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## ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE STATEMENT

Naphthenic acids (NAs) are widely present in crude oil and are being regulated due to their toxicity and persistence in the environment. NA's are a class of carboxylic acids (COOHs) defined by their structure and number of carbon atoms. Screening for COOHs in oil contaminated waters is important when tracking the harmful effects of water-soluble petroleum products formed from sunlight. It is well-known sunlight increases bioavailability and often toxicity of oil spilled in aquatic systems, but there is still much unknown about the composition of the photoproducts, including COOHs. Barium ion adduct chemistry offers an elegant way to screen for COOHs in petroleum polluted waters.

# 1 Barium ion adduct mass spectrometry to identify carboxylic acid photoproducts from crude oil-water 2 systems under solar irradiation

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## 9 10 ABSTRACT

11 Petroleum derived dissolved organic matter (DOM<sub>HC</sub>) samples were successfully cationized with barium,  
12 revealing many [M-H+Ba]<sup>+</sup> peaks in both dark and simulated sunlight treatments. The DOM<sub>HC</sub> samples  
13 generated after light exposure exhibited a greater number of [M-H+Ba]<sup>+</sup> peaks compared to the dark  
14 control. Multiple [M-H+Ba]<sup>+</sup> peaks were investigated in the irradiated DOM<sub>HC</sub> using low resolution  
15 MS/MS in order to confirm the presence of diagnostic fragment ions, m/z 139, 155 and 196 in each  
16 treatment. Due to the high complexity of the irradiated DOM<sub>HC</sub> mixture, Fourier transform ion cyclotron  
17 resonance mass spectrometry (FT-ICR MS/MS) was employed to obtain molecular level information for  
18 both irradiated and dark treatments. The irradiated DOM<sub>HC</sub> treatments had more irradiated oxygenated  
19 species over a wide range of H/C and O/C ratios when compared to the dark controls. Doubly irradiated  
20 species were also observed in DOM<sub>HC</sub>, which provides evidence that photochemistry transforms DOM<sub>HC</sub>  
21 to even more complex mixtures with multiple oxygenations per molecule. This study provides evidence  
22 that barium adduct mass spectrometry can be successfully applied to DOM<sub>HC</sub> screening for the presence  
23 of COOHs, both in dark samples and solar irradiated samples. Furthermore, direct evidence and  
24 molecular composition of aqueous phase crude oil photoproducts is provided by this technique.

## 25 INTRODUCTION

26 Petroleum derived naphthenic acids (NAs) are a class of carboxylic acid (COOHs) compounds  
27 known for their toxicity to aquatic life,<sup>1-7</sup> vegetation<sup>8-11</sup> and for their persistence in the environment.<sup>12-15</sup>  
28 Headley and McMartin (2004) define NAs as alkyl substituted cycloaliphatic carboxylic acids (COOHs)  
29 with small amounts of acyclic aliphatic acids,<sup>14</sup> Shepherd et al. (2010) defined NAs as derivatives of  
30 cyclohexane and cyclopentane homologues from petroleum containing carboxylic acid groups<sup>16</sup> and many  
31 reports have defined them as having the formula C<sub>n</sub>H<sub>2n</sub> + zO<sub>2</sub>.<sup>17-22</sup> Naphthenic acids, widely found in  
32 crude oil,<sup>23</sup> are important due to their prevalence in oil contaminated sites,<sup>17, 24-26</sup> chronic toxicity,<sup>1, 2, 9, 27-31</sup>

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3 33 persistence in the environment,<sup>20</sup> and their important role in biogeochemical cycles.<sup>24,32</sup>

4 34 Naphthenic acids are present in complex mixtures such as oil sands processed water.<sup>14, 15, 17, 33-36</sup>  
5 35 and petroleum.<sup>24, 37-41</sup> and have been widely studied using fluorescence,<sup>25, 42</sup> gas chromatography coupled  
6 36 with mass spectrometry (GC-MS)<sup>43, 44</sup> and Fourier transform ion cyclotron resonance mass spectrometry  
7 37 (FT-ICR MS).<sup>10, 45-53</sup> Targeted and non-targeted derivatization methods have been employed in order to  
8 38 selectively detect NAs. Omari et al. (2019) utilized a charge tagging technique to detect NAs in petroleum  
9 39 fractions.<sup>23</sup> Gutierrez-Villagomez et al. (2017) derivatized NAs and analyzed them using GC-MS.<sup>54</sup> A  
10 40 few notable studies utilized GC x GC-TOF MS to identify derivatized NAs in petroleum and tailing  
11 41 waters.<sup>16, 55, 56</sup> Duncan et al. (2016) developed a method which used barium ion chemistry for fatty acids  
12 42 (FAs)<sup>57-59</sup> coupled with online membrane sampling to selectively ionize COOHs and FAs in wastewater  
13 43 samples.<sup>60</sup> Isolation and cationization of COOHs and FAs using barium derivatization produces barium  
14 44 adducts, which are selectively ionized in positive-ion electrospray ionization ((+) ESI).<sup>57-60</sup>

15 45 It is well known that photochemistry plays a major role in the fate of petroleum spilled in areas  
16 46 with sunlight exposure.<sup>61-68</sup> Recent work has shown that a wide array of photoproducts are generated by  
17 47 natural photochemistry of crude oil under solar irradiation.<sup>69-73</sup> In studying the photochemical  
18 48 mechanisms of oil transformations, previous studies observed increased concentrations of aldehyde and  
19 49 ketone photoproducts in the aqueous phase with solar irradiation time.<sup>73</sup> Given that oil sand processed  
20 50 waters (OSPW) from bitumen has been thoroughly characterized<sup>35, 43, 47, 74-77</sup> and shown to contain up to 2  
21 51 % weight of NAs per total bitumen,<sup>14</sup> we hypothesize that a portion of photooxygenated petroleum which  
22 52 has been previously shown to produce NAs,<sup>78</sup> contains NAs which eventually diffuse into the water once  
23 53 petroleum is exposed to sunlight. Zito et al. (2019) have shown that after the first 24 hours of light  
24 54 exposure, the DOM<sub>HC</sub> exhibited bioluminescence inhibition to *Vibrio fischeri*.<sup>69</sup> This response may be  
25 55 partially due to the presence of NAs produced from the petroleum after sunlight exposure as shown in  
26 56 previous reports on toxicity of oil sands processed water containing naphthenic acids.<sup>26, 27, 30, 34, 79-84</sup>

27 57 However, more sophisticated toxicity studies are needed in order to have a deeper understanding of the toxic  
28 58 effects of DOM<sub>HC</sub> on human and aquatic life. In order to characterize NAs and other COOHs in DOM<sub>HC</sub>,  
29 59 which is a complex mixture, we employed the use of barium ion chemistry known to work for NAs<sup>60</sup> and  
30 60 fatty acids (FAs)<sup>57-59</sup> to selectively identify COOHs present in the DOM<sub>HC</sub> mixture.

31 61 This study presents a preliminary investigation on the barium cationization of DOM<sub>HC</sub> generated  
32 62 in pure water from thin petroleum films exposed to simulated sunlight. We know that the composition of  
33 63 DOM<sub>HC</sub> is highly oxygenated,<sup>69</sup> however, it is unknown what portion of the oxygen containing  
34 64 compounds is comprised of NAs or other COOHs. This study utilizes the methods employed by Duncan  
35 65 et al. (2016) and FT-ICR MS to gain a deeper understanding of the presence of COOHs, which make up a  
36 66 portion of DOM<sub>HC</sub>. The use of barium ion chemistry provides an elegantly simple approach that is

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3 67 selective to COOHs and eliminates contamination. Controlled laboratory studies of acid photoproducts  
4 68 generated in DOM<sub>HC</sub> from pure water are useful because they eliminate potential contamination from  
5 69 background DOM sources and biota, which are known interferences and make NAs and COOHs hard to  
6 70 characterize.<sup>85-87</sup> The results obtained by using this approach provide insight into the composition of acids  
7 71 present in DOM<sub>HC</sub> and have important implications for understanding the fate and persistence of  
8 72 hydrocarbons released by oil spills.

## 13 14 73 **EXPERIMENTAL**

### 15 74 16 75 **Materials**

17 76 The oil used in this study was a surrogate Macondo oil (MC), (provided by BP August 2011, chain  
18 77 of custody number 20110803-Tarr-072). All glassware was acid cleaned and combusted at 550 °C prior to  
19 78 use. Nanopure water was collected from an Aeries nanopure system. Barium acetate was purchased from  
20 79 Sigma Aldrich. Methanol was HPLC grade and purchased from Fischer Scientific.

### 21 80 **Irradiation experiments**

22 81 Photoirradiations were performed in batches of three at a single time point for dark and light  
23 82 samples using an Atlas CPS + solar simulator in nanopore water (refer to Zito et al. (2019) for experiment  
24 83 details).<sup>69</sup> Briefly, thin films of MC oil were prepared by pipetting 385 µL over 50 mLs of nanopore water.  
25 84 The beakers were subsequently covered with quartz lids to prevent evaporation and thermostatically  
26 85 controlled at 27°C. Dissolved organic carbon concentration (DOC) was measured on all samples, which  
27 86 were preconcentrated by the solid-phase extraction technique described in detail elsewhere.<sup>88</sup> Briefly, after  
28 87 DOC analysis, each sample was acidified to pH 2 prior to loading onto a Bond Elut PPL (Agilent  
29 88 Technologies) stationary phase cartridge. Each sample was eluted with methanol at a final concentration of  
30 89 50 µgC mL<sup>-1</sup>. The extracts were stored in the dark at 4°C in pre-combusted glass vials until analysis.  
31 90 Methanol extracts were subsequently mixed with 20 µL of 0.1 mM barium acetate prior to analysis in order  
32 91 to target carboxylate moieties per previously published methods for wastewater.<sup>60</sup> Elemental formulas of  
33 92 the barium adducts were obtained using (+) electrospray ionization (ESI) on a 9.4 T FT-ICR-MS using  
34 93 PetroOrg © software developed at the National High Magnetic Field Laboratory (NHMFL).<sup>89-91</sup> Molecular  
35 94 formulas were assigned within a tolerance of 1 ppm. Elemental constraints for each assignment iteration  
36 95 are listed Supporting Information (Table S1). Identification of molecular formulas using high resolution  
37 96 MS allows verification of barium adduct formation and determination of the number of oxygen molecules  
38 97 present in each photoproducted acid. Tandem mass spectrometry by infrared multiple photon dissociation  
39 98 (IRMPD; Synrad 48-2, λ = 10.6 µm, Mukilteo, WA) was used to confirm barium acetate derivatives. A  
40 99 single m/z at 302.9810, corresponding to a molecular formula of C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>13</sub>O<sub>5</sub><sup>138</sup>Ba<sub>1</sub> (DBE = 1), was quadrupole  
41 100 isolated prior to high-resolution stored waveform inverse Fourier transform (SWIFT) isolation<sup>92</sup> and  
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3 101 IRMPD. In addition, quadrupole isolation of  $\sim 2$   $m/z$  segments were followed by IRMPD to track diagnostic  
4 102 bariated product ions ( $m/z$  196.9186). The photon energy of the laser was fixed at 116.9 meV, using a total  
5 103 energy of  $\sim 20$  J (25 W with an irradiation time of 800 ms). Lower energy would yield only the most labile  
6 104 losses, typically neutral loss. Experimental conditions were chosen to limit dimer formation. In addition,  
7 105 IRMPD experiments did not yield spectra indicative of multimer formation.

## 11 106 12 107 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

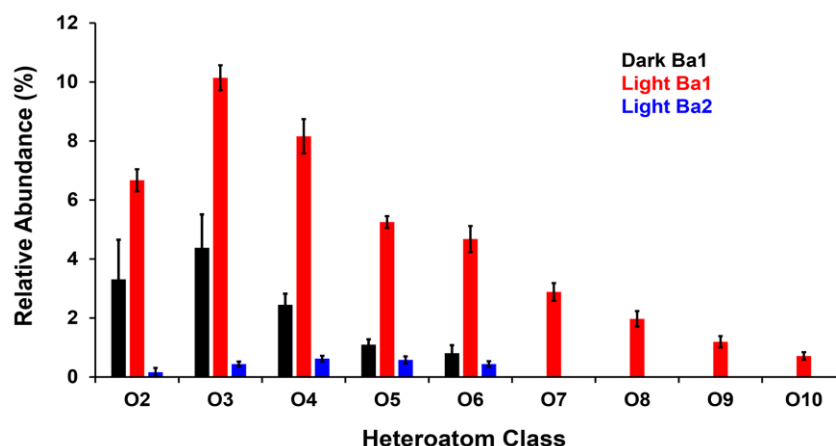
14 108 Product ion scans using low resolution mass spectrometry (Figure S1) were performed, confirming  
15 109 the presence of bariated compounds with product ions of  $m/z$  155  $[\text{BaOH}]^+$ . The low-resolution MS-MS  
16 110 technique allowed determination of nominal masses for the presence of COOHs in the  $\text{DOM}_{\text{HC}}$ . These  
17 111 results also demonstrated an increased abundance of COOHs after exposure to simulated sunlight,  
18 112 including the presence of higher molecular weight species in the aqueous phase. However, due to the  
19 113 large number of peaks observed in both the dark and irradiated treatments, the use of FT-ICR MS was  
20 114 necessary to provide detailed characterization of the  $\text{DOM}_{\text{HC}}$  photoproducts.

25 115 Samples analyzed by FT-ICR MS confirmed the presence of known bariated diagnostic product  
26 116 ions,  $m/z$  196 and  $m/z$  139,<sup>60</sup> in the dark and irradiated  $\text{DOM}_{\text{HC}}$ . Figure 1 shows a heteroatom class graph  
27 117 of the percent relative abundance of molecular formulas derived from FT-ICR MS data versus number of  
28 118 oxygens per molecule (heteroatom class). Data for both dark (black) and irradiated (red and blue)

31 119  $\text{DOM}_{\text{HC}}$  samples are  
32 120 presented. The dark  
33 121 (black) and irradiated (red)  
34 122  $\text{DOM}_{\text{HC}}$  samples both  
35 123 contained  $\text{O}_x$  species  
36 124 cationized with one  
37 125 barium atom, but only the  
38 126 irradiated sample  
39 127 contained  $\text{O}_x$  species  
40 128 cationized with two  
41 129 barium atoms (blue).

42 130 Notably, there is a shift to  
43 131 higher oxygenated species

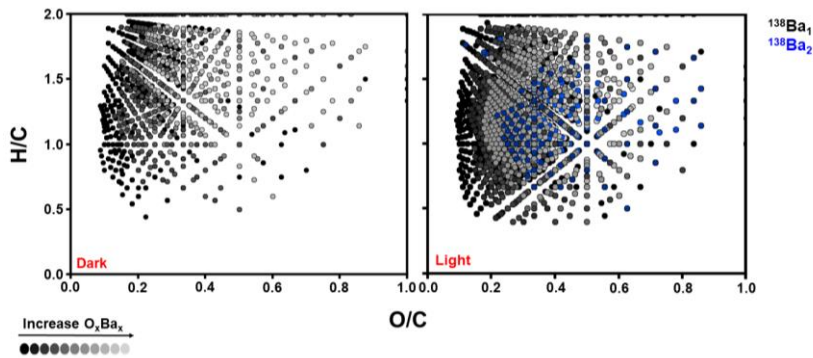
44 132 after irradiation from  $\text{O}_2$  to  $\text{O}_{10}$  as observed in previous studies.<sup>69, 72</sup> Figure 1 also shows that the bariated  
45 133 acid species have a wide range of oxygen content. These data not only confirm that the barium  
46 134 derivatization was successful, but they also show the presence of two barium atoms complexed with the



**Figure 1:** Heteroatom class graphs of bariated oxygen containing species for dark (black), Light (red) and double bariated light (blue)  $\text{DOM}_{\text{HC}}$  formula derived from FT-ICR MS. Error bars represent standard deviation ( $n=3$ ).

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3 135  $O_x$  species. Because barium only forming adducts with COOHs,<sup>60</sup> the presence of two bound barium ions  
4 136 suggests that three acids are present in these species (two bariated and one free acid) to yield a singly  
5 137 charged species. Moreover, Duncan et al. (2016) confirmed that this technique was only selective to  
6 138 carboxylic groups containing hydrogen atoms located in the  $\beta$  and  $\gamma$  positions,<sup>60</sup> Therefore, we can  
7 139 conclude with confidence that the compounds in the  $DOM_{HC}$  containing bariated adducts are indeed  
8 140 COOHs.

11 141 Figure 2 shows van Krevelen plots for all molecular formulas observed by FT-ICR MS (each dot  
12 142 on the plot) for the dark (a) and irradiated (b)  $DOM_{HC}$  bariated samples.

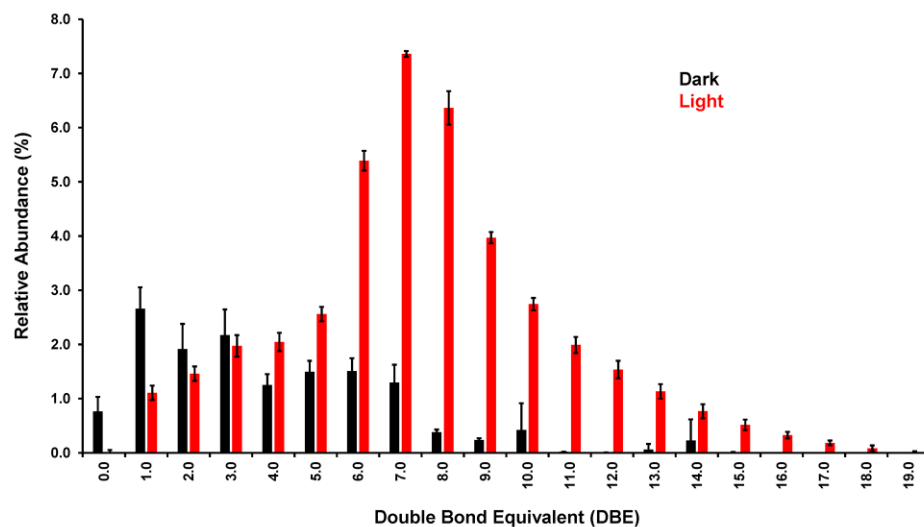


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28 **Figure 2:** van Krevelen plots derived from FT-ICR MS data for the  
29 dark (left) and irradiated (right)  $DOM_{HC}$  bariated samples.

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31 152 were present after sunlight  
32 153 exposure. Therefore, we can conclude that sunlight exposure results in the production of COOHs that  
33 154 partition to the aqueous phase. This process can be problematic when the  $DOM_{HC}$  enters aquatic systems  
34 155 due to the persistence and toxicity of NAs<sup>26, 27, 34, 81</sup> that are likely present among the carboxylated  
35 156 photoproducts. We also observed bariated compounds containing nitrogen and sulfur (Supporting S2),  
36 157 which have been previously reported for petroleum after light exposure.<sup>78</sup>  
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38 158 Figure 3 compares dark and irradiated treatments as a function of DBE versus percent relative abundance  
39 159 from the data derived from FT-ICR MS. There is a strong predominance of six to nine DBE heavily  
40 160 represented in the irradiated treatment.

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These data show that the bariated compounds span a large range of H/C and O/C. These data also show that there are more bariated compounds present in the irradiated versus the dark  $DOM_{HC}$  sample, confirming that more COOHs



**Figure 3:** Compares dark (black) and light (red) DBE equivalents vs. percent relative abundance for bariated species data derived from FT-ICR MS in DOM<sub>HC</sub>. Error bars represent standard deviation (n=3).

This result suggests that there are ring or aromatic species present in DOM<sub>HC</sub> that are COOHs. Also, an increase in DBE was observed for the detected bariated species after irradiation.

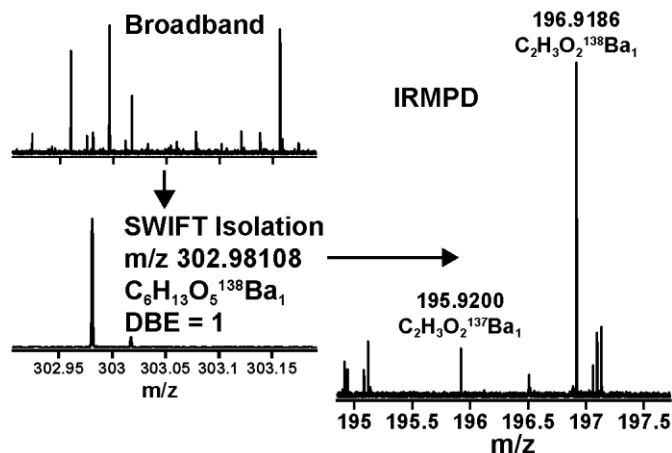
The increase in DBE after irradiation is for aqueous species and

176 occurs specifically because of oxygenation. The photoproducts become more water soluble due to the  
 177 presence of carboxylic acids created by photochemistry. The higher DBE species in the oil are not very  
 178 water soluble because of their large size and non-polar nature. These large molecules are susceptible to  
 179 oxygenation, which results in solubilization in the aqueous layer. While photobleaching does occur, its  
 180 time dependence is slower than that for the formation of the oxygenated species. The DBE data can help  
 181 identify the different types of COOHs present in the samples before and after irradiated exposure. Figure  
 182 3 also shows the presence of DBE zero compounds, which may represent alcohols. Previous reports  
 183 using this method with alcohols did not observe a signal for hydroxylated species;<sup>60</sup> however, the use of  
 184 FT-ICR MS allows for ultra-high resolution enabling for these compounds to be resolved and detected.  
 185 Since NAs are commonly identified by structure and Ba cationization is selective to COOHs<sup>60</sup> high  
 186 resolution MS and MS-MS data can be used to postulate what possible NAs are produced in water from  
 187 irradiated petroleum. Petroleum initially contains NAs that are predominantly alkyl substituted  
 188 cycloaliphatic carboxylic acid with a mixture of acyclic aliphatic acids, olefinic, hydroxyl or dibasic  
 189 acids.<sup>14</sup> In addition to providing important new tools for assessing the behavior of oil in natural  
 190 environments, this project also advances the understanding of barium adducts for analysis of COOHs in  
 191 environmental, biological, and other samples.

192 Figure 4 shows the IRMPD data for the bariated DOM<sub>HC</sub> after light treatment. IRMPD was used  
 193 to verify the presence of m/z 196 which was the qualifier ion proposed by Duncan et al. (2016) for  
 194 confirmation of the presence of COOHs in a sample.<sup>60</sup> Although m/z 196 was observed in low resolution  
 195 MS so was m/z 197. FT-ICR MS was used to verify if the peaks observed at low resolution were correct.  
 196 Figure 4 shows that when m/z 302.98108 with the formula C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>13</sub>O<sub>5</sub>Ba<sub>1</sub>, DBE = 1 was isolated, the



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3 197 fragment  $m/z$  196.9186 was observed. This  
4 198 mass corresponds to the formula  
5 199  $C_2H_3O_2^{138}Ba$  rather than  $C_2H_2O_2^{137}Ba$  as  
6 200 reported by Duncan et al. (2016) for  $m/z$   
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8 201 196, and represents a characteristic fragment  
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10 202 of bariated COOHs. Figure S3 presents the  
11 203  $m/z$  quad isolation vs. signal magnitude for  
12 204  $m/z$  196.918 for  $C_2H_3O_2^{138}Ba$  and shows all  
13 205 the precursor ions that yielded the fragment.  
14 206 These precursors are present over the whole  
15 207 mass range observed and represent  
16 208 carboxylic acid containing molecules formed  
17 209 by exposure of the oil to light.  
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**Figure 4:** IRMPD data from SWIFT isolation at  $m/z$  302.98108 in bariated  $DOM_{HC}$  after light treatment showing the presence of  $m/z$  196.9186.

## 211 CONCLUSION

212 NAs are regulated due to their toxicity and persistence in the environment. They are recalcitrant  
213 to biodegradation and photodegradation alone, making them persistent. This study provides a preliminary  
214 investigation into the presence of carboxylic acid photoproducts in  $DOM_{HC}$  generated from thin  
215 petroleum films first utilizing low resolution then verification using FT-ICR MS/IRMPD. Based on prior  
216 work, these photoproducted carboxylic acids likely contain naphthenic acids, which are known to be toxic.  
217 Other carboxylic acid photoproducts are also potentially toxic as their bioavailability is increased  
218 compared to their petroleum precursors. Data presented here show the existence of more bariated acid  
219 species in  $DOM_{HC}$  after solar treatment, demonstrating that photochemistry plays a role in the dissolution  
220 of petroleum derived COOHs. This transformation is an important factor to consider when petroleum  
221 comes in contact with sunlight and water, thereby making it bioavailable to surrounding ecosystems. The  
222 use of low-resolution MS to prescreen for COOHs provides a quick screening tool for water bodies  
223 contaminated by petroleum, and high-resolution MS can provide more compositional detail.  
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232 Spectrometry (CAMS) Facility at the University of New Orleans.

233

#### 234 **Author Contributions**

235 The manuscript was written through contributions of all authors. All authors have given approval to the  
236 final version of the manuscript.

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#### 238 **Conflict of interest**

239 There are no conflicts to declare.

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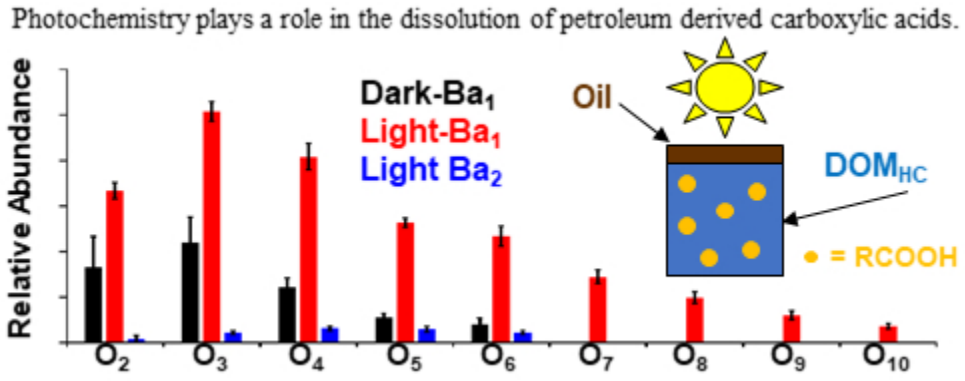
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