Supporting Information

Constructing weak Ru–Mo metallic bonds to suppress Ru overoxidation for

durable acidic water oxidation

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Experimental section

Preparation of D301 powder. Firstly, 250 mL of deionized water (DI), 1 M HCl solution, 1 M NaCl solution, or 1 M NaOH solution was injected four times into an ion exchange column containing 50 g of D301 pellets to remove inorganic and organic substances in the D301 pellets. A large volume of DI was then used to further remove impurities from the D301 pellets. The cleaned D301 pellets were transferred to a desiccator, heated to 40 °C and held at this temperature for approximately 24 hours. These D301 pellets were finally pulverized to powder by grinding at 3000 rpm in a high-speed rotor mill.

Synthesis of K₂RuCl₆. Typically, 5.00 g RuCl₃·xH₂O and 2.73 g KCl were dissolved in 200 mL DI. Under magnetic stirring, 40 mL of ethanol and 5 mL of concentrated hydrochloric acid were added. Subsequently, the solution was transferred to a magnetic oil bath and condensed under reflux at 110°C for 3 hours. When the solution turns reddish brown, it can be dried to obtain K₂RuCl₆.

Synthesis of Mo_xRu_{1-x}O₂ (x = 0, 0.125, 0.25, 0.5) catalysts. Typically, 343.0 mg K₂RuCl₆ (0.875 mmol) and 24.5 mg (NH₄)₂MoO₄ (0.125 mmol) were dissolved in 30 mL of DI to form a precursor solution. Then, 3.00 g of powdered D301 anion exchange resin was added to the solution, followed by magnetic stirring at room temperature for 8 hours. After sufficient ion exchange, the suspension was vacuum filtered and then dried at 80°C for 8 hours. The resulting powder containing Ru and Mo was then calcined in air under ambient pressure at 450 °C for 8 hours. After cooling the furnace to room temperature, the black products were collected. The obtained products were washed several times with 40 mL of DI and then dried in a vacuum oven at 60°C to finally obtain the Mo_{0.125}Ru_{0.875}O₂ sample. To synthesize the Mo₀Ru₁O₂, Mo_{0.25}Ru_{0.75}O₂ and Mo_{0.5}Ru_{0.5}O₂ samples, the same procedure was used with the Mo_{0.125}Ru_{0.875}O₂ sample by changing the amount of K₂RuCl₆ (392.0 mg, 294.0 mg, 196.0 mg) and (NH₄)₂MoO₄ (0 mg, 49.0 mg, and 98.0 mg).

Structure and composition of the catalysts. Powder X-ray diffractometer (XRD) was performed on a Panalytical X'pert with Cu K α radiation ($\lambda = 1.542$ Å) at room temperature to obtain the crystalline structure of the samples. The X-ray photoelectron spectroscopy (XPS) signals of the samples were collected with an ESCALAB250Xi spectrometer with an Al K α light source (Al K α , 1.4866 keV). For transmission electron microscopy (TEM), a FEI Talos F200S instrument was used to characterize the microstructure of the samples under an accelerating voltage of 200 kV, and corresponding energy dispersive X-ray (EDS) mapping was employed to identify the element composition and distribution. Electron paramagnetic resonance (EPR) spectra were obtained on a Bruker EMXPLUS spectrometer with a microwave frequency of 9.84 GHz. The X-ray absorption spectroscopy (XAFS) study was performed at the BL14B2 of SPring-8 (8 GeV, 100 mA), Japan, in which, the X-ray beam was mono-chromatized with water-cooled Si (311) double-crystal monochromator and focused with two Rh coated focusing mirrors with the beam size of 2.0 mm in the horizontal direction and 0.5 mm in the vertical direction around sample position, to obtain X-ray adsorption fine structure (XAFS) spectra both in near and extended edge.

Electrochemical measurements. A conventional three-electrode system in Gamry electrochemical workstation (Reference 3000) was employed to evaluate the electrochemical performance of the samples. Ag/AgCl (3.5 M KCl-saturated) and graphite rods ($\Phi = 6$ mm) served as the reference electrode (RE) and counter electrode (CE), respectively. The catalyst ink was prepared by dispersing 4 mg of catalyst into a mixture of 1 mL ethanol and 15 µL Nafion solution (5 wt%), followed by ultrasonic dispersion. Then, 15 µL of the abovementioned ink was dropped onto a cleaned glassy carbon (GC) electrode ($\Phi = 5$ mm) and dried under an infrared lamp to form the working electrode (WE) with the catalysts. In all experiments, the electrolyte was 0.1 M perchloric acid (HClO₄) solution. Before testing, the Ag/AgCl electrode was calibrated by cyclic voltammetry (CV) using a purified Pt mesh as the WE in H₂-saturated 0.1 M HClO₄ electrolyte, and the average voltage value was recorded as ^{*E*}_{*c*} when the current was zero. The value of ^{*E*}_{*c*} was generally between 0.260 V and 0.270 V for the Ag/AgCl electrode in 0.1 M HClO₄ solution. All potentials were calibrated relative to the reversible hydrogen electrode (RHE) with iR compensation, according to the following calculations:

 $E_{RHE} = E_{Ag/AgCl} + E_c - I_{mea} \times R_s$

where $E_{Ag/AgCl}$ is the potential relative to the Ag/AgCl electrode, which is the set potential during all measurements, and E_c is the potential of the Ag/AgCl electrode relative to the RHE. I_{mea} is the measured

polarization current. R_s is the solution resistance.

To assess the true OER performance, the WEs were first subjected to 50 cycles of CV between 1.0 and 1.5 V (vs. RHE) at a scan rate of 50 mV s⁻¹ to stabilize the catalysts in an O₂-saturated 0.1 M HClO₄ solution. Then, linear sweep voltammetry (LSV) was used to measure the OER polarization curve from 1.0 to 1.6 V (vs. RHE) at a sweep rate of 5 mV s⁻¹ with a 1600 rpm rotation speed. Electrochemical impedance spectroscopy (EIS) was obtained in the frequency range from 10^5 Hz to 10^{-2} Hz at a bias voltage of 1.4 V (vs. RHE) with a 10 mV of amplitude. To investigate the stability of the catalysts, carbon paper (CP, with a surface area of 1 cm²) with 2.0 mg of catalyst was employed as the WEs, and then chronopotentiometry was used to record the E-t curve at a current density of 10 mA cm⁻².

The ECSA were calculated in the revised version via the following equation:

 $ECSA = C_{dl}/C_s$

where ECSA is the electrochemical active surface area (cm²), C_{dl} is double layer capacitance (mF), and C_s is the specific capacitance ($C_s = 0.035$ mF cm⁻²).

Electrochemical measurement of PEMWE. During the process of constructing the membrane electrode assembly (MEA), $Mo_{0.125}Ru_{0.875}O_2$ are used as anode catalysts, while commercial Pt/C (40 wt%, Johnson Matthey) is employed as the cathode catalyst. To prepare the anode and cathode inks, the catalysts are dispersed in a mixture of isopropanol and deionized water in a ratio of 2:3. Subsequently, a 5 wt% Nafion solution is added to achieve an ionomer content of 38 wt% for the anode and 40 wt% for the cathode. After ultrasonic treatment in a low-temperature water bath for at least one hour, a uniform catalyst ink can be obtained. To fabricate the MEA with Nafion 115 membrane as the electrolyte, the anode and cathode catalysts are directly sprayed onto both sides of the Nafion 115 membrane using an ultrasonic spraying system. After optimizing the catalyst loading, it is controlled at 2 mg_{Ru} cm⁻² and 0.3 mg_{Pt} cm⁻², respectively. After cooling and peeling, a catalyst-coated membrane (CCM) is obtained and stored in deionized water for further measurements. To construct a proton exchange membrane electrolyzer for performance evaluation, a titanium felt with a thickness of 500 µm is used as the porous transport layer (PTL) for both the anode and cathode. The assembly pressure of the fixture is set at 6 N m, and the active area of the electrodes is measured at 9 cm². The proton exchange membrane electrolyzer operates at 80°C, using deionized water as the reactant, with a flow rate of 40 mL min⁻¹. Polarization curves are collected in the range of 0.1 to 3.5 A cm⁻².

Differential electrochemical mass spectrometry (DEMS) analysis. In situ DEMS involving heavy-oxygen water ($H_2^{18}O$) was performed to identify the level of participation for lattice oxygen during the OER process in a QAS 100 device. The catalysts were dripped onto a porous gold (Au) disk electrode with a catalyst loading of 0.1 mg cm⁻². The porous Au disk electrode with catalysts, Ag/AgCl electrode and pure Pt wire were used as the WE, RE and CE, respectively. First, the catalysts were labeled with ¹⁸O isotope by 4 CV cycles at a scan rate of 5 mV s⁻¹ in 0.1 M HClO₄ solution containing $H_2^{18}O$. Considering the difference in activity between Mo_{0.125}Ru_{0.875}O₂ and Com-RuO₂, the potential range of CV cycles was set as 0.9-1.25 V (vs. Ag/AgCl) for Mo_{0.125}Ru_{0.875}O₂ and 0.9-1.6 V (vs. Ag/AgCl) for Com-RuO₂ to achieve a similar current intensity. Then, the resulting electrodes were rinsed with ¹⁶O water several times to remove the residual $H_2^{18}O$. Finally, the electrodes were placed in 0.1 M HClO₄ containing $H_2^{16}O$, and CV was carried out within the above potential windows. Meanwhile, mass spectrometry was used to detect O₂ generated during the OER process in real time.

Details of the computational studies. Density functional theory (DFT) calculations were conducted via the Vienna Ab initio Simulation Package (VASP). The electronic structures of materials were described by the generalized gradient approximation (GGA) of Perdew-Burke-Ernzerhof (PBE) and the projector augmented wave $(PAW)^{1-3}$. The kinetic cutoff energy of the plane wave was fixed at 450 eV. The convergence tolerance of force and energy for each atom were 0.02 eV/Å and 10^{-5} eV , respectively^{4, 5}.

A unit cell of pristine RuO_2 contained 48 atoms, including 16 Ru atoms and 32 O atoms. On this basis, we constructed the doped model according to the Mo proportion from ICP-AES (Table S1). During the structural optimization process, Brillouin zone integration was performed with $3 \times 3 \times 4$ gamma k-point sampling. All

atoms and lattice parameters were free to vary. According to the principle of energy minimization, the most stable structure was selected to perform subsequent calculations. Detailed information on the model structures after optimization is provided in Fig. S2-5.

For the slab model, pristine RuO₂ had a four-layer Ru-O structure, contained 64 Ru atoms and 128 O atoms. The Mo-doped RuO₂ slab had the same specifications. However, XPS showed that Mo was enriched on the surface of Mo-doped RuO₂(Fig. S14). Therefore, the slab models of Mo-doped RuO₂ were reassigned based on the actual concentration on the catalyst surface (Table. S4). Furthermore, both XPS (Fig. S13) and DFT results (Fig. S16) indicate that the Mo sites on the reaction interface not only have a strong tendency towards hydroxylation, but also act only as electron modulators and do not participate in the OER process. This suggests that the Mo sites on the real reaction interface are saturated with oxygen intermediates, thus constructing the oxygen-saturated slab model. Furthermore, the top two layers were relaxed, and the bottom two layers were set to be static to simulate the surface relaxation. Monkhorst-Pack k-point sampling ($2 \times 2 \times 1$ and $4 \times 4 \times 1$) was applied for geometric optimization and density of states (DOS) calculations, respectively. Detailed information on the model structures after optimization is provided in Fig. S15.

To evaluate catalyst activity, models of the reaction intermediates (OH^{*}, O^{*} and OOH^{*}) adsorbed on the RuO₂ and Mo-doped RuO₂ catalysts were also constructed, and each model was optimized to the most stable state. The free energy (ΔG) of each OER step was calculated according to the following equation^{6, 7}:

 $\Delta G = \Delta E + \Delta E_{ZPE} - T \times \Delta S$

where ΔE is the energy difference between before and after the reaction; ΔE_{ZPE} is the zero-point energy difference at 298.15 K; *T* is the experimental temperature (298.15 K); and ΔS is the entropy change.



Fig. S1 EPR spectra of Com-RuO₂ and $Mo_{0.125}Ru_{0.875}O_2$.



Fig. S2 Structures, volume and energy of $Mo_1Ru_{15}O_{32-bulk}$ with Mo_{CUS} or Mo_{BRI} , where the green, orange and red sphere represents Ru, Mo and O atoms, respectively.



1. CUS+BRI-1 Volume = 515.882 Å³ E = -365.447 eV (The most stable)



5. 2CUS-2 Volume = 516.038 Å³ E = -365.407 eV



E = -364.812 eV

9. 2CUS-4 Volume = 516.745 Å³



2. CUS+BRI-2 Volume = 515.822 Å³ E = -365.446 eV



6. 2BRI-2 Volume = 515.935 Å³ E = -365.413 eV



10. 2BRI-4 Volume = 516.652 Å³ E = -364.800 eV



3. 2CUS-1 Volume = 515.895 Å³ E = -365.436 eV



7. 2CUS-3 Volume = 516.683 Å³ E = -364.822 eV



11. 2CUS-5 Volume = 515.342 Å³ E = -365.014 eV



4. 2BRI-1 Volume = 515.838 Å³ E = -365.438 eV



8. 2BRI-3 Volume = 516.909 Å³ E = -364.974 eV



12. 2BRI-5 Volume = 516.008 Å³ E = -364.793 eV



Fig. S3 a) Structures, volume and energy of $Mo_2Ru_{14}O_{32-bulk}$ established on the basis of the most stable $Mo_1Ru_{15}O_{32-bulk}$. **b)** Energy of all $Mo_2Ru_{14}O_{32-bulk}$ structures.



Fig. S4 a) Structures, volume and energy of $Mo_4Ru_{12}O_{32-bulk}$ established on the basis of the most stable $Mo_2Ru_{14}O_{32-bulk}$. b) Energy of all $Mo_4Ru_{12}O_{32-bulk}$ structures.



Fig. S5 a) Structures, volume and energy of $Mo_8Ru_8O_{32-bulk}$ established on the basis of the most stable $Mo_4Ru_{12}O_{32-bulk}$. b) Energy of all $Mo_8Ru_8O_{32-bulk}$ structures.



Fig. S6 Volumes of the bulk models with different Mo proportions according to DFT calculations.



Fig. S7 Particle size distribution of $Mo_{0.125}Ru_{0.875}O_2$.



Fig. S8 Thermodynamically stable bulk structures and intermetallic coordination distances of Ru, RuO_2 , and Mo-doped RuO_2 .



Fig. S9 Ru–M coordination distances in the bulk models with different Mo proportions.



Fig. S10 ELF of $Mo_2Ru_{14}O_{32-bulk}$ and $Mo_8Ru_8O_{32-bulk}$, where the regions with intensities below 0.15 are removed.



Fig. S11 a) Ru-3p XPS spectra of $Mo_xRu_{1-x}O_2$. b) Binding energies of Ru species in $Mo_xRu_{1-x}O_2$.



Fig. S12 a) Mo-3d XPS spectra of $Mo_xRu_{1-x}O_2$. b) Binding energies of Mo species in $Mo_xRu_{1-x}O_2$.



Fig. S13 a) O-1s XPS spectra of Mo_xRu_{1-x}O₂. b) Ratio of O species in Mo_xRu_{1-x}O₂.



Fig. S14 The Mo proportion obtained by XPS and ICP.



Fig. S15 Initial and oxygen-saturated slab models with different Mo proportion.



Fig. S16 Free energy diagram of surface hydroxylation on CUSs of the RuO_2 and $Mo_4Ru_{12}O_{32}$ slabs.



Fig. S17 Differential charge density diagram after surface hydroxylation on Mo_{CUS} .



Fig. S18 Ru-Ru/Mo coordination distance on RuO_2 , $Mo_xRu_{16-x}O_{32}$, metal Ru slabs before and after the formation of O^* .



Fig. S19 ECSA of Com-RuO₂ and Mo-doped RuO₂.



Fig. S20 a) Free energy step diagram and b) corresponding structures of RuO₂.



Fig. S21 a) Free energy step diagram and b-d) corresponding structures of Mo₂Ru₁₄O_{32-Osat}.



Fig. S22 a) Free energy step diagram and b-d) corresponding structures of Mo₄Ru₁₂O_{32-Osat}.



Fig. S23 a) Free energy step diagram and b) corresponding structures of Mo₈Ru₈O_{32-Osat}.



Fig. S24 a) XPS spectra of Com-RuO₂ and Mo_{0.125}Ru_{0.875}O₂ after aging for 2 hours.



Fig. S25 a) XRD spectra of Com-RuO₂ and $Mo_{0.125}Ru_{0.875}O_2$ before and after aging for 12 hours.



Fig. S26 a-c) TEM images, d) particle size distribution and e) HADDF image and EDS mapping of Com-RuO₂ before aging.



Fig. S27 a-c) TEM images, d) particle size distribution and e) HADDF image and EDS mapping of Com-RuO₂ after aging for 12 hours.



Fig. S28 a-d) TEM images, e) HAADF image and f) EDS mapping of Mo_{0.125}Ru_{0.875}O₂ after aging for 12 hours.



Fig. S29 Formation energy of oxygen vacancies on the RuO_2 slab and $Mo_4Ru_{12}O_{32-Osat}$ slab.



Fig. S30 -ICOHP and bond length of Ru_{CUS} -O_{bri} bond before and after the formation of O^{*}.



Fig. S31 ELF after the formation of Ru–O^{*} on the RuO₂ slab and Mo₄Ru₁₂O_{32-Osat} slab.

ICP results						
Sample	Element	Mass fraction	Atomic fraction			
Mo _{0.125} Ru _{0.875} O ₂	Мо	3.8330%	12.4%			
	Ru	28.4941%	87.6%			
Mo _{0.25} Ru _{0.75} O ₂	Мо	8.1784%	25.1%			
	Ru	25.6610%	74.8%			
Mo _{0.5} Ru _{0.5} O ₂	Мо	16.2548%	47.8%			
	Ru	18.7269%	52.2%			

Table S1. Elemental composition analysis of $Mo_xRu_{1-x}O_2$ by ICP-AES.

Model	Bader charge of Ru atom	Bader charge of Mo atom
RuO _{2-bulk}	1.723	/
Mo ₂ Ru ₁₄ O _{32-bulk}	1.686	2.434
Mo ₄ Ru ₁₂ O _{32-bulk}	1.650	2.415
Mo ₈ Ru ₈ O _{32-bulk}	1.523	2.364
$MoO_{2-bulk}(P2_1/c)$	/	2.107
MoO _{3-bulk}	/	2.639

Table S2. Bader charge of Ru and/or Mo in bulk of RuO_2 , $Mo_xRu_{16-x}O_{32}$, MoO_2 and MoO_3 .

Sample	Path	CN ^a	R(Å) ^b	$\sigma^2(\text{\AA}^2)^c$	$\Delta E_0 (eV)^d$	R-factor
Ru-foil	Ru-Ru ₁	6	2.652 ± 0.002	0.00806	2762	0.0217
	Ru-Ru ₂	6	2.675±0.021	0.00210	2.762	
Mo _{0.125} Ru _{0.875} O ₂	Ru-O	4.41±1.58	2.064±0.003	0.00855	0.262	0.0327
	Ru-Mo	0.74±0.26	2.726±0.016	0.00897	-0.363	
Com-RuO ₂	Ru-O	6	1.969±0.025	0.00172		
	Ru-Ru ₁	2	3.138±0.014	0.00199	-2.684	0.0179
	Ru-Ru ₂	8	3.561±0.003	0.00221		

Table S3. EXAFS data fitting results of Ru-foil, $Mo_{0.125}Ru_{0.875}O_2$ and RuO_2 ($S_0^2 = 0.8$).

^a coordination number, ^b coordination distance, ^c Debye-waller factor, ^d inner potential shift

Sample	R _s (ohm)	R _{ct} (ohm)	CPE-T	CPE-P
Com-RuO ₂	27.14	8189	0.002425	0.93673
Mo ₀ Ru ₁ O ₂	29.67	1144	0.003229	0.92418
Mo _{0.125} Ru _{0.875} O ₂	25.11	462	0.010153	0.88435
Mo _{0.25} Ru _{0.75} O ₂	26.24	778	0.010241	0.86744
Mo _{0.5} Ru _{0.5} O ₂	28.57	1098	0.008857	0.81717

 Table S4. EIS fitting parameters for all samples.

Sample	Mo at% from ICP	Corresponding Bulk model	Mo at% from XPS	Corresponding Slab model
Com-RuO ₂	0.0 at%	RuO _{2-bulk}	0.0 at%	RuO ₂
Mo _{0.125} Ru _{0.875} O ₂	12.4 at%	Mo ₂ Ru ₁₄ O _{32-bulk}	24.5 at%	Mo ₄ Ru ₁₂ O ₃₂ -O _{sat}
Mo _{0.25} Ru _{0.75} O ₂	25.1 at%	Mo ₄ Ru ₁₂ O _{32-bulk}	33.9 at%	/
$Mo_{0.5}Ru_{0.5}O_2$	47.8 at%	Mo ₈ Ru ₈ O _{32-bulk}	46.3 at%	Mo ₈ Ru ₈ O ₃₂ -O _{sat}

Table S5. Catalogue of reaction interfaces for $Mo_xRu_{1-x}O_2$.

Catalyst	Overpotential (mV@10 mA	Stability(h) @10 mA	Stability in PEMWE (h)	Reference
	cm ⁻²)	cm ⁻²		
Mo _{0.125} Ru _{0.875} O ₂	224	>400	500 h@300 mA cm ⁻²	This work
Li _{0.52} RuO ₂	152	70	/	4
a/c-RuO ₂ (Na-doped)	205	60	/	8
$Cr_{0.6}Ru_{0.4}O_2$	178	10	/	9
Mn _{0.4} Ru _{0.6} O ₂	196	120	12 h@1 A cm ⁻²	10
RuCoO _x	200	100	10 h@100 mA cm ⁻²	11
Ni-RuO ₂	214	200	1000 h@200 mA cm ⁻²	12
Cu-RuO ₂	188	8	/	13
ZnRuO _x	230	320	120 h@200 mA cm ⁻²	14
Ga-RuO ₂	218	150		15
Nb _{0.1} Ru _{0.9} O ₂	204	360	100 h@200 mA cm ⁻²	16
In-RuO ₂ /G	187	180	/	17
Er-RuO _x	200	200	100 h@200 mA cm ⁻²	7
Ta-RuO ₂	201	280	/	18
Ru ₅ WO _x	227	550	/	19

 Table S6. Comparison of the OER performance of reported representative Ru-based oxide
 electrocatalysts in acidic media.

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