

P Vacancy-Induced Electron Redistribution and Phase Reconstruction of CoFeP for Overall Water Splitting at Industrial Current Density

Xueling Wei[#], Yang Jiao[#], Xiangyu Zou^{*}, Yuchen GUO^a, Wenhui Li^{*}, Taotao Ai^{*}

School of Material Science and Engineering, Shaanxi University of Technology, Hanzhong 723000, China

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1. Experimental Section

1.1 Materials

Cobaltous nitrate hexahydrate (Co(NO₃)₂·6H₂O, 99.9%), Ferrous sulfate heptahydrate FeSO₄·7H₂O, 99.9%, Sodium hypophosphite NaH₂PO₂, potassium hydroxide (KOH), commercial ruthenium dioxide (RuO₂), and Nafion (5 wt%) were purchased from Shanghai Aladdin Biochemical Technology Co., Ltd. The deionized (DI) water used in the solution preparation and washing steps comes from ultrapure water (Milli-Q, 18 MΩ·cm) made in the laboratory. Nickel foam (NF, diameter of the nickel fiber: 1.6 mm, porosity: 96%) were used as the substrate. All chemicals were analytical grade and used as received without further purification.

1.2 Treatment of nickel foam

In order to remove the surface oxide layer, a piece of NF (1×3 cm²) was treated in HCl solution (2.0 M) under ultrasonication for 0.5 h, followed by sonicating several times with ethanol and DI water successively, and finally dried in an oven at 60 °C for 6 h.

1.3. General characterizations

The microstructure and phase information of catalysts using X-ray diffraction (XRD, Rigaku Ultima IV, Cu K α , $\lambda = 1.54056 \text{ \AA}$), field-emission scanning electron microscope (FESEM, JSM-7610F, 15 kV), and Transmission electron microscopy (TEM, JEOL 2010F) with EDS. The surface characteristics were investigated using X-ray photoelectron spectroscopy (XPS, Thermo Fisher Scientific K-Alpha, Mg K α). In-situ Raman spectroscopy measurements were conducted using a confocal micro-Raman spectrometer (Renishaw inVia) coupled with an electrochemical workstation. The contents were determined using plasma optical emission spectrometry (ICP-OES, Agilent ICPOES730). The contact angle data of liquid and bubbles were recorded using a JY-82B instrument. The vacancies were characterized using EPR (BRUKER EMXPLUS).

1.4. Electrochemical test

Electrochemical measurements were conducted using a PARSTAT (P4000) workstation with a three-electrode configuration: Hg/HgO as the reference, graphite as the counter, and prepared samples as the working electrode.

The potentials were converted to the reversible hydrogen electrode (RHE) by the equation: $E_{\text{RHE}} = E_{\text{Hg/HgO}} + 0.098 + 0.0591 \times \text{pH}$. The catalytic performances of samples were evaluated using LSV at 5 mV s^{-1} .

All the LSV curves were derived from multiple tests to ensure data consistency. Electrochemical impedance spectroscopy (EIS) was conducted across a frequency from 10^5 to 10^{-2} Hz with 5 mV AC amplitude. The LSV curves were calibrated using a 70% solution resistance correction.

The electrochemically active surface area (ECSA) is directly proportional to the double-layer capacitance (C_{dl}) using the equation $\text{ECSA} = C_{\text{dl}} / C_s$, where $C_s = 40 \text{ \mu F cm}^{-2}$. C_{dl} was determined from cyclic voltammograms at various scan rates in the non-Faradic potential region. The specific activity is the current density per unit real surface area of catalyst, which can be calculated by normalizing the current to the ECSA. The ECSA-normalized current density for the as-prepared catalysts was calculated according to: $j_{\text{ECSA-normalized}} = j / \text{ECSA}$

The Tafel slope was calculated according to Equation: $\eta = \alpha + \frac{2.3RT}{\alpha nF} \log|j|$, where η is the overpotential, j is the current density, α is the transfer coefficient, n is the number of electrons involved in the reaction, F is the Faradaic constant, $b = 2.3RT/\alpha nF$ is the value of Tafel slope.

Turnover frequency (TOF) calculation. TOF (for a heterogeneous catalyst) = $j/(4 \cdot F \cdot m)$. j : the current density at an overpotential; F : the Faraday constant; m : the number of moles of metal on the electrode.

The Faradaic efficiency for OER was tested at room temperature in a H-type cell. The oxygen evolution electrolysis was performed at a constant current of 0.3 A m^{-2} and oxygen was collected and measured. Faradaic efficiency (η) was calculated by

Equation: $\eta = \frac{\eta_{\text{experimental}}}{\eta_{\text{theoretical}}} \times 100\%$. The theoretical number of moles ($\eta_{\text{experimental}}$)

of oxygen produced was calculated by Equation: $\eta_{\text{theoretical}} = \frac{i \times t}{4 \times e \times N_A}$, where i (A) is the current, t (s) is the electrolysis time, e is the elementary charge ($1.60 \times 10^{-19} \text{ C}$), and N_A is the Avogadro's constant (6.02×10^{23}).

1.5. DFT calculation details

All the calculations were performed within the framework of density functional theory (DFT) using the projector augmented plane-wave method, as implemented in the Vienna ab initio simulation package (VASP). The generalized gradient approximation proposed by Perdew-Burke-Ernzerhof was selected for the calculation of exchange-correlation potentials. The cutoff energy for plane waves was set to 400 eV. The energy criterion was set to be 10^{-5} eV for obtaining the iterative solution of the Kohn-Sham equation. A $3 \times 3 \times 1$ k-mesh was used for the structural optimizations of CoFeOOH , CoFeOOH-PO_4^{3-} , CoFeP , and CoFeP_V .

A 15 \AA vacuum region was set in the z-direction to prevent interactions between two adjacent surfaces. The force and convergence thresholds for energy were less than

0.02 eV \AA^{-1} and 10^{-5} eV, respectively. During the calculations, the bottom layers of the structures were fixed. The reaction Gibbs free energy (ΔG) of the intermediates was determined using $\Delta G = \Delta E + \Delta ZPE - T\Delta S$, where T is the temperature (298.15 K), ΔZPE is zero-point energy, ΔE is the reaction energy, and ΔS is the entropy difference calculated from the vibration frequency. The entropies of H_2 and H_2O vapor under standard conditions were obtained from the NIST database.

2. Supplementary figures

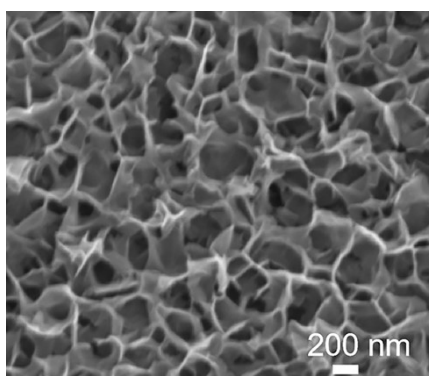


Fig S1. SEM image of CoFe@NF

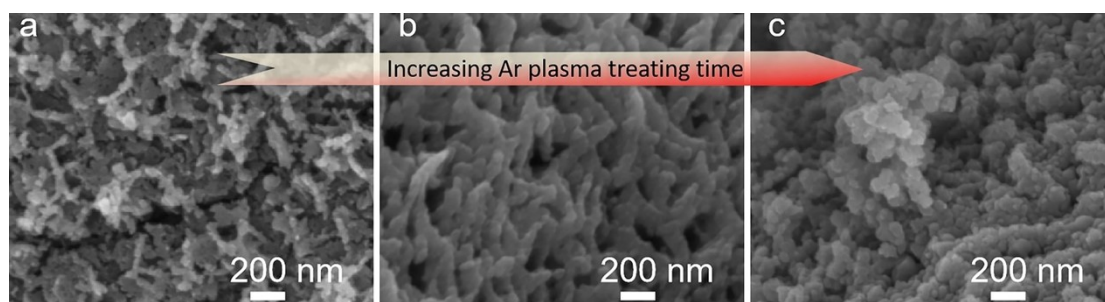


Fig S2. SEM images of CoFePv@NF with different plasma-assisted phosphating time (a) 3 min, (b) 6 min, (c) 9 min,

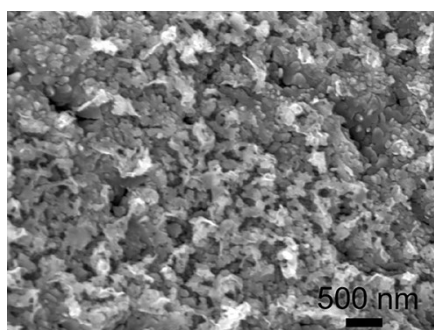


Fig S3. SEM image of CoFeP@NF

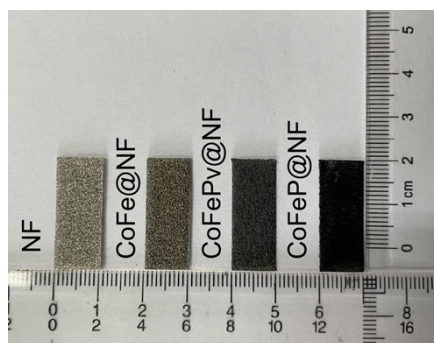


Fig S4. Photos of prepared electrodes

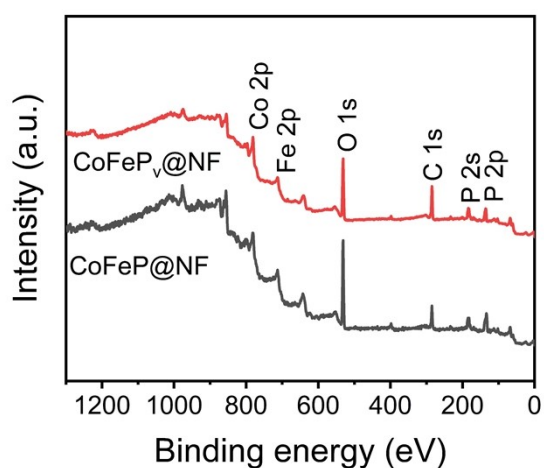


Fig S5. Full XPS spectrum of CoFeP_v@NF and CoFeP@NF

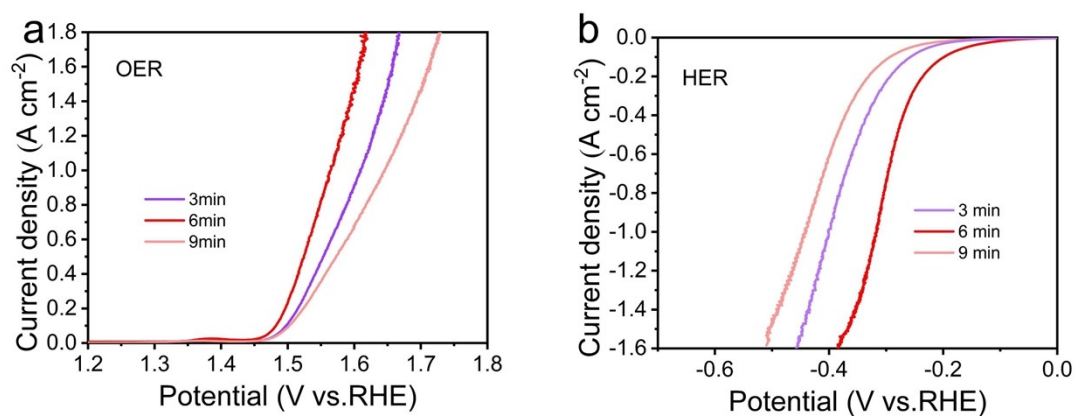


Fig. S6. Catalytic performance of CoFeP_v@NF with different plasma-assisted phosphating time (a) HER, (b) OER performance

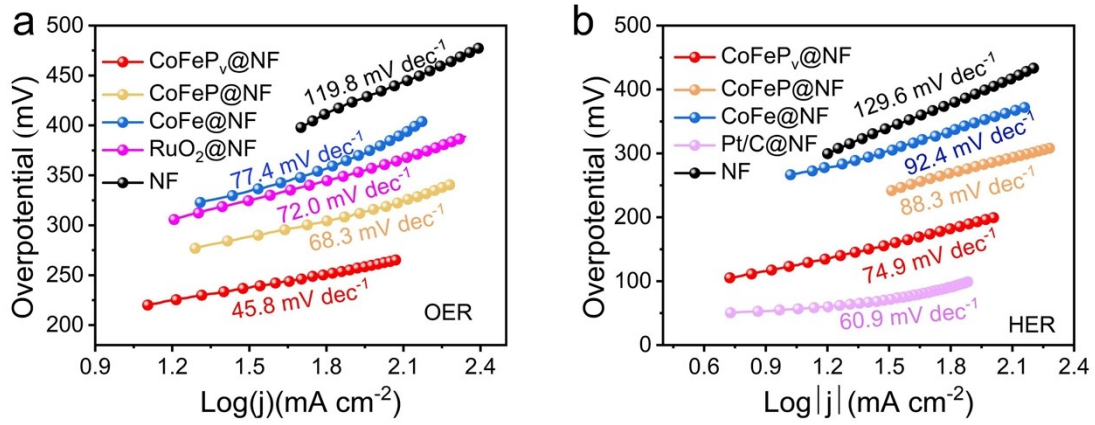


Fig S7. Tafel slopes of electrodes (a) OER, (b) HER

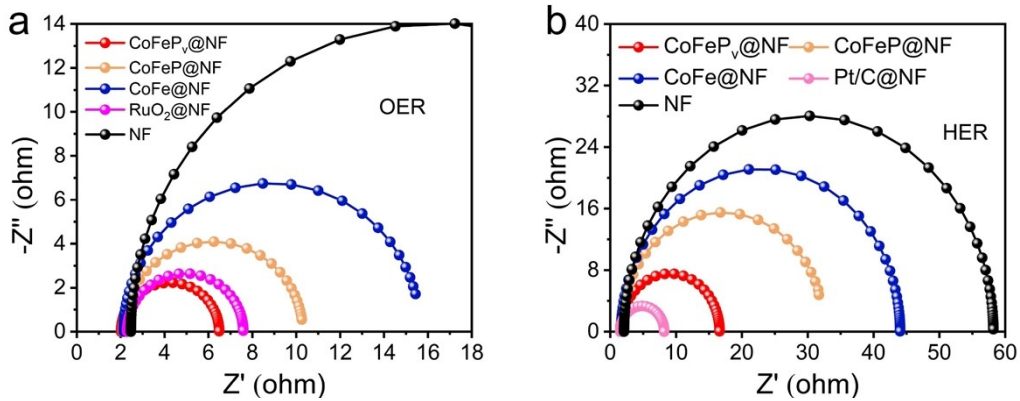


Fig S8. Nyquist plots of electrodes (a) OER, (b) HER

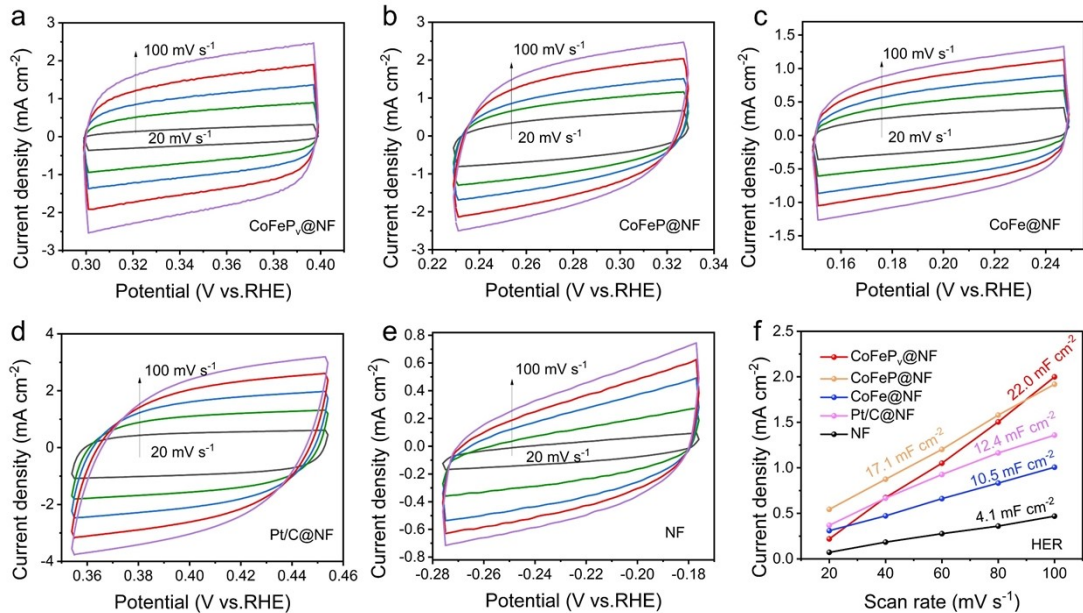


Fig S9. CVs in non-Faradaic region at different scan rate for HER: (a) CoFePv@NF, (b) CoFeP@NF, (c) CoFe@NF, (d) Pt/C@NF, (e) NF, and (f) Corresponding C_{dl} by calculated

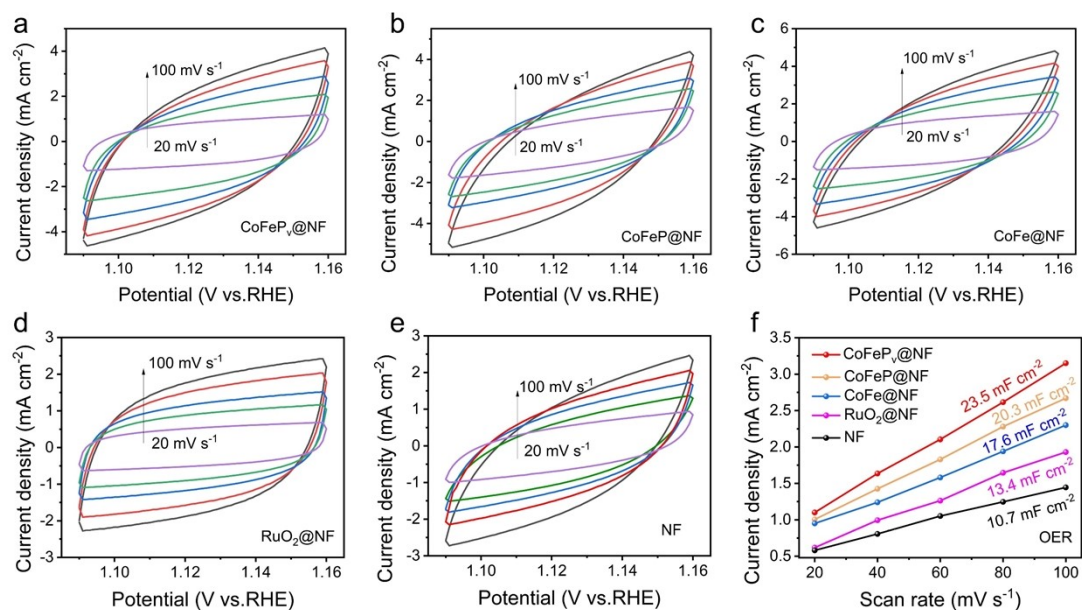


Fig S10. CVs in non-Farradic region at different scan rate for OER (a) CoFeP_v@NF, (b) CoFeP@NF, (c) CoFe@NF, (d) RuO₂@NF, (e) NF, and (f) Corresponding C_{dl} by calculated

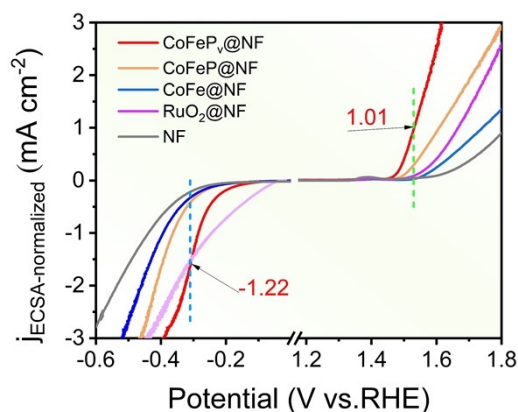


Fig S11. ECSA-normalized polarization curves

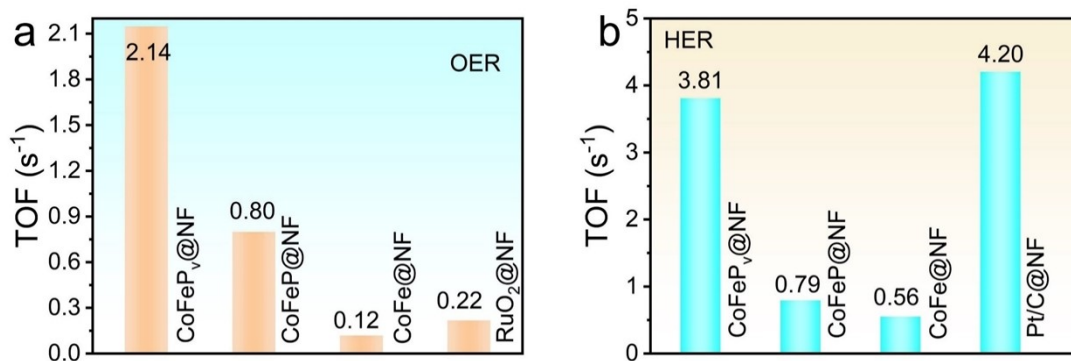


Fig S12. TOF of electrodes at the overpotential of 300 mV: (a) OER, (b) HER

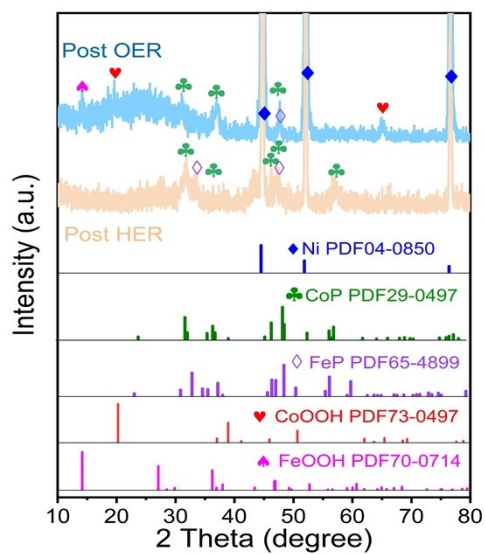


Fig S13. XRD patterns of CoFePv@NF after HER and OER stability test

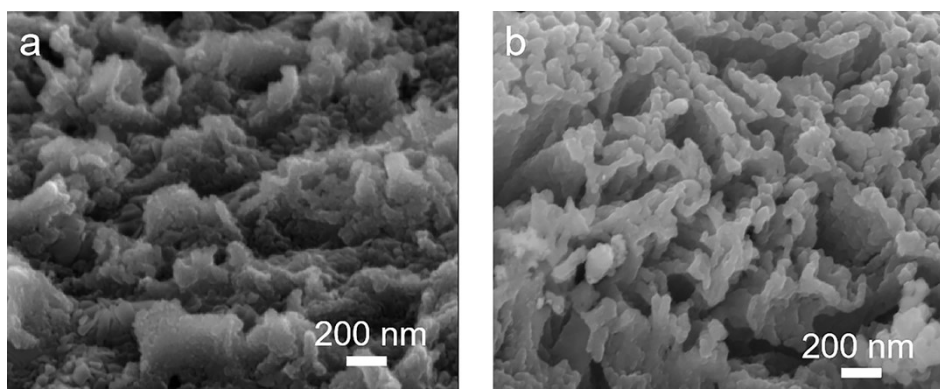


Fig S14. SEM images of CoFePv@NF after stability test: (a) HER, (b) OER

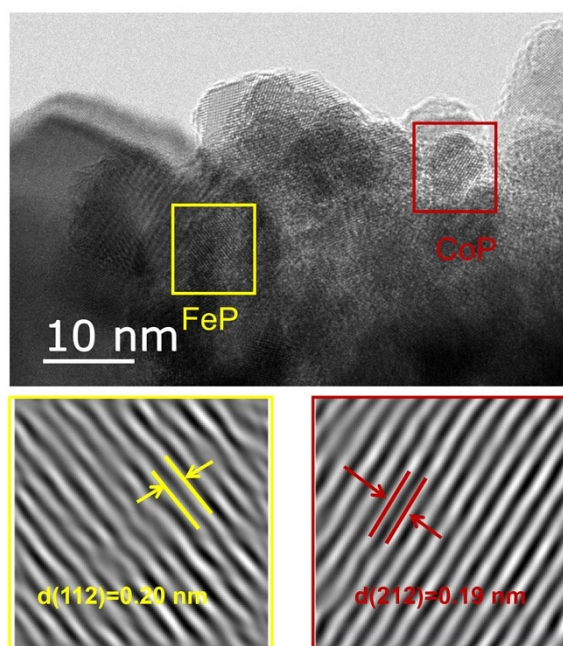


Fig S15. TEM images of CoFePv@NF after HER stability test

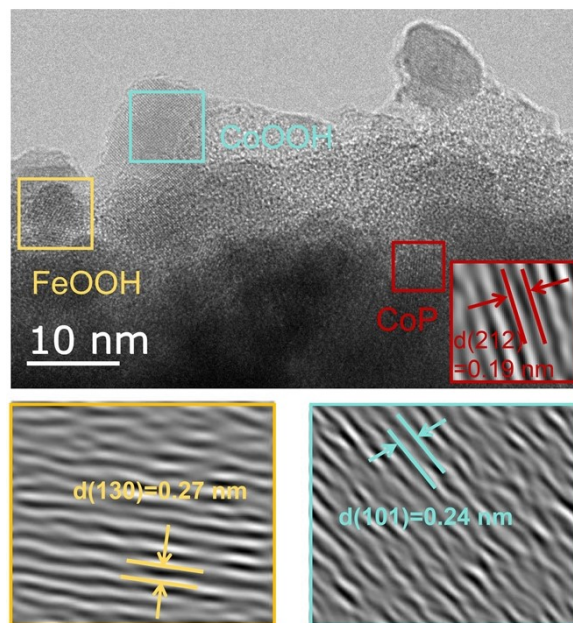


Fig. S16. TEM images of CoFePv@NF after OER stability test

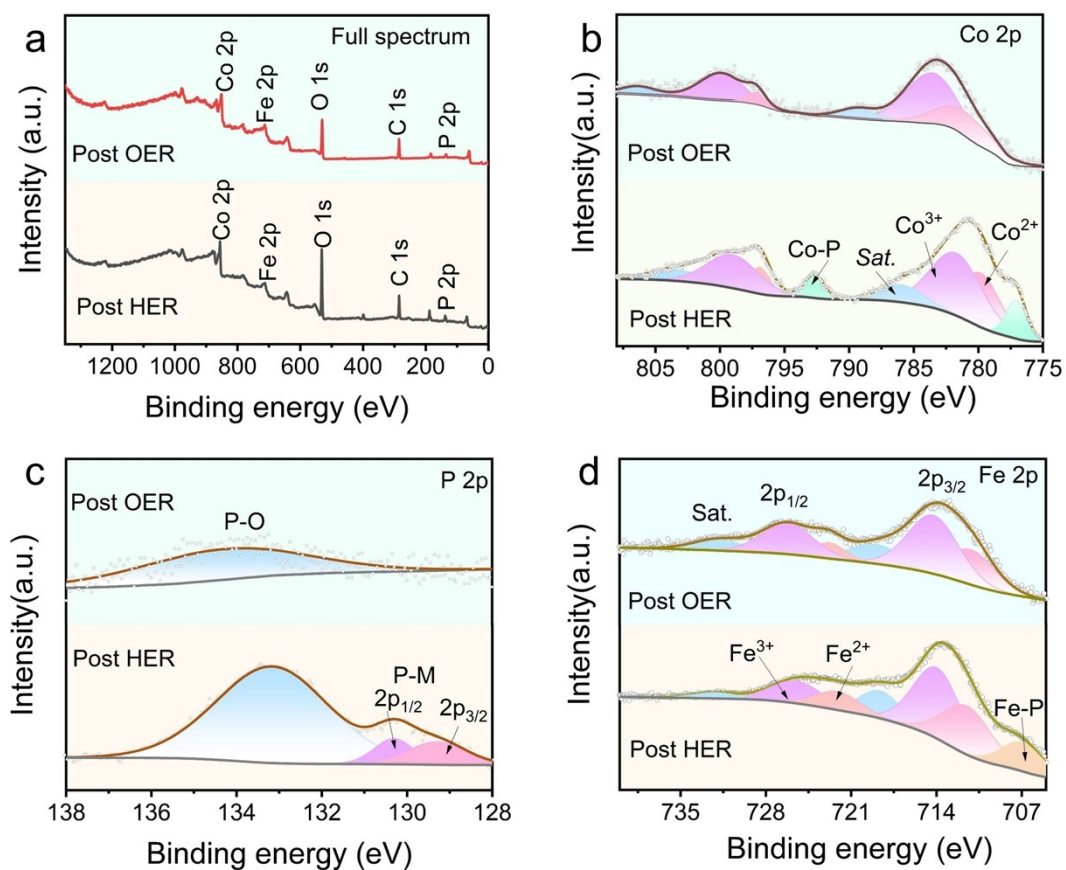


Fig. S17. XPS spectra of CoFePv@NF after HER and OER stability test:(a) Full spectrum, (b) Co 2p, (c) P 2p, (d) Fe 2p

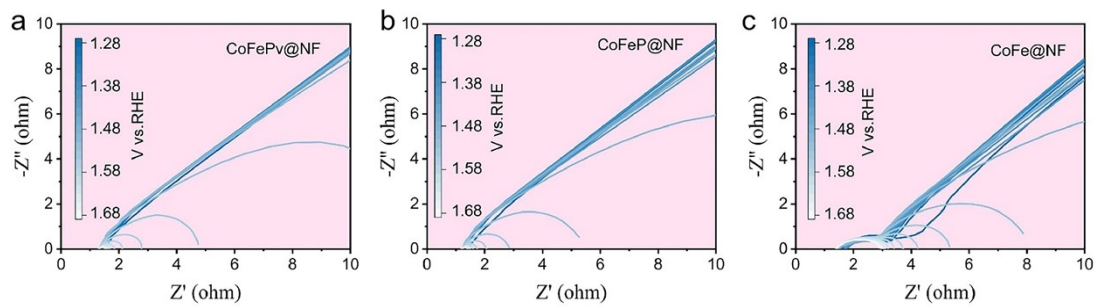


Fig. S18. In situ Nyquist plots of electrodes during OER (a) CoFePv@NF, (b) CoFeP@NF, (c) CoFe@NF

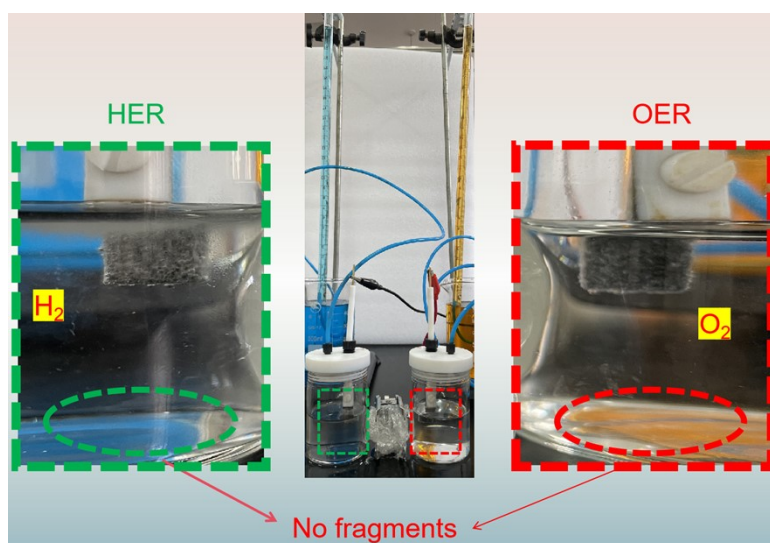


Fig.S19. The photo of drainage method

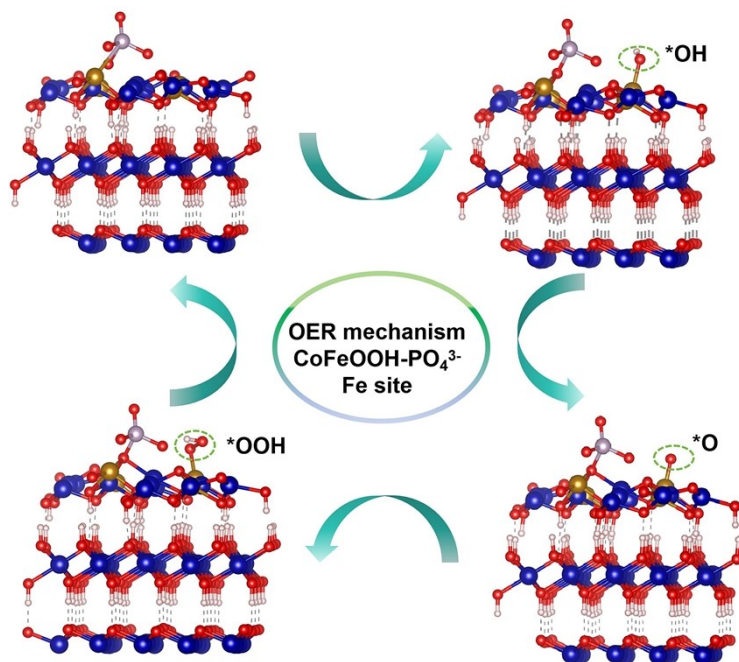


Fig. S20. OER mechanism of CoFeOOH-PO₄³⁻ at Fe sites

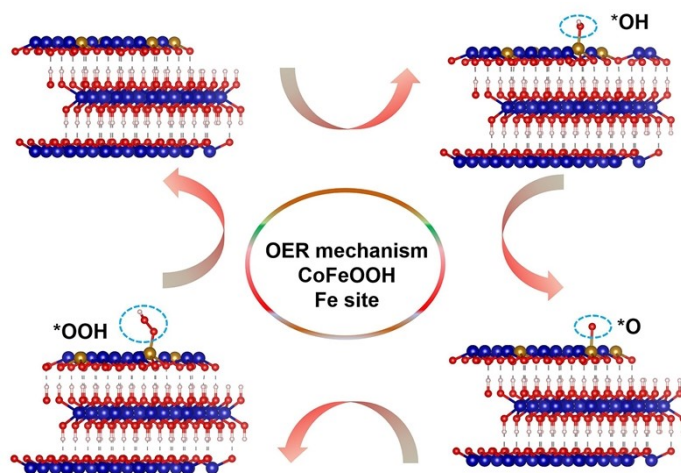


Fig. S21. OER mechanism of CoFeOOH at Fe sites

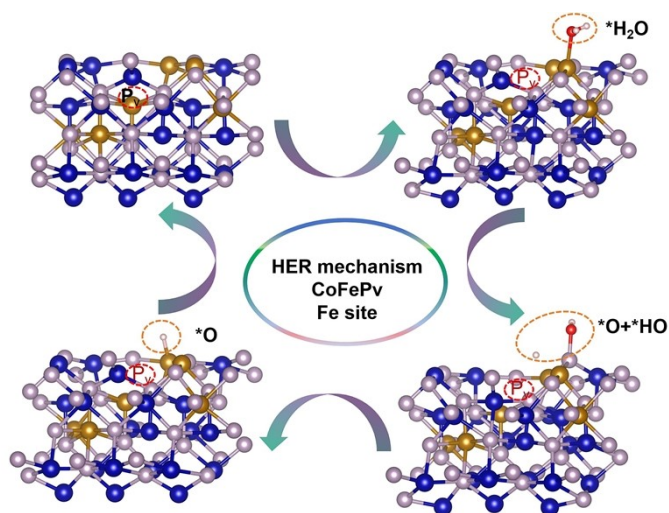


Fig. S22. HER mechanism of CoFePv at Fe sites

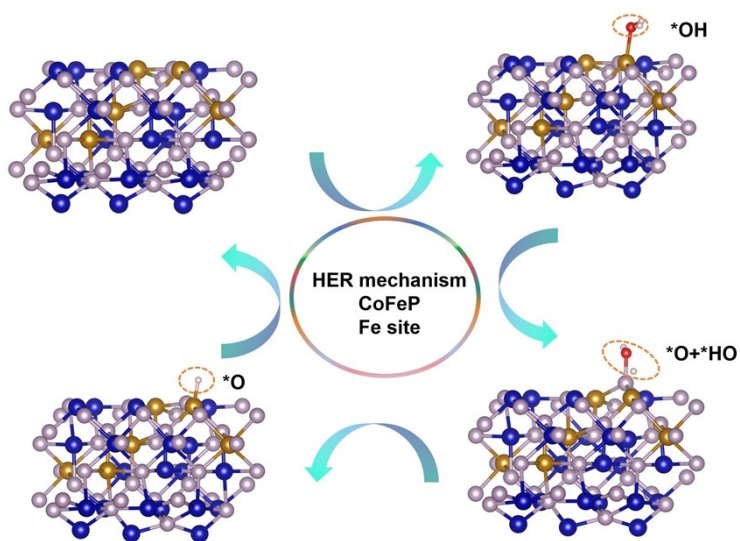


Fig. S23. HER mechanism of CoFeP at Fe sites

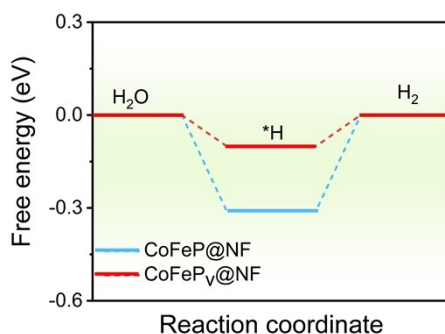


Fig. S24. HER pathway of CoFePv and CoFeP under alkaline conditions

Table S1 Mass ratios of CoFeP and CoFePv characterized by ICP-OES

Sample	Element	Mass-ratio (%)	Elements	Mass-ratio (%)	Elements	Mass-ratio (%)	Sum (%)
CoFeP	Co	72.23	Fe	26.64	P	1.13	100
CoFePv	Co	72.82	Fe	26.43	P	0.74	100

Table S2 Compared with other recent reported phosphate HER electrodes

Electrocatalysts	η_{10} (mV)	Tafel slope (mV dec ⁻¹)	References
CoFePv@NF	99	74.9	This work
CoPO@C/NF	93	111.4	[1]
CoP/CoMoP ₂	93.6	89.9	[2]
1T'/1T Co,P-SnS ₂ @CC	94	75.2	[3]
Fe ₂ P-Co ₂ P-Ni ₂ P	105	86.09	[4]
NiSe ₂ /Fe-P	113	73.1	[5]
CoP@PNC@NF	148	59.6	[6]
H-Fe ₃ O ₄ @FeP@NC	165	155.6	[7]
P-MoO ₂ @CoNiP	174	95.2	[8]
CoO/CoP-NC	178	90	[9]
Ni ₂ P-Fe ₂ P/NF	225	107	[10]
FeNiP-CoP@NC	254	24.9	[11]
Ni-FeP-B-0.02	337	74	[12]

Table S3 Compared with other recent reported phosphate OER electrodes

Electrocatalysts	η_{10} (mV)	Tafel slope (mV dec ⁻¹)	References
CoFePv@NF	243	45.8	This work
Co ₂ P-Co _x O _y	246	69	[13]
CoP-FeP/NC	254	50.9	[14]
H-Fe ₃ O ₄ @FeP@NC	258	41.3	[7]
Cu-Co-P/NF	259	57.99	[15]
FeCoP/C	282	53	[16]
Mn ₁ -Ni ₁ -Co ₁ -P/NF	289	85	[17]
Ni-CoP	290	66	[18]
Rh-Co ₂ Fe-P	303	63	[19]
CoNiFeP@NF	333	69	[20]
Co ₂ P/CoP@NPGC-1	340	116	[21]
CoP/CoP ₂ @NC	369	99	[22]
Fe-CoxP	440	49	[23]

Table S4 Compared with other recent reported phosphates OWS electrodes

electrodes	Voltage (V)	Ref.
CoFePv@NF(+, -)	1.9	This work
NiMoB NiMoB(+, -)	2.11	[24]
FeIr/NF FeIr/NF(+, -)	1.93	[25]
FeCoNiCu-PE(+, -)	1.931	[26]
FeCo/Ni(OH) ₂ Ni mesh(+, -)	1.91	[27]
CoMoO ₄ -Co(OH) ₂ /NF(+) CoMoP- CoP/NF(-)	2.0	[28]
(Ni ₃ Fe-FeV ₂ O ₄)@C/NF(+, -)	1.9	[29]

Fe-NiFe LDH(+, -)	2.0	[30]
Ru-Ni ₂ P/NiO/NF(+, -)	2.02	[31]
(NiCoRu)OH/S(+, -)	1.92	[32]
(NiFe)C ₂ O ₄ /NF PtC	2.1	[33]
NiCo@C-NiCoMoO(+, -)	1.9	[34]
Co ₄ N-CeO ₂ (+, -)	1.97	[35]
Ru-CoO _x /NF(+, -)	1.92	[36]
NiFe/Ni/Ni(+, -)	1.96	[37]
Ni ₃ FeN/NF (+, -)	1.91	[38]

Reference

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