

Electrocatalytic Reduction of CO₂ on Size-Selected Nanoclusters of First-Row Transition Metal Nanoclusters: A Comprehensive Mechanistic Investigation

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Energy Corrections:

Gas-phase corrections:

The free energy of a gaseous molecule is calculated using the following expression:

$$U(T) = ZPE + \Delta U_{0 \rightarrow T}$$

$$H(T) = U(T) + PV = ZPE + \Delta U_{0 \rightarrow T} + PV$$

$$G(T) = H(T) - TS = ZPE + \Delta U_{0 \rightarrow T} + PV - TS$$

Zero-point energy (ZPE) and entropy corrections for various gaseous species computed at 298.15 K and 1 atm are given in Table S1. All the molecules were optimized using PBE functional.

Table S1: Zero-point energy (ZPE, eV) and entropy corrections (TS*, eV) for various gaseous species computed at 298K.

| Molecule | ZPE | TS | H(T) | G(T) |
|--------------------|-------|-------|-------|--------|
| H ₂ O | 0.568 | 0.584 | 0.671 | 0.087 |
| CH ₃ OH | 1.354 | 0.739 | 1.472 | 0.733 |
| HCOOH | 0.887 | 0.769 | 1.000 | 0.231 |
| H ₂ | 0.269 | 0.403 | 0.359 | -0.044 |
| CO | 0.132 | 0.611 | 0.222 | -0.389 |
| CO ₂ | 0.307 | 0.662 | 0.405 | -0.258 |
| CH ₄ | 1.182 | 0.576 | 1.286 | 0.711 |

Gas-phase thermochemical reaction energies computed with PBE functional are inconsistent with experimental results. To accurately quantify these inconsistencies, we have compared the reaction enthalpies (ΔH_{PBE}) with the experimental reference reaction enthalpies (ΔH_{ref}) taken from the NIST database¹ for a dataset of nine reaction enthalpies that involve CO₂ and CO molecules. We have found an average error of +0.06 eV and -0.41 eV for reactions that involve CO₂ and CO respectively, and these corrections were added to the DFT energy values of CO₂ and CO. It can be seen that the errors of these nine reaction enthalpies reduced considerably after adding energy corrections to CO₂ and CO.

Table S2: Comparison of nine reaction enthalpies (eV) for reactions involving CO and CO₂: ΔH_{ref} , based on NIST database values; ΔH_{PBE} , computed DFT values using PBE functional without any corrections; ΔH_{corr} , DFT values corrected by adding energy corrections of +0.06 eV for CO₂ and -0.41 eV for CO.

| Reaction | ΔH_{ref} | ΔH_{PBE} | $\Delta H_{\text{PBE}} - \Delta H_{\text{ref}}$ | ΔH_{corr} | $\Delta H_{\text{corr}} - \Delta H_{\text{ref}}$ |
|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|---|--------------------------|--|
| CO ₂ + H ₂ → CO + H ₂ O | 0.43 | 0.86 | 0.43 | 0.39 | -0.04 |
| 4H ₂ + CO ₂ → CH ₄ + H ₂ O | -1.71 | -1.66 | 0.05 | -1.72 | -0.01 |
| 3H ₂ + CO → CH + H ₂ O | -2.14 | -2.52 | -0.38 | -2.11 | 0.03 |
| CO ₂ + H ₂ → HCOOH | 0.15 | 0.07 | -0.08 | 0.01 | -0.14 |
| CO + H ₂ O → HCOOH | -0.27 | -0.79 | -0.51 | -0.38 | -0.10 |
| 3H ₂ + CO ₂ → CH ₃ OH + H ₂ O | -0.55 | -0.52 | 0.04 | -0.58 | -0.02 |
| 2H ₂ + CO → CH ₃ OH | -0.98 | -1.38 | -0.40 | -0.97 | 0.01 |
| 3H ₂ + CO ₂ → 1/2C ₂ H ₄ + 2H ₂ O | -0.66 | -0.57 | 0.09 | -0.63 | 0.03 |
| 2H ₂ + CO → ½ C ₂ H ₄ + H ₂ O | -1.09 | 1.43 | -0.35 | -1.03 | 0.06 |

Liquid-phase corrections:

CO₂ electron reduction reaction results in the release of H₂O, HCOOH, and CH₃OH which are formed in the liquid-phase. As it is difficult to calculate the liquid-phase free energies for H₂O, HCOOH, and CH₃OH with the DFT method, we applied an empirical correction based on the free energy difference between the formations of liquid and gas phases using the NIST database values. Based on this, liquid free energy corrections of -0.09 eV ad -0.12 eV were applied to H₂O and HCOOH respectively.

Table S3: Empirical liquid-phase free energy corrections (eV) from the free energy difference between the formations of liquid and gas phases using the NIST database values.

| | $\Delta_f G^\circ(l)/\text{kJ mol}^{-1}$ | $\Delta_f G^\circ(g)/\text{kJ mol}^{-2}$ | $\Delta fG^\circ(l)$ eV | $\Delta fG^\circ(g)$ eV | Difference |
|--------------------|--|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------|
| H ₂ O | -237.126 | -228.5457418 | -2.4576 | -2.3687 | -0.0889 |
| CH ₃ OH | -166.148 | -166.3493248 | -1.7220 | -1.7241 | 0.0021 |
| HCOOH | -362.589 | -350.9525505 | -3.7579 | -3.6373 | -0.1206 |

Solvent Corrections:

We have used an empirical solvent correction based on previously reported literature values. An empirical solvation correction of -0.5 eV was applied to OH* species and for hydroxyl species that are indirectly bound to the nanocluster surface through other atoms such as COH* and COOH*, a solvent correction of -0.38 eV was applied. For other species that contain C-O bonds, a correction of -0.1 eV was applied.^{2,3}

Table S4: Coefficient of determination (R^2) for the linear free energy scaling relationship between the adsorption energies of CO₂*, O* and C* with other CO₂RR adsorbates.

| | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|---------------------|------|---|---------------------|------|---|---------------------|------|
| CO ₂ * | CHO* | 0.93 | O | CH ₂ O* | 0.92 | C | CH* | 0.85 |
| CO ₂ * | CH ₂ O* | 0.92 | O | OH* | 0.91 | C | CH ₂ O* | 0.82 |
| CO ₂ * | OOCH* | 0.91 | O | CHO* | 0.90 | C | COH* | 0.82 |
| CO ₂ * | COOH* | 0.91 | O | CH ₃ O* | 0.90 | C | CHOH* | 0.82 |
| CO ₂ * | O* | 0.89 | O | CO ₂ * | 0.89 | C | CO* | 0.80 |
| CO ₂ * | CO* | 0.85 | O | CH ₂ * | 0.84 | C | CHO* | 0.80 |
| CO ₂ * | CH ₃ O* | 0.85 | O | OOCH* | 0.84 | C | CO ₂ * | 0.80 |
| CO ₂ * | OH* | 0.85 | O | COOH* | 0.83 | C | CH ₂ * | 0.79 |
| CO ₂ * | CH ₂ * | 0.82 | O | CHOH* | 0.78 | C | COOH* | 0.76 |
| CO ₂ * | CHOH | 0.82 | O | C* | 0.75 | C | O* | 0.75 |
| CO ₂ * | C* | 0.80 | O | CH* | 0.75 | C | CH ₃ O* | 0.72 |
| CO ₂ * | CH* | 0.71 | O | CO* | 0.68 | C | OOCH* | 0.72 |
| CO ₂ * | CH ₂ OH* | 0.63 | O | COH* | 0.66 | C | OH* | 0.71 |
| CO ₂ * | COH* | 0.62 | O | CH ₂ OH* | 0.66 | C | CH ₂ OH* | 0.62 |
| CO ₂ * | CH ₃ * | 0.38 | O | CH ₃ * | 0.40 | C | H* | 0.45 |
| CO ₂ * | H* | 0.35 | O | H* | 0.35 | C | CH ₃ * | 0.39 |

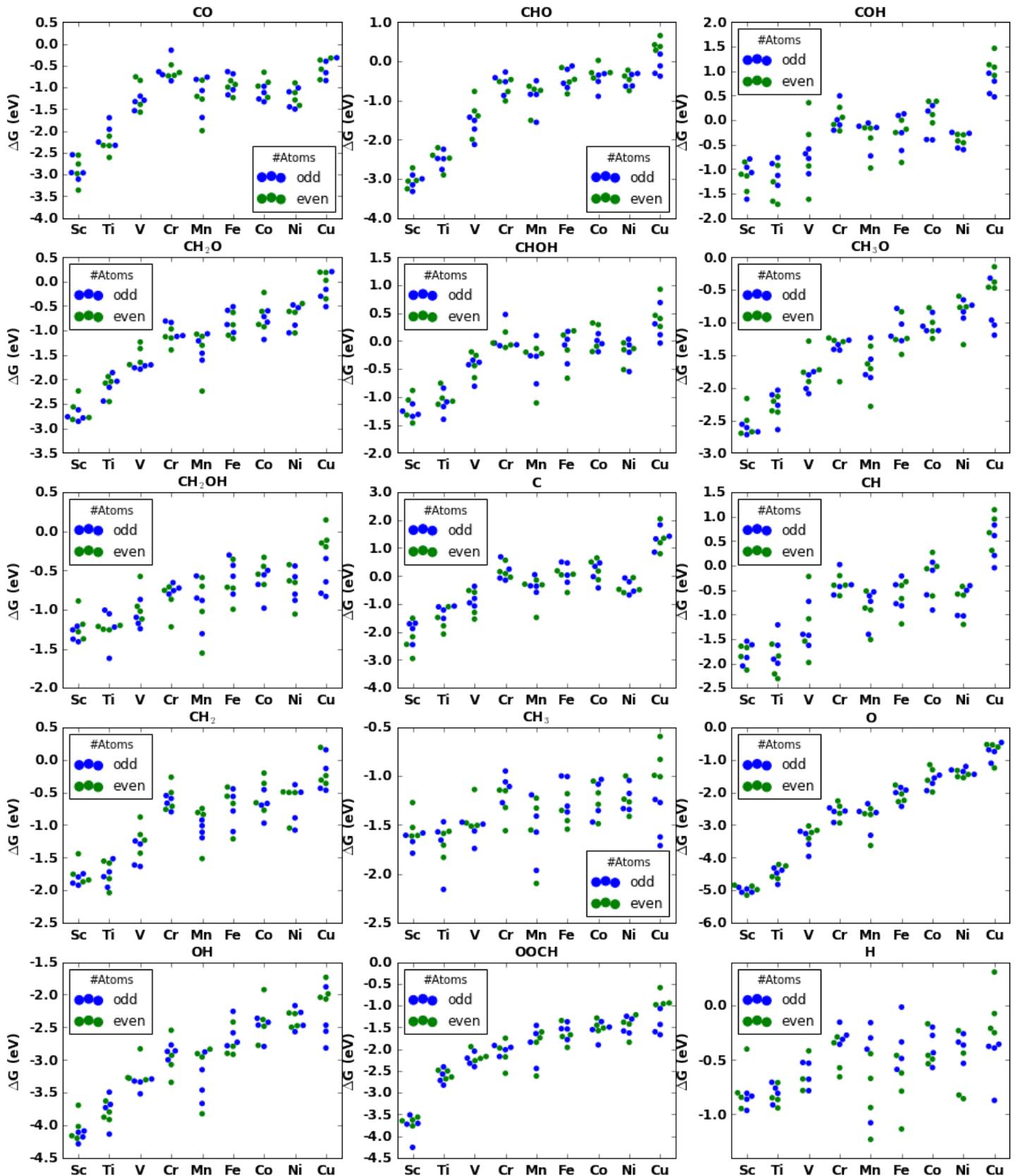


Figure S1: Adsorption free energies (ΔG , eV) of various adsorbates on first-row transition metal nanoclusters.

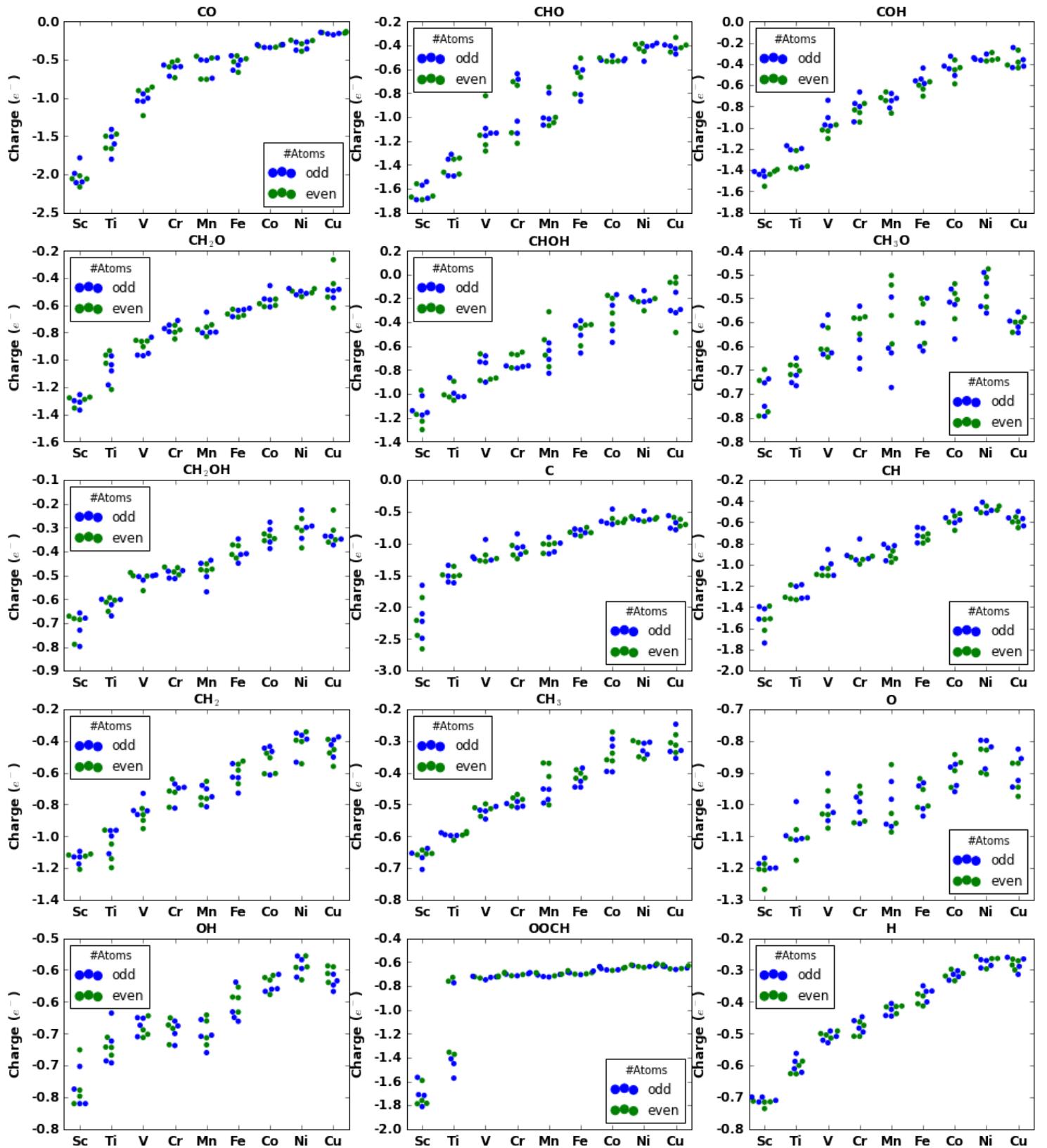


Figure S2: Residual changes (e^-) on various adsorbed species on binding with first-row transition metal nanoclusters.

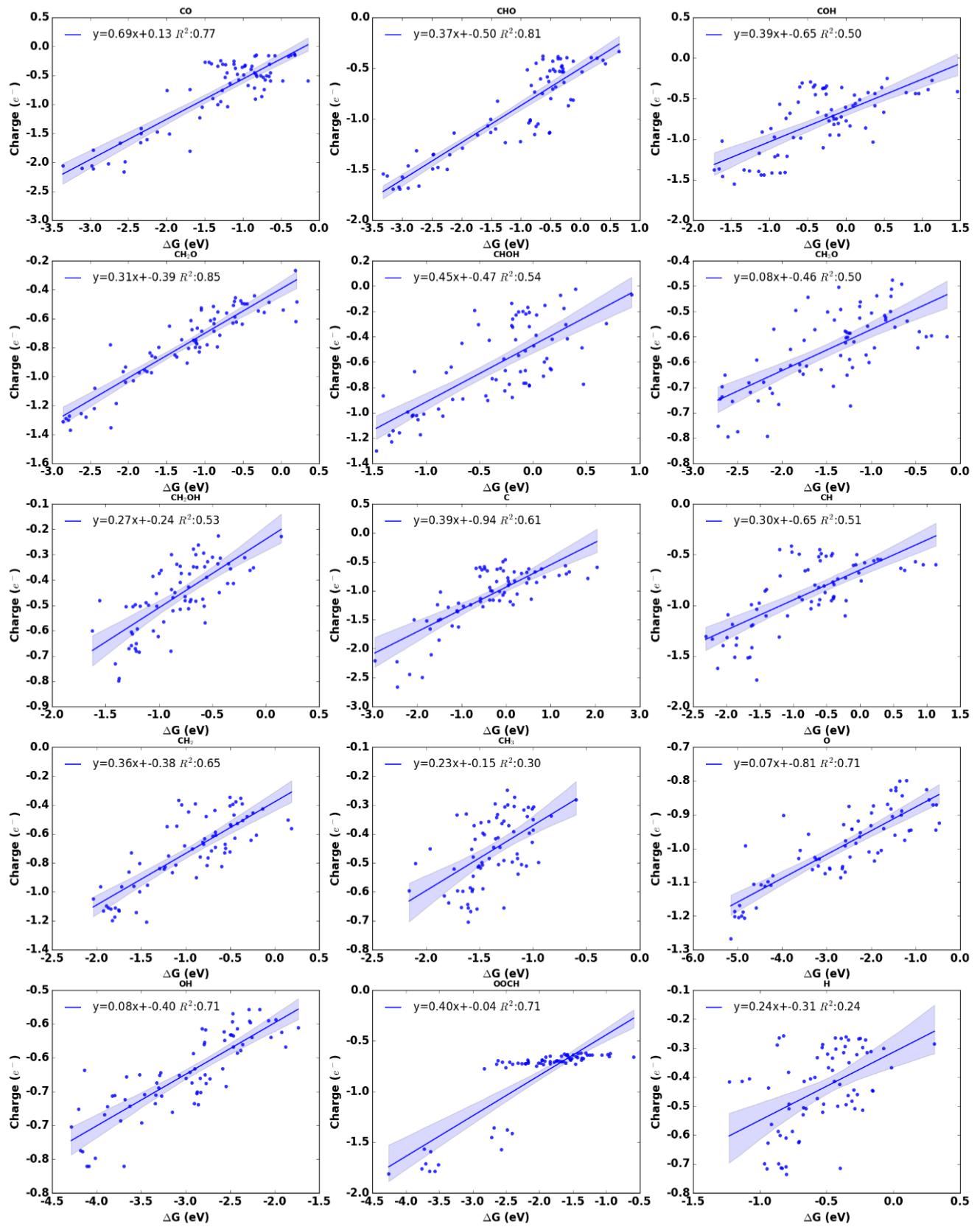


Figure S3: Correlation between residual charges (e^-) on adsorbates and adsorption free energies (eV) for various adsorbates.

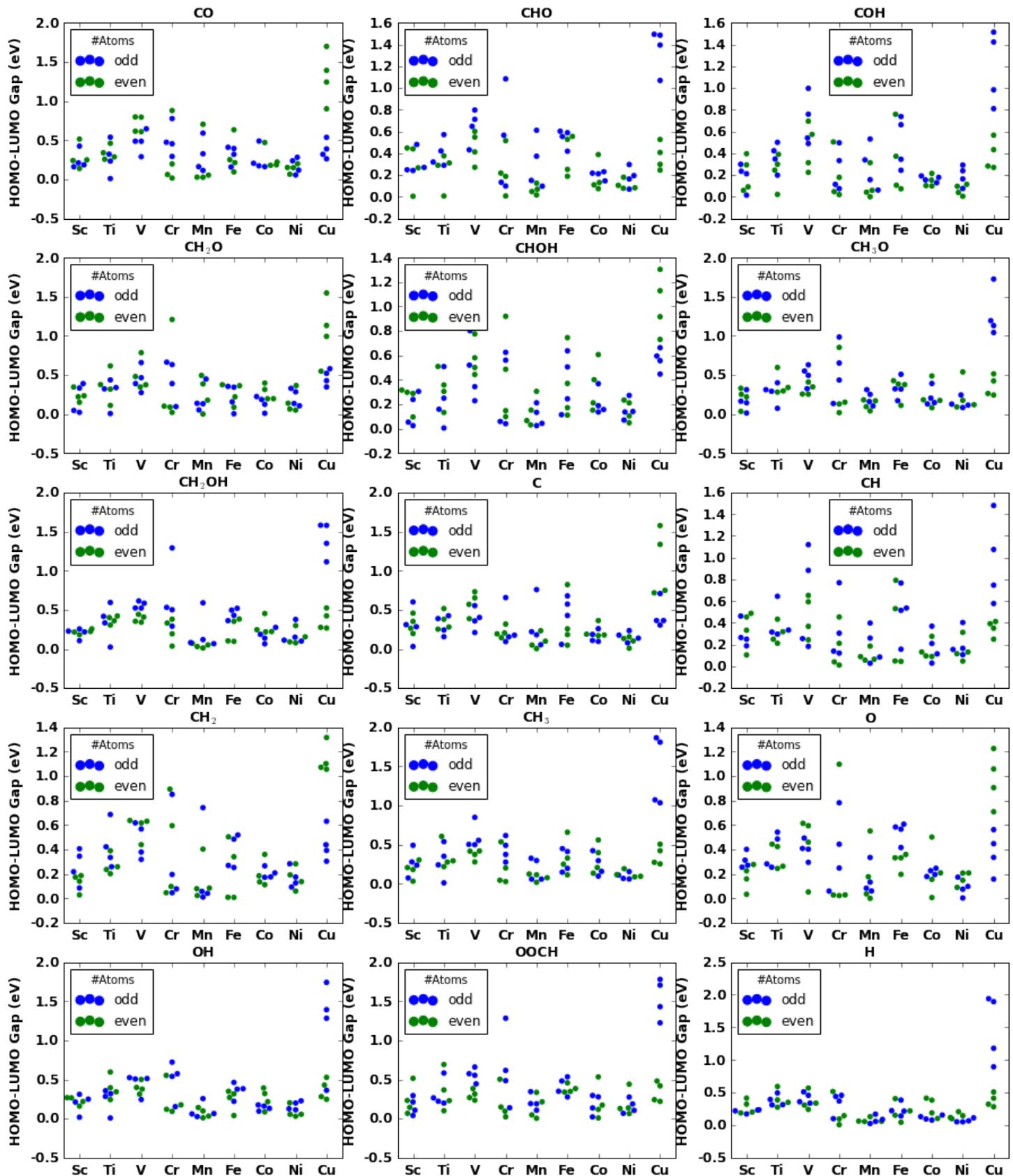


Figure S4: HOMO-LUMO gaps (eV) of various adsorbates bound on first-row transition metal nanoclusters.

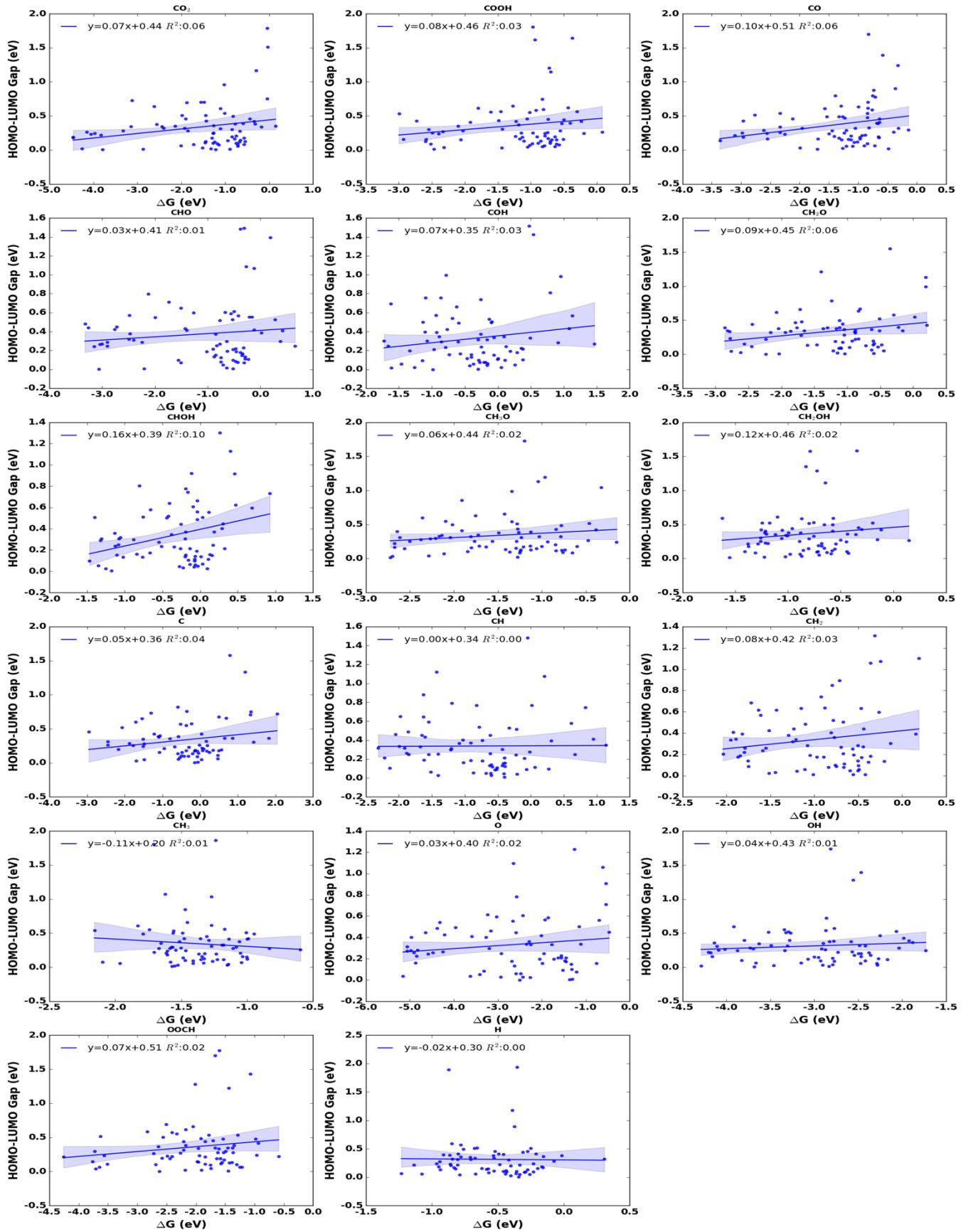


Figure S5: correlation between HOMO-LUMO gaps (eV) and adsorption free energies (eV) for various adsorbates.

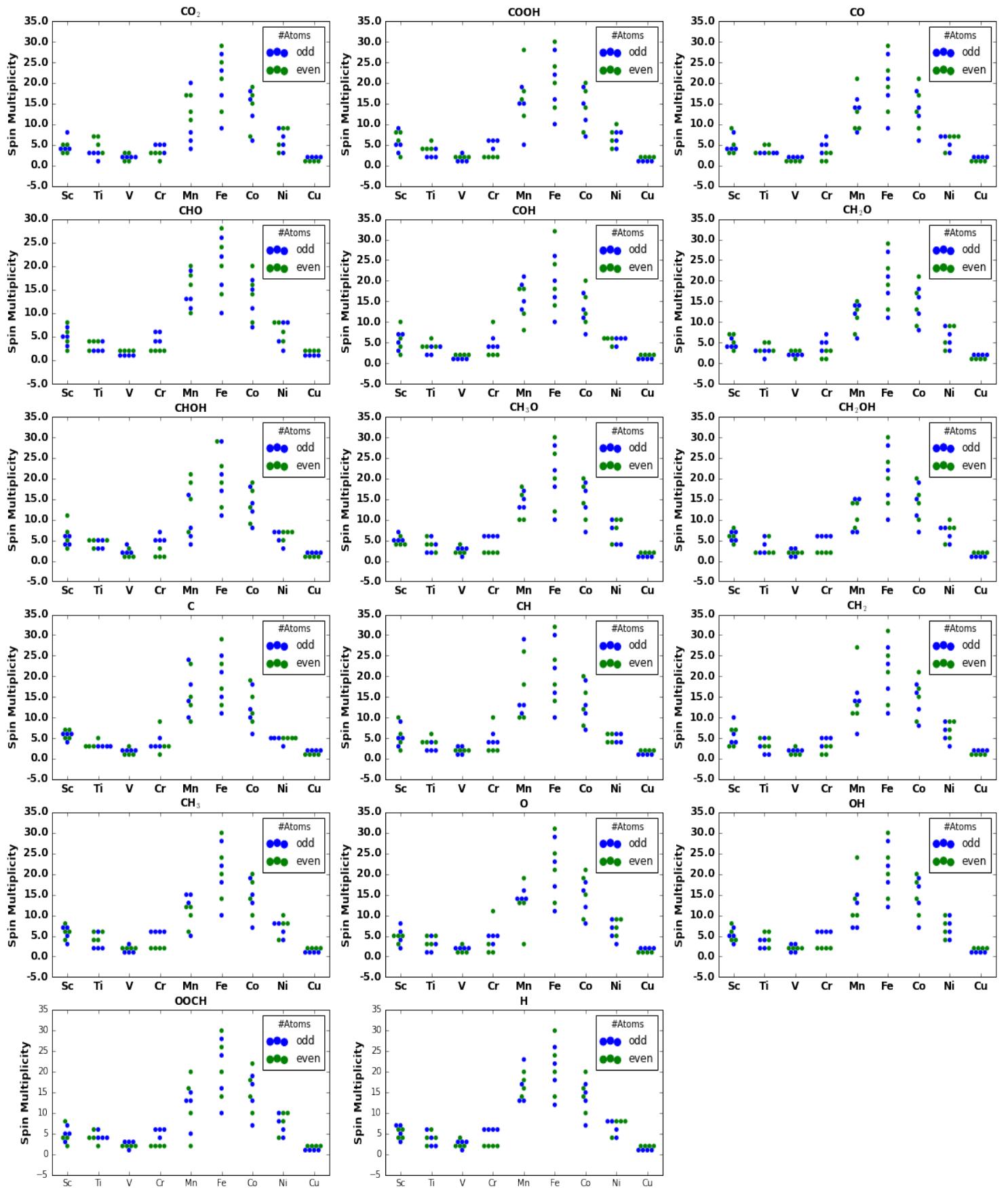


Figure S6: Spin multiplicities of various adsorbates bound on first-row transition metal nanoclusters.

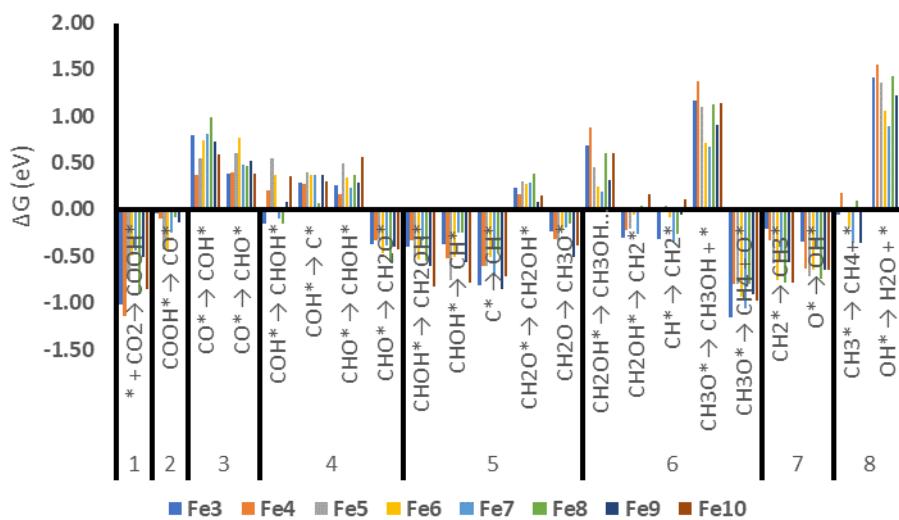
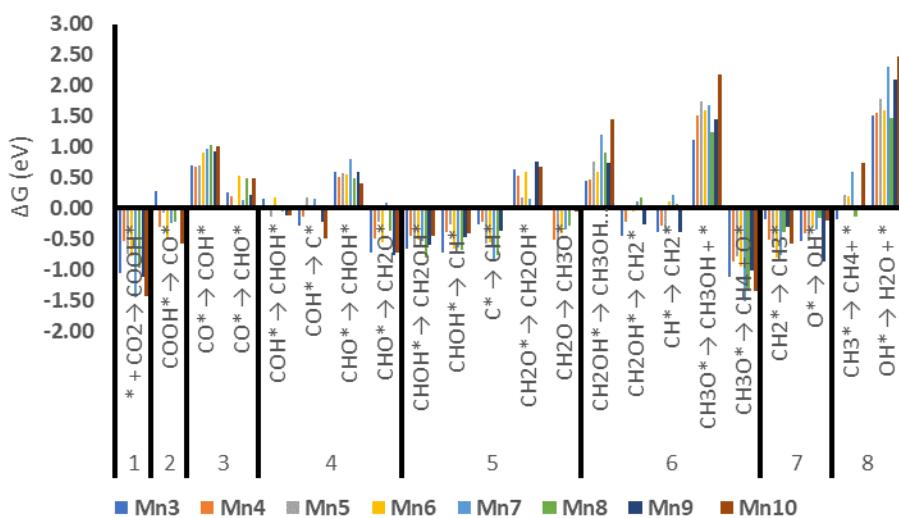
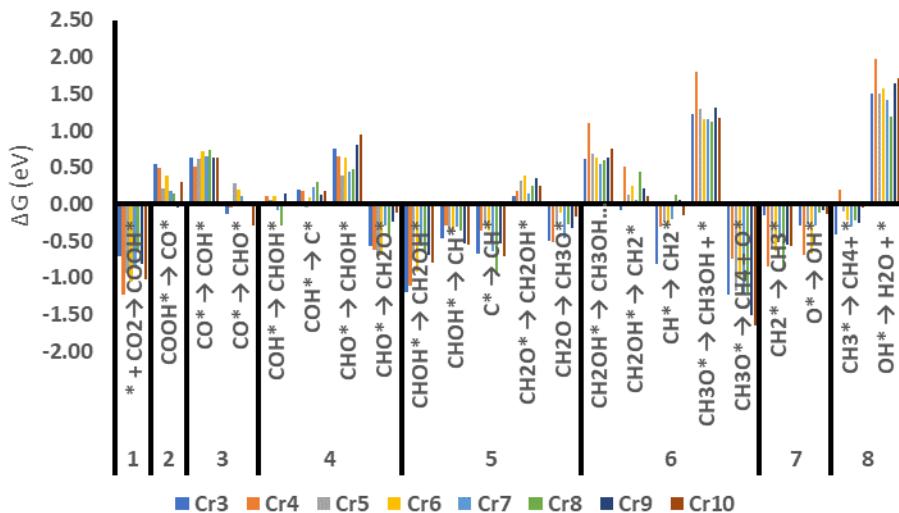


Figure S7: Free energy changes (eV) for various electrochemical steps in the CO₂RR process on Cr, Mn and Fe clusters. Step numbers 1-8 show the total number of (H⁺ + e⁻) pairs transferred.

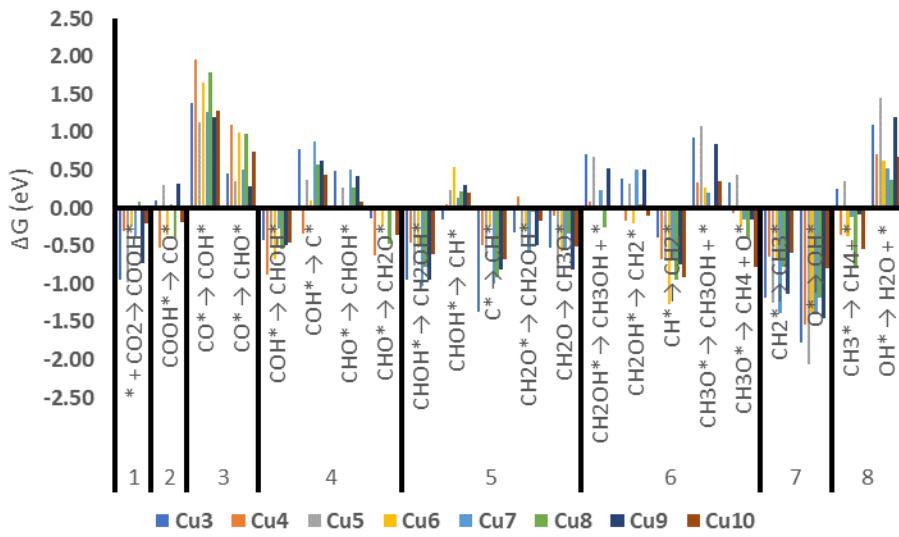
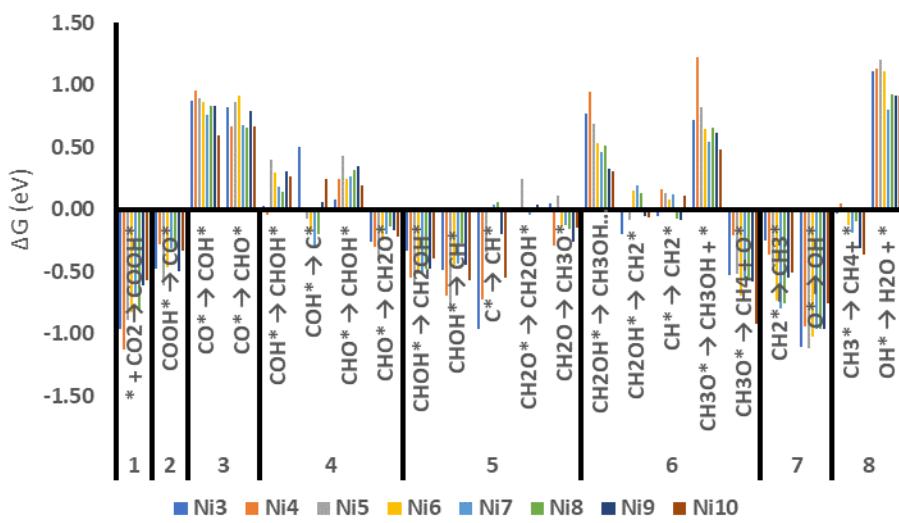
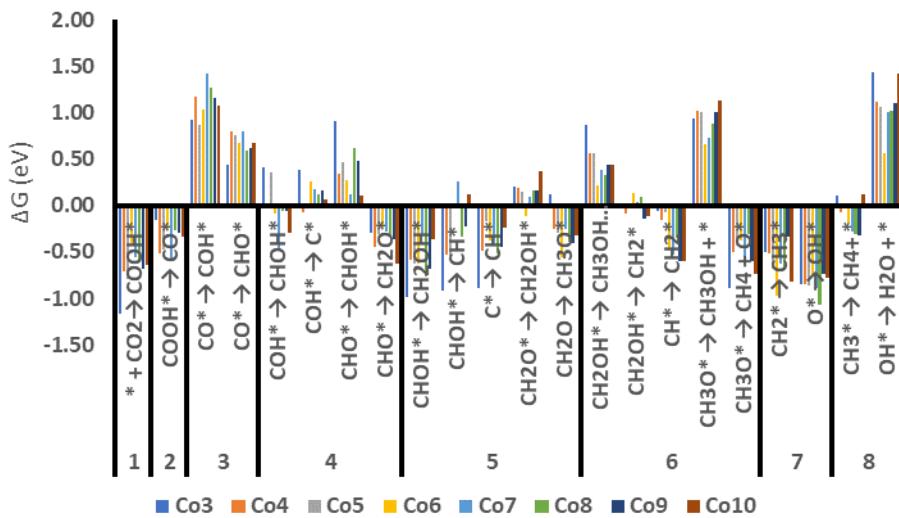


Figure S8: Free energy changes (eV) for various electrochemical steps in the CO₂RR process on Co, Ni and Cu clusters. Step numbers 1-8 show the total number of (H⁺ + e⁻) pairs transferred.

Table S5: Adsorption free energies (ΔG , eV) of CO₂RR adsorbates on various first-row transition metal nanoclusters (Sc_n-Cu_n; n = 3-10)

| Adsorb | Sc3 | Sc4 | Sc5 | Sc6 | Sc7 | Sc8 | Sc9 | Sc10 | Ti3 | Ti4 | Ti5 | Ti6 | Ti7 | Ti8 | Ti9 | Ti10 | V3 | V4 | V5 | V6 | V7 | V8 | V9 | V10 |
|--------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| CO ₂ | -3.83 | -3.79 | -4.46 | -3.97 | -4.25 | -4.05 | -4.15 | -4.46 | -3.12 | -2.62 | -2.40 | -2.56 | -2.43 | -2.87 | -3.14 | -3.33 | -1.88 | -1.48 | -2.14 | -1.93 | -1.90 | -1.98 | -1.85 | -1.55 |
| H | -0.81 | -0.80 | -0.86 | -0.40 | -0.83 | -0.84 | -0.96 | -0.95 | -0.91 | -0.85 | -0.76 | -0.86 | -0.71 | -0.71 | -0.81 | -0.94 | -0.52 | -0.42 | -0.78 | -0.78 | -0.53 | -0.68 | -0.68 | -0.23 |
| COOH | -3.00 | -2.73 | -2.49 | -2.55 | -2.40 | -2.59 | -2.93 | -2.47 | -2.60 | -2.03 | -2.06 | -2.10 | -1.92 | -2.34 | -2.32 | -2.51 | -1.23 | -1.18 | -1.60 | -1.80 | -1.28 | -1.49 | -1.46 | -0.75 |
| OOC | -3.73 | -3.63 | -3.51 | -3.56 | -3.71 | -3.65 | -4.26 | -3.77 | -2.83 | -2.50 | -2.41 | -2.68 | -2.58 | -2.49 | -2.72 | -2.64 | -2.05 | -2.22 | -2.33 | -2.17 | -2.21 | -2.27 | -2.41 | -1.95 |
| CO | -2.96 | -2.76 | -2.55 | -2.56 | -2.96 | -2.98 | -3.11 | -3.36 | -2.33 | -2.12 | -1.96 | -2.33 | -1.70 | -2.34 | -2.26 | -2.61 | -1.30 | -0.84 | -1.54 | -1.57 | -1.33 | -1.39 | -1.20 | -0.76 |
| COHOH | -0.88 | -0.65 | -0.84 | -0.63 | -0.67 | -0.85 | -0.84 | -0.89 | -0.64 | -0.43 | -0.46 | -0.64 | -0.59 | -0.60 | -0.72 | -0.64 | -0.14 | 0.09 | -0.37 | -0.08 | -0.02 | -0.04 | -0.07 | 0.15 |
| CHO | -3.33 | -3.26 | -3.00 | -2.72 | -2.91 | -3.05 | -3.16 | -3.06 | -2.76 | -2.47 | -2.48 | -2.40 | -2.25 | -2.21 | -2.49 | -2.90 | -1.51 | -1.27 | -2.13 | -1.99 | -1.73 | -1.40 | -1.43 | -0.77 |
| COH | -1.62 | -1.14 | -0.97 | -0.86 | -0.80 | -1.11 | -1.07 | -1.46 | -1.13 | -0.93 | -0.89 | -1.72 | -0.77 | -1.26 | -1.34 | -1.66 | -0.79 | -0.94 | -1.10 | -1.62 | -0.69 | -0.30 | -0.59 | 0.35 |
| CH ₂ O | -2.86 | -2.82 | -2.79 | -2.23 | -2.62 | -2.56 | -2.76 | -2.78 | -2.44 | -2.08 | -1.86 | -1.94 | -2.04 | -2.04 | -2.16 | -2.45 | -1.72 | -1.37 | -1.79 | -1.70 | -1.76 | -1.65 | -1.70 | -1.23 |
| C | -1.71 | -1.51 | -1.69 | -2.45 | -1.88 | -2.17 | -2.46 | -2.95 | -1.11 | -1.10 | -1.22 | -2.08 | -1.08 | -1.48 | -1.52 | -1.78 | -0.37 | -0.58 | -1.07 | -1.54 | -0.81 | -1.30 | -0.96 | -0.52 |
| CHOH | -1.13 | -0.88 | -1.31 | -1.05 | -1.25 | -1.32 | -1.35 | -1.47 | -1.40 | -0.75 | -0.84 | -1.13 | -1.09 | -1.08 | -1.17 | -1.02 | -0.81 | -0.26 | -0.34 | -0.66 | -0.42 | -0.44 | -0.38 | -0.20 |
| CH ₃ O | -2.68 | -2.68 | -2.61 | -2.17 | -2.56 | -2.50 | -2.72 | -2.70 | -2.64 | -2.36 | -2.11 | -2.21 | -2.04 | -2.14 | -2.27 | -2.38 | -1.76 | -1.73 | -2.02 | -1.77 | -1.81 | -1.91 | -2.09 | -1.29 |
| CH | -2.05 | -1.86 | -1.62 | -1.65 | -1.55 | -1.68 | -1.88 | -2.14 | -1.91 | -1.61 | -1.63 | -2.31 | -1.21 | -1.85 | -2.00 | -2.22 | -1.43 | -1.55 | -1.63 | -1.98 | -0.73 | -1.09 | -1.41 | -0.22 |
| CH ₂ OH | -1.41 | -1.28 | -1.26 | -0.89 | -1.21 | -1.19 | -1.38 | -1.37 | -1.62 | -1.25 | -1.05 | -1.22 | -1.01 | -1.20 | -1.22 | -1.26 | -0.87 | -1.02 | -1.25 | -0.96 | -1.10 | -1.12 | -1.18 | -0.58 |
| O | -4.96 | -4.88 | -5.06 | -4.84 | -4.91 | -4.98 | -5.06 | -5.15 | -4.82 | -4.21 | -4.32 | -4.64 | -4.39 | -4.26 | -4.47 | -4.59 | -3.97 | -3.23 | -3.60 | -3.41 | -3.27 | -3.17 | -3.20 | -3.03 |
| CH ₂ | -1.89 | -1.84 | -1.92 | -1.44 | -1.75 | -1.76 | -1.80 | -1.87 | -1.96 | -1.59 | -1.72 | -1.82 | -1.52 | -1.55 | -1.79 | -2.04 | -1.61 | -1.23 | -1.64 | -1.43 | -1.25 | -1.15 | -1.29 | -0.88 |
| OH | -4.29 | -4.20 | -4.11 | -3.69 | -4.09 | -4.02 | -4.18 | -4.16 | -4.14 | -3.91 | -3.68 | -3.80 | -3.49 | -3.63 | -3.73 | -3.88 | -3.34 | -3.27 | -3.52 | -3.28 | -3.29 | -3.31 | -3.32 | -2.83 |
| CH ₃ | -1.79 | -1.61 | -1.67 | -1.27 | -1.58 | -1.53 | -1.61 | -1.61 | -2.16 | -1.83 | -1.57 | -1.59 | -1.47 | -1.57 | -1.65 | -1.71 | -1.47 | -1.50 | -1.74 | -1.48 | -1.49 | -1.51 | -1.56 | -1.14 |

| Adsorb | Cr3 | Cr4 | Cr5 | Cr6 | Cr7 | Cr8 | Cr9 | Cr10 | Mn3 | Mn4 | Mn5 | Mn6 | Mn7 | Mn8 | Mn9 | Mn10 | Fe3 | Fe4 | Fe5 | Fe6 | Fe7 | Fe8 | Fe9 | Fe10 |
|--------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| CO ₂ | -1.03 | -1.44 | -1.26 | -1.02 | -1.33 | -0.95 | -1.27 | -1.28 | -1.44 | -0.83 | -1.45 | -1.52 | -1.72 | -1.22 | -1.45 | -2.01 | -1.11 | -1.24 | -0.89 | -0.58 | -0.60 | -1.15 | -0.78 | -0.85 |
| H | -0.15 | -0.66 | -0.27 | -0.34 | -0.31 | -0.57 | -0.36 | -0.29 | -0.16 | -0.94 | -0.30 | -0.44 | -1.08 | -0.67 | -0.40 | -1.23 | -0.49 | -1.14 | -0.59 | -0.46 | -0.34 | -0.79 | -0.01 | -0.62 |
| COOH | -0.70 | -1.22 | -0.93 | -1.05 | -0.82 | -0.63 | -0.81 | -1.02 | -1.05 | -0.53 | -0.74 | -0.79 | -1.44 | -0.98 | -1.11 | -1.43 | -1.02 | -1.15 | -0.74 | -0.50 | -0.44 | -0.91 | -0.50 | -0.85 |
| OOC | -2.02 | -2.56 | -2.17 | -2.18 | -1.92 | -1.98 | -1.96 | -1.75 | -1.46 | -1.61 | -1.65 | -1.84 | -2.45 | -1.74 | -1.84 | -2.62 | -1.78 | -1.96 | -1.54 | -1.35 | -1.37 | -1.71 | -1.53 | -1.67 |
| CO | -0.15 | -0.74 | -0.71 | -0.66 | -0.64 | -0.48 | -0.85 | -0.72 | -0.77 | -0.83 | -0.82 | -1.27 | -1.69 | -1.21 | -1.07 | -2.00 | -1.06 | -1.24 | -1.17 | -0.93 | -0.69 | -0.99 | -0.64 | -0.85 |
| COHOH | 0.67 | 0.14 | 0.44 | 0.57 | 0.48 | 0.82 | 0.37 | 0.30 | 0.19 | 0.18 | 0.18 | 0.01 | -0.60 | -0.02 | -0.11 | -0.42 | 0.02 | -0.19 | 0.03 | 0.27 | 0.36 | -0.09 | 0.36 | 0.39 |
| CHO | -0.28 | -0.77 | -0.42 | -0.47 | -0.52 | -0.52 | -0.88 | -1.01 | -0.50 | -0.64 | -0.84 | -0.75 | -1.56 | -0.71 | -0.85 | -1.51 | -0.67 | -0.83 | -0.56 | -0.16 | -0.21 | -0.53 | -0.12 | -0.46 |
| COH | 0.49 | -0.22 | -0.10 | 0.06 | 0.00 | 0.26 | -0.21 | -0.09 | -0.06 | -0.16 | -0.13 | -0.37 | -0.73 | -0.17 | -0.15 | -0.98 | -0.26 | -0.87 | -0.62 | -0.19 | 0.13 | 0.00 | 0.09 | -0.26 |
| CH ₂ O | -0.84 | -1.40 | -1.12 | -1.15 | -0.81 | -0.97 | -1.10 | -1.13 | -1.21 | -1.12 | -1.07 | -1.30 | -1.46 | -1.07 | -1.61 | -2.24 | -1.04 | -1.17 | -0.88 | -0.63 | -0.59 | -1.10 | -0.51 | -0.88 |
| C | 0.68 | -0.04 | -0.15 | 0.15 | 0.24 | 0.56 | -0.08 | 0.08 | -0.35 | -0.29 | 0.05 | -0.32 | -0.58 | -0.15 | -0.37 | -1.48 | 0.03 | -0.59 | -0.22 | 0.18 | 0.50 | 0.06 | 0.46 | 0.04 |
| CHOH | 0.47 | -0.12 | -0.04 | 0.16 | -0.08 | -0.04 | -0.07 | -0.07 | 0.10 | -0.13 | -0.27 | -0.20 | -0.77 | -0.22 | -0.26 | -1.11 | -0.41 | -0.67 | -0.07 | 0.18 | 0.03 | -0.16 | 0.17 | 0.11 |
| CH ₃ O | -1.34 | -1.91 | -1.42 | -1.28 | -1.27 | -1.24 | -1.43 | -1.30 | -1.24 | -1.64 | -1.85 | -1.71 | -1.80 | -1.37 | -1.56 | -2.29 | -1.28 | -1.49 | -1.21 | -0.84 | -0.79 | -1.25 | -1.03 | -1.26 |
| CH | 0.02 | -0.40 | -0.43 | -0.21 | -0.39 | -0.40 | -0.60 | -0.62 | -0.62 | -0.52 | -0.54 | -0.87 | -1.41 | -0.91 | -0.73 | -1.51 | -0.78 | -1.19 | -0.82 | -0.33 | -0.22 | -0.41 | -0.39 | -0.68 |
| CH ₂ OH | -0.73 | -1.22 | -0.80 | -0.76 | -0.66 | -0.71 | -0.76 | -0.87 | -0.57 | -0.59 | -0.88 | -0.70 | -1.31 | -1.03 | -0.85 | -1.56 | -0.80 | -1.00 | -0.58 | -0.36 | -0.30 | -0.72 | -0.44 | -0.73 |
| O | -2.57 | -2.65 | -2.59 | -2.26 | -2.48 | -2.43 | -2.93 | -2.94 | -2.35 | -2.50 | -2.62 | -2.66 | -3.32 | -2.68 | -2.59 | -3.63 | -2.43 | -2.29 | -2.01 | -1.78 | -1.85 | -2.05 | -1.93 | -2.25 |
| CH ₂ | -0.80 | -0.71 | -0.67 | -0.50 | -0.60 | -0.27 | -0.55 | -0.76 | -1.01 | -0.81 | -0.93 | -0.75 | -1.20 | -0.84 | -1.11 | -1.52 | -1.10 | -1.21 | -0.79 | -0.42 | -0.56 | -0.67 | -0.45 | -0.56 |
| OH | -2.87 | -3.34 | -2.86 | -2.93 | -2.77 | -2.55 | -3.00 | -3.07 | -2.88 | -2.90 | -3.15 | -2.96 | -3.67 | -2.84 | -3.46 | -3.83 | -2.78 | -2.92 | -2.73 | -2.42 | -2.26 | -2.79 | -2.58 | -2.90 |
| CH ₃ | -0.95 | -1.56 | -1.27 | -1.14 | -1.06 | -1.15 | -1.11 | -1.32 | -1.19 | -1.33 | -1.57 | -1.55 | -1.96 | -1.23 | -1.41 | -2.10 | -1.31 | -1.54 | -1.37 | -1.18 | -1.00 | -1.46 | -1.01 | -1.35 |

| Adsorb | Co3 | Co4 | Co5 | Co6 | Co7 | Co8 | Co9 | Co10 | Ni3 | Ni4 | Ni5 | Ni6 | Ni7 | Ni8 | Ni9 | Ni10 | Cu3 | Cu4 | Cu5 | Cu6 | Cu7 | Cu8 | Cu9 | Cu10 |
|--------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| CO ₂ | -1.31 | -0.78 | -0.75 | -0.32 | -0.75 | -0.67 | -0.85 | -0.68 | -1.19 | -1.28 | -1.11 | -0.72 | -0.65 | -0.72 | -0.55 | -0.57 | -0.44 | -0.30 | -0.35 | -0.05 | 0.14 | -0.03 | -0.18 | -0.05 |
| H | -0.57 | -0.49 | -0.43 | -0.54 | -0.27 | -0.17 | -0.20 | -0.46 | -0.36 | -0.86 | -0.53 | -0.82 | -0.34 | -0.44 | -0.26 | -0.23 | -0.38 | -0.25 | -0.87 | -0.21 | -0.36 | 0.31 | -0.39 | -0.07 |
| COOH | -1.17 | -0.71 | -0.79 | -0.40 | -0.55 | -0.61 | -0.68 | -0.64 | -0.97 | -1.13 | -0.89 | -0.82 | -0.70 | -0.79 | -0.61 | -0.57 | -0.94 | -0.30 | -0.97 | -0.24 | -0.37 | 0.08 | -0.72 | -0.19 |
| OOCH | -1.91 | -1.58 | -1.50 | -1.29 | -1.37 | -1.52 | -1.55 | -1.45 | -1.63 | -1.84 | -1.59 | -1.38 | -1.31 | -1.43 | -1.25 | -1.21 | -1.67 | -0.98 | -1.60 | -0.94 | -1.07 | -0.59 | -1.44 | -0.96 |
| CO | -1.33 | -1.23 | -1.27 | -0.65 | -1.12 | -0.88 | -0.98 | -0.97 | -1.45 | -1.42 | -1.50 | -1.29 | -1.01 | -1.12 | -1.10 | -0.90 | -0.84 | -0.82 | -0.66 | -0.58 | -0.32 | -0.33 | -0.40 | -0.37 |
| COHOH | -0.22 | -0.17 | -0.20 | 0.30 | 0.16 | 0.28 | 0.11 | 0.16 | -0.26 | -0.27 | -0.40 | -0.24 | -0.29 | -0.06 | -0.01 | 0.18 | -0.03 | 0.02 | 0.18 | 0.20 | 0.55 | 0.53 | 0.41 | 0.47 |
| CHO | -0.89 | -0.43 | -0.52 | 0.02 | -0.32 | -0.29 | -0.35 | -0.29 | -0.63 | -0.75 | -0.64 | -0.38 | -0.34 | -0.47 | -0.31 | -0.23 | -0.38 | 0.28 | -0.31 | 0.42 | 0.18 | 0.65 | -0.12 | 0.37 |
| COH | -0.41 | -0.06 | -0.40 | 0.38 | 0.29 | 0.38 | 0.18 | 0.11 | -0.57 | -0.46 | -0.61 | -0.43 | -0.25 | -0.29 | -0.27 | -0.30 | 0.54 | 1.13 | 0.47 | 1.08 | 0.95 | 1.46 | 0.79 | 0.91 |
| CH ₂ O | -1.18 | -0.88 | -0.83 | -0.22 | -0.60 | -0.61 | -0.72 | -0.92 | -0.89 | -1.05 | -1.05 | -0.63 | -0.53 | -0.61 | -0.48 | -0.45 | -0.51 | -0.35 | -0.30 | 0.19 | 0.20 | 0.19 | -0.16 | 0.02 |
| C | -0.02 | -0.14 | -0.43 | 0.64 | 0.47 | 0.50 | 0.34 | 0.17 | -0.07 | -0.48 | -0.68 | -0.60 | -0.54 | -0.49 | -0.21 | -0.06 | 1.33 | 0.79 | 0.85 | 1.19 | 1.83 | 2.04 | 1.42 | 1.35 |
| CHOH | 0.01 | -0.09 | -0.05 | 0.29 | -0.19 | 0.32 | 0.13 | -0.19 | -0.55 | -0.51 | -0.20 | -0.14 | -0.07 | -0.16 | 0.03 | -0.03 | 0.11 | 0.26 | -0.04 | 0.40 | 0.69 | 0.92 | 0.31 | 0.46 |
| CH ₃ O | -1.06 | -1.13 | -1.13 | -0.78 | -0.85 | -1.00 | -1.13 | -1.25 | -0.84 | -1.34 | -0.94 | -0.76 | -0.66 | -0.77 | -0.74 | -0.60 | -1.04 | -0.46 | -1.20 | -0.38 | -0.32 | -0.15 | -0.97 | -0.47 |
| CH | -0.91 | -0.62 | -0.60 | 0.27 | 0.06 | -0.02 | -0.10 | -0.07 | -1.03 | -1.20 | -1.02 | -0.58 | -0.51 | -0.43 | -0.41 | -0.61 | -0.05 | 0.31 | 0.20 | 0.95 | 0.83 | 1.14 | 0.61 | 0.67 |
| CH ₂ OH | -0.98 | -0.68 | -0.68 | -0.33 | -0.50 | -0.45 | -0.56 | -0.55 | -0.88 | -1.06 | -0.80 | -0.65 | -0.58 | -0.63 | -0.44 | -0.43 | -0.83 | -0.20 | -0.79 | -0.12 | -0.35 | 0.14 | -0.65 | -0.15 |
| O | -1.95 | -1.63 | -1.56 | -1.15 | -1.48 | -1.31 | -1.73 | -1.99 | -1.36 | -1.55 | -1.45 | -1.45 | -1.21 | -1.33 | -1.31 | -1.52 | -0.70 | -0.54 | -0.75 | -0.61 | -0.47 | -0.55 | -1.11 | -1.25 |
| CH ₂ | -0.97 | -0.78 | -0.67 | -0.21 | -0.46 | -0.36 | -0.70 | -0.66 | -1.08 | -1.05 | -0.89 | -0.50 | -0.38 | -0.50 | -0.50 | -0.49 | -0.44 | -0.36 | -0.47 | -0.31 | 0.15 | 0.19 | -0.14 | -0.25 |
| OH | -2.79 | -2.49 | -2.42 | -1.92 | -2.36 | -2.38 | -2.47 | -2.78 | -2.47 | -2.50 | -2.57 | -2.48 | -2.17 | -2.29 | -2.27 | -2.28 | -2.47 | -2.07 | -2.82 | -1.99 | -1.88 | -1.74 | -2.56 | -2.04 |
| CH ₃ | -1.47 | -1.29 | -1.35 | -1.17 | -1.08 | -1.05 | -1.03 | -1.49 | -1.33 | -1.41 | -1.34 | -1.24 | -1.18 | -1.26 | -1.05 | -1.00 | -1.62 | -1.01 | -1.71 | -0.99 | -1.24 | -0.60 | -1.27 | -0.83 |

Table S6: Potential-determining step (PDS) and the free energy change of PDS for different CHO* and COH* mediated reaction pathways on all nanoclusters. The PDS step in the red color indicates the lowest energy reaction pathway among all the reaction pathways. Although it seems like many reaction pathways have similar PDS values, there are intermediate steps that will decide the overall lowest energy reaction route.

| | CHO Path I | RDS | CHO Path II | RDS | CHO Path III | RDS | CHO Path IV | RDS | COH Path V | RDS | COH Path VI | RDS | COH Path VII | RDS |
|------|------------|----------------------------|-------------|--|--------------|--|-------------|--|-------------|-------------------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Sc3 | 2.92 | OH* → H ₂ O + * | 1.45 | CH ₂ O* → CH ₂ OH* | 2.20 | CHO* → CHOH* | 2.20 | CHO* → CHOH* | 1.34 | CO* → COH* | 1.34 | CO* → COH* | 1.34 | CO* → COH* |
| Sc4 | 2.84 | OH* → H ₂ O + * | 1.53 | CH ₂ O* → CH ₂ OH* | 2.37 | CHO* → CHOH* | 2.37 | CHO* → CHOH* | 1.62 | CO* → COH* | 1.62 | CO* → COH* | 1.62 | CO* → COH* |
| Sc5 | 2.75 | OH* → H ₂ O + * | 1.53 | CH ₂ O* → CH ₂ OH* | 1.69 | CHO* → CHOH* | 1.69 | CHO* → CHOH* | 1.58 | CO* → COH* | 1.58 | CO* → COH* | 1.58 | CO* → COH* |
| Sc6 | 2.33 | OH* → H ₂ O + * | 1.34 | CH ₂ O* → CH ₂ OH* | 1.67 | CHO* → CHOH* | 1.67 | CHO* → CHOH* | 1.70 | CO* → COH* | 1.70 | CO* → COH* | 1.70 | CO* → COH* |
| Sc7 | 2.73 | OH* → H ₂ O + * | 1.41 | CH ₂ O* → CH ₂ OH* | 1.65 | CHO* → CHOH* | 1.65 | CHO* → CHOH* | 2.17 | CO* → COH* | 2.17 | CO* → COH* | 2.17 | CO* → COH* |
| Sc8 | 2.66 | OH* → H ₂ O + * | 1.37 | CH ₂ O* → CH ₂ OH* | 1.72 | CHO* → CHOH* | 1.72 | CHO* → CHOH* | 1.88 | CO* → COH* | 1.88 | CO* → COH* | 1.88 | CO* → COH* |
| Sc9 | 2.82 | OH* → H ₂ O + * | 1.38 | CH ₂ O* → CH ₂ OH* | 1.81 | CHO* → CHOH* | 1.81 | CHO* → CHOH* | 2.04 | CO* → COH* | 2.04 | CO* → COH* | 2.04 | CO* → COH* |
| Sc10 | 2.80 | OH* → H ₂ O + * | 1.40 | CH ₂ O* → CH ₂ OH* | 1.60 | CHO* → CHOH* | 1.60 | CHO* → CHOH* | 1.90 | CO* → COH* | 1.90 | CO* → COH* | 1.90 | CO* → COH* |
| Ti3 | 2.77 | OH* → H ₂ O + * | 0.82 | CH ₂ O* → CH ₂ OH* | 1.36 | CHO* → CHOH* | 1.36 | CHO* → CHOH* | 1.20 | CO* → COH* | 1.20 | CO* → COH* | 1.20 | CO* → COH* |
| Ti4 | 2.55 | OH* → H ₂ O + * | 0.82 | CH ₂ O* → CH ₂ OH* | 1.72 | CHO* → CHOH* | 1.72 | CHO* → CHOH* | 1.19 | CO* → COH* | 1.19 | CO* → COH* | 1.19 | CO* → COH* |
| Ti5 | 2.32 | OH* → H ₂ O + * | 0.81 | CH ₂ O* → CH ₂ OH* | 1.64 | CHO* → CHOH* | 1.64 | CHO* → CHOH* | 1.07 | CO* → COH* | 1.07 | CO* → COH* | 1.07 | CO* → COH* |
| Ti6 | 2.44 | OH* → H ₂ O + * | 0.73 | CH ₂ O* → CH ₂ OH* | 1.27 | CHO* → CHOH* | 1.27 | CHO* → CHOH* | 0.61 | CO* → COH* | 0.61 | CO* → COH* | 0.61 | CO* → COH* |
| Ti7 | 2.13 | OH* → H ₂ O + * | 1.03 | CH ₂ O* → CH ₂ OH* | 1.16 | CHO* → CHOH* | 1.16 | CHO* → CHOH* | 0.93 | CO* → COH* | 0.93 | CO* → COH* | 0.93 | CO* → COH* |
| Ti8 | 2.27 | OH* → H ₂ O + * | 0.84 | CH ₂ O* → CH ₂ OH* | 1.13 | CHO* → CHOH* | 1.13 | CHO* → CHOH* | 1.08 | CO* → COH* | 1.08 | CO* → COH* | 1.08 | CO* → COH* |
| Ti9 | 2.37 | OH* → H ₂ O + * | 0.94 | CH ₂ O* → CH ₂ OH* | 1.32 | CHO* → CHOH* | 1.32 | CHO* → CHOH* | 0.92 | CO* → COH* | 0.92 | CO* → COH* | 0.92 | CO* → COH* |
| Ti10 | 2.52 | OH* → H ₂ O + * | 1.19 | CH ₂ O* → CH ₂ OH* | 1.88 | CHO* → CHOH* | 1.88 | CHO* → CHOH* | 0.95 | CO* → COH* | 0.95 | CO* → COH* | 0.95 | CO* → COH* |
| V3 | 1.98 | OH* → H ₂ O + * | 0.85 | CH ₂ O* → CH ₂ OH* | 0.70 | CHO* → CHOH* | 0.70 | CHO* → CHOH* | 0.51 | CO* → COH* | 0.51 | CO* → COH* | 0.51 | CO* → COH* |
| V4 | 1.91 | OH* → H ₂ O + * | 0.35 | CH ₂ O* → CH ₂ OH* | 1.01 | CHO* → CHOH* | 1.01 | CHO* → CHOH* | 0.36 | COH* → C* | 0.68 | COH* → CHOH* | 0.68 | COH* → CHOH* |
| V5 | 2.16 | OH* → H ₂ O + * | 0.55 | CH ₂ O* → CH ₂ OH* | 1.78 | CHO* → CHOH* | 1.78 | CHO* → CHOH* | 0.44 | CO* → COH* | 0.75 | COH* → CHOH* | 0.75 | COH* → CHOH* |
| V6 | 1.92 | OH* → H ₂ O + * | 0.74 | CH ₂ O* → CH ₂ OH* | 1.34 | CHO* → CHOH* | 1.34 | CHO* → CHOH* | 0.55 | CH* → CH ₂ * | 0.96 | COH* → CHOH* | 0.96 | COH* → CHOH* |
| V7 | 1.93 | OH* → H ₂ O + * | 0.66 | CH ₂ O* → CH ₂ OH* | 1.31 | CHO* → CHOH* | 1.31 | CHO* → CHOH* | 0.64 | CO* → COH* | 0.64 | CO* → COH* | 0.64 | CO* → COH* |
| V8 | 1.94 | OH* → H ₂ O + * | 0.53 | CH ₂ O* → CH ₂ OH* | 0.95 | CHO* → CHOH* | 0.95 | CHO* → CHOH* | 1.10 | CO* → COH* | 1.10 | CO* → COH* | 1.10 | CO* → COH* |
| V9 | 1.96 | OH* → H ₂ O + * | 0.53 | CH ₂ O* → CH ₂ OH* | 1.05 | CHO* → CHOH* | 1.05 | CHO* → CHOH* | 0.61 | CO* → COH* | 0.61 | CO* → COH* | 0.61 | CO* → COH* |
| V10 | 1.47 | OH* → H ₂ O + * | 0.66 | CH ₂ O* → CH ₂ OH* | 0.58 | CHO* → CHOH* | 0.58 | CHO* → CHOH* | 1.11 | CO* → COH* | 1.11 | CO* → COH* | 1.11 | CO* → COH* |
| Cr3 | 1.51 | OH* → H ₂ O + * | 0.56 | COOH* → CO* | 0.75 | CHO* → CHOH* | 0.75 | CHO* → CHOH* | 0.64 | CO* → COH* | 0.64 | CO* → COH* | 0.64 | CO* → COH* |
| Cr4 | 1.98 | OH* → H ₂ O + * | 0.51 | CH ₂ OH* → CH ₂ * | 0.66 | CHO* → CHOH* | 0.66 | CHO* → CHOH* | 0.51 | CO* → COH* | 0.51 | CO* → COH* | 0.51 | CO* → COH* |
| Cr5 | 1.50 | OH* → H ₂ O + * | 0.32 | CH ₂ O* → CH ₂ OH* | 0.38 | CHO* → CHOH* | 0.38 | CHO* → CHOH* | 0.61 | CO* → COH* | 0.61 | CO* → COH* | 0.61 | CO* → COH* |
| Cr6 | 1.57 | OH* → H ₂ O + * | 0.40 | CH ₂ O* → CH ₂ OH* | 0.63 | CHO* → CHOH* | 0.63 | CHO* → CHOH* | 0.71 | CO* → COH* | 0.71 | CO* → COH* | 0.71 | CO* → COH* |
| Cr7 | 1.41 | OH* → H ₂ O + * | 0.18 | COOH* → CO* | 0.44 | CHO* → CHOH* | 0.44 | CHO* → CHOH* | 0.64 | CO* → COH* | 0.64 | CO* → COH* | 0.64 | CO* → COH* |
| Cr8 | 1.18 | OH* → H ₂ O + * | 0.44 | CH ₂ OH* → CH ₂ * | 0.48 | CHO* → CHOH* | 0.48 | CHO* → CHOH* | 0.74 | CO* → COH* | 0.74 | CO* → COH* | 0.74 | CO* → COH* |
| Cr9 | 1.64 | OH* → H ₂ O + * | 0.35 | CH ₂ O* → CH ₂ OH* | 0.81 | CHO* → CHOH* | 0.81 | CHO* → CHOH* | 0.64 | CO* → COH* | 0.64 | CO* → COH* | 0.64 | CO* → COH* |
| Cr10 | 1.71 | OH* → H ₂ O + * | 0.29 | COOH* → CO* | 0.94 | CHO* → CHOH* | 0.94 | CHO* → CHOH* | 0.63 | CO* → COH* | 0.63 | CO* → COH* | 0.63 | CO* → COH* |
| Mn3 | 1.52 | OH* → H ₂ O + * | 0.64 | CH ₂ O* → CH ₂ OH* | 0.59 | CHO* → CHOH* | 0.59 | CHO* → CHOH* | 0.70 | CO* → COH* | 0.70 | CO* → COH* | 0.70 | CO* → COH* |
| Mn4 | 1.54 | OH* → H ₂ O + * | 0.53 | CH ₂ O* → CH ₂ OH* | 0.50 | CHO* → CHOH* | 0.50 | CHO* → CHOH* | 0.67 | CO* → COH* | 0.67 | CO* → COH* | 0.67 | CO* → COH* |
| Mn5 | 1.79 | OH* → H ₂ O + * | 0.21 | CH ₃ * → CH ₄₊ * | 0.57 | CHO* → CHOH* | 0.57 | CHO* → CHOH* | 0.69 | CO* → COH* | 0.69 | CO* → COH* | 0.69 | CO* → COH* |
| Mn6 | 1.59 | OH* → H ₂ O + * | 0.60 | CH ₂ O* → CH ₂ OH* | 0.55 | CHO* → CHOH* | 0.55 | CHO* → CHOH* | 0.90 | CO* → COH* | 0.90 | CO* → COH* | 0.90 | CO* → COH* |
| Mn7 | 2.31 | OH* → H ₂ O + * | 0.60 | CH ₃ * → CH ₄₊ * | 0.79 | CHO* → CHOH* | 0.79 | CHO* → CHOH* | 0.96 | CO* → COH* | 0.96 | CO* → COH* | 0.96 | CO* → COH* |
| Mn8 | 1.47 | OH* → H ₂ O + * | 0.49 | CO* → CHO* | 0.49 | CO* → CHO* | 0.49 | CO* → CHO* | 1.04 | CO* → COH* | 1.04 | CO* → COH* | 1.04 | CO* → COH* |
| Mn9 | 2.10 | OH* → H ₂ O + * | 0.75 | CH ₂ O* → CH ₂ OH* | 0.58 | CHO* → CHOH* | 0.58 | CHO* → CHOH* | 0.92 | CO* → COH* | 0.92 | CO* → COH* | 0.92 | CO* → COH* |
| Mn10 | 2.46 | OH* → H ₂ O + * | 0.74 | CH ₃ * → CH ₄₊ * | 0.74 | CH ₃ * → CH ₄₊ * | 0.74 | CH ₃ * → CH ₄₊ * | 1.01 | CO* → COH* | 1.01 | CO* → COH* | 1.01 | CO* → COH* |
| Fe3 | 1.42 | OH* → H ₂ O + * | 0.38 | CO* → CHO* | 0.38 | CO* → CHO* | 0.38 | CO* → CHO* | 0.79 | CO* → COH* | 0.79 | CO* → COH* | 0.79 | CO* → COH* |
| Fe4 | 1.55 | OH* → H ₂ O + * | 0.40 | CO* → CHO* | 0.40 | CO* → CHO* | 0.40 | CO* → CHO* | 0.37 | CO* → COH* | 0.37 | CO* → COH* | 0.37 | CO* → COH* |
| Fe5 | 1.37 | OH* → H ₂ O + * | 0.61 | CO* → CHO* | 0.61 | CO* → CHO* | 0.61 | CO* → CHO* | 0.55 | CO* → COH* | 0.55 | COH* → CHOH* | 0.55 | COH* → CHOH* |
| Fe6 | 1.06 | OH* → H ₂ O + * | 0.77 | CO* → CHO* | 0.77 | CO* → CHO* | 0.77 | CO* → CHO* | 0.75 | CO* → COH* | 0.75 | CO* → COH* | 0.75 | CO* → COH* |
| Fe7 | 0.89 | OH* → H ₂ O + * | 0.48 | CO* → CHO* | 0.48 | CO* → CHO* | 0.48 | CO* → CHO* | 0.81 | CO* → COH* | 0.81 | CO* → COH* | 0.81 | CO* → COH* |

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