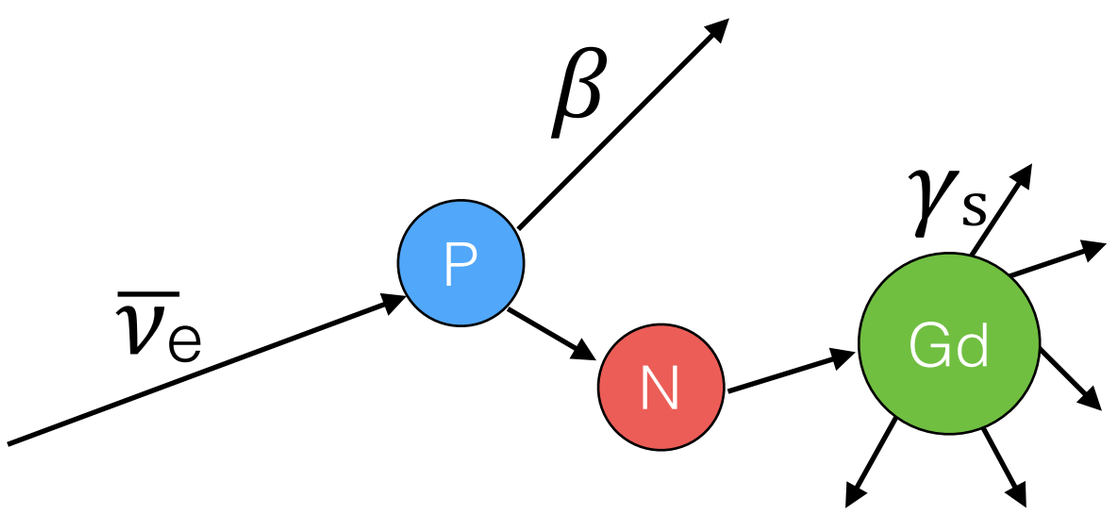




Detecting Reactor Neutrinos

Daya Bay



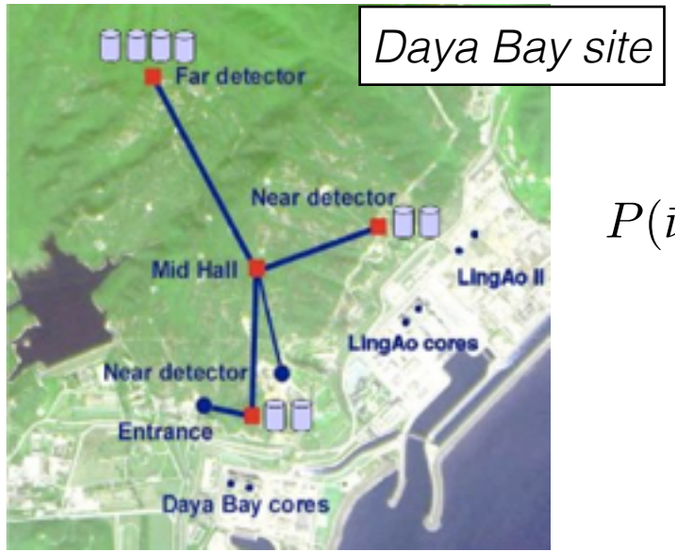


Inverse Beta Decay

- Loaded Organic scintillator surrounded by photomultiplier tubes
- Neutrinos interact with free protons
- Neutrino energy threshold of 1.8 MeV, producing signal of ~1MeV
- Capture resulting neutron as a tag of IBD interaction (typically Gd)
- Time-correlated signals, separated by ~10s μs

Precision Reactor Neutrino Physics

Kilometer baseline θ_{13} precision experiments: Daya Bay, Double Chooz, RENO



$$P(\bar{\nu}_e \rightarrow \bar{\nu}_e) = 1 - sin^2(2\theta)sin^2\left(\frac{\Delta m^2 L}{4E_\nu}\right)$$

survival probability

reactor core

fraction anti-ν_e

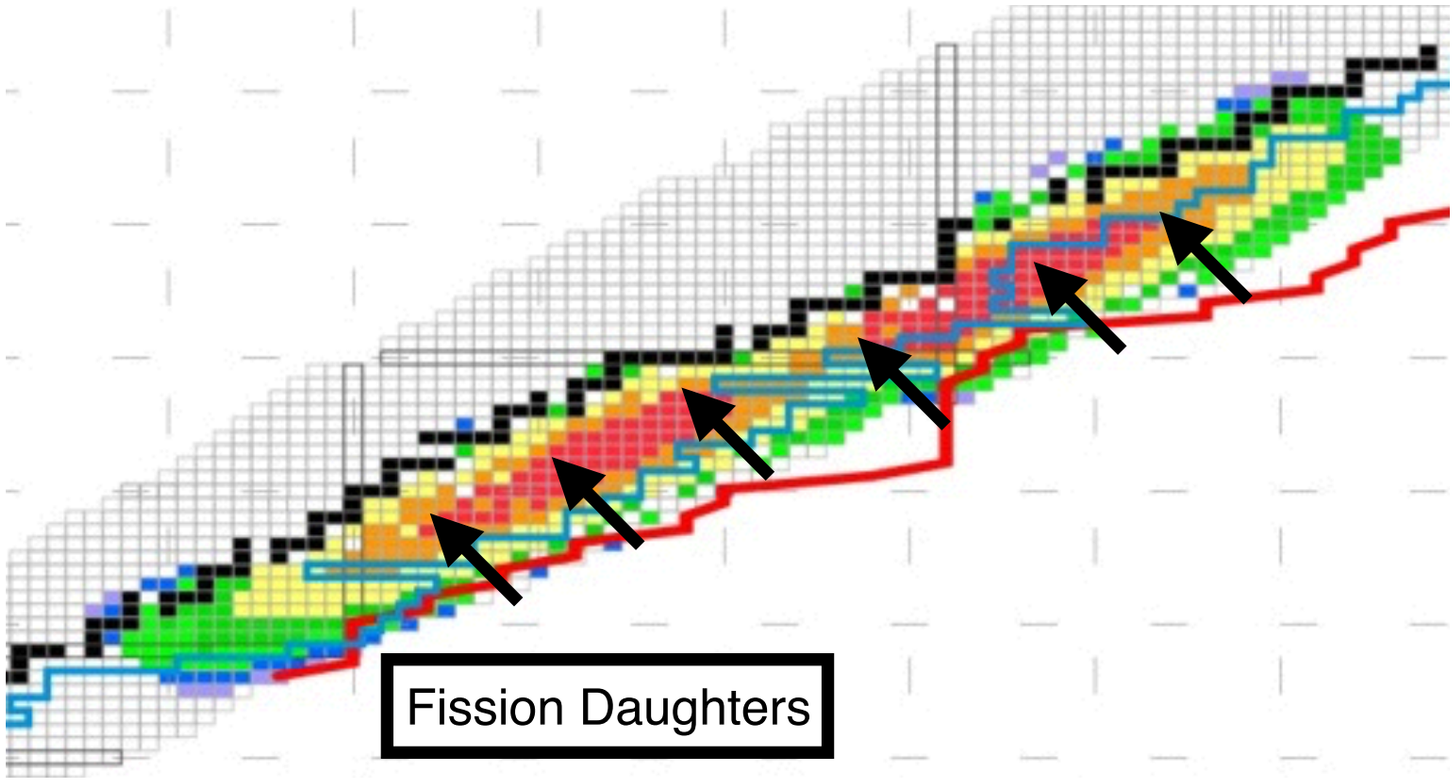
detect inverse beta decay:
anti-ν_e + p → e^+ + n

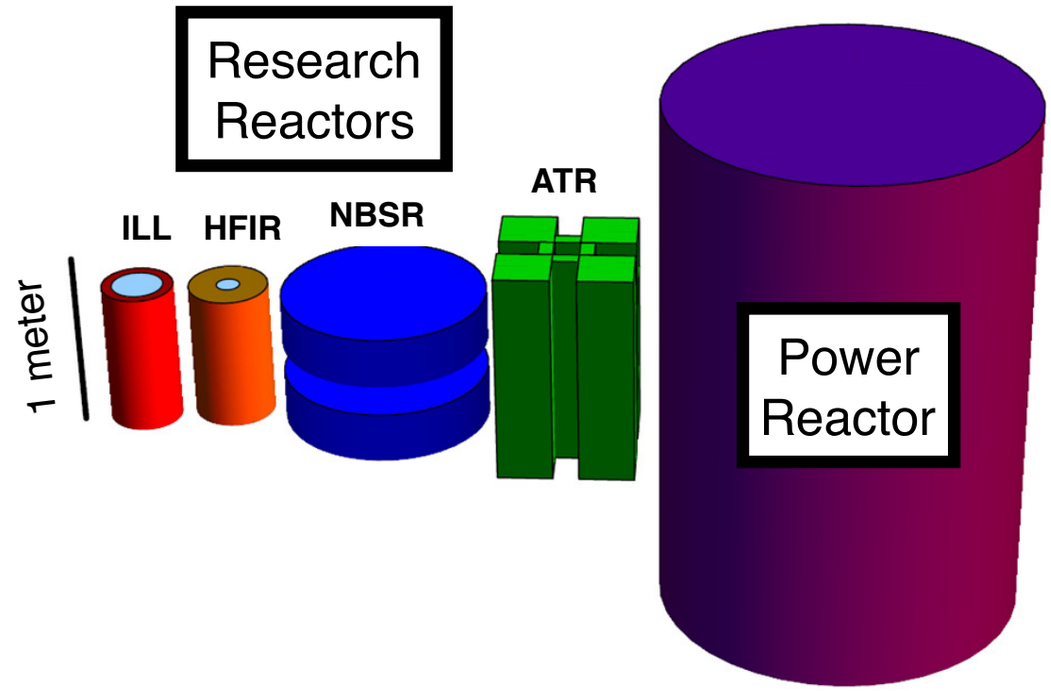
near detector

far detector

Relative measurements reduce dependence on predictions of reactor properties

Reactor neutrino production





$$S(E_{\bar{\nu}}) = \sum_{i=0}^{n} \boxed{R_i} \sum_{j=0}^{m} \boxed{f_{ij}} \boxed{S_{ij}(E_{\bar{\nu}})}$$

Decay Rate — Spectrum — Branching Fraction

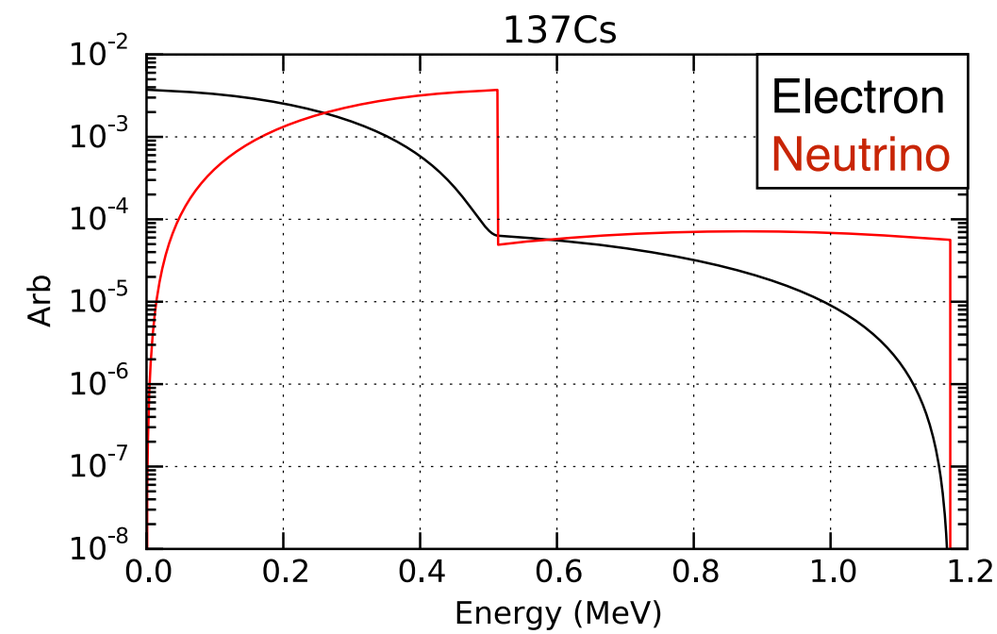
- Fission of parent isotopes yield neutron-rich daughters
  - Beta decays produce ~6ν/fission, <10MeV

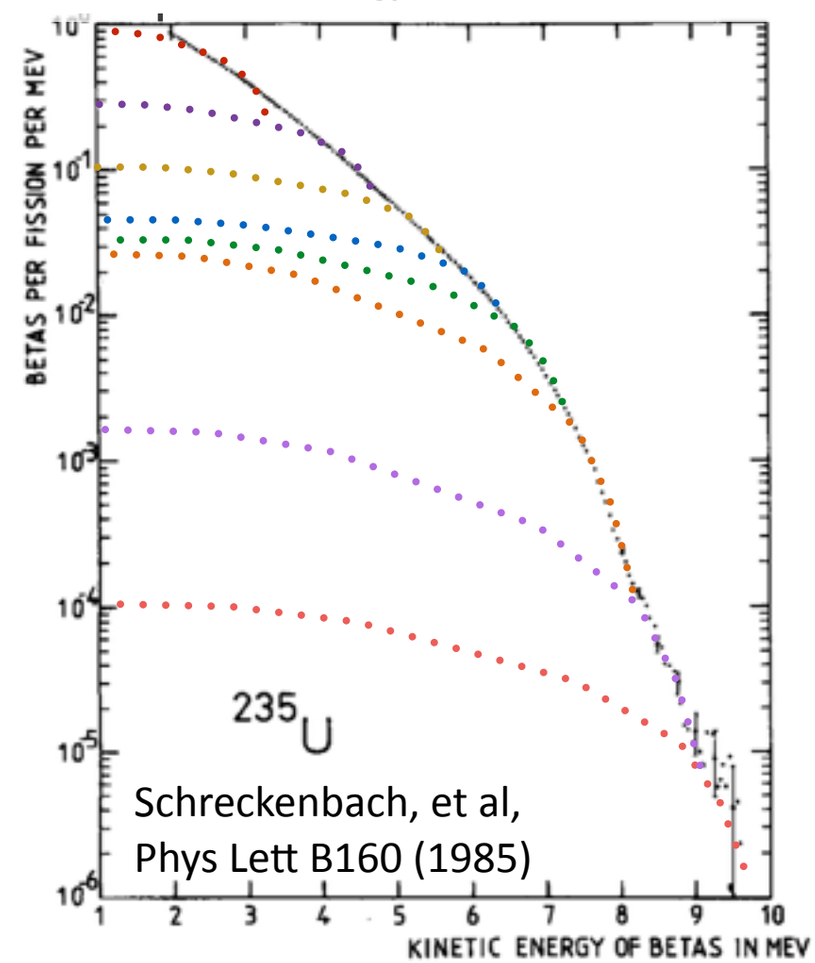
- Power plants have low-enriched uranium (LEU) cores
  - Mixture of ^{235}U, ^{238}U, ^{239}Pu, ^{241}Pu
- Research Reactors have highly-enriched cores only ^{235}U

Predicting Neutrino Flux/Spectra

Two main approaches:

- ***Ab-initio***
  - Calculate individual beta-decay spectra for 1000s of isotopes from database info
  - Sum according to cumulative yields
  - **Problem:** databases have huge uncertainties
- ***Beta-conversion***
  - Measure cumulative beta spectra from fission parents
  - Use virtual beta-branches to convert into neutrino spectra
  - **Problem:** can virtual branches capture all relevant physics?

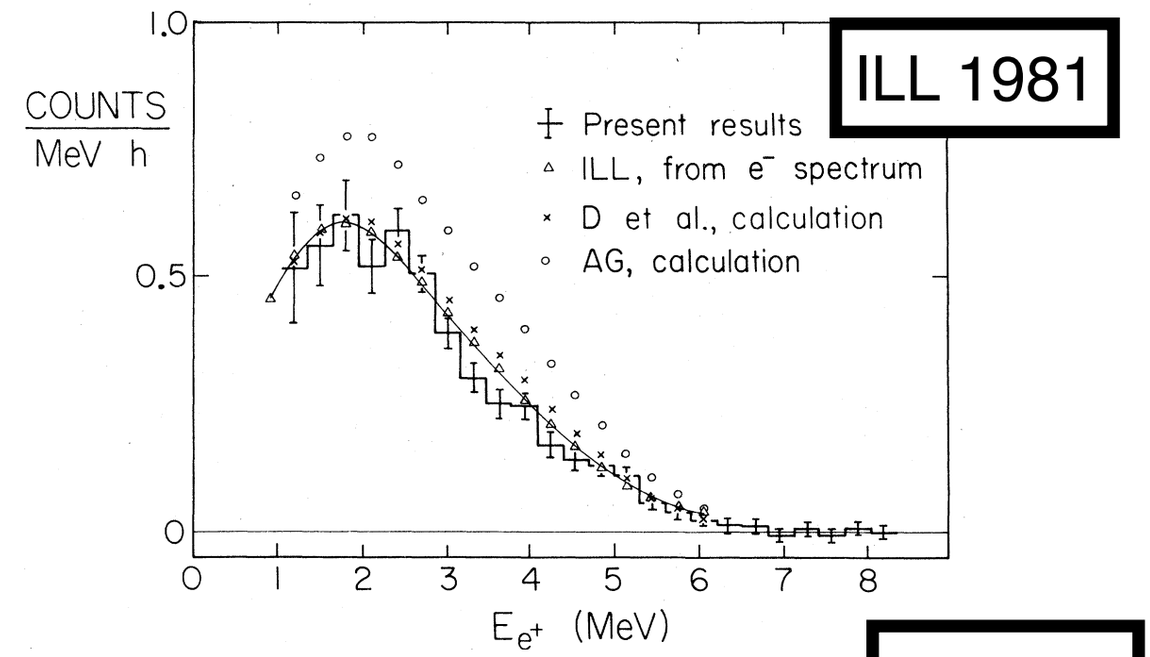


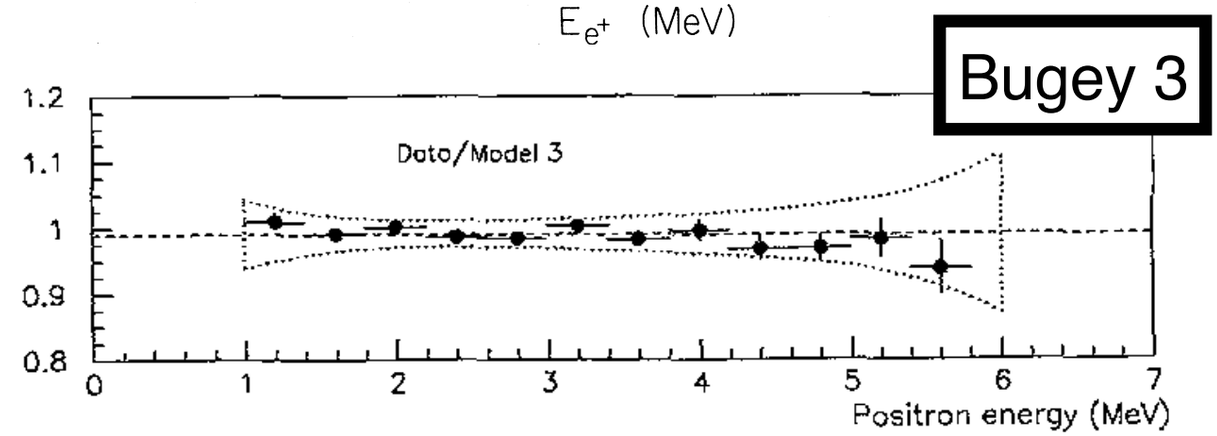


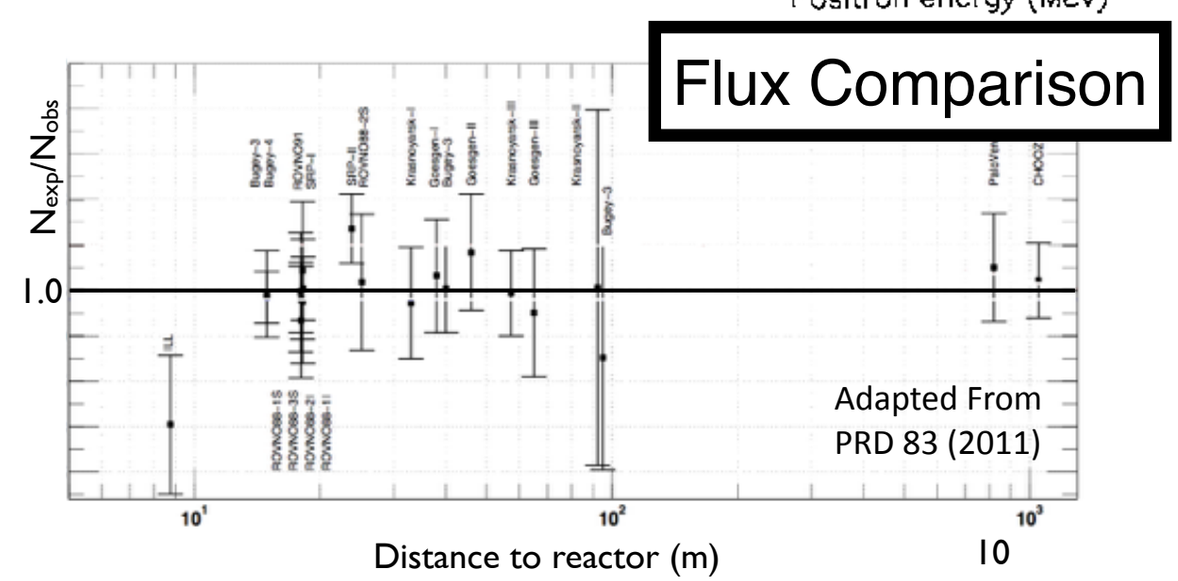
Schreckenbach, et al, Phys Lett B160 (1985)

Predicting Neutrino Flux/Spectra

- **Early 1980s:** Measurement of ^{235}U spectrum at Institut Laue–Langevin (ILL)
  - Agrees with ab-initio calculations
  - <5000 neutrinos detected, 20% uncertainties
- **Mid 1980s:** Beta-conversion measurements at ILL, reduce systematics improve uncertainties or predictions
- **1990s:** Bugey PWR spectrum agrees with Beta-conversion spectra
- **1990-2000s:** Measured fluxes agree with predictions

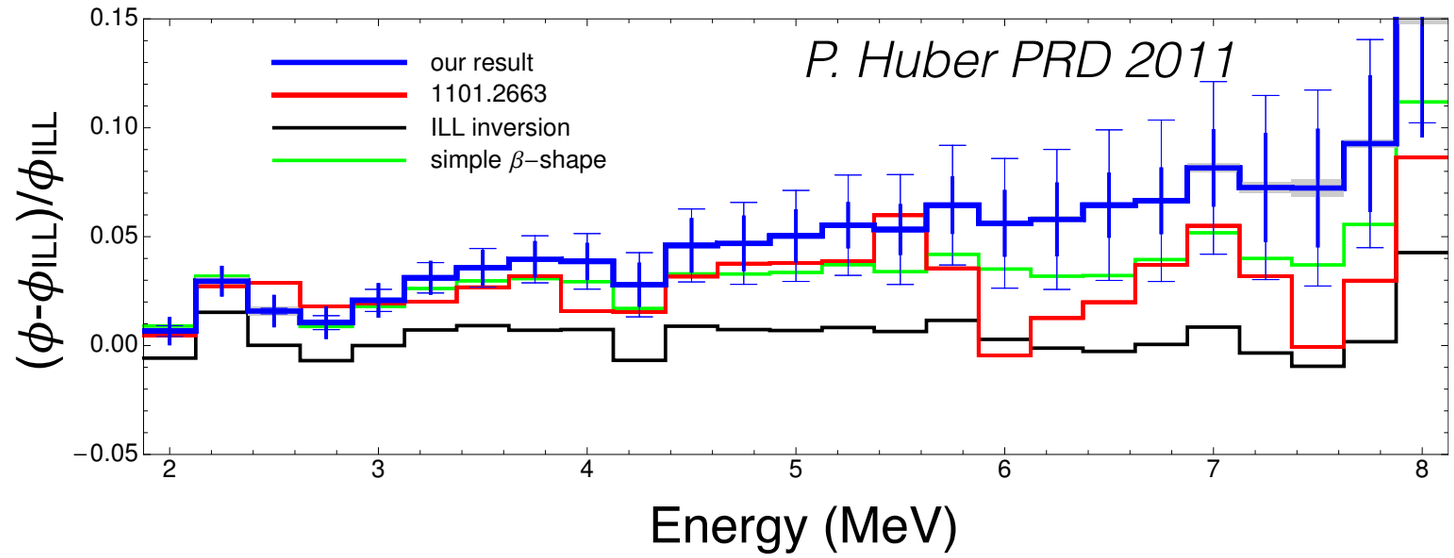


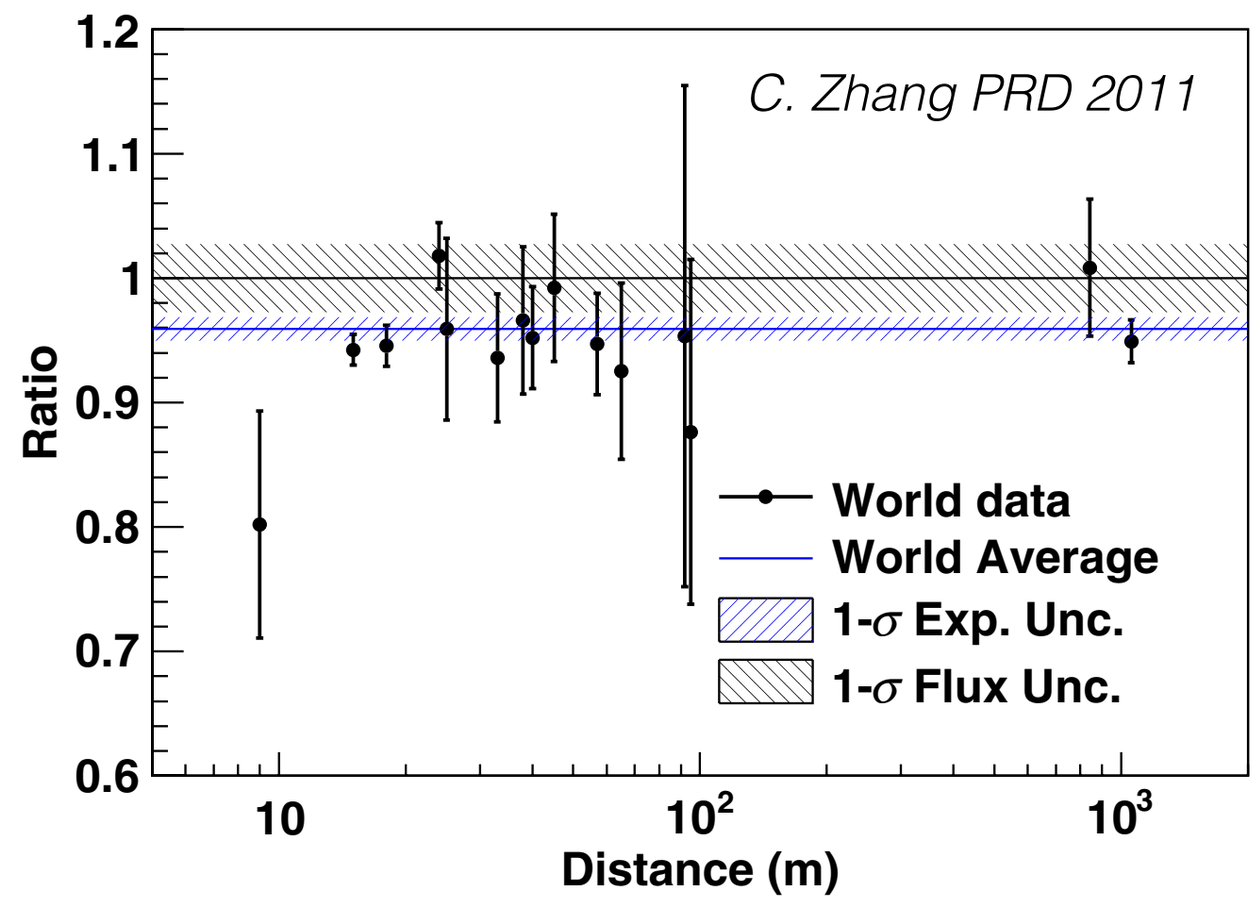




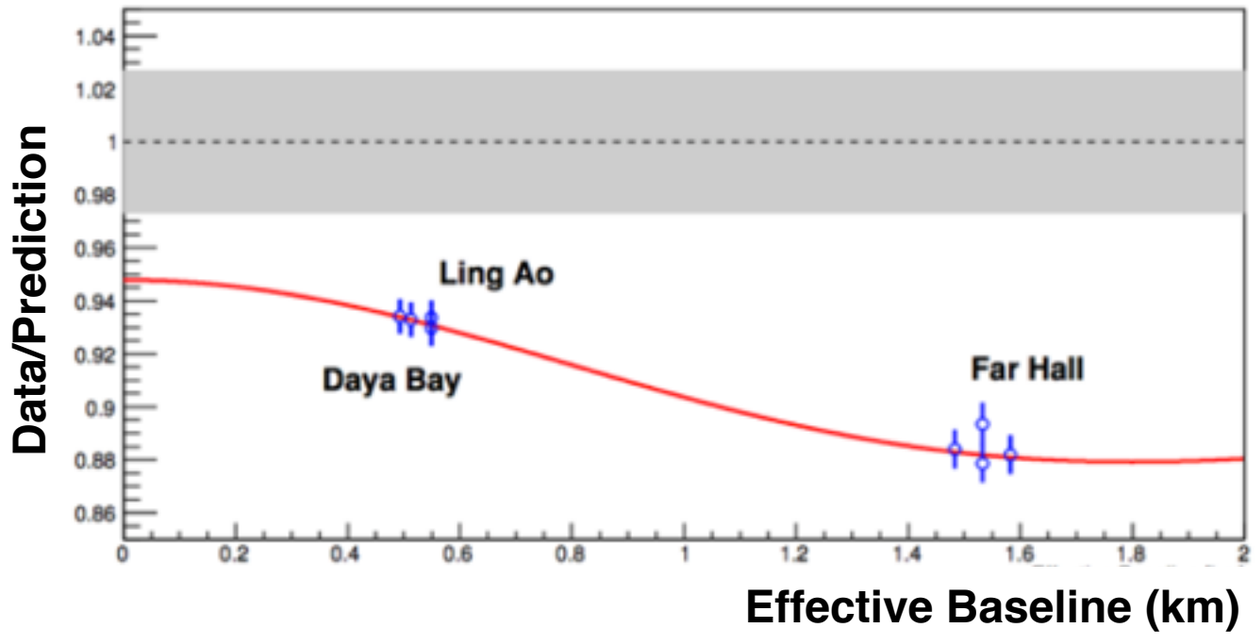
Recent Events: Problems emerge

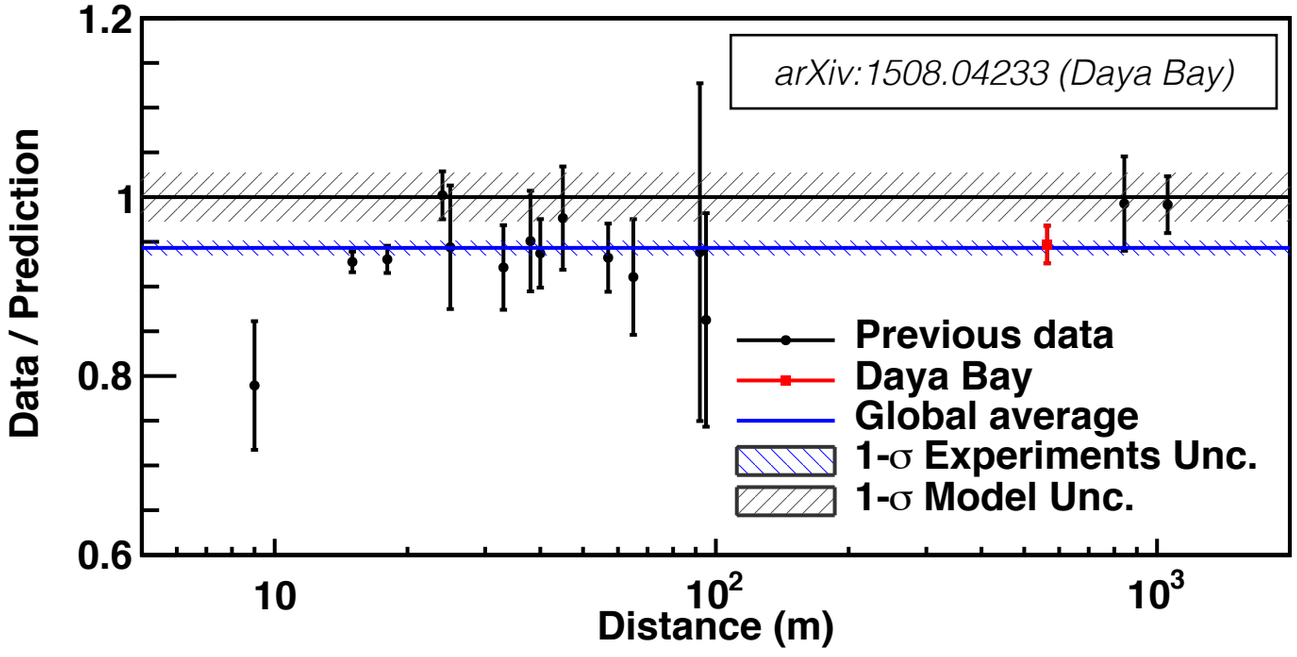
- **2011:** Two beta-conversion reanalyses increase predicted flux
  - One pure conversion, one hybrid between ab-initio and conversion
  - 3σ tension with previous experiments
- **Change in Flux/Spectrum:**
  - Conversion: +3%
  - Neutron lifetime: +1%
  - Non-equilibrium isotopes: +1%
- **Could be bias from non-blind analyses?**





Flux Deficit at Daya Bay

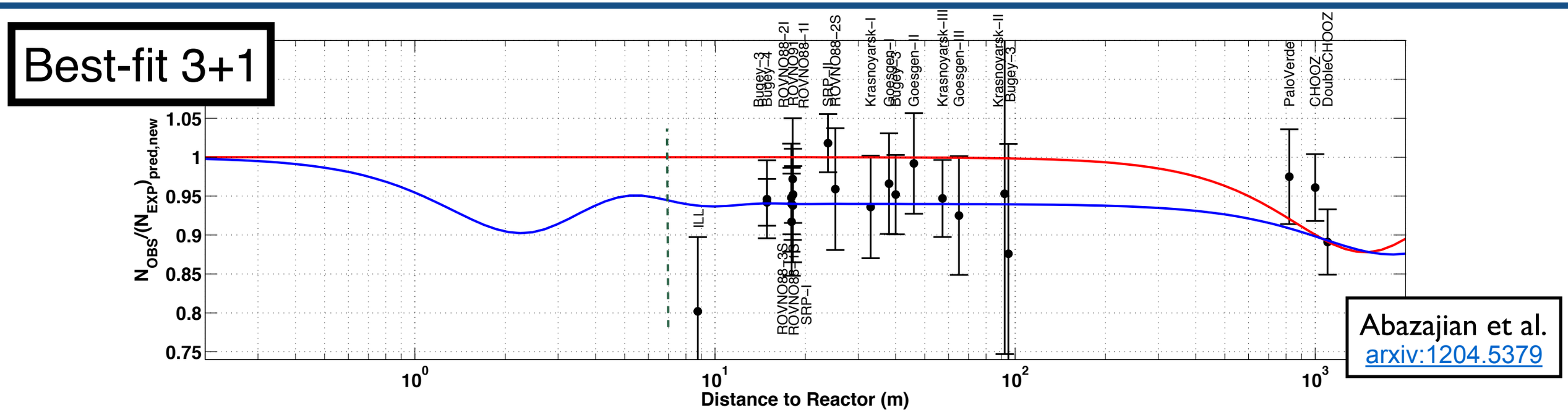




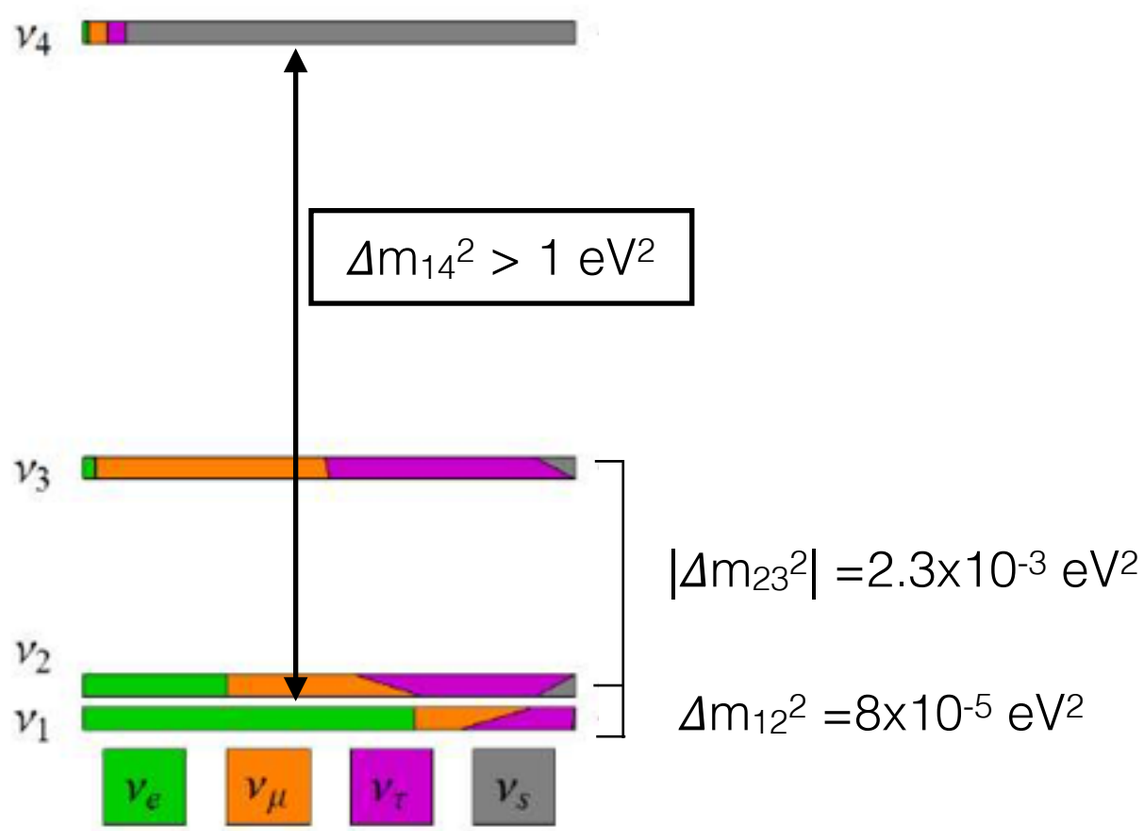
Blind analysis of absolute flux agrees with old prediction

Not a bias effect

Sterile Neutrinos??



Abazajian et al.
arxiv:1204.5379



If not a bias effect, what is it?

- Problem with prediction?
- Detector effect that isn't understood?
- *New physics?*

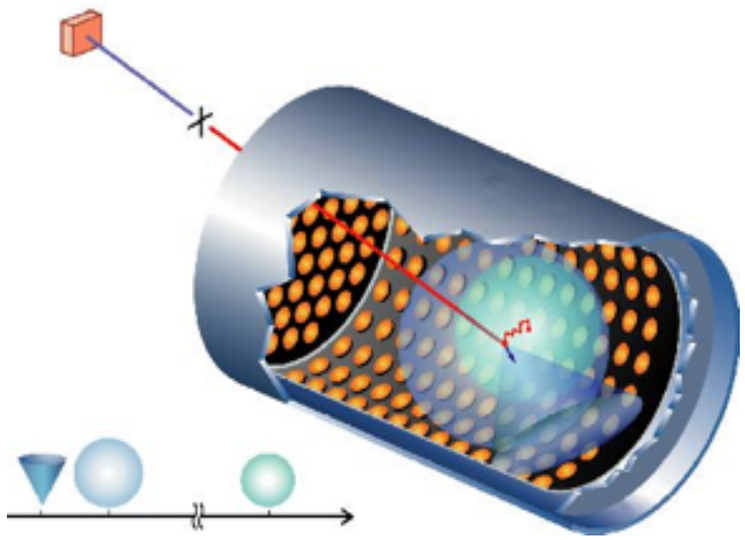
Sterile Neutrino:

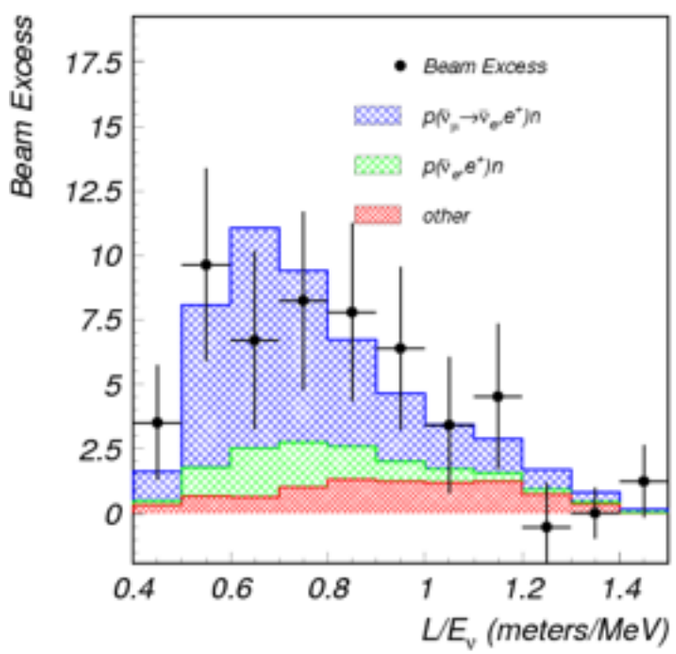
- High frequency oscillation
- Mass splitting ~1eV^2
- Baseline ~few meters

Other Sterile Neutrino Hints

PROSPECT

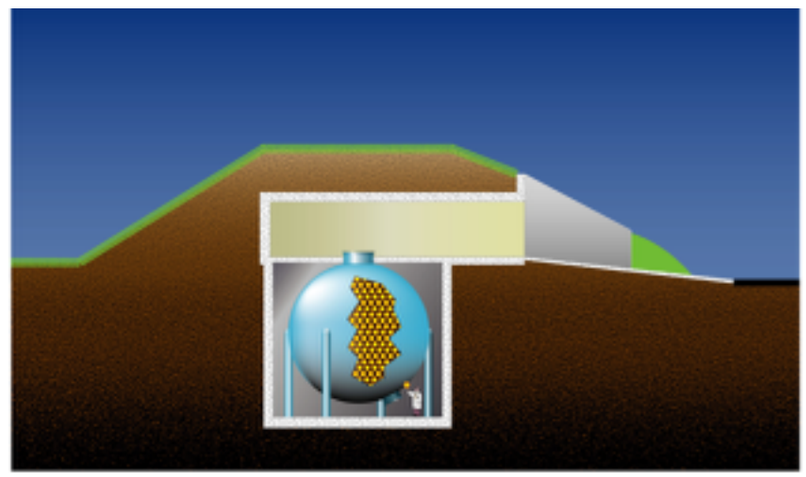
LSND
decay at rest

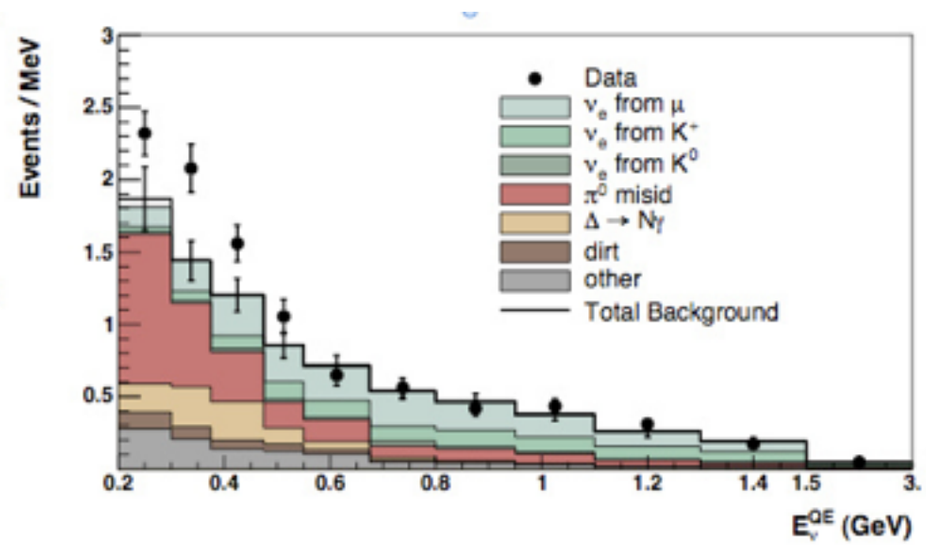




anti-ν_e appearance

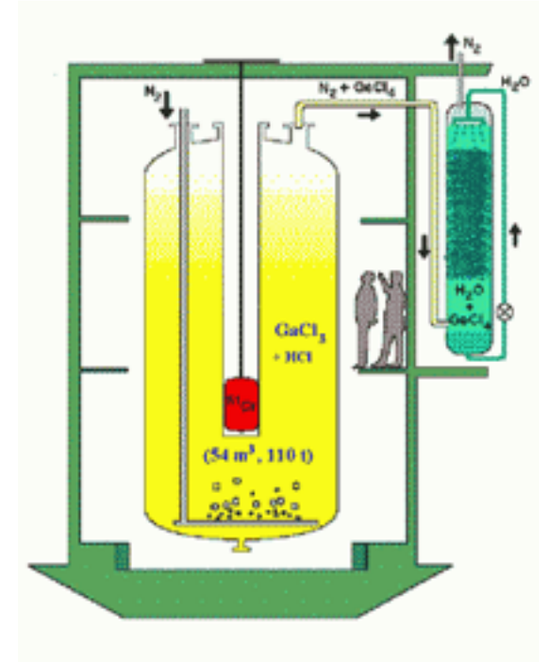
MiniBooNE
short baseline accelerator

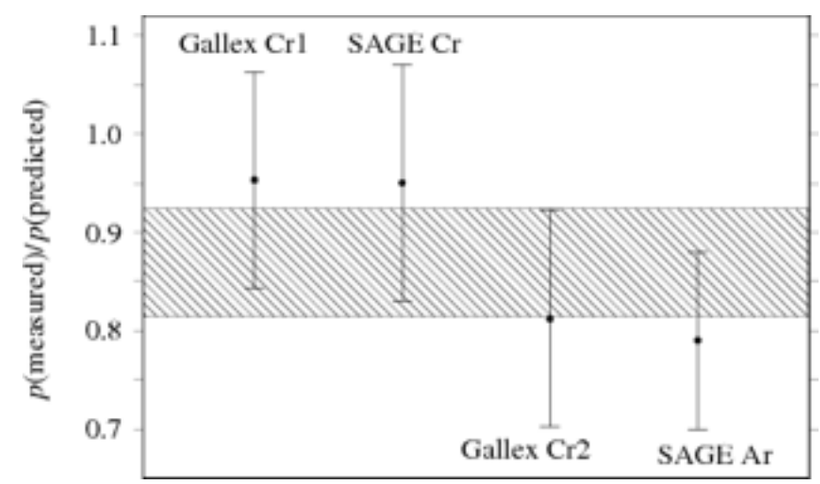




low energy ν_e appearance

GALLEX/SAGE
Ga source calibration





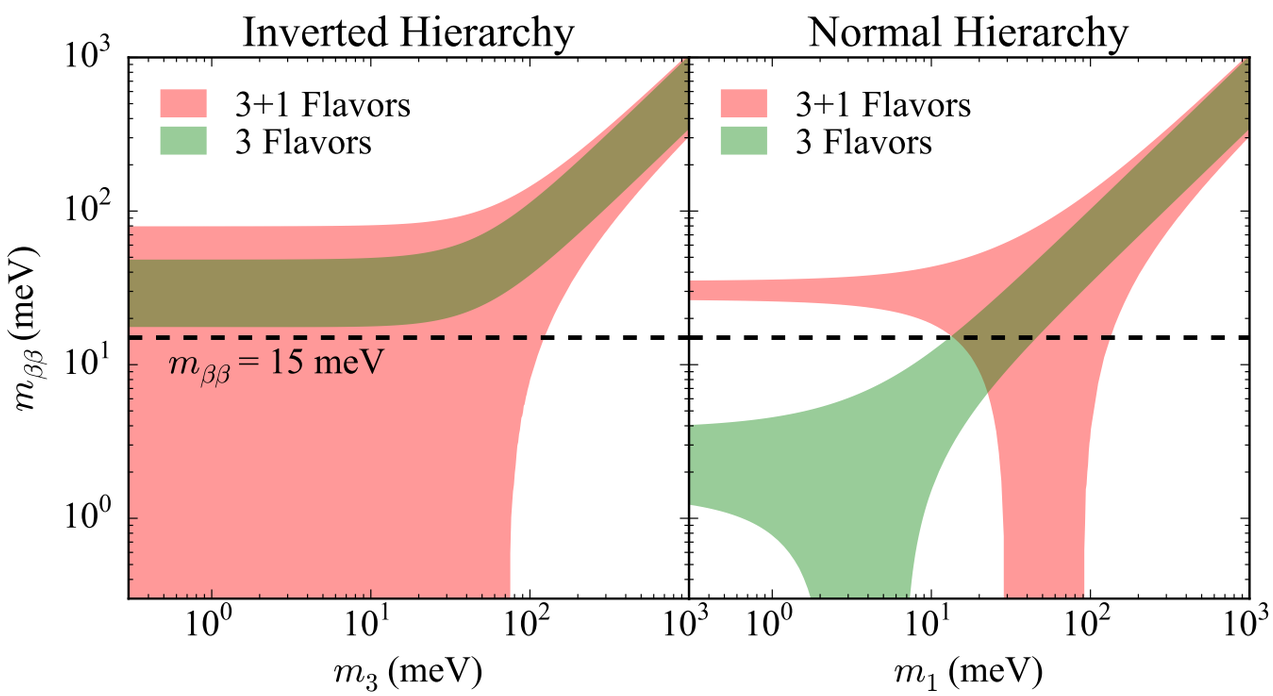
ν_e disappearance

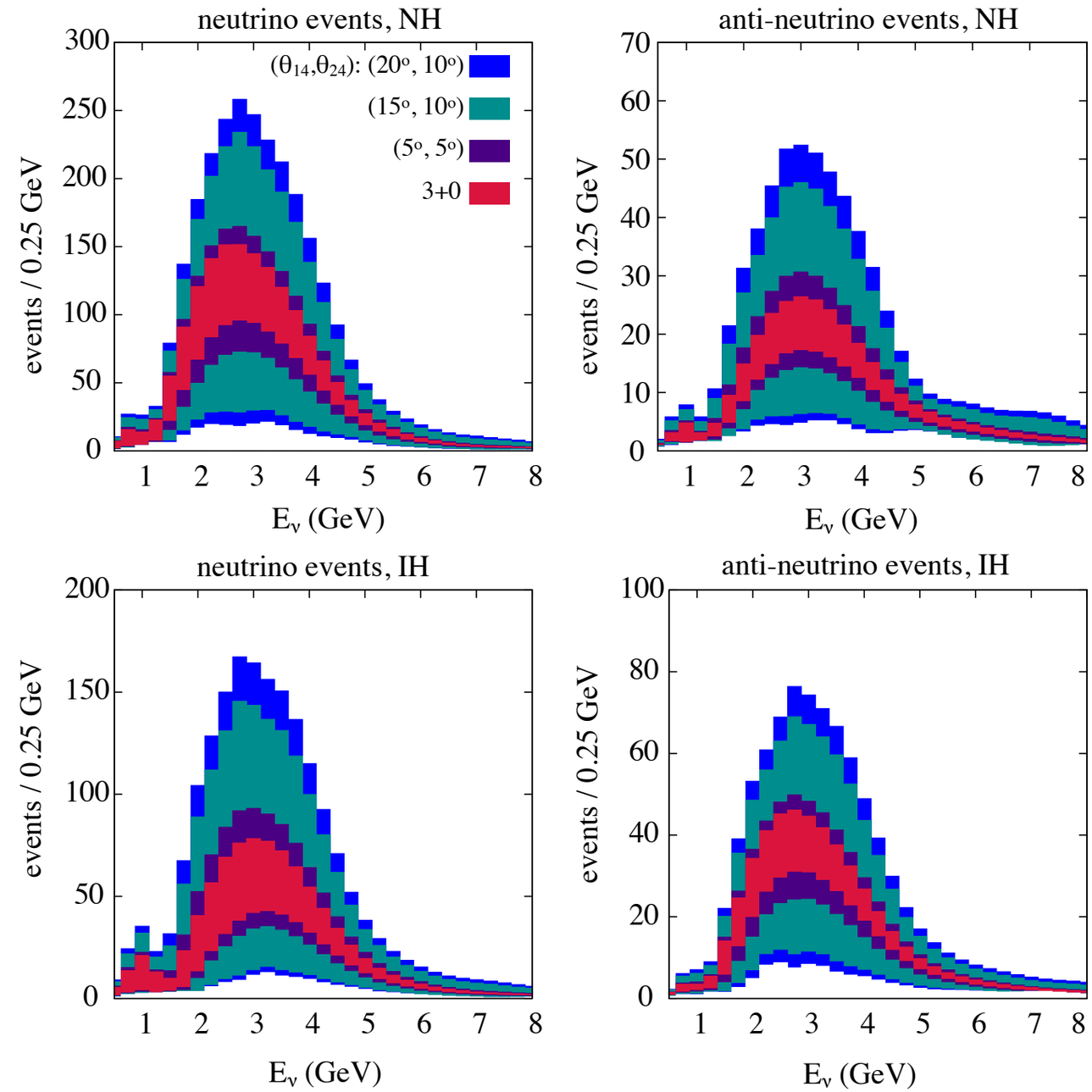
Impact on Future Experiments

eV-scale neutrinos would impact:

- Expected neutrino spectrum for Long-baseline oscillation searches
- Mass ordering for Double Beta Decay searches

Needs to be addressed soon

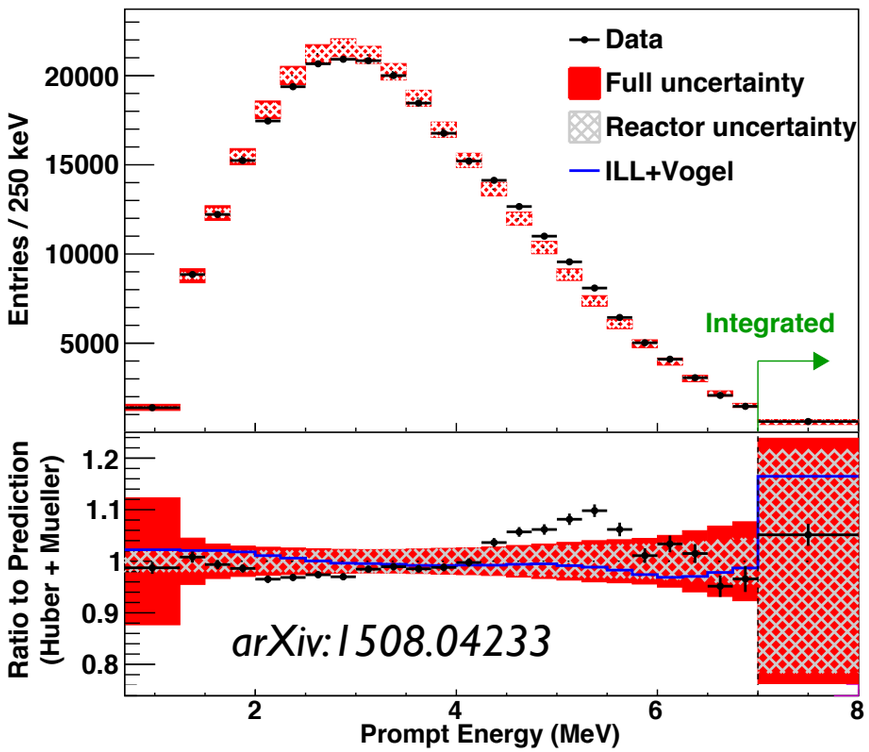




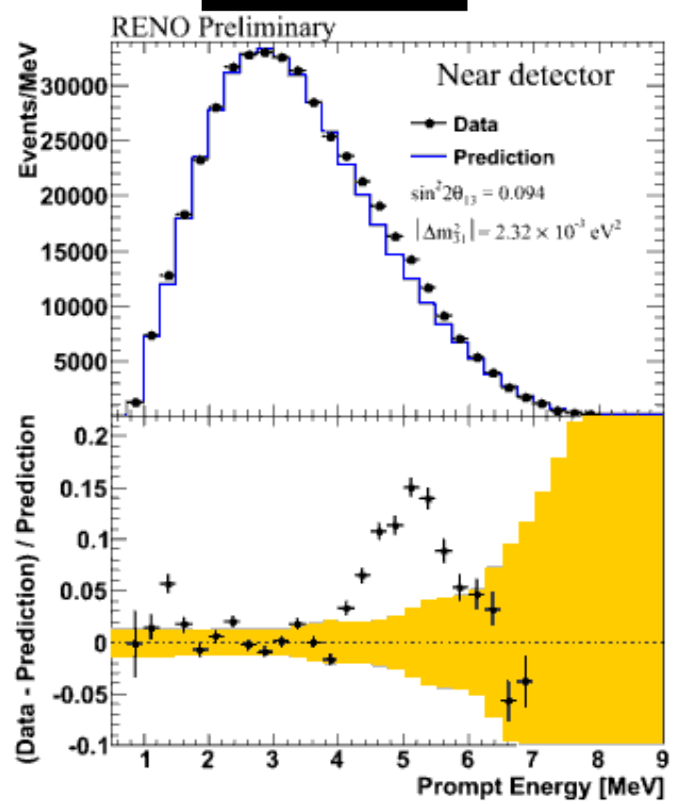
Gandhi, Kayser, Masud, Prakash
arXiv:1508.06275

New Anomaly: Spectral Feature

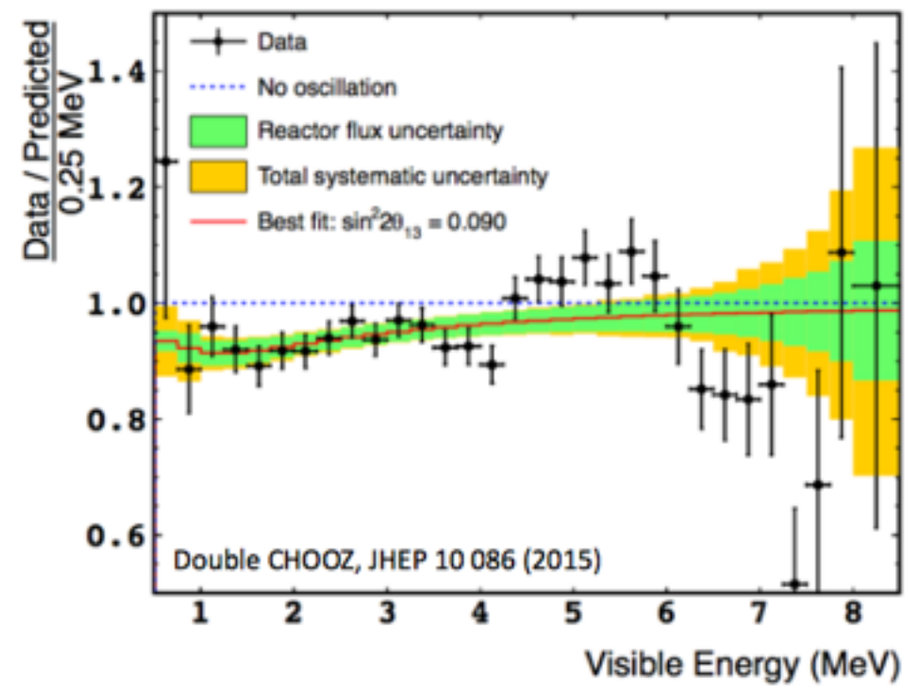
Daya Bay



RENO



Double Chooz

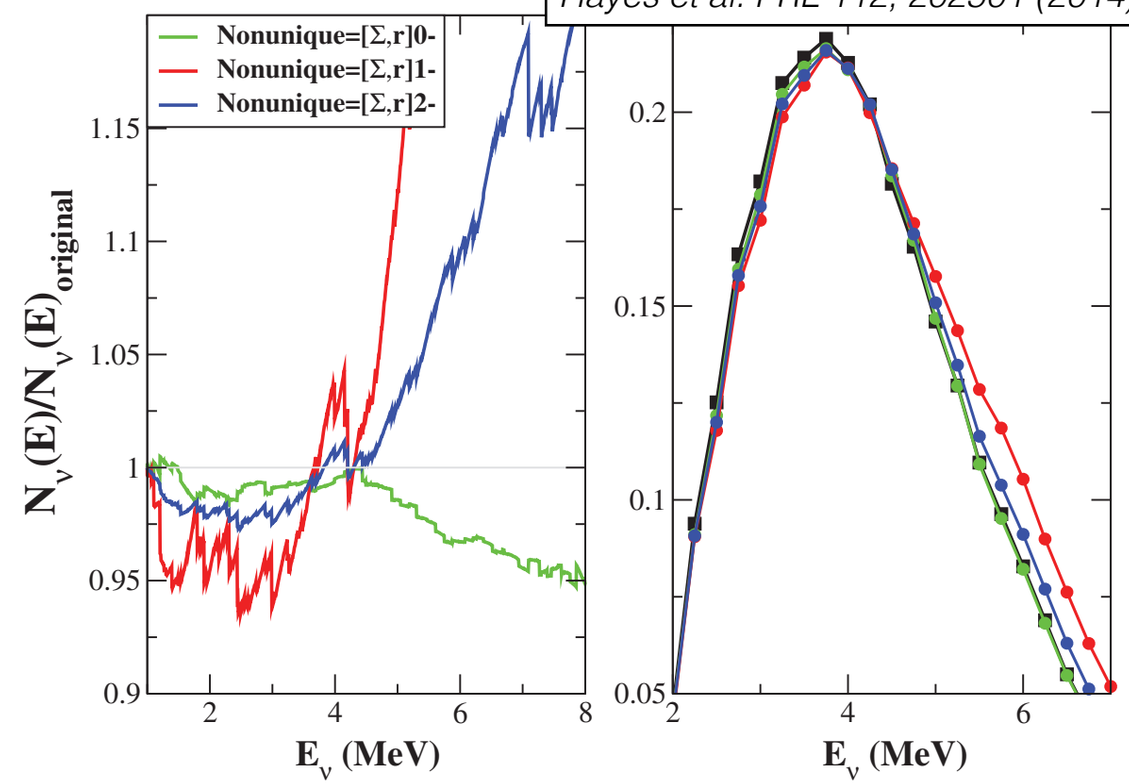


- All three $\boldsymbol{\theta}_{13}$ experiments have observed a spectral deviation between 4-6MeV prompt energy (5-7MeV neutrino energy)
- Predictions based on beta-conversion (Huber, Mueller, Haag)
- Tracks with reactor power, observed in both Near and Far detectors
- Cannot be explained by known detector effects

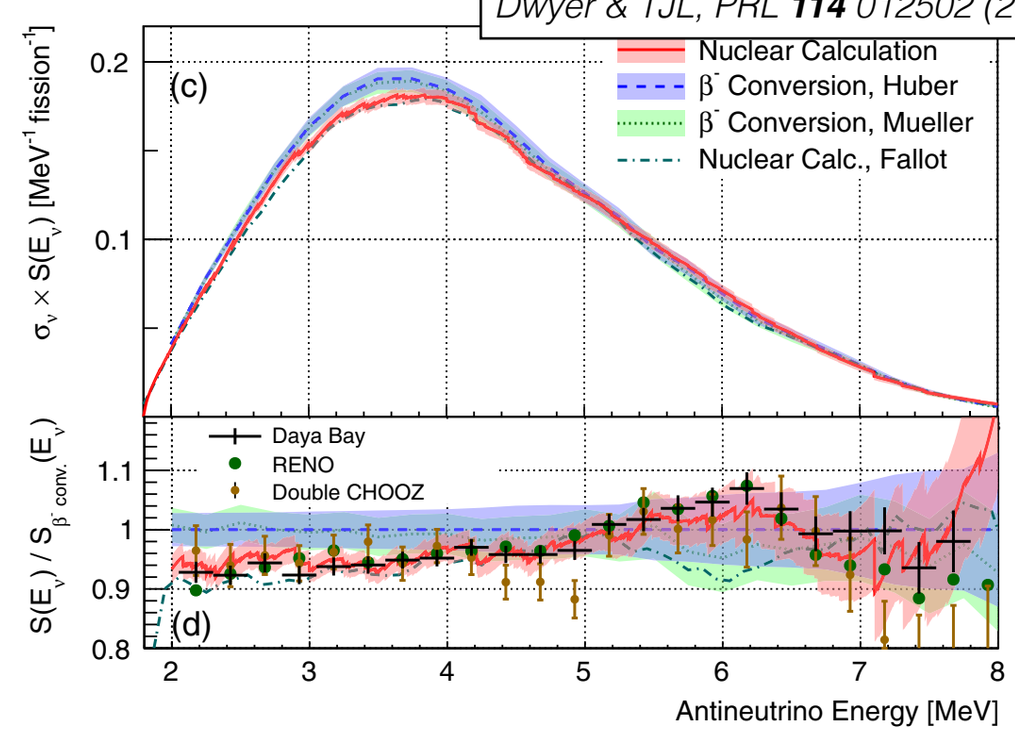
New Anomaly: Spectral Feature

- **Beta-converted spectra could be wrong:**
  - Use Allowed shapes for all decays, known to be incorrect
  - Error in the measurements?
- Ab-initio calculation for one database seems to reproduce the feature
  - **Problem:** Large uncertainties and missing data
  - **Problem:** More complete database doesn't reproduce the shape
- *Feature seems to track with ^{238}U content, could point to one fission parent as the problem?*

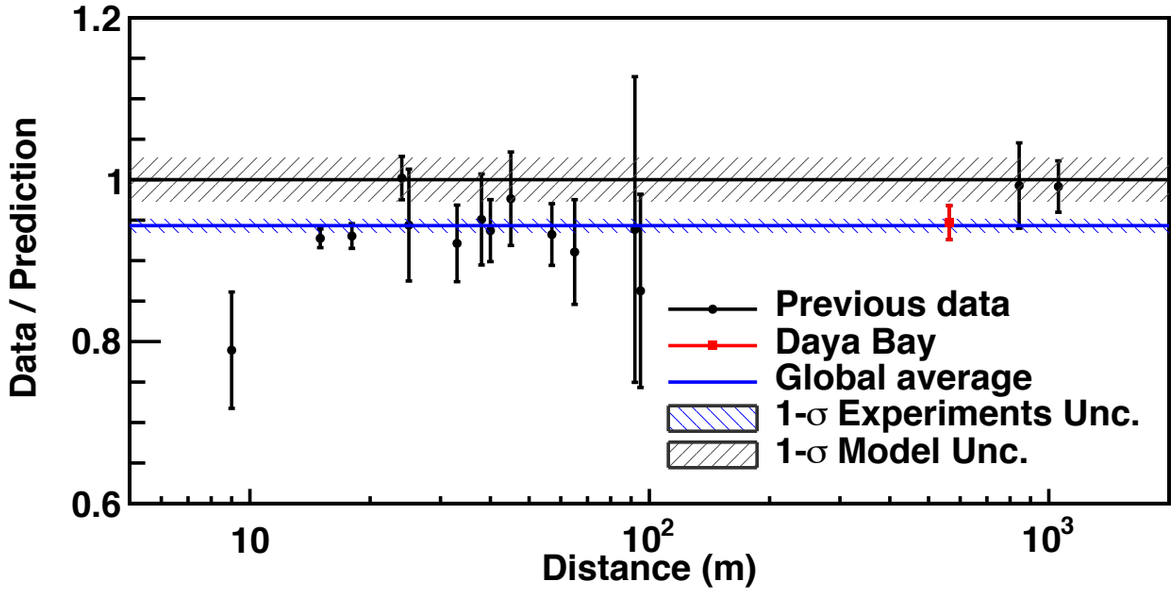
Hayes et al. PRL 112, 202501 (2014)

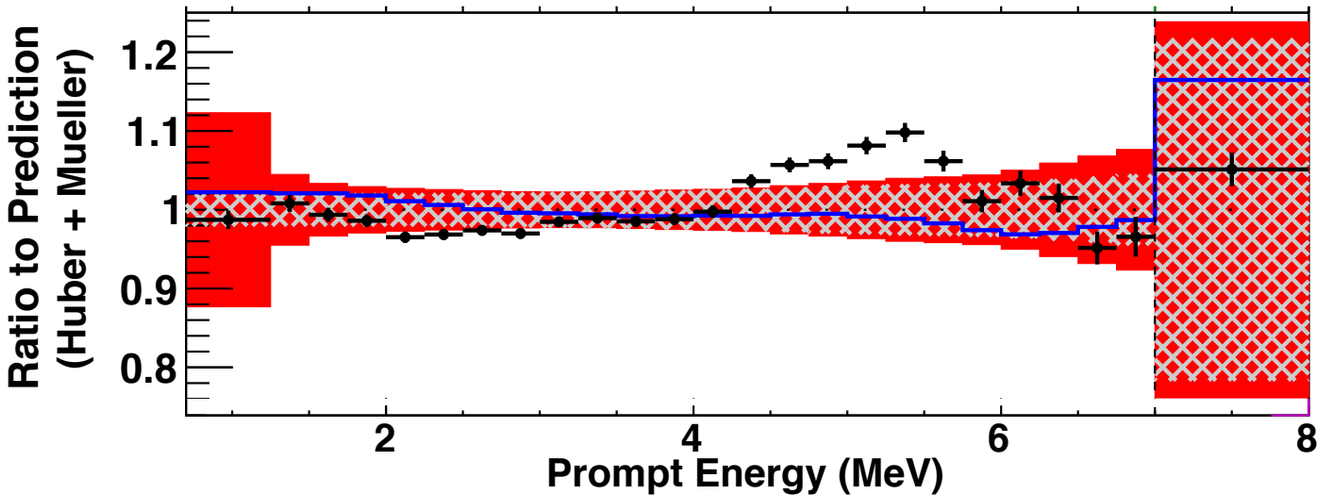


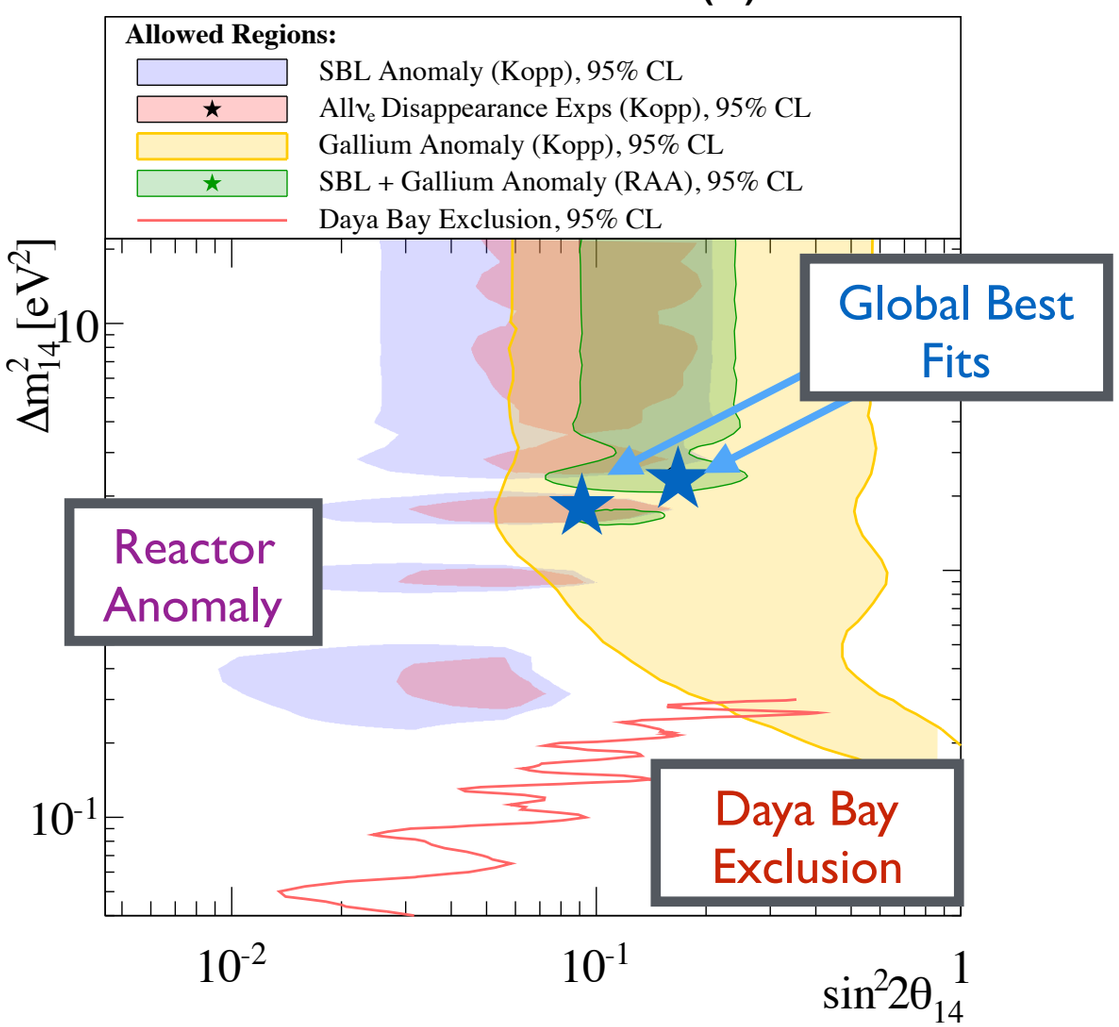
*Dwyer & TJL, PRL **114** 012502 (2015)*



Anomalies lead to Discoveries







- Flux deficit remains after blinded analysis
- No existing experiment is able to probe these questions
- **We need new data**
- Spectral anomaly could point were to look
  - All θ_{13} measurements at LEU power reactors
  - *HEU measurement powerful crosscheck*

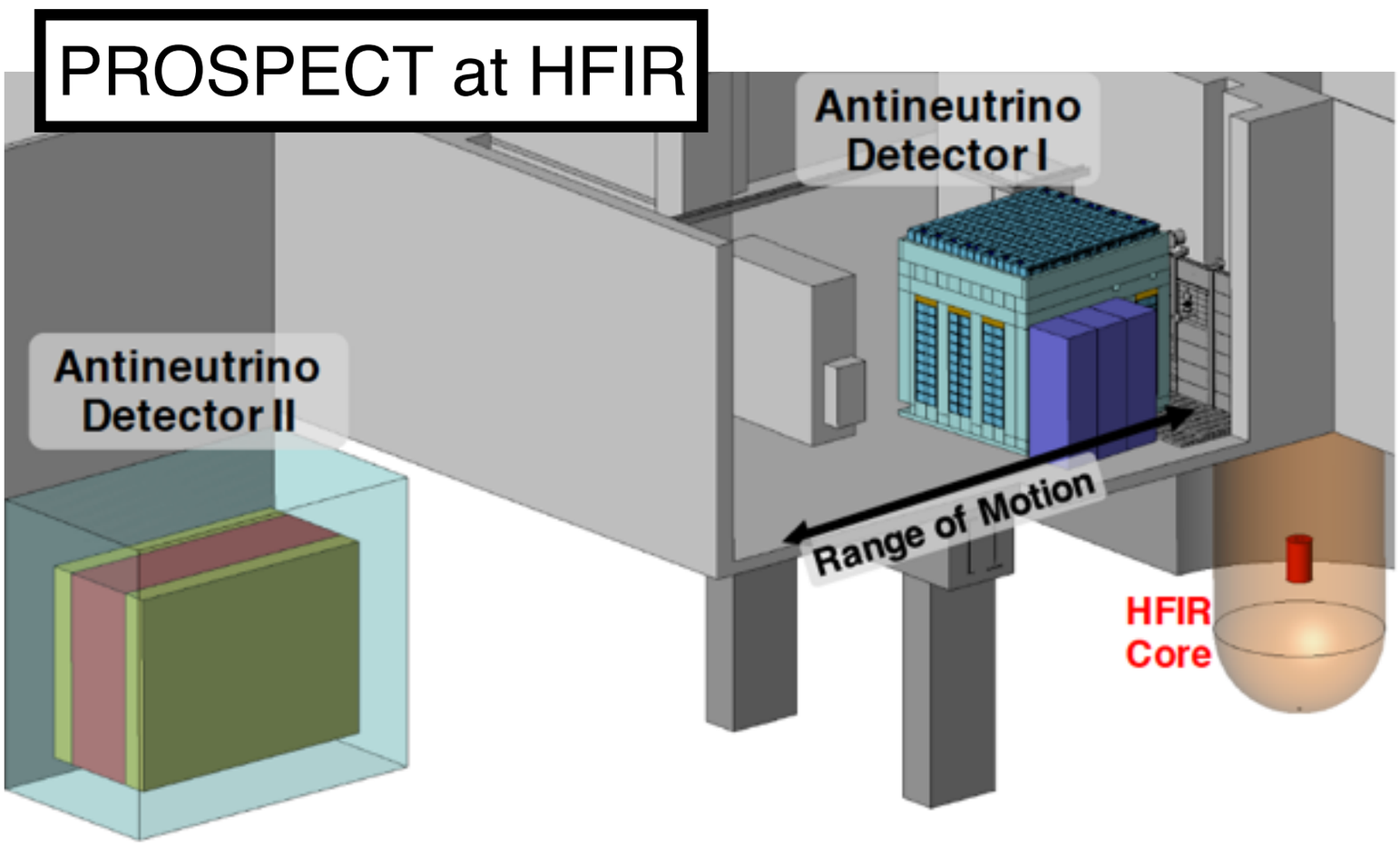
PROSPECT

The Precision Reactor Oscillation and Spectrum Experiment

Phased Experimental Plan

Physics Goals:

- Search for short baseline ν_e oscillations using detector segmentation
  - Distortions in energy spectrum that vary with baseline
- Measure ^{235}U antineutrino spectrum to illuminate the spectral anomaly



Experimental Strategy:

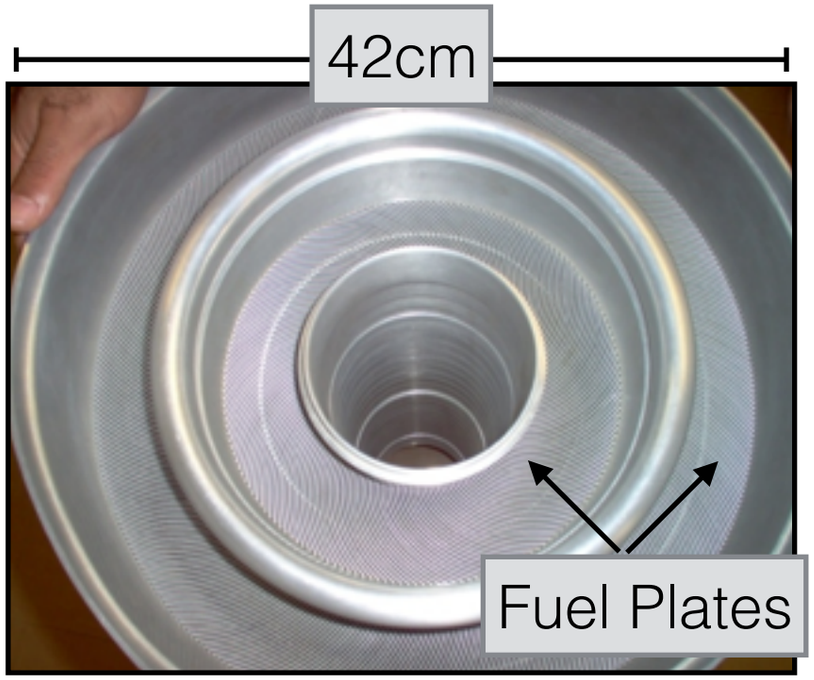
- **Phase 1:**
  - Sterile neutrino search, cover best fit region at 4σ in 1 year
  - World-leading ^{235}U spectrum with 100k events/year
- **Phase 2:** World-leading short baseline sensitivity

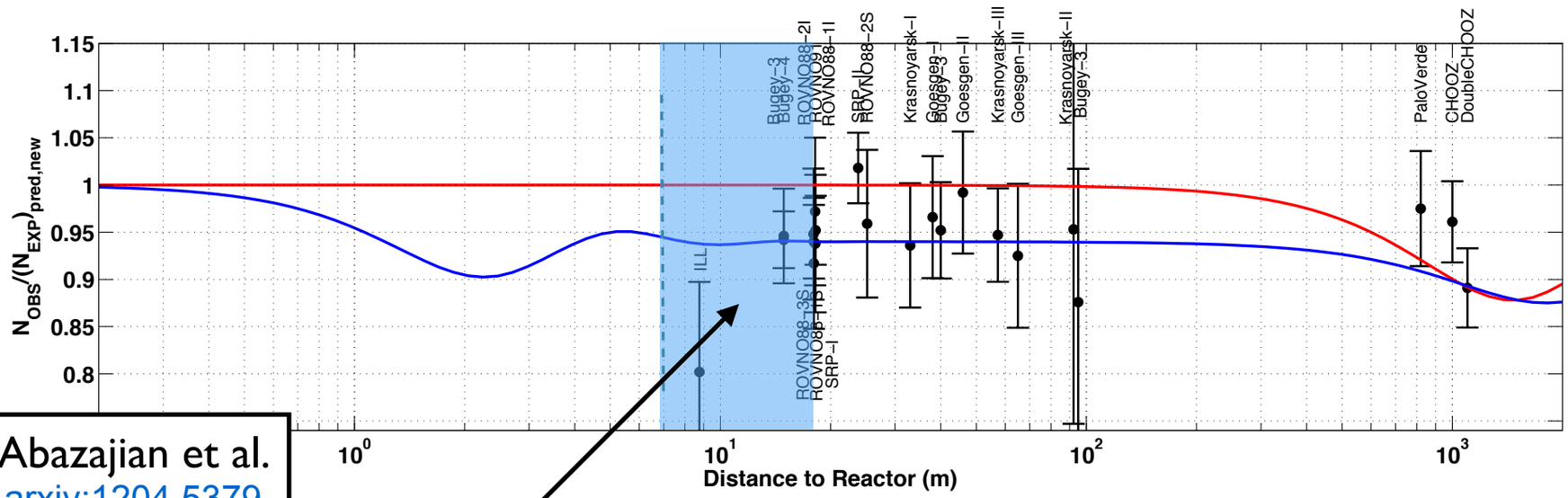
Challenges:

- Minimal overburden, cosmogenic backgrounds
- Reactor-related backgrounds
  - High energy ($\lesssim$10MeV) gammas

HFIR Research Reactor

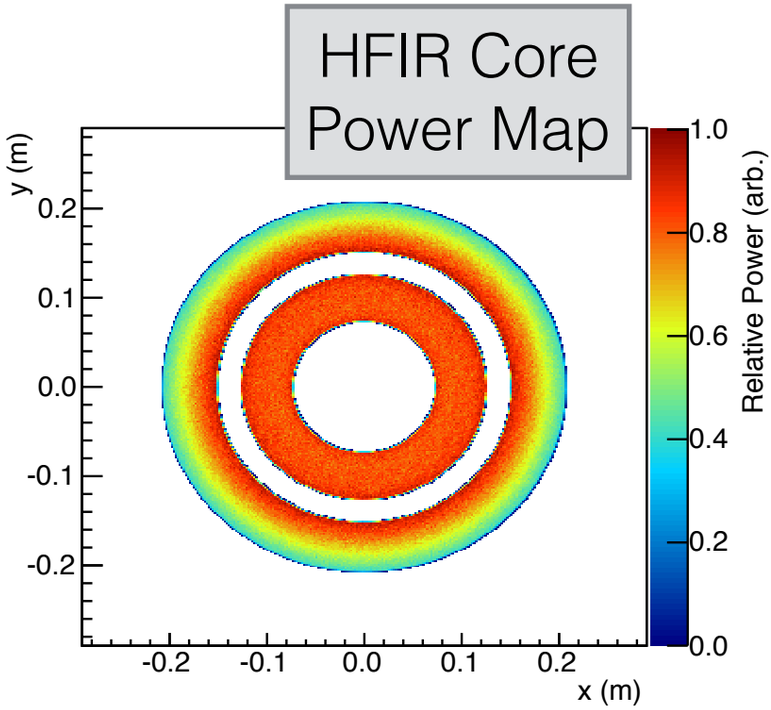
- High Flux Isotope Reactor at Oak Ridge National Lab
- 85MW HEU compact-core reactor, 42% uptime
- PROSPECT activity for past 3 yrs
- Backgrounds fully characterized
- Unique location for a short baseline experiment



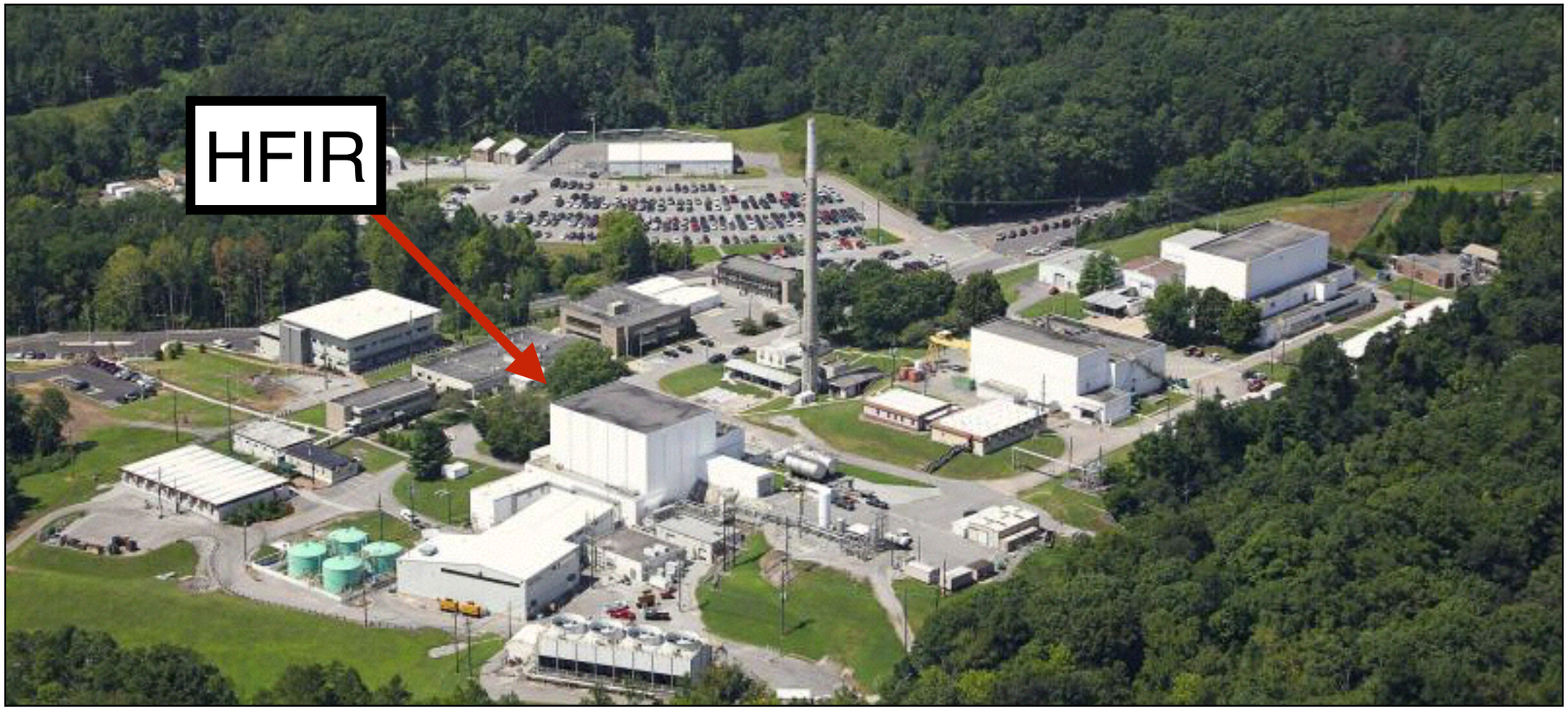


Abazajian et al.
arxiv:1204.5379

HFIR Baselines



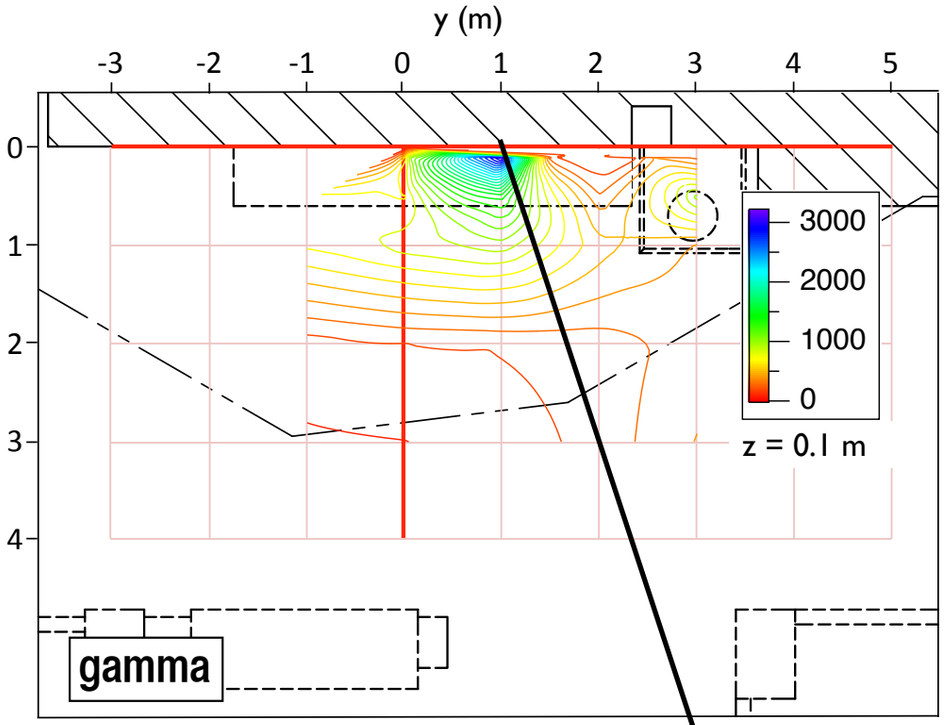
Surface Neutrino Detection



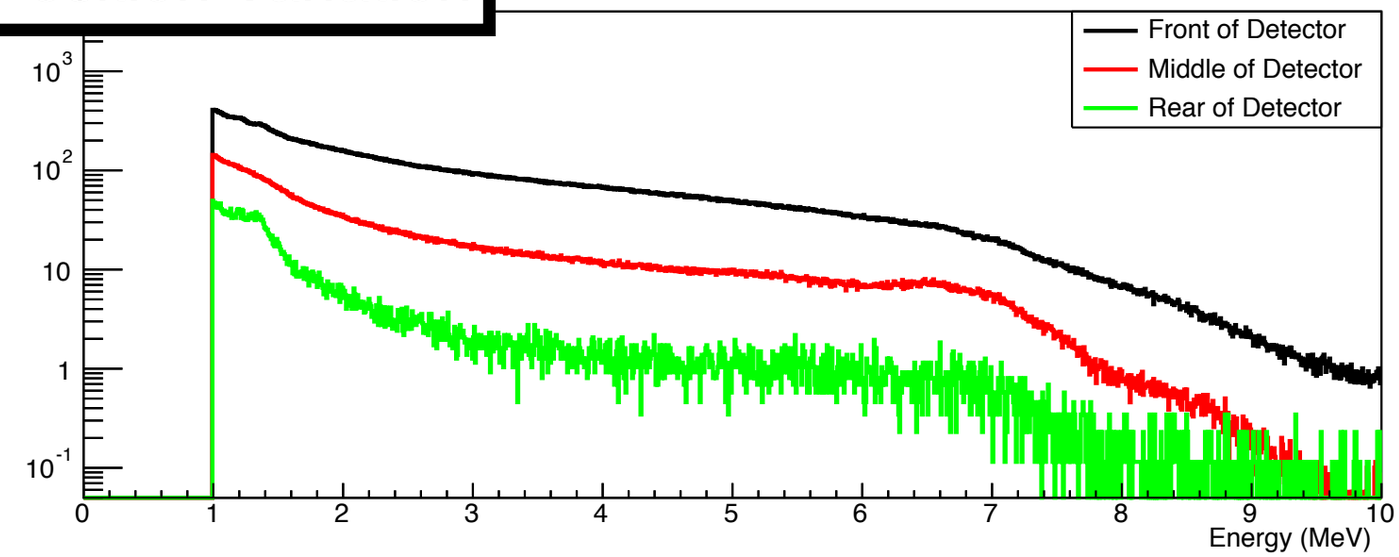
Must be very close to research reactor

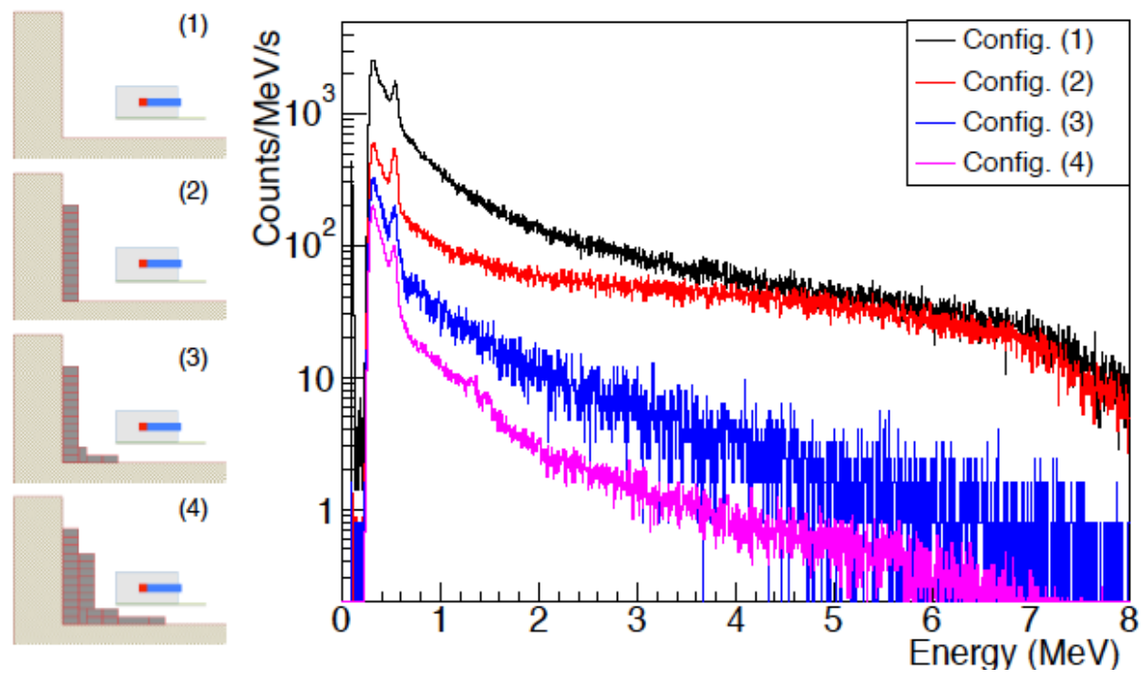
- Reactor-related backgrounds (gammas and thermal n)
- Detector will have to operate at the surface (or close to it)
- *Cosmic-rays are problematic*

Reactor Backgrounds



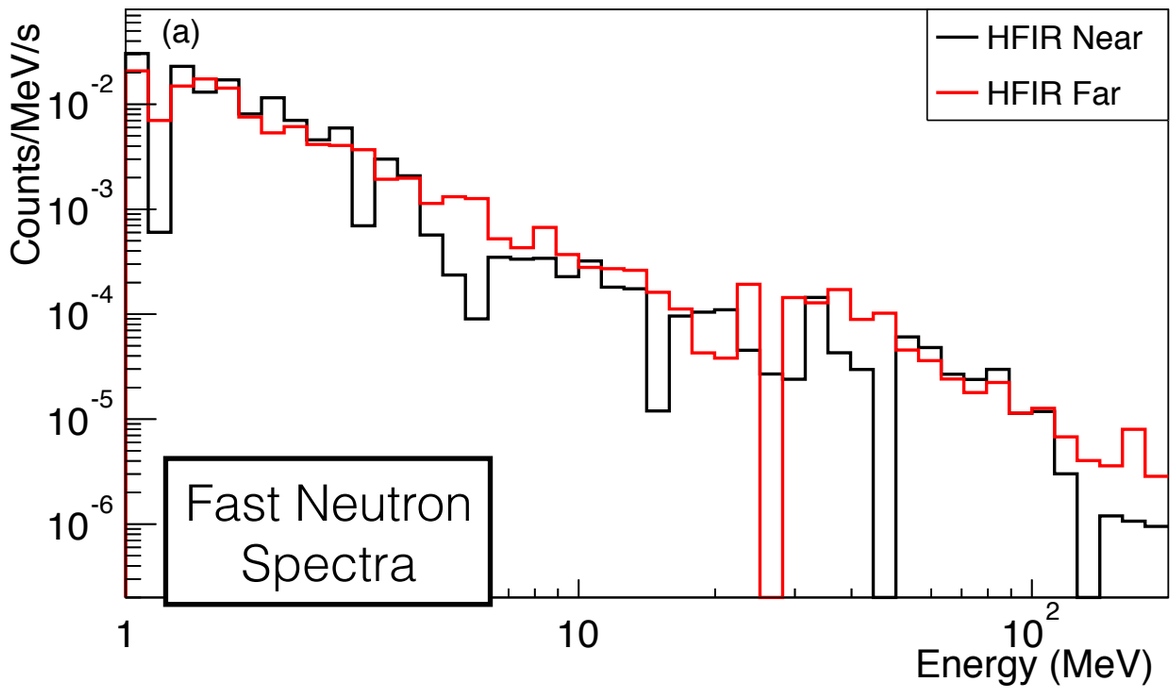
Position Variation

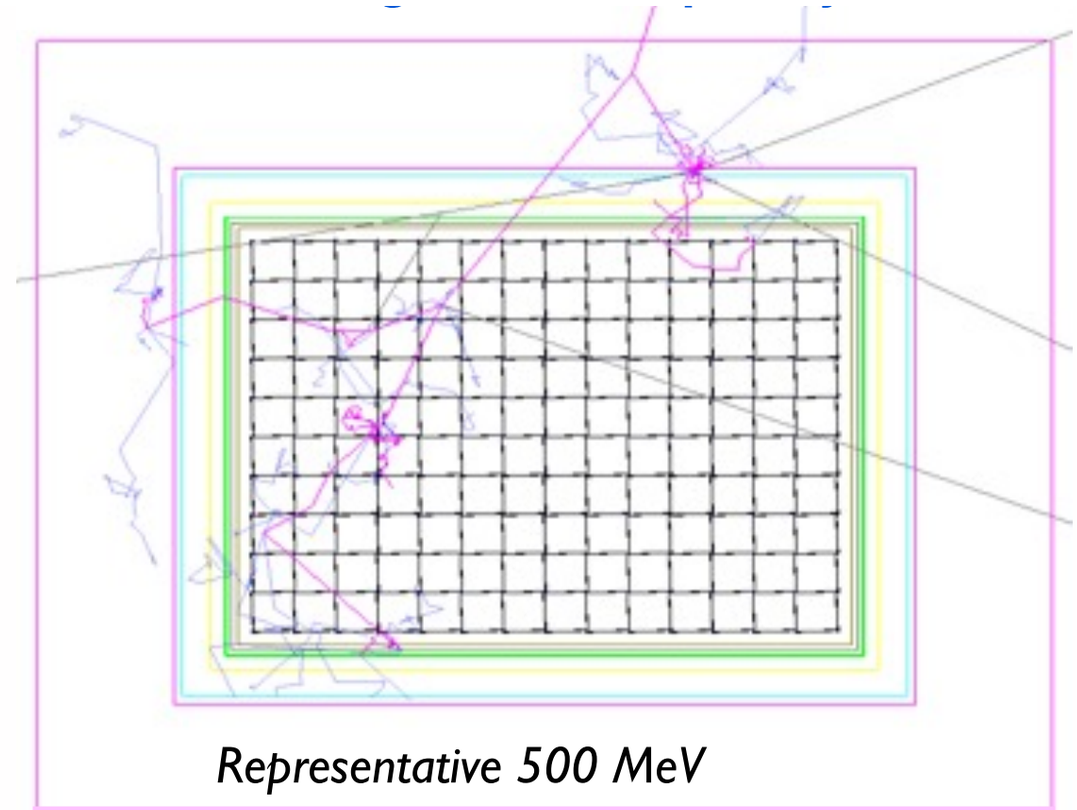




Targeted shielding effectively reduced gamma backgrounds

Cosmogenic Backgrounds

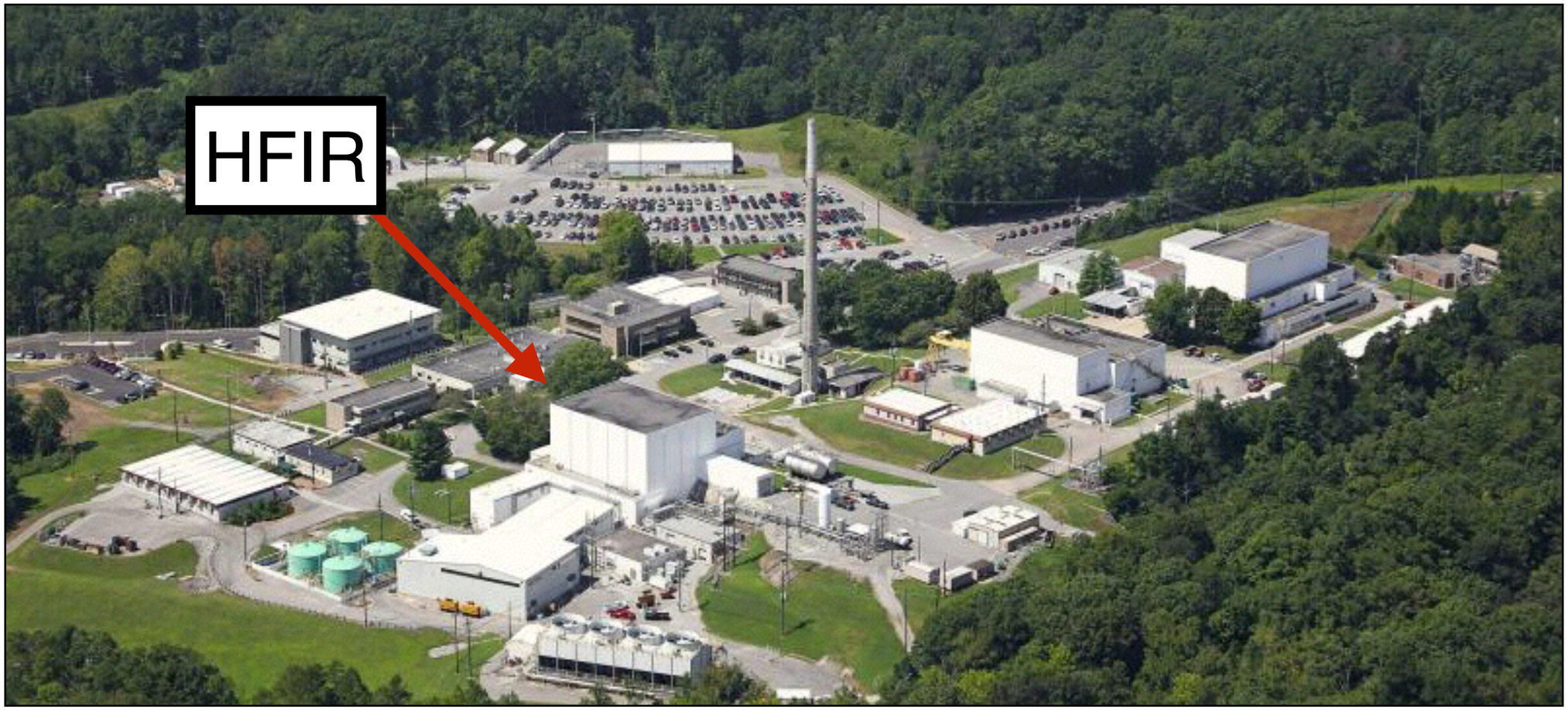




FaNS-1 at HFIR

- <10MeV neutrons are effectively shielded
- >100MeV neutrons create showers of particles and many secondary neutrons
- IBD-like backgrounds stem mainly from fast neutron interactions

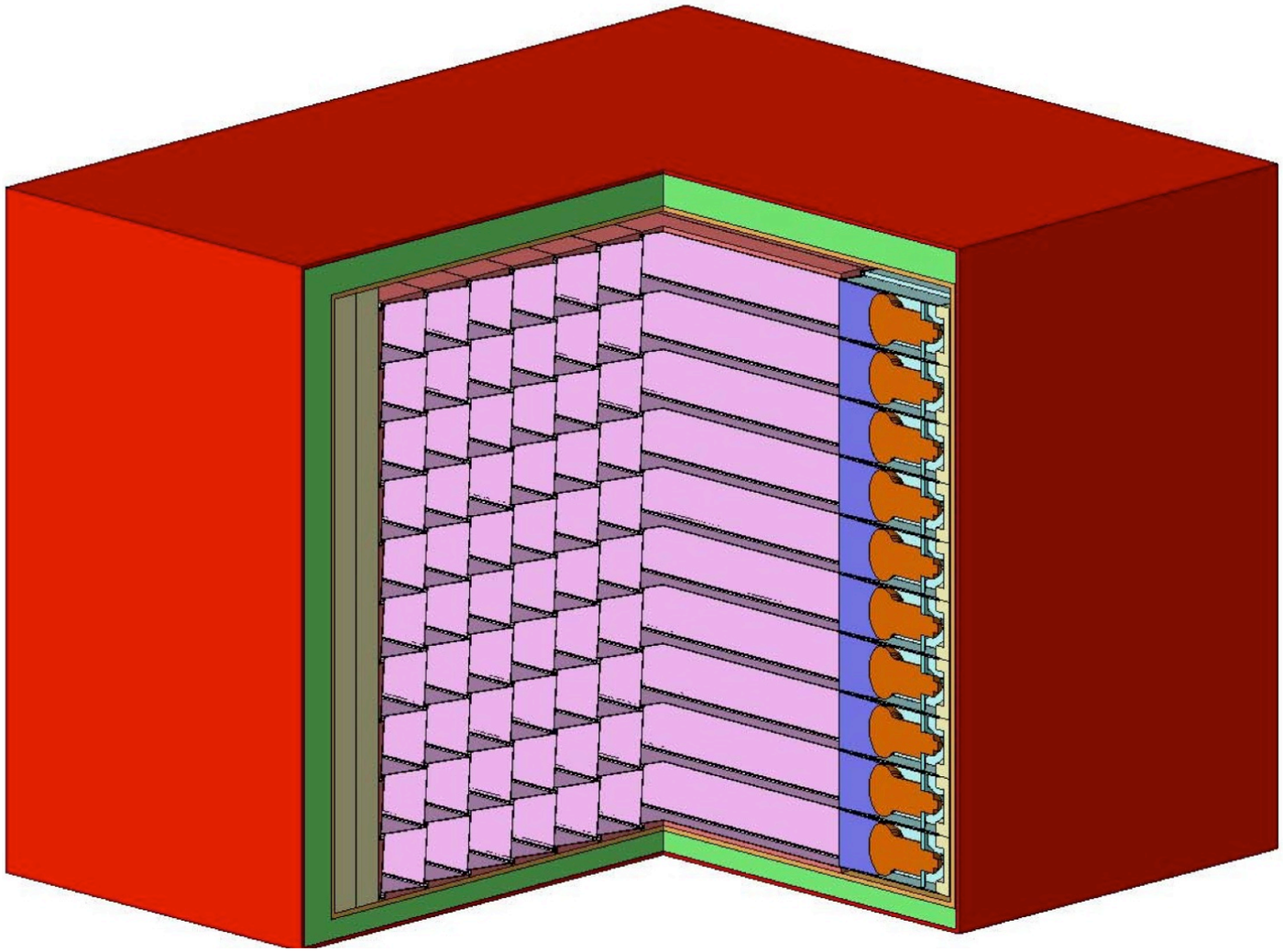
Surface Neutrino Detection

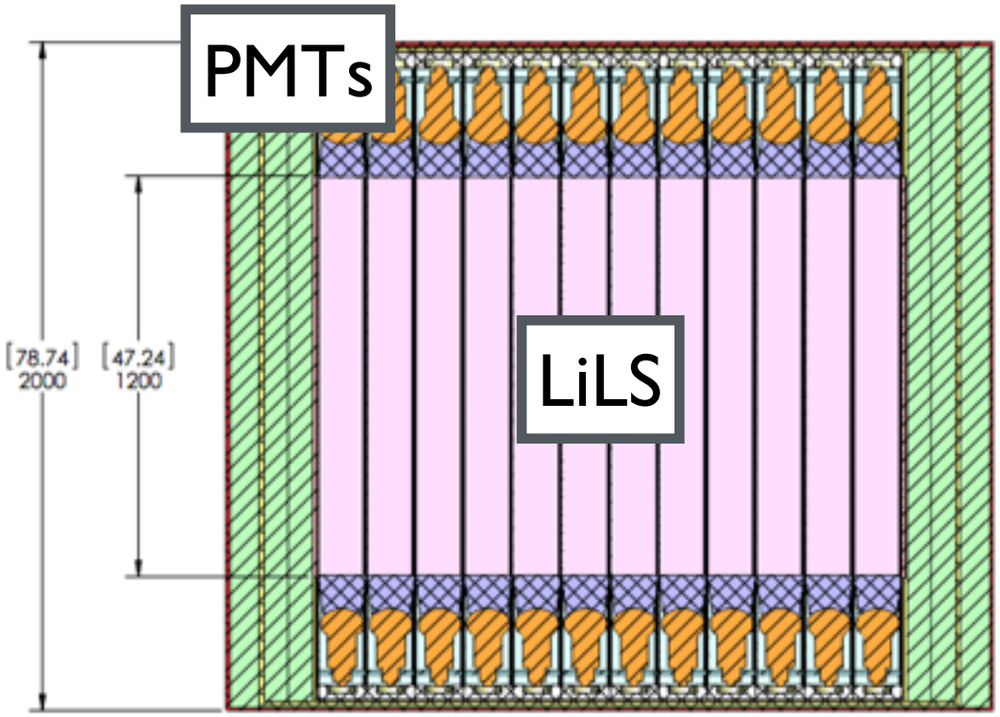


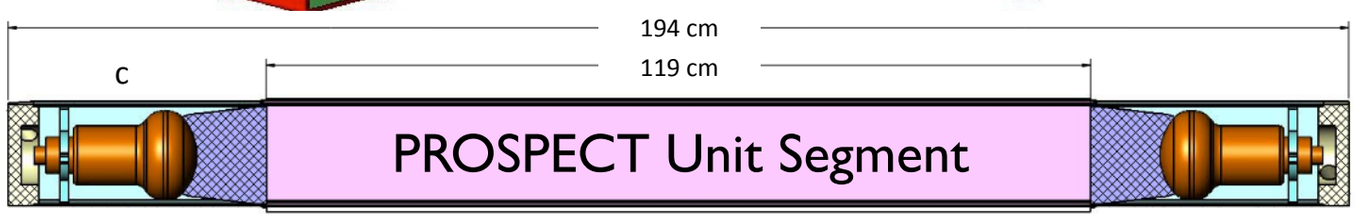
Three-pronged effort to address these backgrounds:

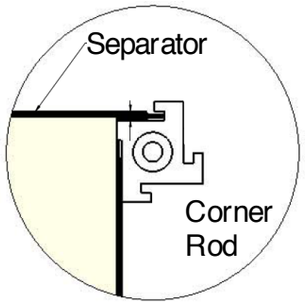
1. New detector design
2. New liquid scintillator
3. New shielding design

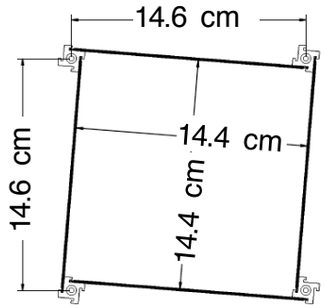
Segmented Antineutrino Detector





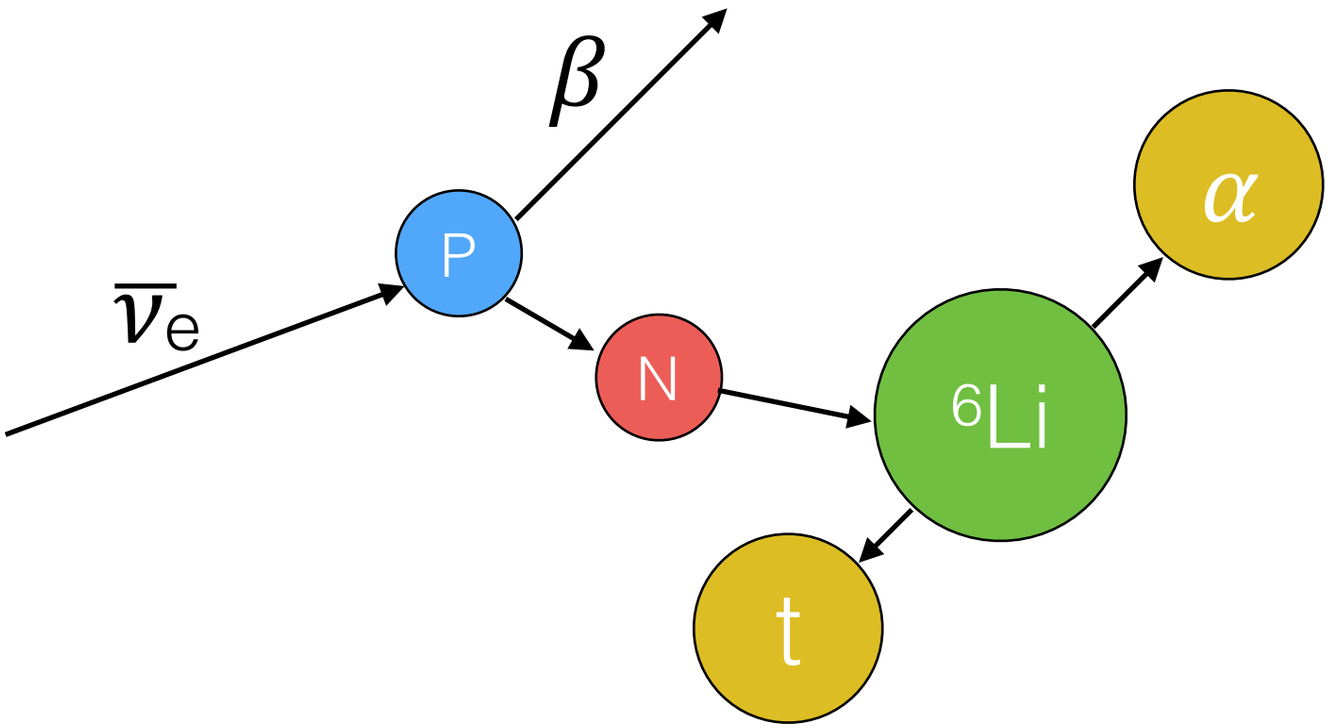






- 3ton lithium-loaded liquid scintillator (^{6}LiLS) detector
- 120 optical segments
  - 15x15x119cm^3, ~25 liters each
  - **Identify multiple particle interactions, reject showers**
- Double-ended PMT readout
- Access for calibration sources between every cell

IBD Detection with ^{6}LiLS



Prompt signal: 1-10 MeV positron from inverse beta decay (IBD)

Delay signal: ~0.6 MeV signal from neutron capture on ^{6}Li **with PSD signature**

Pulse-shape Discrimination Signatures

Inverse Beta Decay
γ-like prompt, n-like delay

Fast Neutron
~~n-like prompt, n-like delay~~

Accidental Gammas
~~γ-like prompt, γ-like delay~~

Coincidence Signature of event:
e-like prompt signal, followed by a ~50μs delayed neutron capture

Coincidence + PSD allows rejection of vast majority of backgrounds

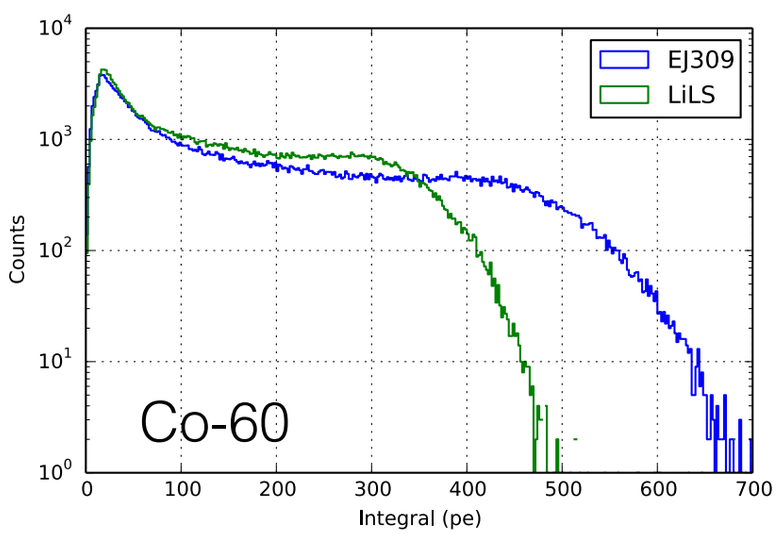
^{6}Li-loaded Liquid Scintillator

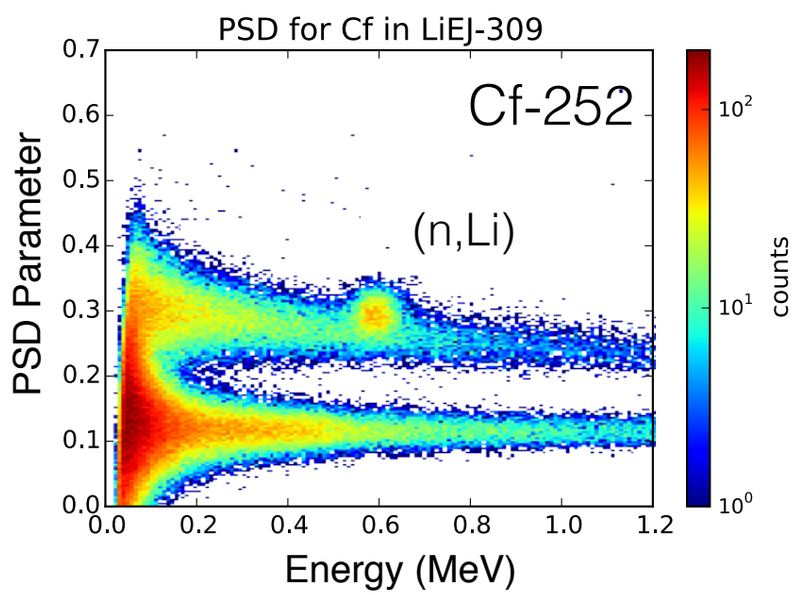
LiLS Requirements:

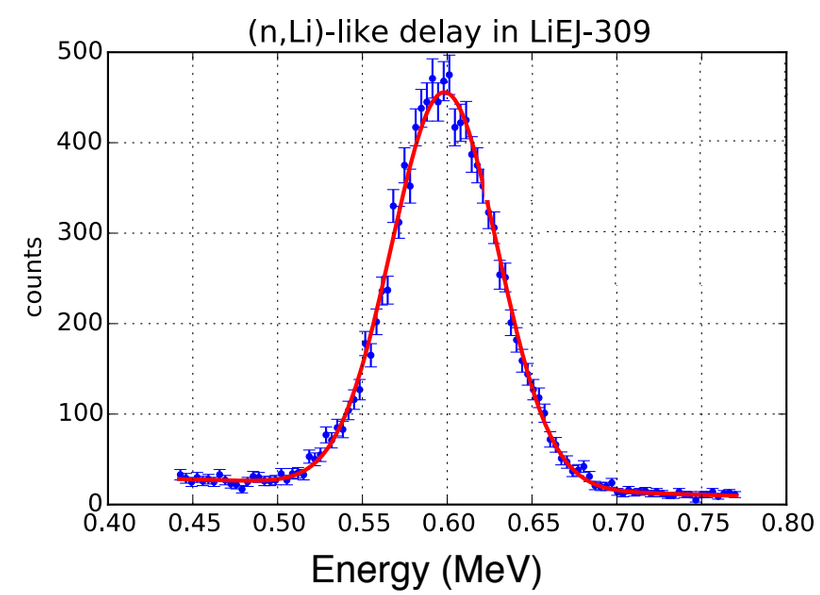
- High light yield (>6000ph/MeV) for energy resolution
- Excellent pulse-shape discrimination (PSD)
- Non-toxic, high flashpoint
- Stable and affordable

LiLS based on EJ-309 meets all requirements

- 8200ph/MeV, excellent PSD
- **Safe to operate at a reactor**

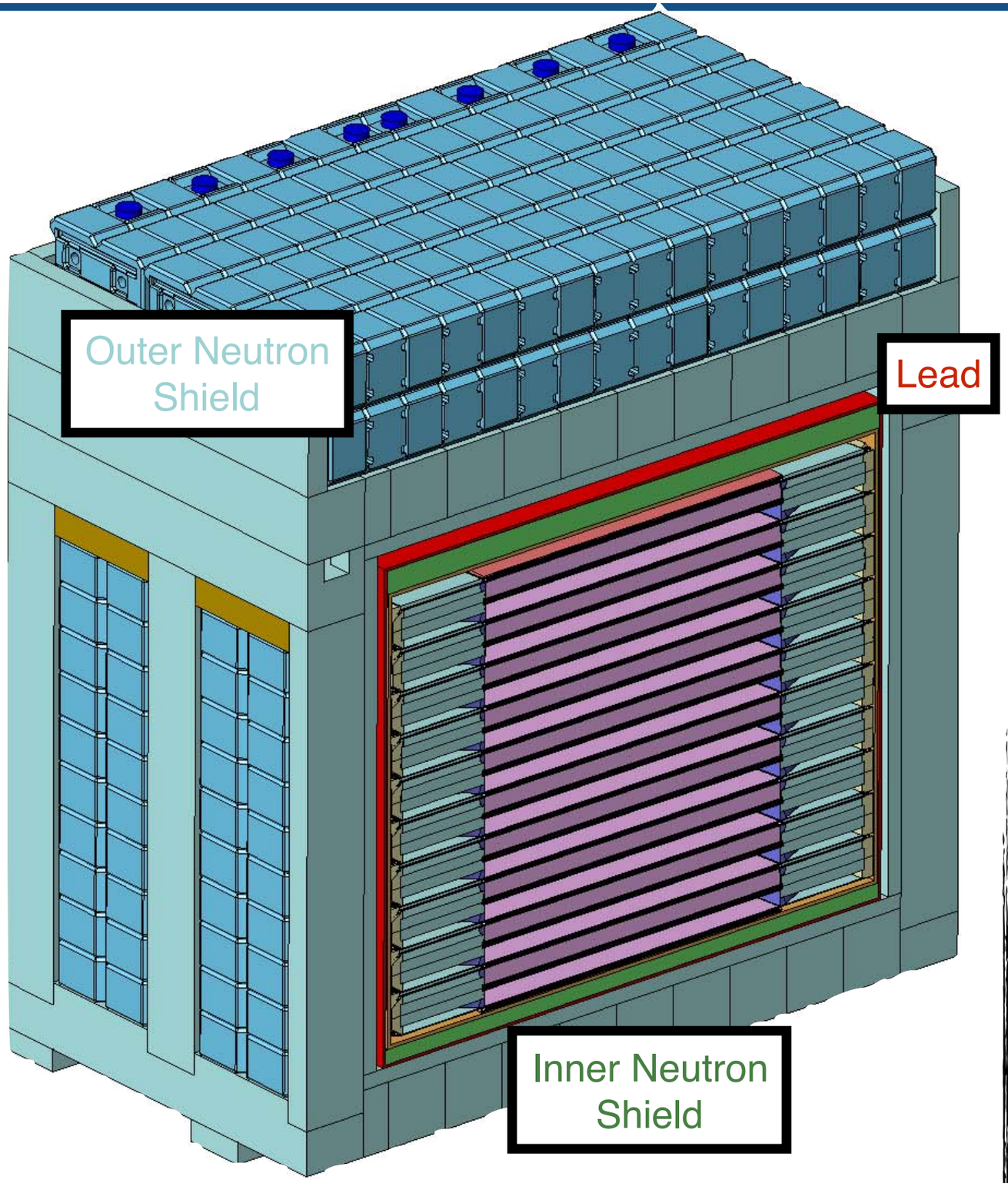


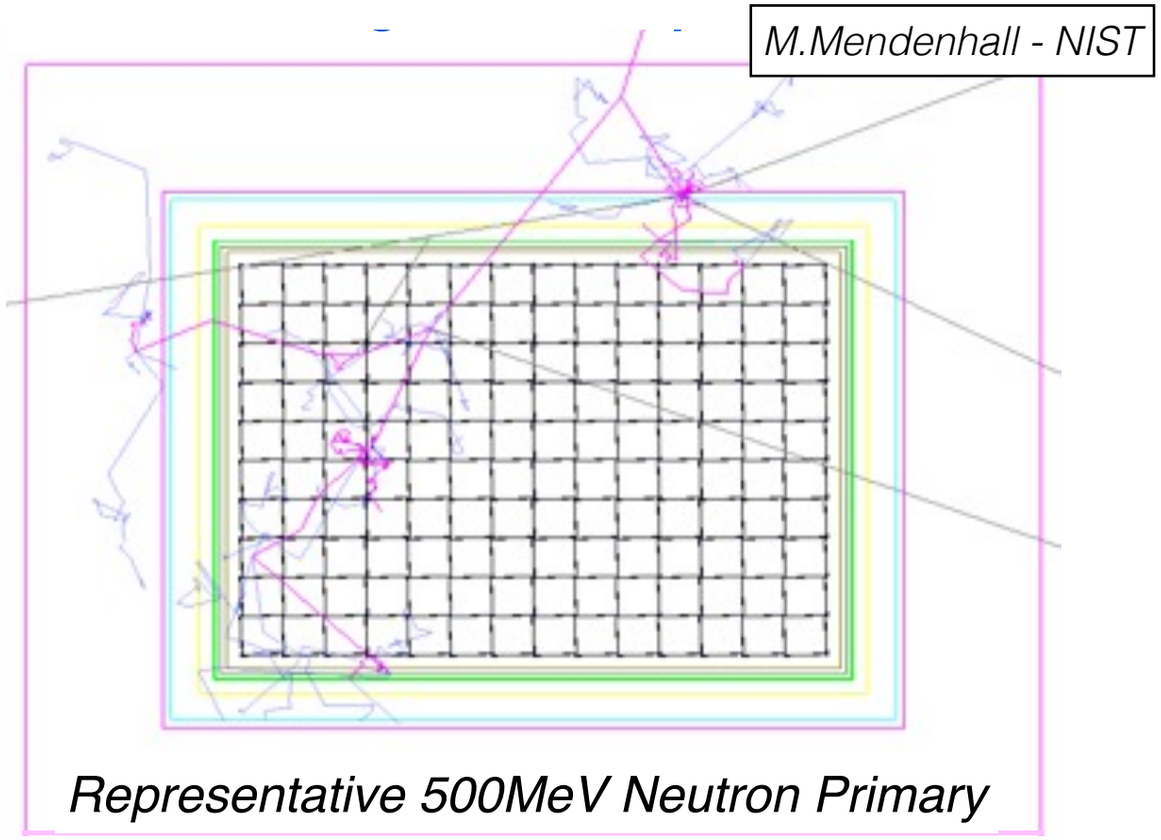




developed novel LiLS with excellent light yield, PSD, and neutron capture capabilities

Novel Shielding Design

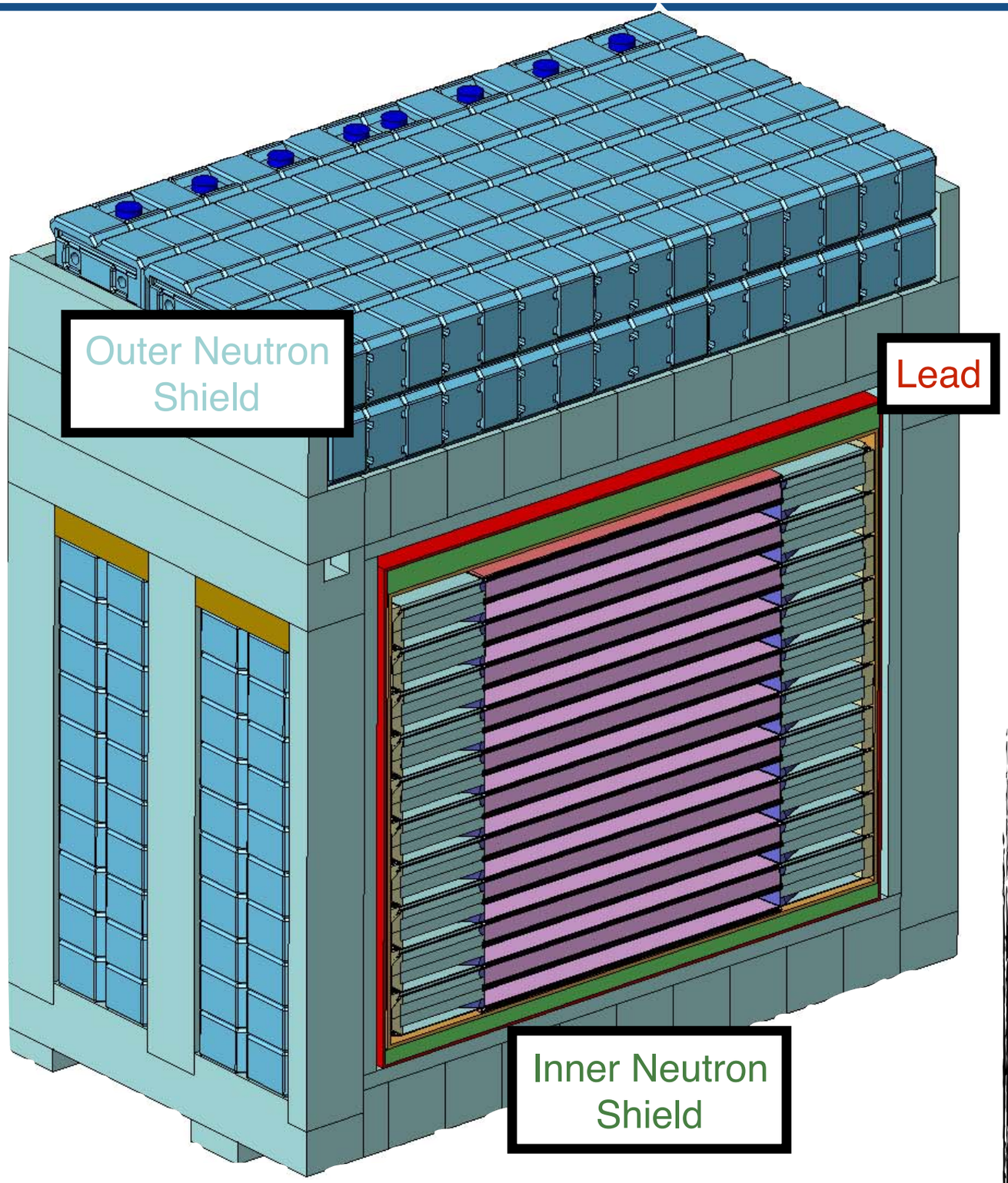


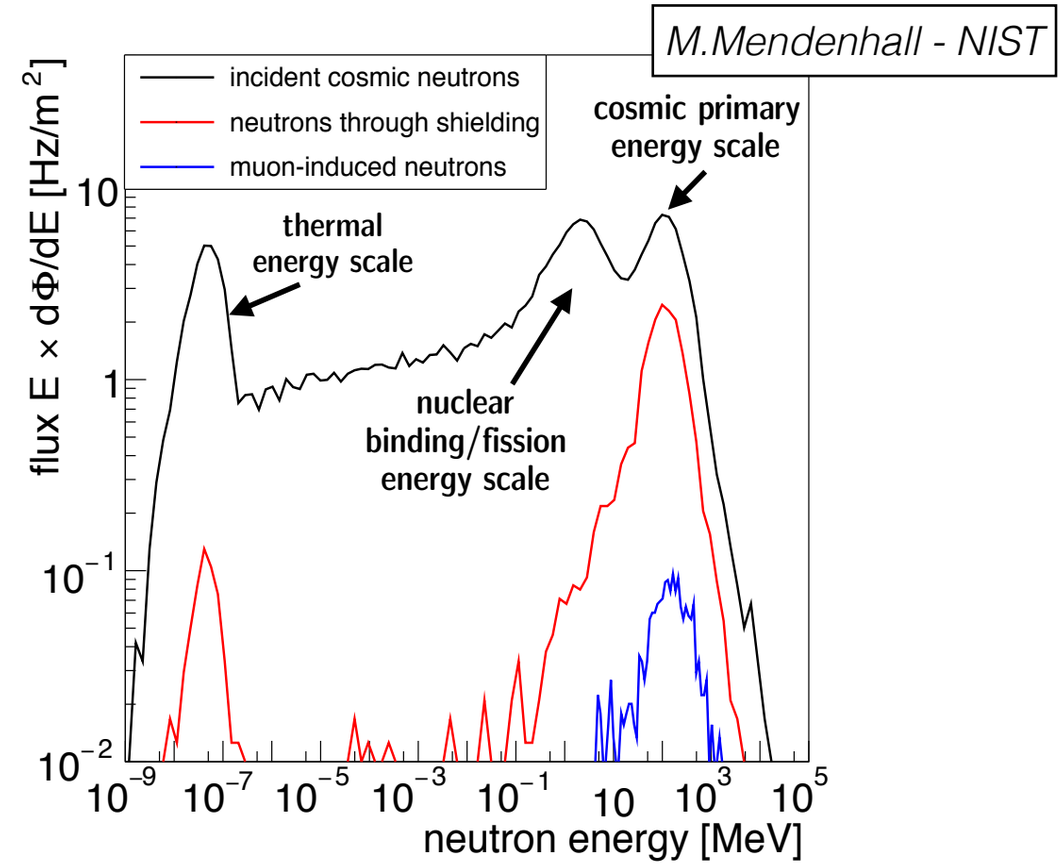


Optimize space, weight, and total background suppression

- Main problem are ~100MeV neutrons
  - create majority of IBD-like backgrounds (gamma-like prompt, neutron capture)
- Neutron spallation on high-Z shielding increases backgrounds
- *Need neutron shielding inside lead shielding*

Novel Shielding Design





Optimize space, weight, and total background suppression

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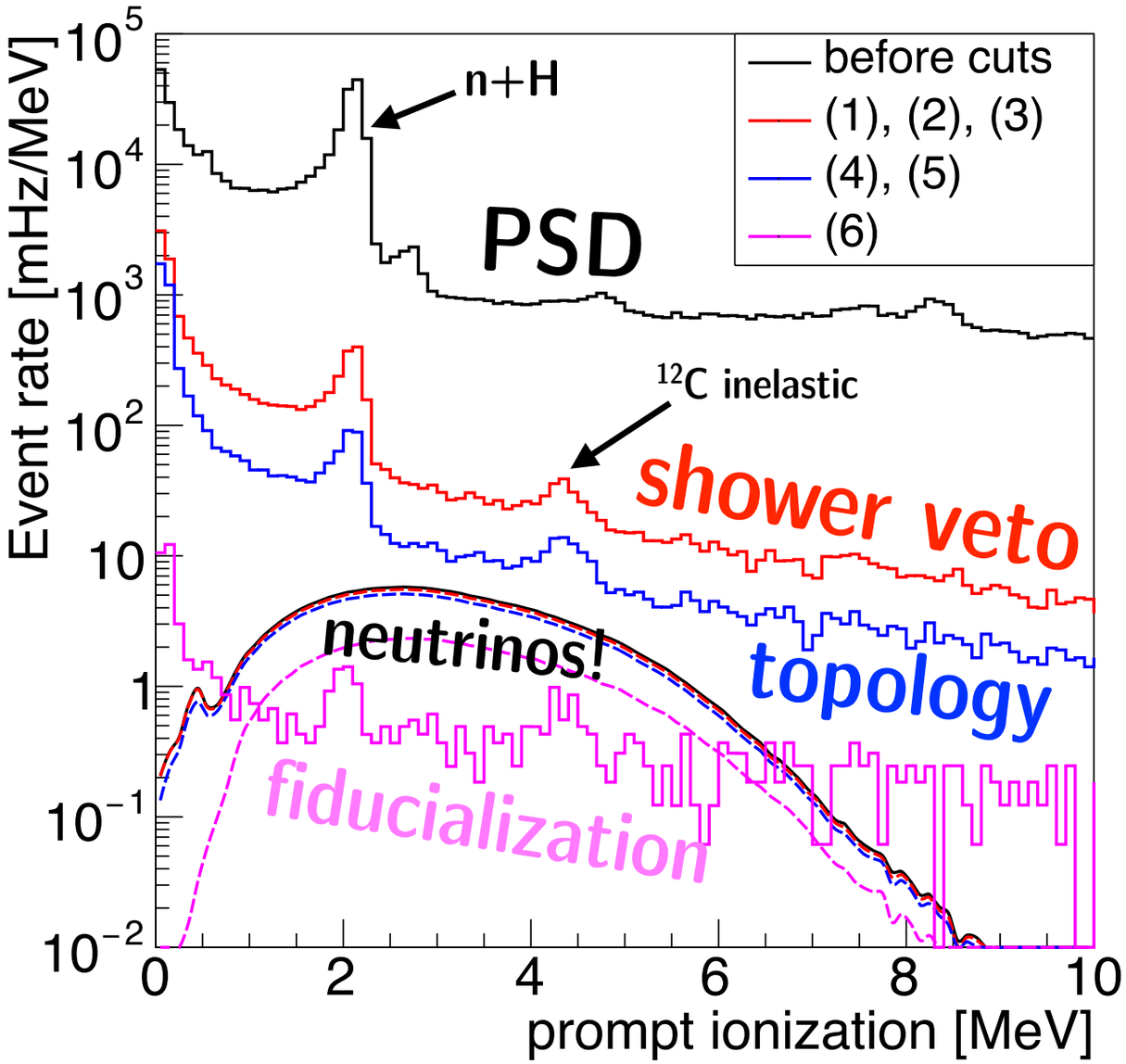
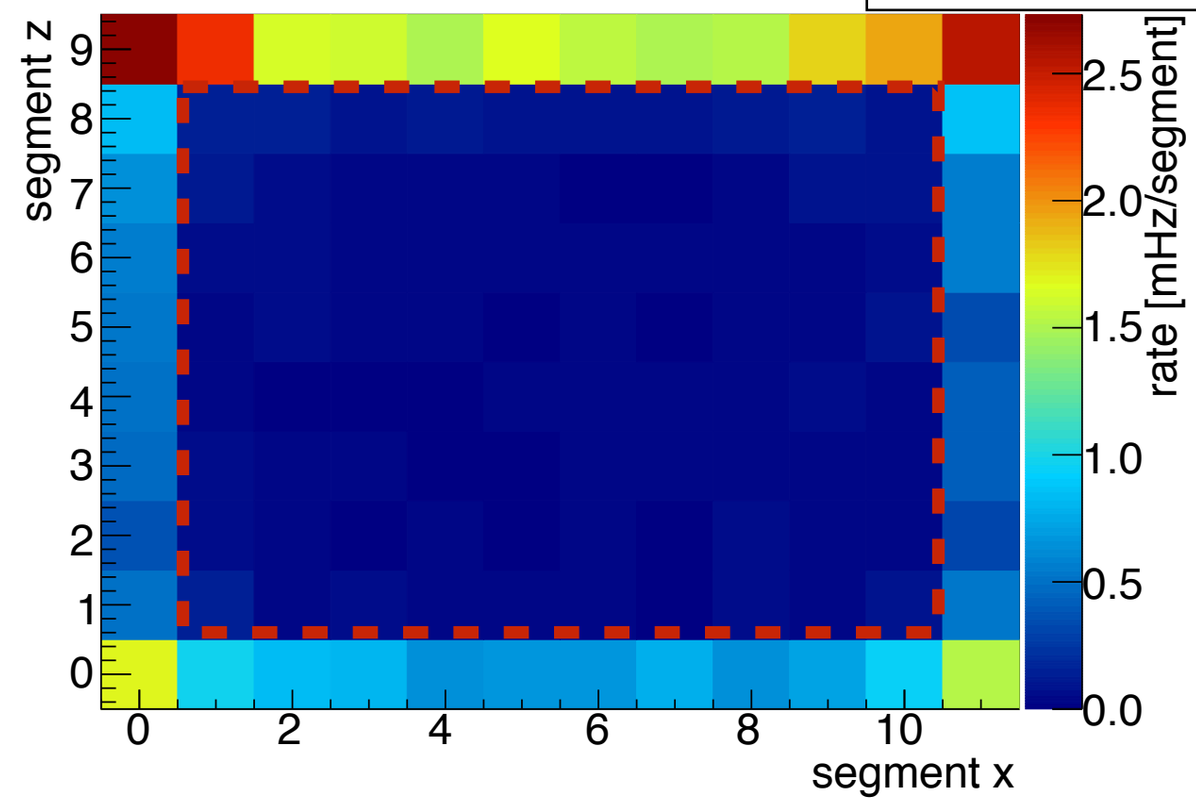
BG Rejection via Detector Design

PROSPECT

M.Mendenhall - NIST

Neutron coincident events





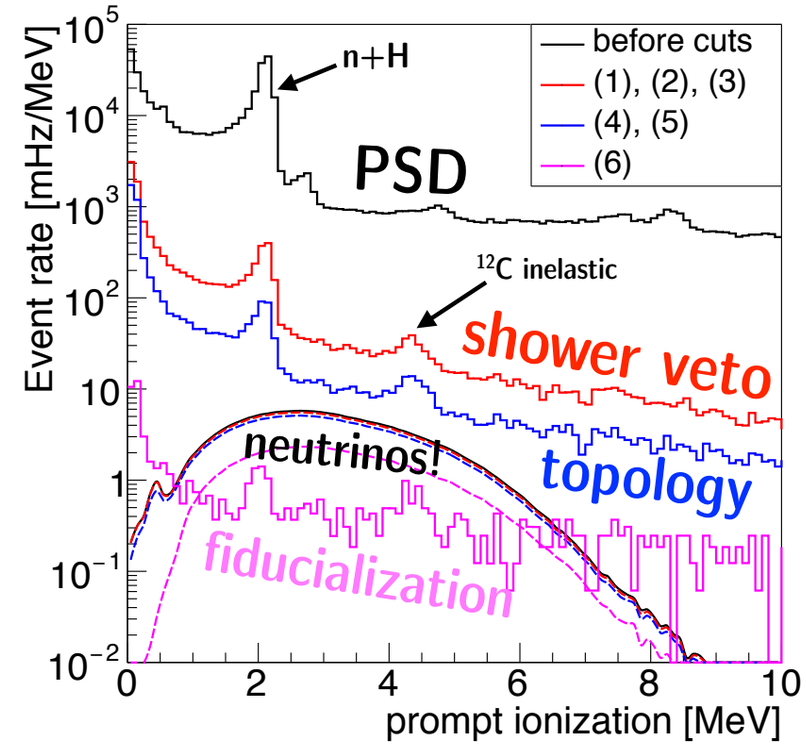
Background reduction steps:

- Efficient PSD and neutron tagging
- Identification of multiple particle interactions
- **Fiducialization**

Active suppression of >3 orders of magnitude

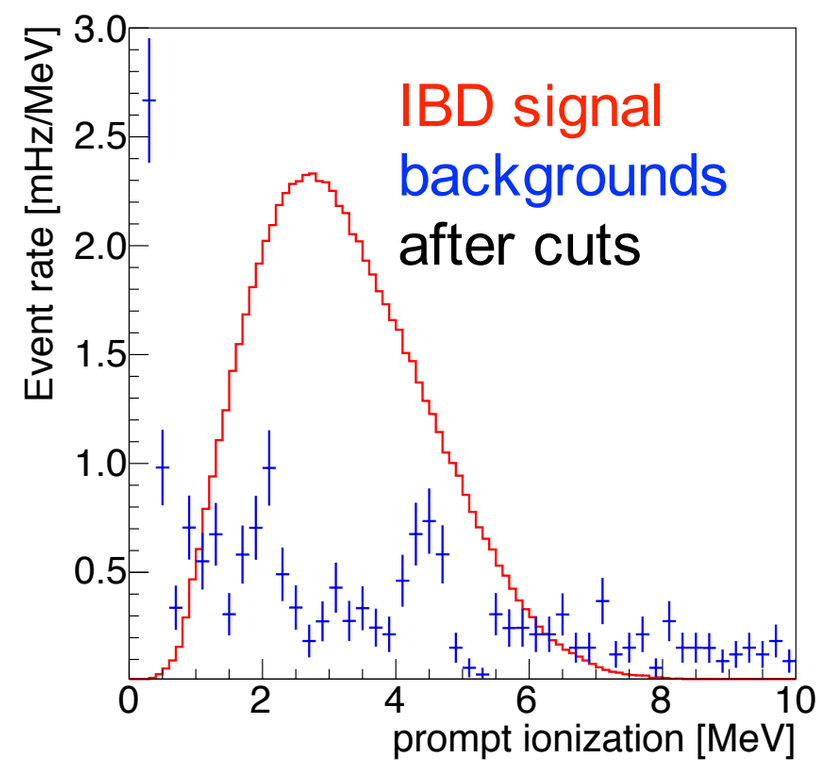
PROSPECT Signal and Background

- Signal (dashed) and background (solid) prompt spectra are shown through selection cuts
- S/B better than 1:1 is predicted.
- Rate and shape of the residual IBD-like background can be measured with high precision during reactor off periods.

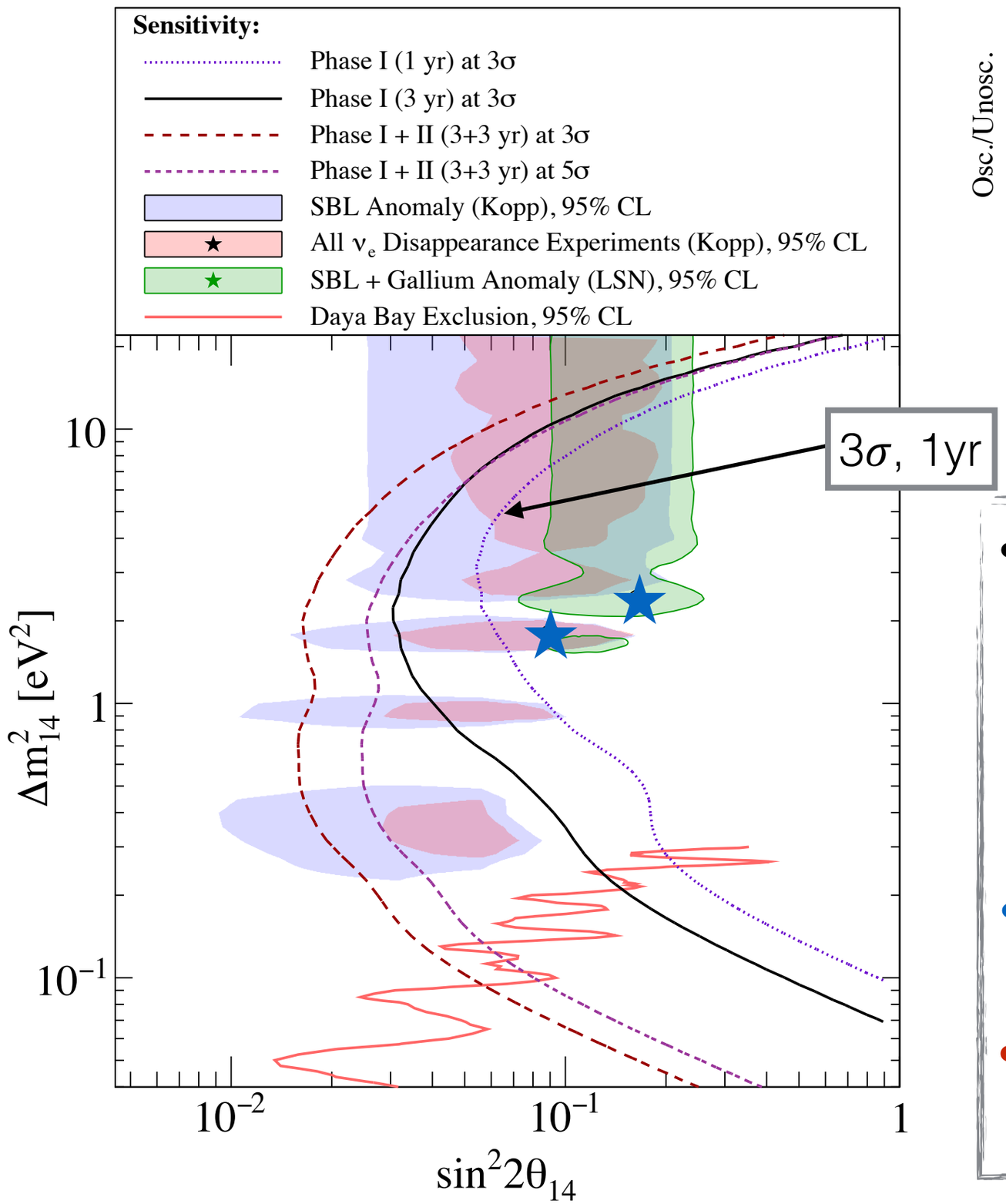


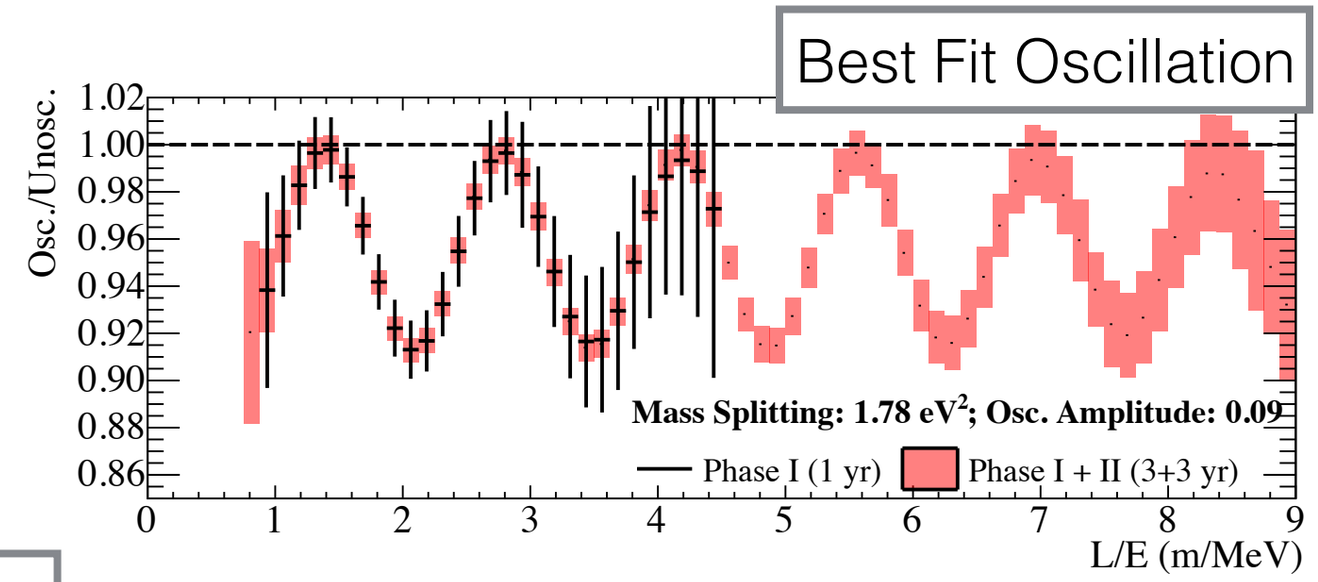
Cuts	IBD signal		Cosmic BG	
Exposure	*Daily*	*Phase I*	*Daily*	*Phase I*
PSD	1630	7.3e5	2.1e6	9.5e8
Time (1, 2, 3)	1570	7.1e5	3.4e4	1.5e7
Spatial (4, 5)	1440	6.5e5	9900	4.5e6
Fiducial (6)	660	3.0e5	250	1.1e5

Simulated event rates (0.8 ≤ E ≤ 7.2 MeV) after applying background rejection cuts



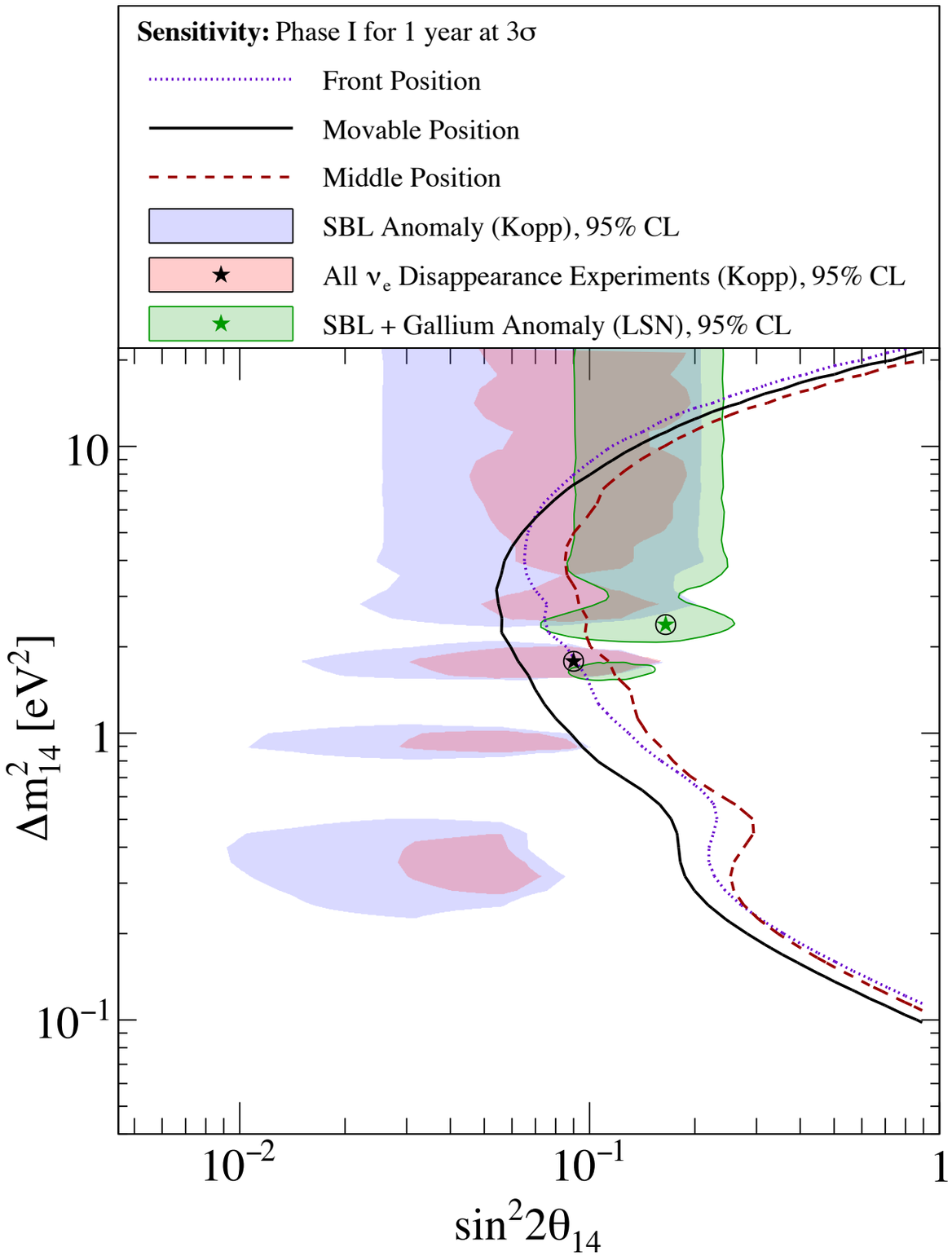
Short Baseline Oscillation Search

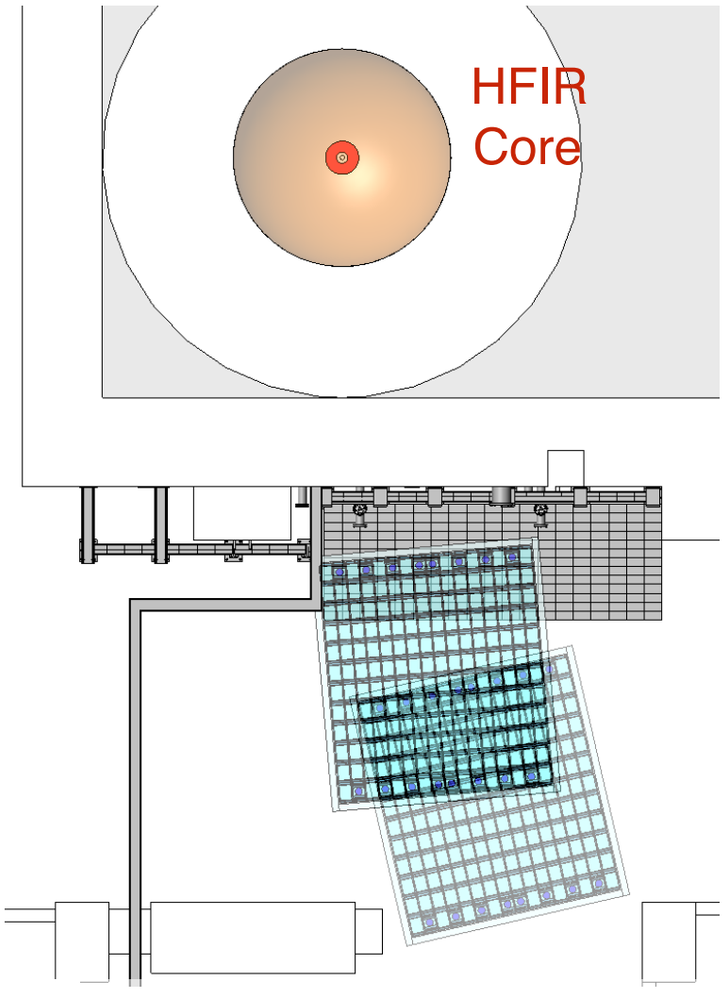




- Segmented detector designed for oscillation search
  - Each cell is a separate "detector"
  - Oscillatory L/E between segments limits uncertainties from reactor
- *True oscillometry needed for confirmation of sterile neutrinos*
- **Probe best-fit region at >3σ in 1 year**

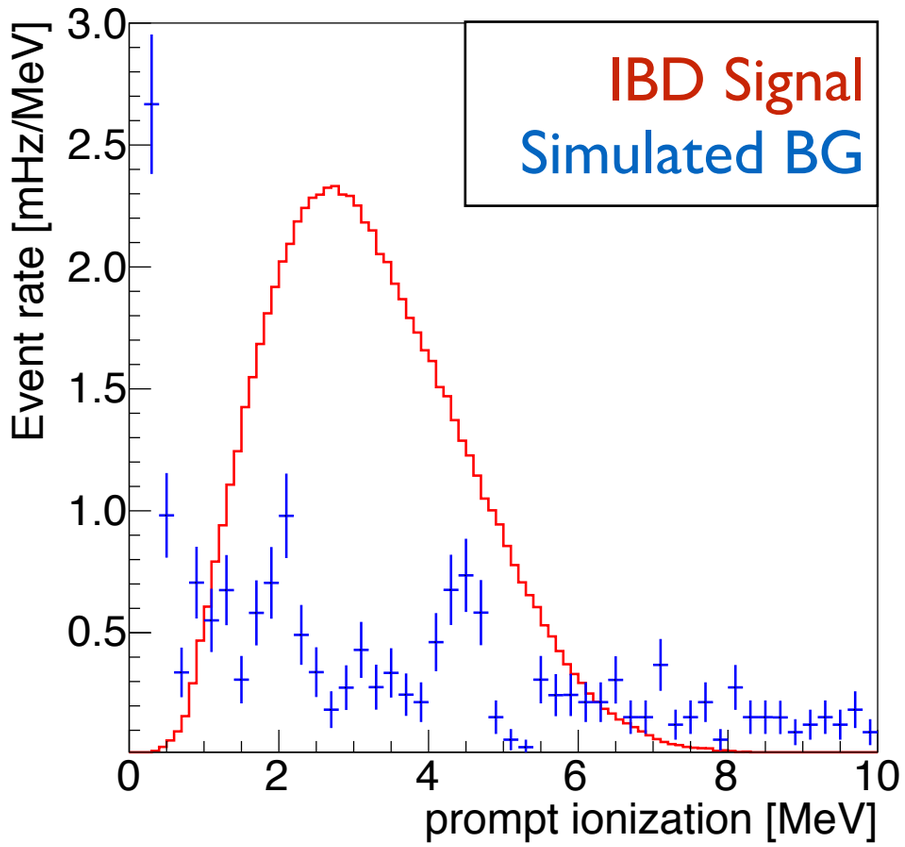
A Movable Detector

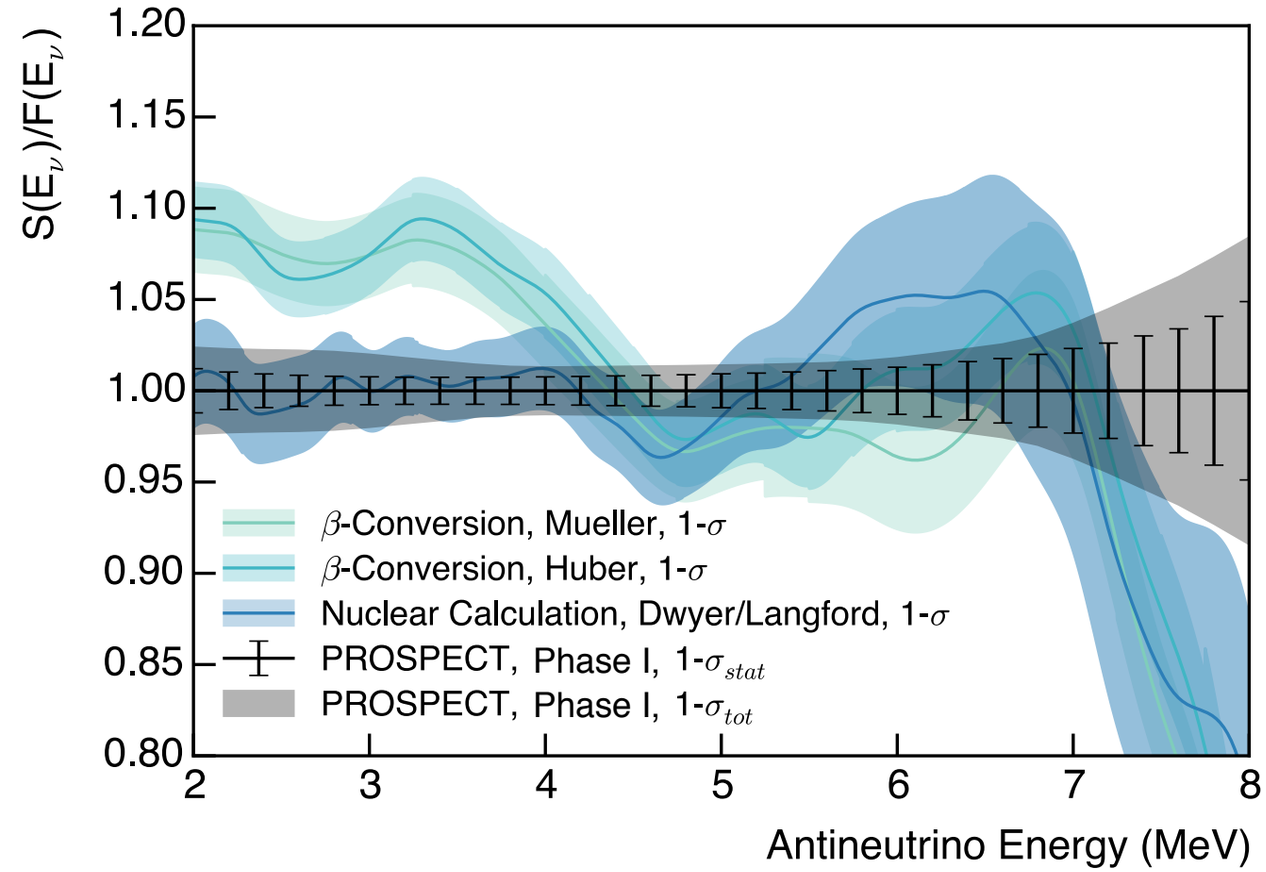




- AD-1 is designed to translate by 1m, almost half the detector length
- Improves the sensitivity from <3σ to greater than 4σ
- Provides powerful systematics check

^{235}U Spectrum Measurement

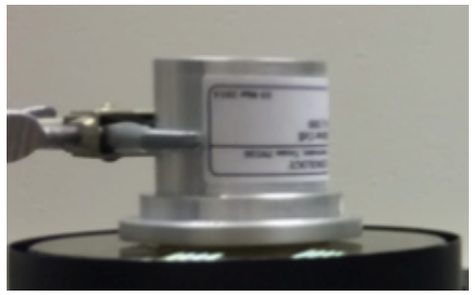




- ~700 inverse beta decays detected per day, 100k/year (30x ILL rate)
- Best energy resolution of any reactor neutrino experiment (4.5%@1MeV)
- **Phase-1 precision will surpass spectral model uncertainties**
  - Directly test reactor neutrino models
  - Produce a benchmark spectrum for future reactor experiments

Phased Detector Development

PROSPECT-0.1
Aug 2014
Spring 2015



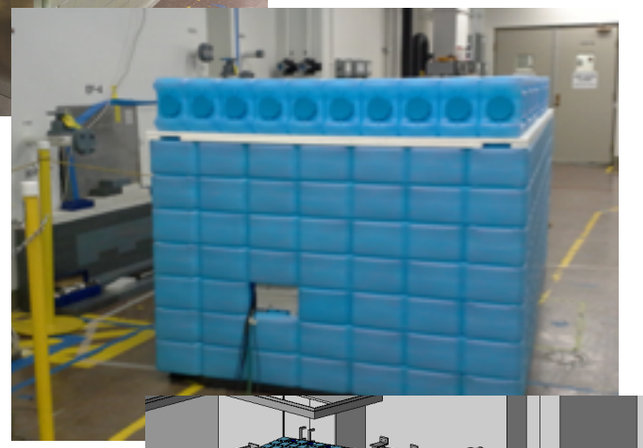
5cm
0.1liter
LS cell

PROSPECT-2
Dec 2014
Feb 2015

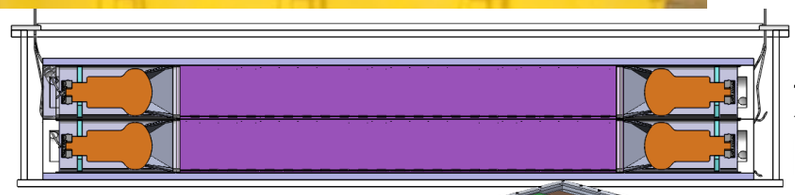
12.5cm
1.7 liter
LS cell

PROSPECT-20
March 2015

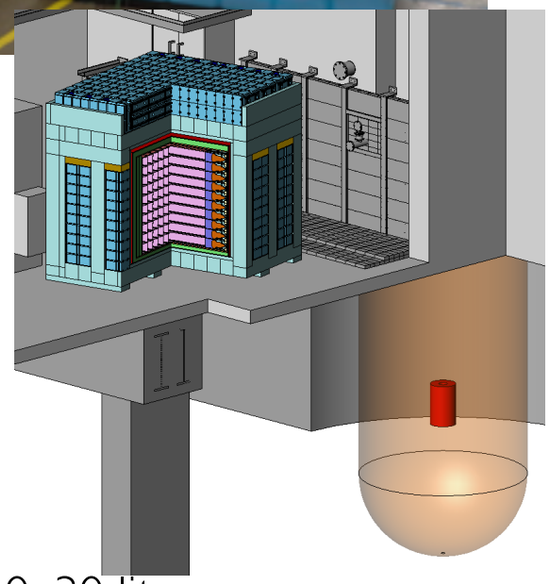
1m
23 liter
LS cell



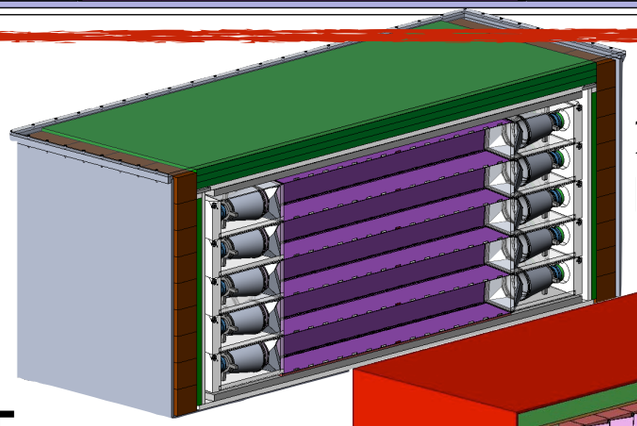
PROSPECT-50
February 2016



1.2m
2x25 liter
LS segments

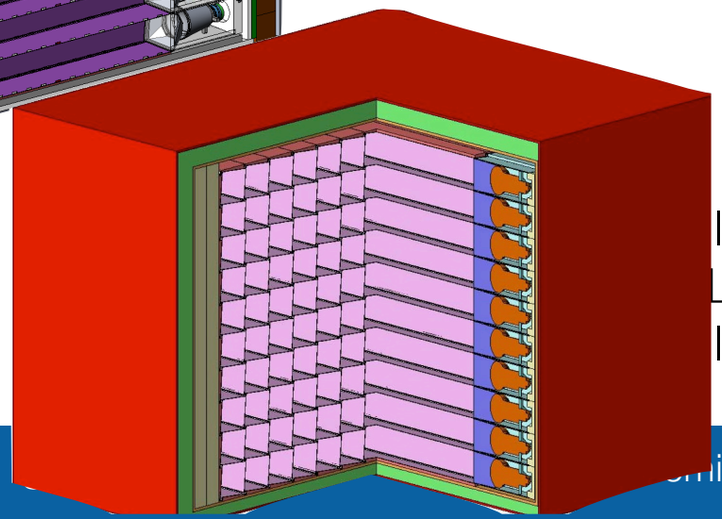


PROSPECT-625
Early 2016*



1.19m long
25x25 liter
LS segments

PROSPECT
Phase I
Late 2016*

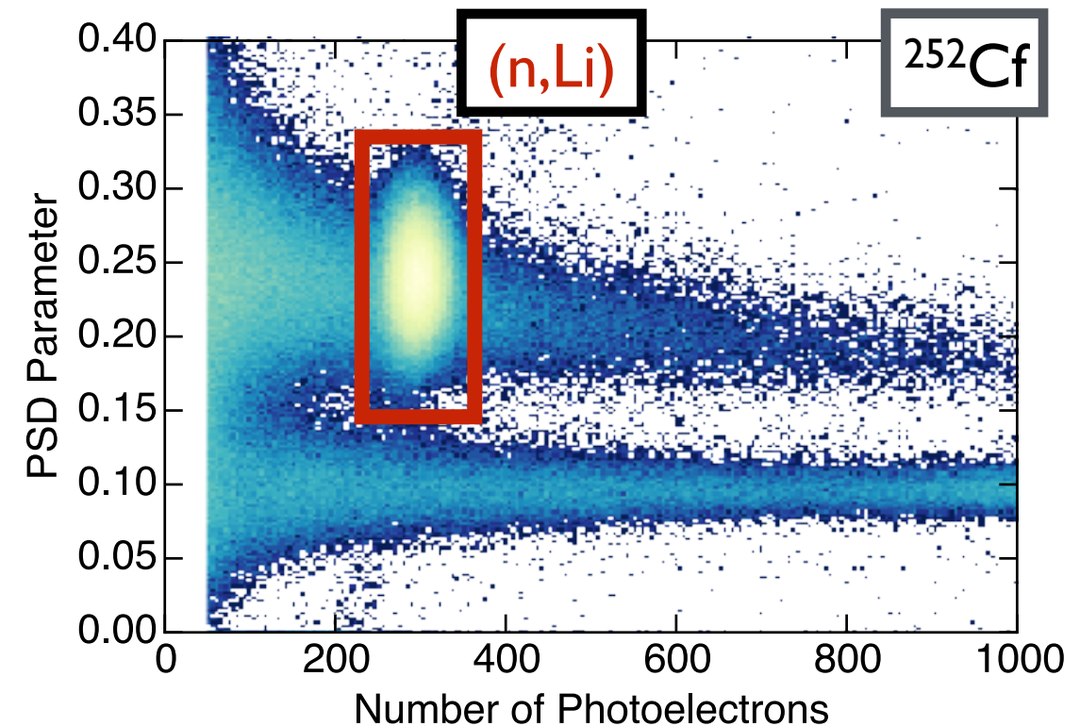


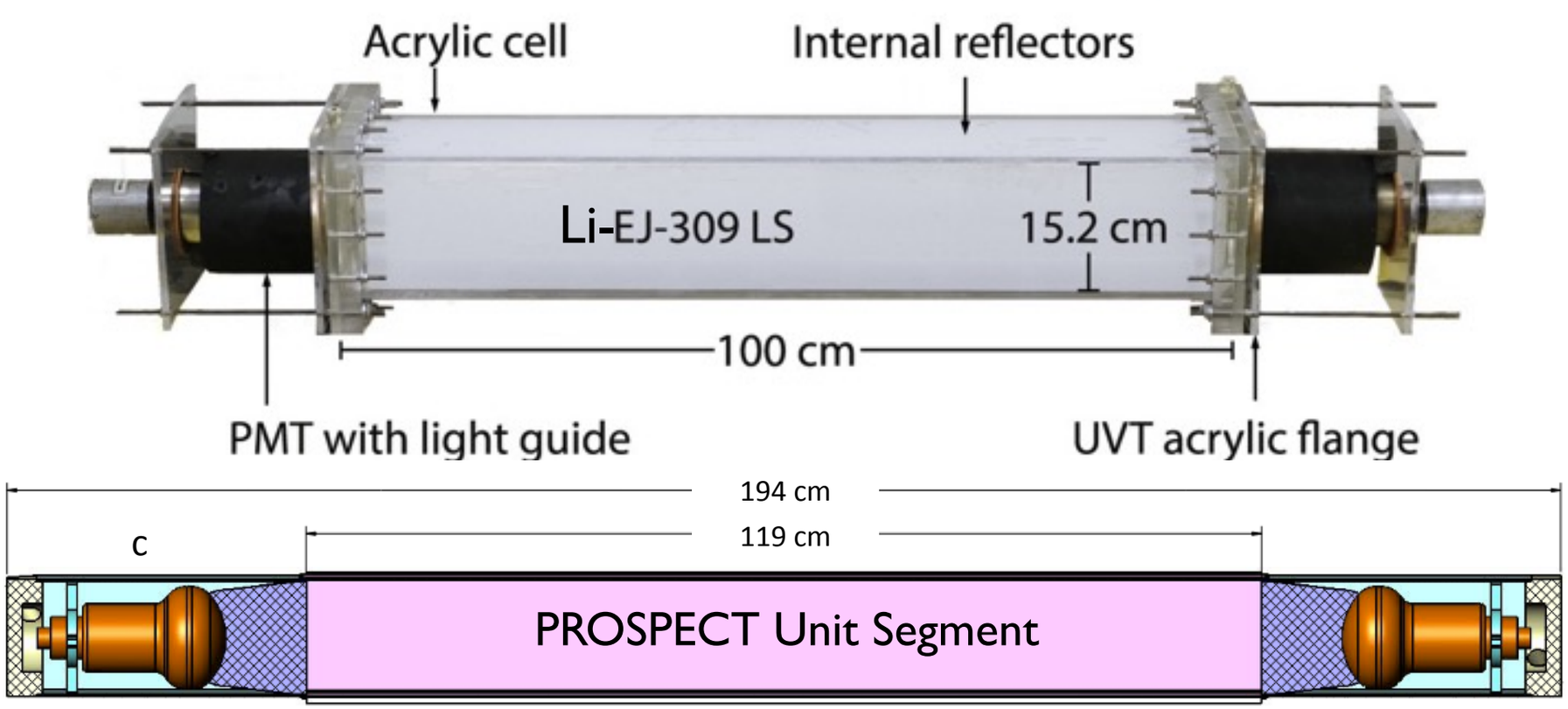
120x30 liter
LS segments
15x15x119cm

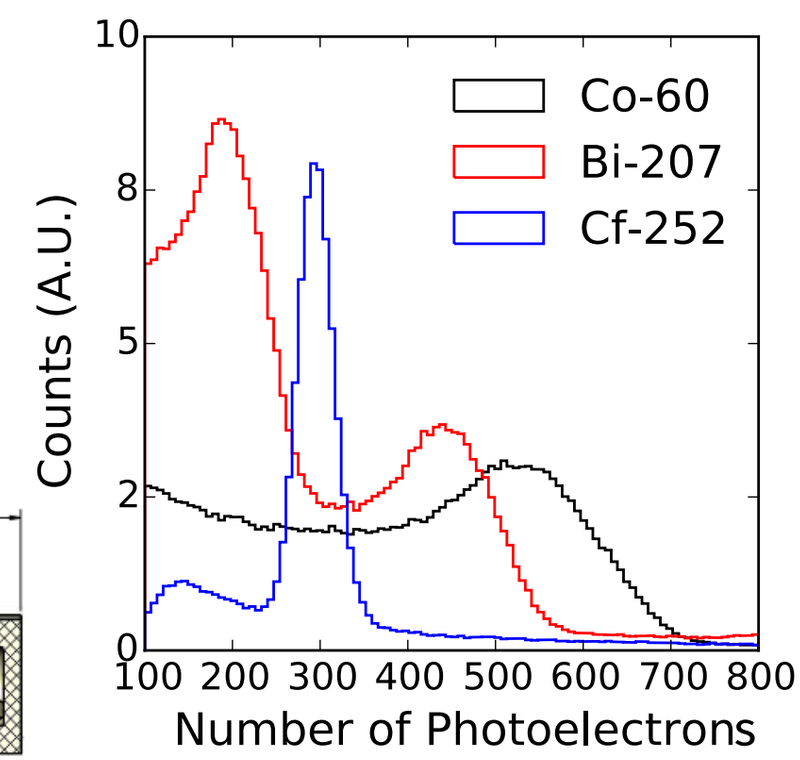
*technically driven schedule

Full-scale Test Detector

- **PROSPECT-20**
  - 23L test cell of 6Li-loaded Liquid Scintillator
  - 15x15x100cm^3 detector
- Measured Light collection: 530PE/MeV
  - **4.5%@1MeV energy resolution**
- Measured PSD Figure of Merit: 1.4 at (n,Li) capture
  - **>99.9% background rejection**
- Double-ended readout
  - uniform light collection and position reconstruction

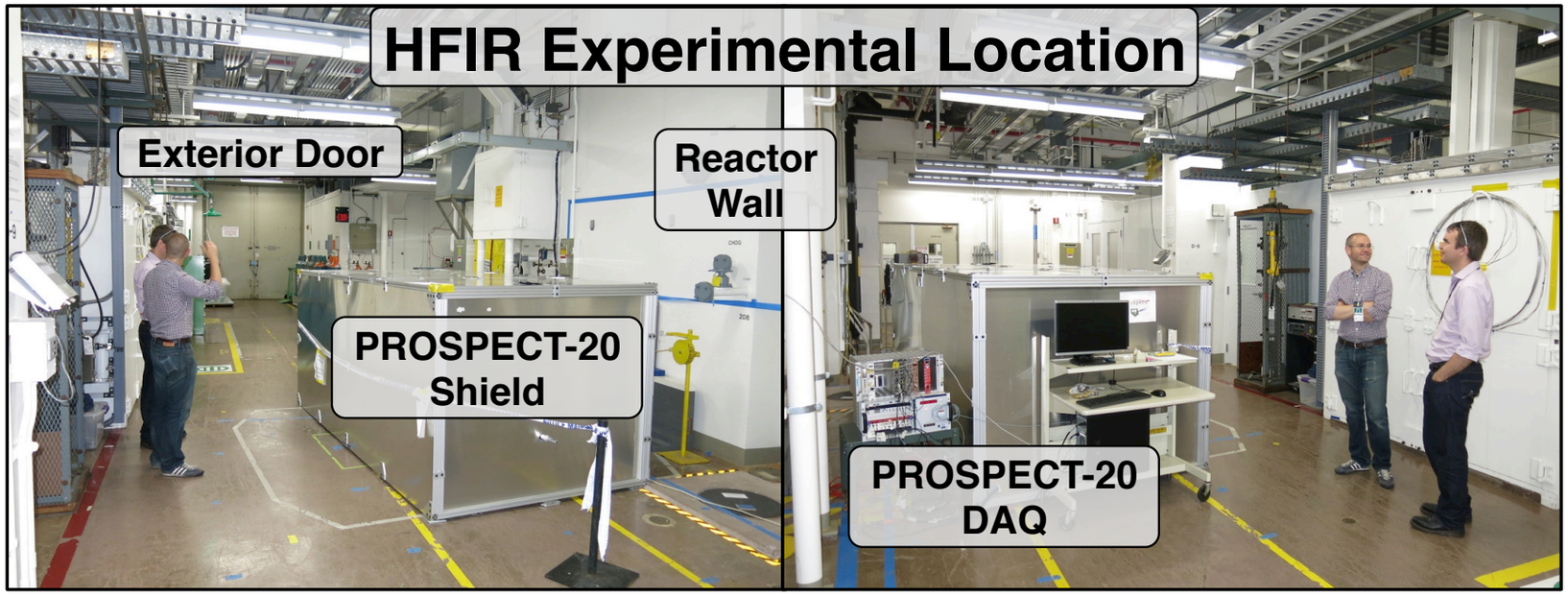


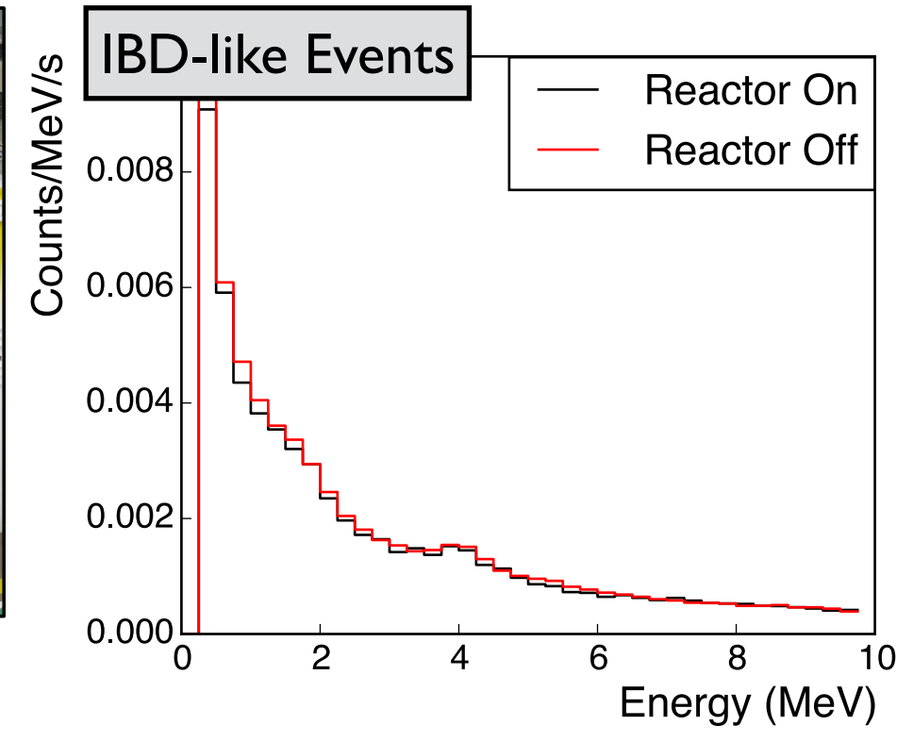




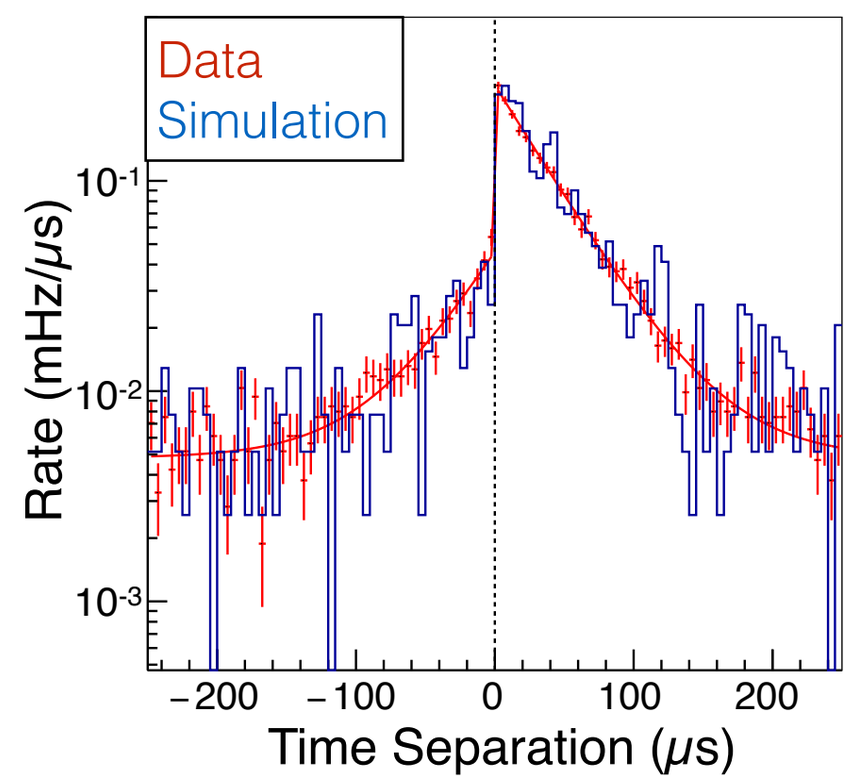
PROSPECT-20 Paper arXiv:1508.06575

PROSPECT-20 at HFIR

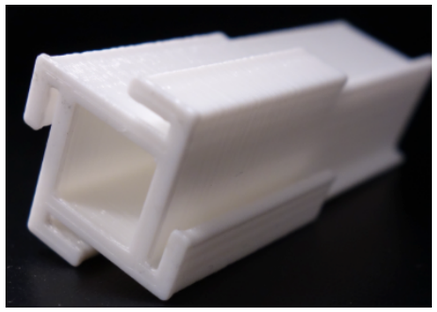


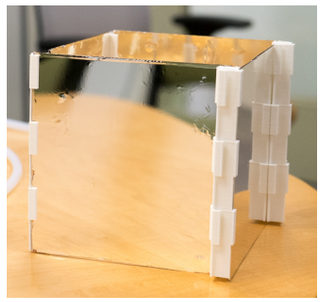


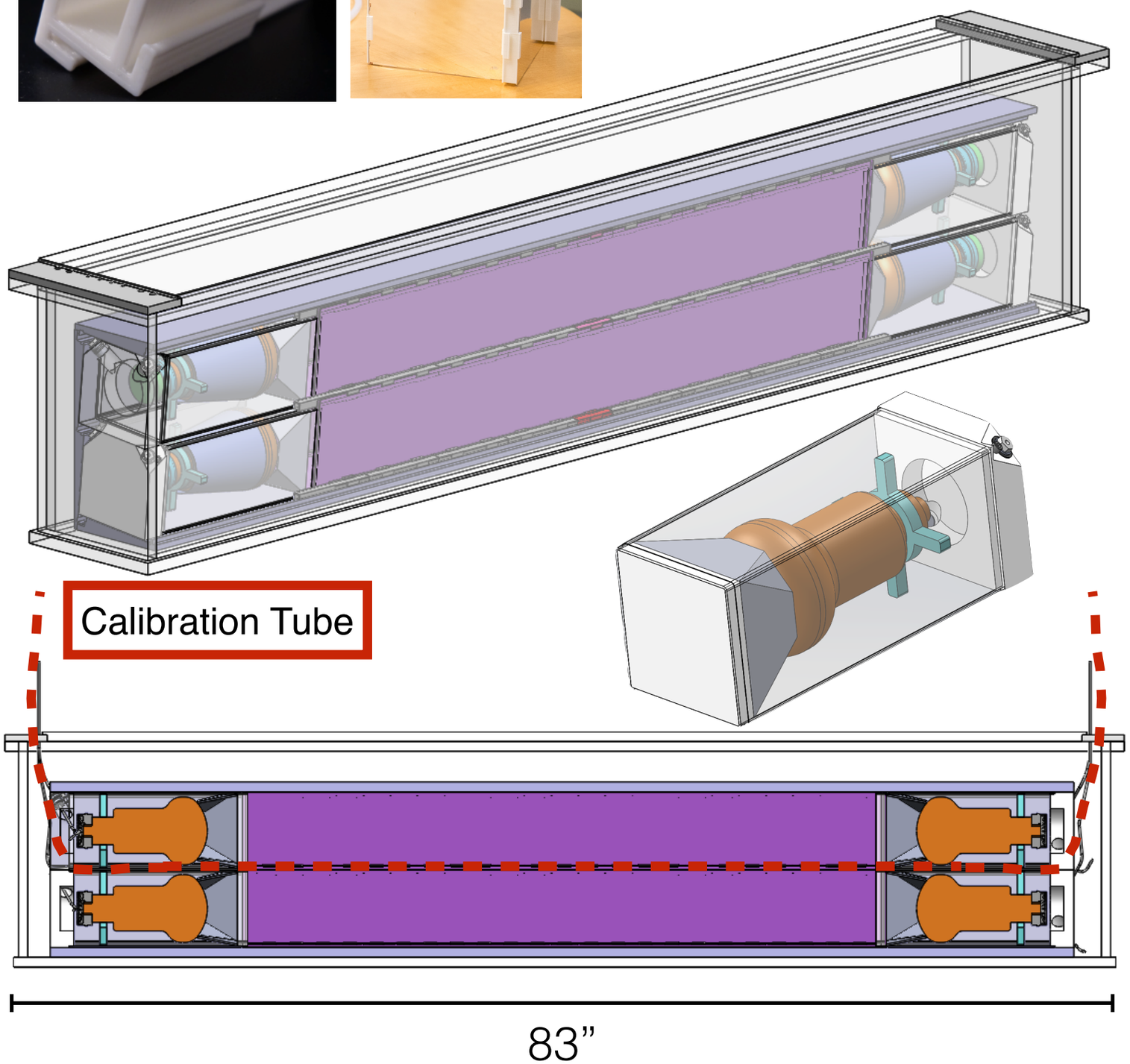
- Operated for four months at HFIR
  - Two HFIR cycles
- Shielding package roughly 25% mass of full shield
- Reactor-related backgrounds mitigated
  - Targeted local shielding
  - Active background rejection with LiLS
- **Validation of background simulations for full PROSPECT detector**



PROSPECT-50 Demonstrator







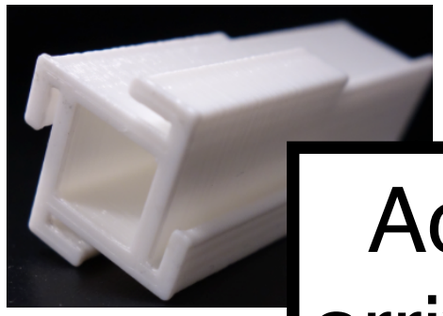
PROSPECT-50:

- 50 liters of ^{6}LiLS
- Two PROSPECT segments

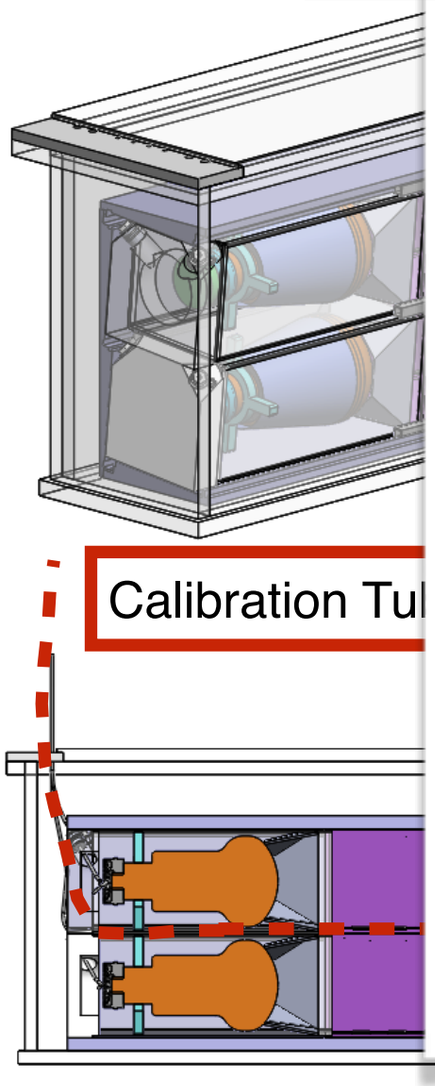
Test platform of each subsystem

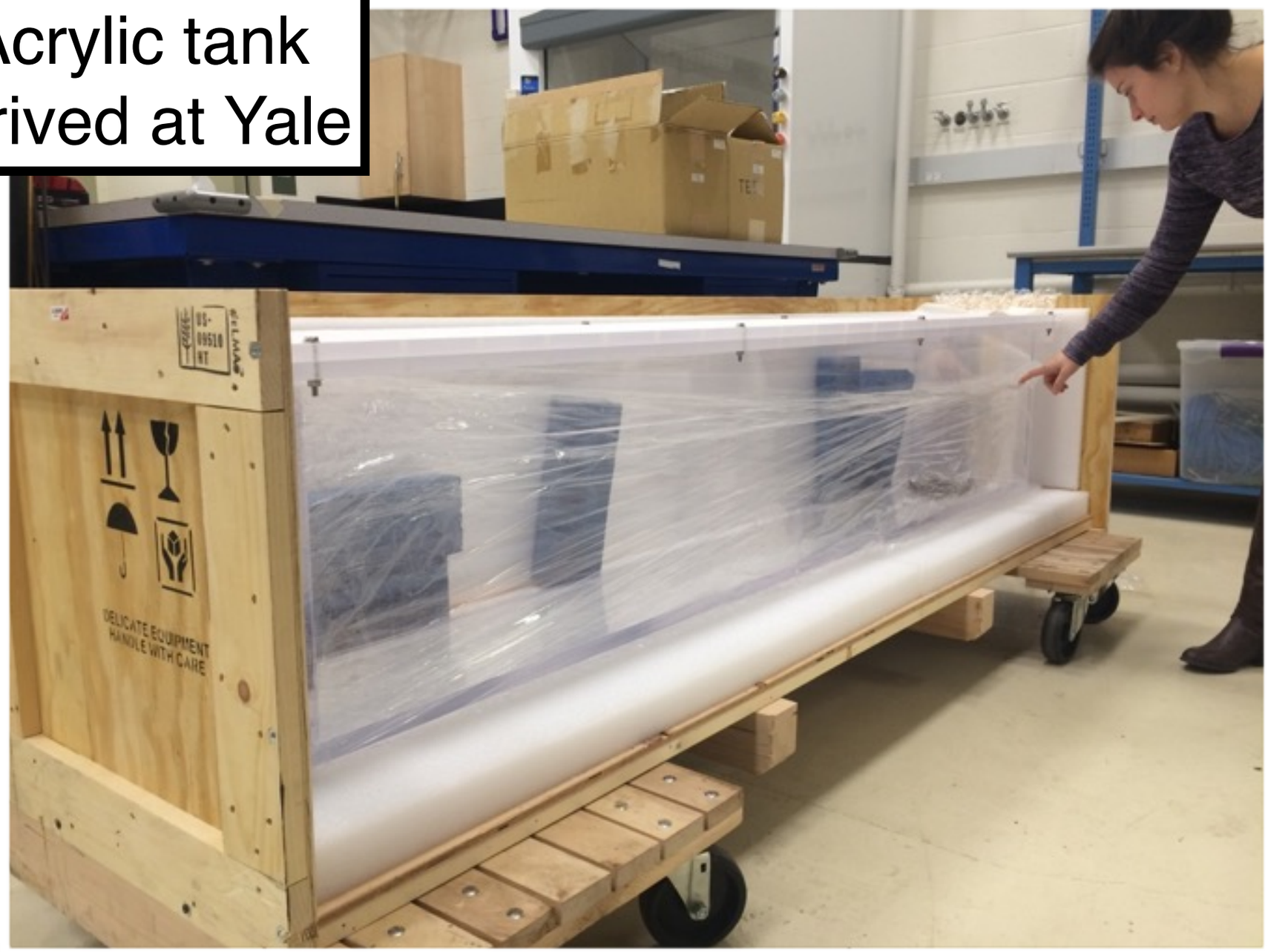
- Thin-walled reflector panels
- PMT enclosures
- Filling system and procedure
- Calibration system
  - LED optical
  - Source capsules
- Cell-to-cell variation

PROSPECT-50 Demonstrator



Acrylic tank arrived at Yale





83”

ıts

ı subsystem

r panels

ɔrocedure

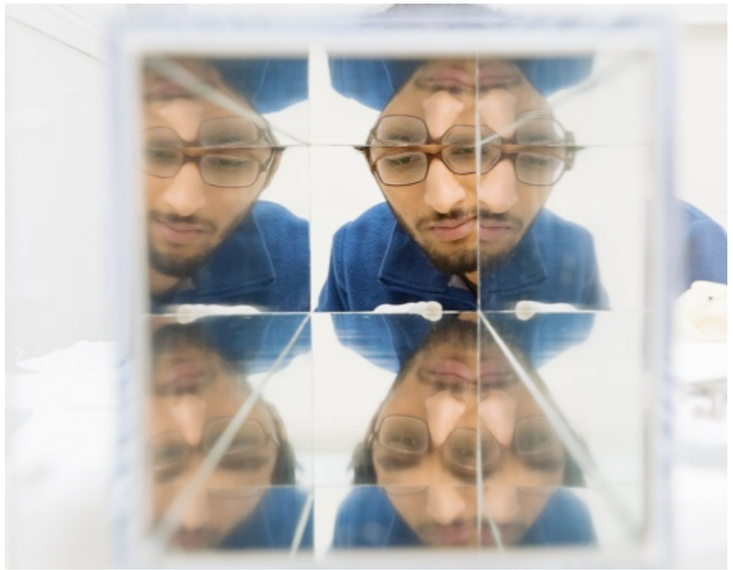
Low-mass optical separators

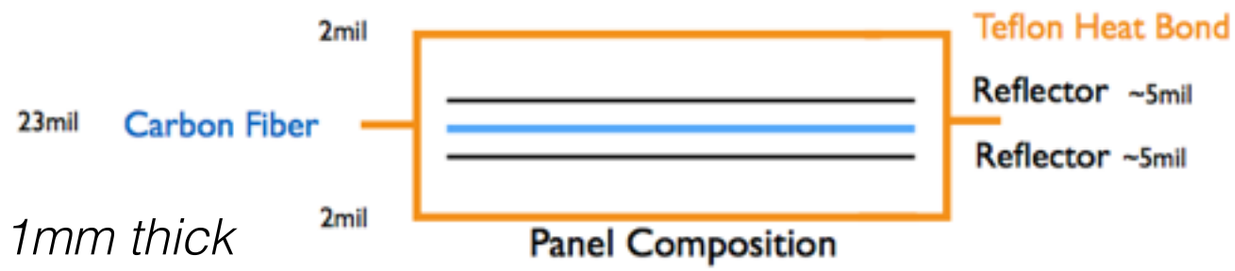
Compatibility:

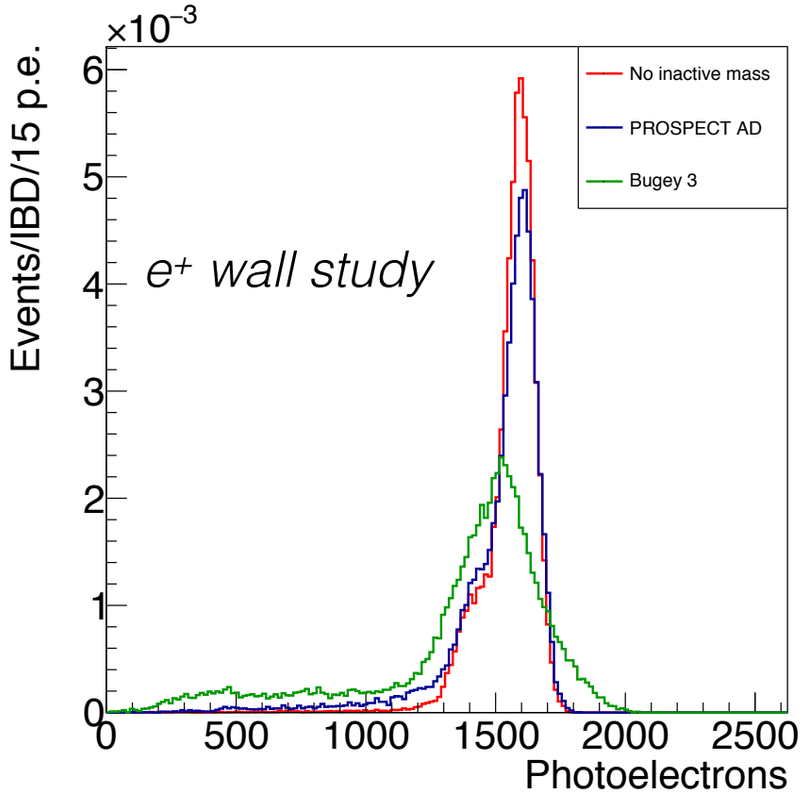
- extensive material compatibility testing required to ensure long-term LS performance
- focus on materials proven in recent experiments - PTFE, acrylic, polypropylene, …
- long-term mechanical stability verified

Separators:

- physics goals demand low inactive mass, high reflectivity, and long-term compatibility
- developed multi-layer system meeting all requirements
- fabrication procedures for full-scale system under validation



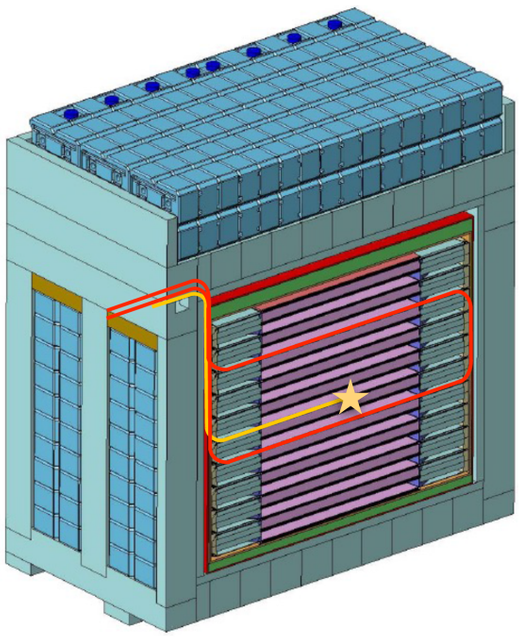




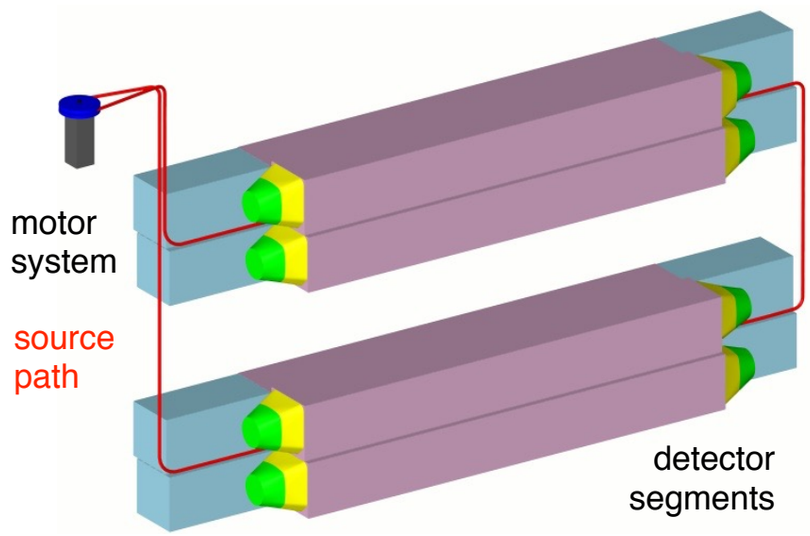
produced robust low-mass separators from LS-compatible materials

Calibration Techniques

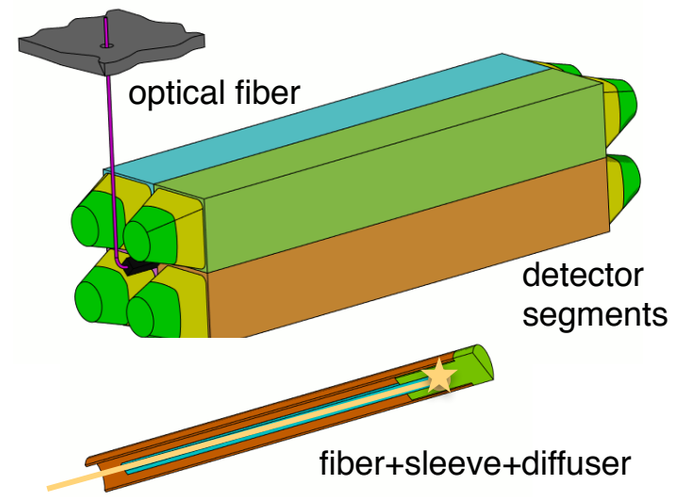
antineutrino detector
with optical and source calibration



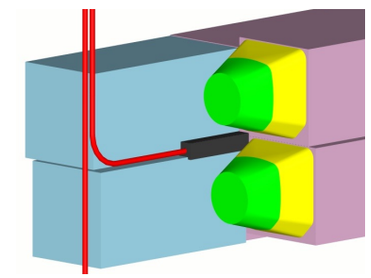
source deployment system
with string and guide tubes



optical calibration system
with string and guide tubes



routing between segments
and PMT modules



pulsed laser sources
- LiLS light transmission
- PMT gain and timing

encapsulated γ sources
- energy scale
- scintillator non-linearity

neutron sources
- PSD calibration
- neutron detection efficiency

radioactive and cosmogenic backgrounds will be used to monitor and calibrate detector response between source deployments

Example: PROSPECT-20
- through going muons
- ^{40}K
- n capture on ^{6}Li

R&D on scintillator spiking with ^{227}Ac
- segment uniformity, relative LiLS mass measurements

Summary and Outlook

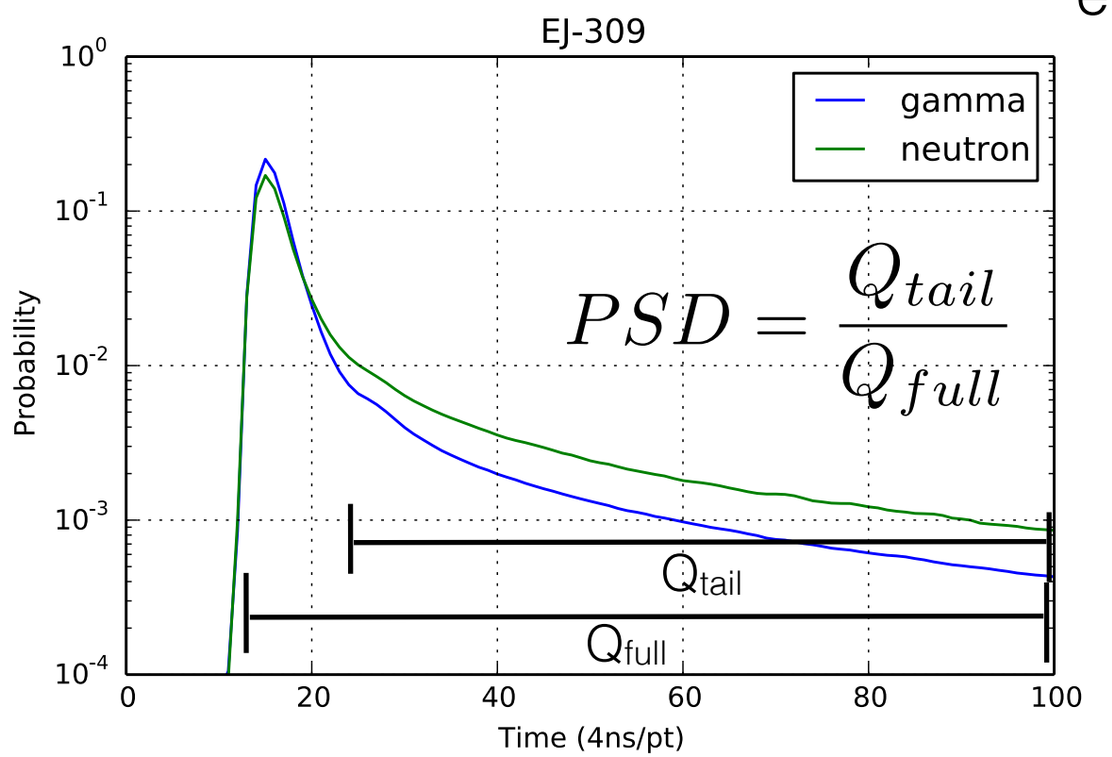
- Neutrino anomalies have lead to discoveries
- The reactor flux and shape anomalies offer a window to new physics
- **PROSPECT will cover the sterile neutrino best fit region at 3σ within its first calendar year**
- **PROSPECT will measure the ^{235}U spectrum with the highest precision to-date**
- Key design goals have been demonstrated and technical implementation is underway

Publications: arXiv: 1309.7647, 1506.03547, 1508.06575

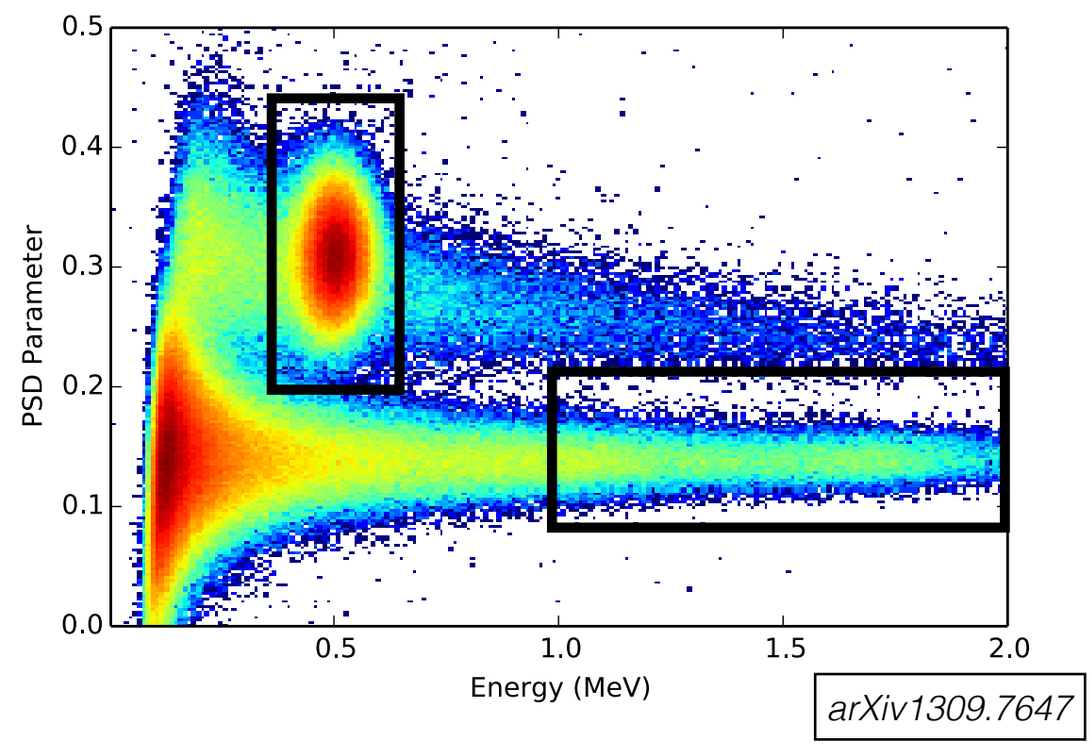
http://prospect.yale.edu

Pulse Shape Discrimination

Can take advantage of how different particles deposit energy in scintillator using pulse-shape discrimination (PSD). Gives particle identification information.



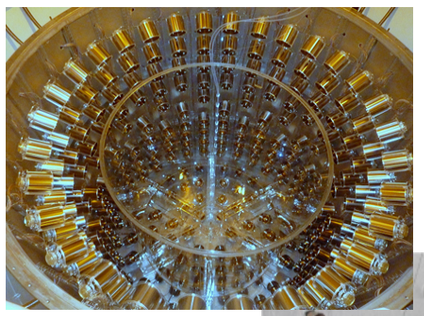
energy+PSD cuts for prompt and delay signals

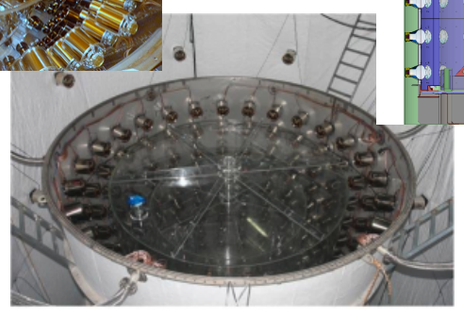


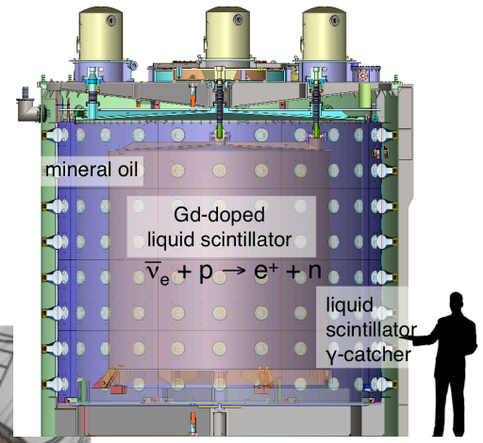
PROSPECT-2 (LiLS)

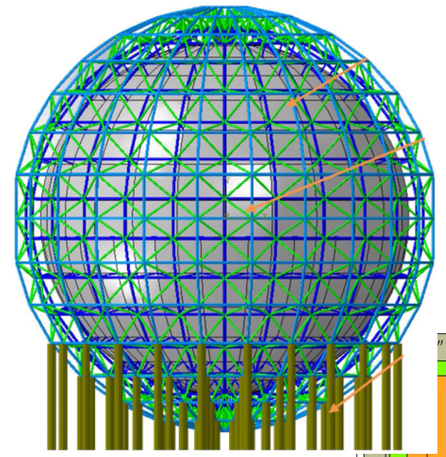
particle classification: light particles = “gamma-like”, heavy charged = “neutron-like”

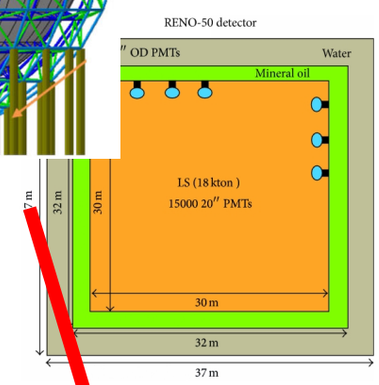
Baselines Probe Different Parameters

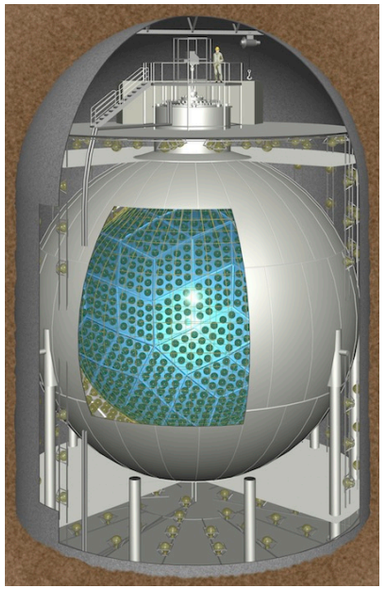


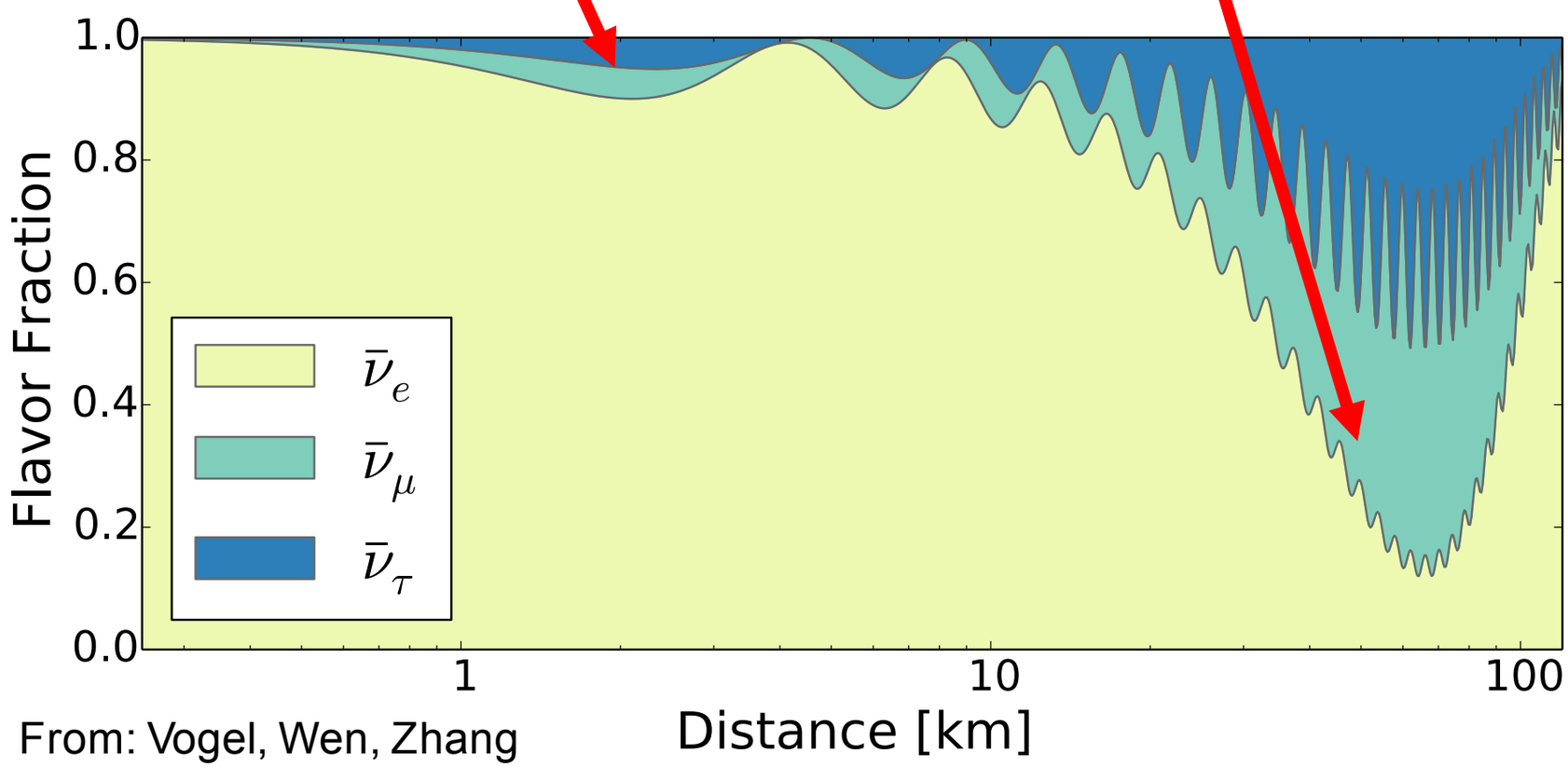












From: Vogel, Wen, Zhang

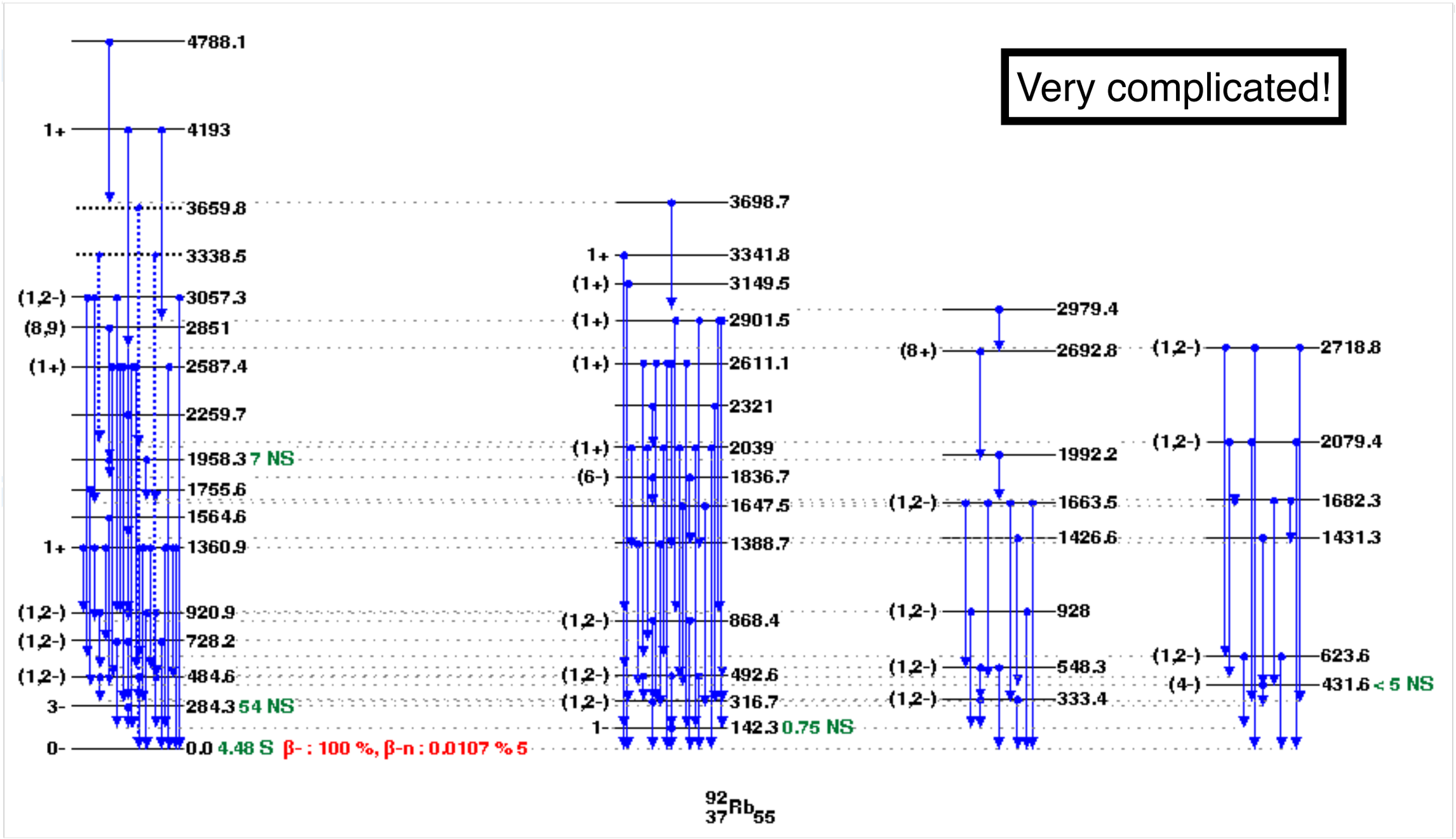
Predicting Neutrino Flux/Spectra

Ex: 144Ce Decay

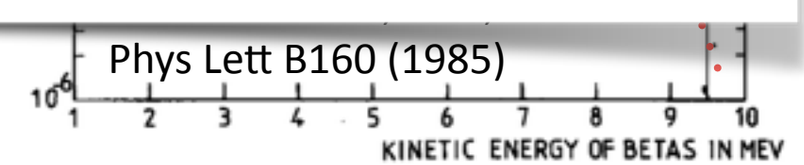
Two main approaches:

- A

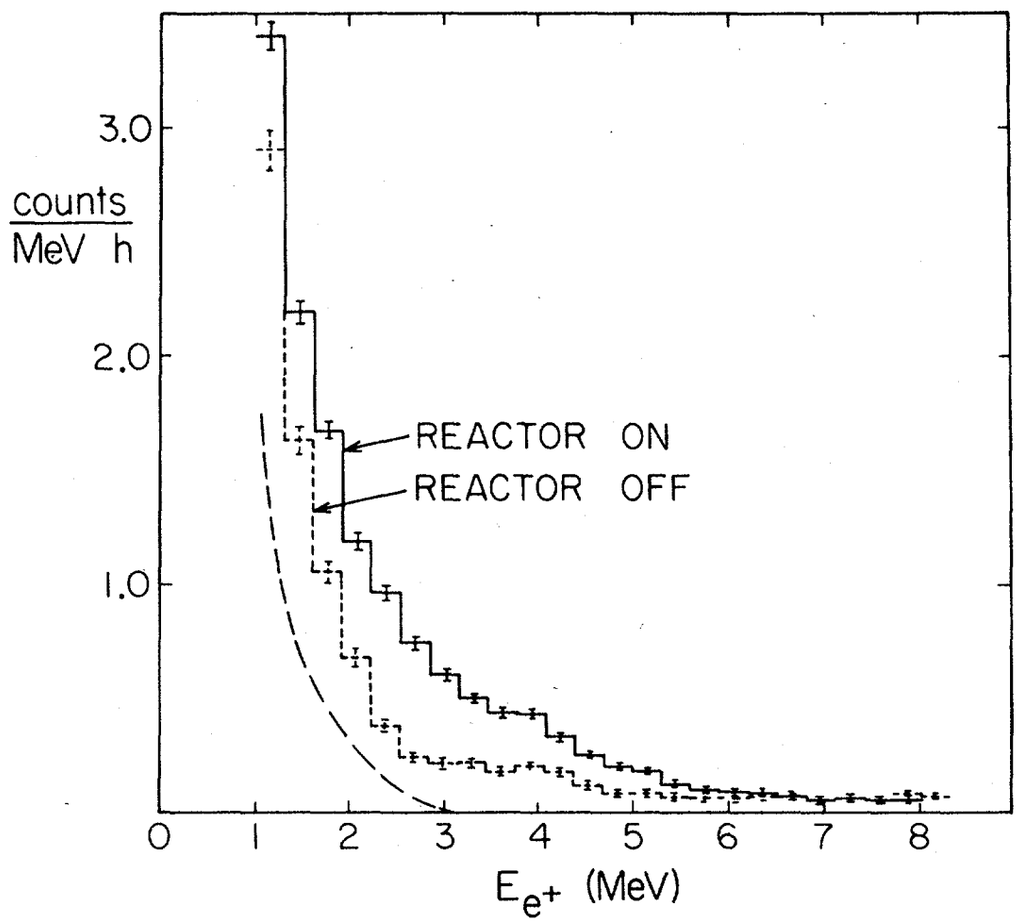
- A

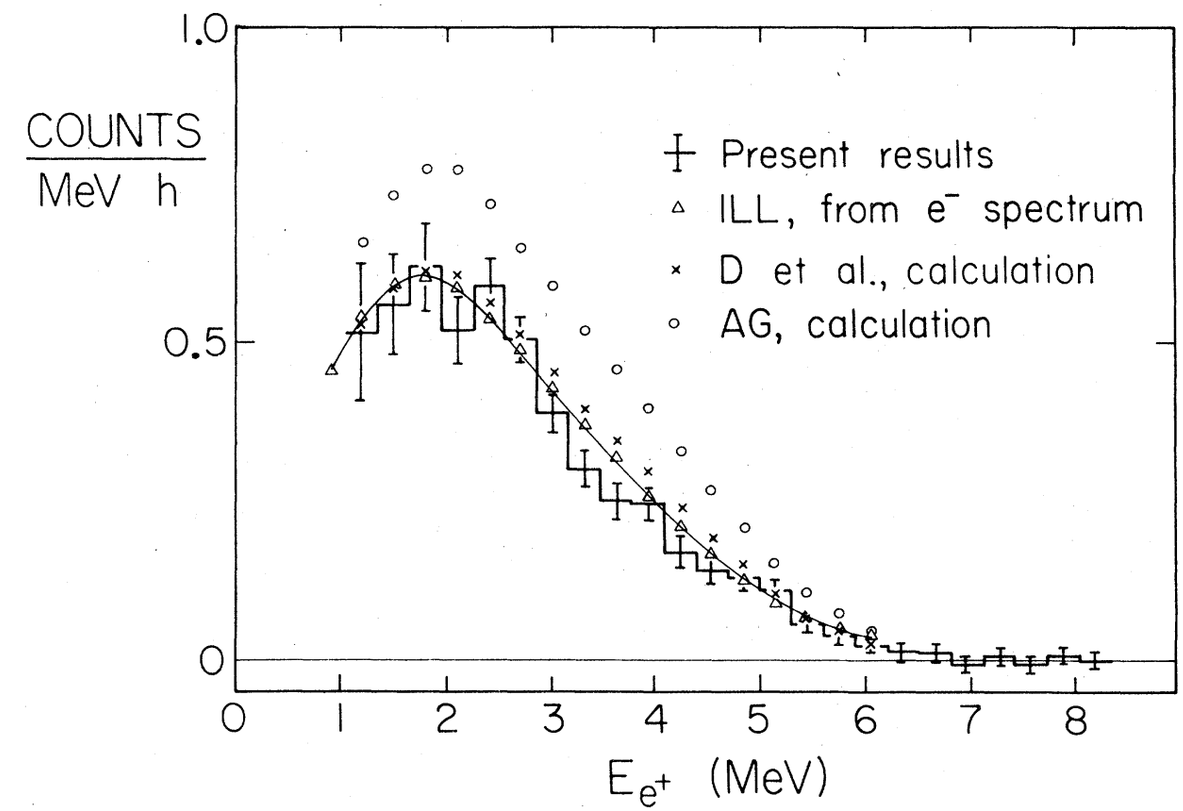


all relevant physics?



ILL ^{235}U Spectrum Measurement





- **1981:** Only published measurement of ^{235}U spectrum at ILL reactor in France
- ±20% uncertainties, unable to constrain reactor models
- Fewer than 5000 neutrino events detected