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Contrasting Reactive Organic Carbon Observations in the Southeast United States (SOAS) and Southern

³ California (CalNex)

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26

27 Abstract

Despite the central role of reactive organic carbon (ROC) in the formation of secondary species 28 that impact global air quality and climate, our assessment of ROC abundance and impacts is 29 challenged by the diversity of species that contribute to it. We re-visit measurements of ROC 30 species made during two field campaigns in the United States: the 2013 SOAS campaign in 31 forested Centreville, AL, and the 2010 CalNex campaign in urban Pasadena, CA. We find that 32 average measured ROC concentrations are about twice as high in Pasadena (73.8 µgCsm⁻³) than 33 in Centreville (36.5 µgCsm⁻³). However, the OH reactivity (OHR) measured at these sites is similar 34 (20.1 and 19.3 s⁻¹). The shortfall in OHR when summing up measured contributions is 31%, at 35 Pasadena and 14% at Centreville, suggesting that there may be a larger reservoir of unmeasured 36 ROC at the former site. Estimated O₃ production and SOA potential (defined as concentration x 37 yield) are both higher during CalNex than SOAS. This analysis suggests that the ROC in urban 38 California is less reactive, but due to higher concentrations of oxides of nitrogen and hydroxyl 39 radicals, is more efficient in terms of O₃ and SOA production, than in the forested southeastern 40 U.S. 41

42 1. Introduction

Reactive organic carbon (ROC, defined as the family of all atmosphere organics in any phase, 43 other than methane¹) compounds are emitted into the atmosphere from anthropogenic, pyrogenic, 44 and natural sources ²⁻⁴, whereupon they are oxidized primarily by OH, O₃, and NO₃ to form a suite 45 of products, including particulate matter (PM), ozone, and CO₂⁵. At a global scale, models suggest 46 that ROC is the dominant source for the production of these secondary species ^{1, 6-7}. The first two 47 of these secondary products, PM and O₃, are the principal global air pollutants, associated with the 48 premature mortality of over 8 million people each year ⁸. All three of these products impact 49 50 climate, the last two as greenhouse gases, and organic aerosols that, through scattering and cloud formation, act to counter-balance some of the warming from greenhouse gases ⁹. 51

Despite the central place of ROC in tropospheric chemistry, our understanding of its abundance, 52 lifecycle, and ultimate impacts remain highly uncertain. This is largely due to the complexity of 53 ROC, which is estimated to consist of many thousands of compounds ¹⁰, a small subset of which 54 are routinely measured and modeled in the atmosphere. Previous attempts to develop approaches 55 to measure total carbon mass in the gas phase ¹¹⁻¹³ have lacked the precision necessary to constrain 56 a global budget. The alternative is to try to build a picture of the total mass of carbon by summing 57 up speciated measurements from more routine instrumentation. Such an approach demonstrated 58 59 that average observed ROC concentrations over North America spanned two orders of magnitude from 4 to 456 µgCm⁻³¹⁴. This approach fails to identify whether carbon closure is achieved, but 60 can provide insight into the abundance of key species of ROC and their fate. Over the last two 61 decades, instrumentation has been developed to routinely detect a wider range of compounds ⁵. 62 The most comprehensive effort to date to sum measurements that span the range of volatility (and 63 thus are thought to achieve mass closure), suggested that compounds that are not typically 64

65 measured during field campaigns contributed $\sim 1/3$ of the mass of ROC in a forested environment 66 in Colorado ¹⁵.

The atmospheric burden of ROC is dominated by long-lived species such as alkanes and acetone, 67 whereas reactivity is dominated by short-lived species such as isoprene¹. Together, these 68 complementary metrics capture both those species highest in abundance and those most important 69 for chemical processing. Techniques to measure total OH reactivity (OHR, the inverse of the OH 70 lifetime) were developed over a decade ago, and are now routinely deployed in field campaigns 71 (see Yang et al. ¹⁶ for a review). OHR is typically dominated by ROC, other than in some urban 72 73 or remote environments where the bulk of OHR may come from inorganics or long-lived species (e.g. CH4, CO), respectively ¹⁷⁻¹⁹. When deployed alongside speciated measurements, OHR 74 measurements can be used to estimate the "missing OHR" not accounted for by routine 75 instrumentation. This missing OHR has been estimated at 30-50% in urban environments, and 76 higher (more than half missing in some cases) in forests ¹⁶. This missing OHR may represent 77 unmeasured emitted species or oxidation products. 78

79 While the measurements of OHR provide a powerful framework to assess chemical processing in 80 the atmosphere, it is crucial to acknowledge that the term "missing reactivity" has been applied somewhat fluidly. The "missing reactivity" can be the shortfall between the contribution from 81 measured species and the total OHR measurement (as described above and used in this study), or 82 83 it can be the difference between modeled OHR and the total OHR measurement. The former having 84 the virtue of a direct constraint, the latter accounting for known unmeasured compounds. When "missing reactivity" is assessed based solely on measurements, it reflects the suite of 85 instrumentation deployed under varying operating conditions in any given campaign (which may, 86 for example, dictate detection limits and the number of species reported). This suite can be more 87

or less comprehensive, and is certainly not consistent across campaigns, challenging our ability to 88 compare "missing reactivity" estimates. The summed reactivity also relies on assumed rate 89 constants, which may differ across studies. Furthermore, the measurement of total OHR is itself 90 operationally defined. For example, some semi-volatile or intermediate volatility compounds 91 (S/IVOC) may not be sampled through an inlet, or chemical reactions may rapidly reform OH, 92 resulting in the measured OH loss being lower than the OHR calculations that do not consider this 93 recycling. These definitional and operational factors may influence the interpretation of OHR 94 95 results.

Field observations provide a snapshot of the local atmospheric environment and can be used to 96 97 probe specific sources and atmospheric processes. While field campaigns are often constructed with specific scientific questions in mind, the observational capital may be relevant to additional 98 future lines of inquiry. In this study, we revisit measurements made during two field campaigns 99 over the United States: the Southern Aerosol and Oxidant Study (SOAS) of 2013 and the California 100 Research at the Nexus of Air Quality and Climate (CalNex) campaign of 2010. While numerous 101 studies have explored the processes controlling atmospheric composition for each of these two 102 campaigns, this study applies a new lens to contrast the abundance and role of ROC in these two 103 very different environments. 104

105

106 2. Materials and Methods

107 The CalNex campaign was based in Southern California, a region which has undergone a major 108 air quality clean-up since the 1970s but remains under the influence of over 10 million people who 109 live in Los Angeles County ²⁰. Southern California represents a modern urban environment, 110 characterized by reductions in vehicle emissions over recent decades ²¹, with increasingly

important emissions from other source categories including volatile consumer products (VCPs)²². 111 Here we investigate measurements made at the Pasadena, California ground site from May 15-112 June 16, 2010, from towers located 10m above an empty parking lot (note that the AMS had a 113 separate inlet sampling above a trailer at a height of ~6m). See Table 1 for details and Ryerson et 114 al. ²⁰ for more information. In particular, we include here an expanded set of ROC measurements 115 made by gas chromatography mass spectrometry (GC-MS) based on new peak identification 116 methods ²²⁻²³. A 2D-TAG was deployed during the last 4 days of the campaign, but given the lack 117 of overlap with other measurements, that data is not included here²⁴⁻²⁵. Meteorological conditions 118 varied during the CalNex campaign with both sunny, clear days and cool, overcast days ²⁰. 119

SOAS was a part of the larger Southeast Atmospheric Study (SAS) of 2013²⁶. The Southeast 120 United States (SEUS) represents a mix of biogenic and anthropogenic sources, with urban centers 121 122 embedded in large swaths of forests. Air quality regulations have led to declines in anthropogenic 123 emissions of NOx, SOx, and organic aerosol in the region for more than a decade preceding SOAS ²⁷⁻²⁸. Here we explore the measurements made at the ground site in Centreville, Alabama, from 124 June 1 to July 15, 2013. The majority of the gas phase measurements analyzed here were made 125 from a tower located 16.5 m above the ground in a clearing near the edge of a forest and well above 126 127 the forest canopy (Table 2). The aerosol measurements and the gas phase measurements operated 128 by the SEARCH network (see Table 2) were made nearby at ground-level near the center of the clearing. This rural site is located within the Talladega National Forest, a dense mixed forest of 129 pine and broadleaf trees. The summer of 2013 was consistently cooler and rainier than average 130 conditions ²⁶. 131

In this study, we revisit the online measurements of ROC, OH reactivity and related trace species
measured at Centreville and Pasadena. For both campaigns, all observations are first averaged to

an hourly time base and individual ROC species concentrations are converted into units of µgCm⁻ ³ at standard temperature and pressure (STP, 298 K, 1 atm). Given that not all instrumentation operated continuously over the entirety of the campaigns, in particular for SOAS (see Table 2), we only present diurnal averages or 24-hour averages for each campaign. We further note that while much of the same key instrumentation was deployed at both sites, this suite and its operation are not identical, and not all species are observed at concentrations above detection limits at both sites, thus the list of ROC species measured/reported for the SOAS and CalNex campaigns differ.

141

142 **3. Results**

143 3.1: Reactive Organic Carbon Mass Concentrations

Figure 1 shows the average ROC mass concentrations measured for the CalNex and SOAS
campaigns, highlighting the contributions from different chemical families. Table S1 provides
average concentrations for each individual species.

Average ROC concentrations during SOAS total 36.5 µgCsm⁻³, with sizeable contributions from 147 primary biogenic species, in particular isoprene (8.6 µgCsm⁻³) and monoterpenes (4.8 µgCsm⁻³). 148 The top 10 species (isoprene, methanol, acetone, organic aerosol, ethanol, α -pinene, MVK, ethane, 149 other monoterpenes, and ß-pinene) contribute 70% of the mean ROC mass concentrations 150 observed during SOAS. In contrast, CalNex ROC (average 73.8 µgCsm⁻³) is dominated by 151 anthropogenic species, including alkanes (24.9 µgCsm⁻³) and ethanol (9.0 µgCsm⁻³), the latter of 152 which has been highlighted as a product of VCP emissions as well as from mobile sources in the 153 Los Angeles region ^{22, 29}. The top 10 species measured during CalNex (ethanol, acetone, ethane, 154 155 propane, i-pentane, methanol, organic aerosol, propanol, propionic acid, and n-butane) make up

156 58% of the mean ROC. Overall, measured ROC is twice as abundant in the atmosphere during CalNex compared to SOAS, consistent with expectations of higher ROC in a "polluted 157 environment". When compared to a previous compilation of ROC concentrations over North 158 America¹⁴, the ROC reported at CalNex is second only to Mexico City, and exceeds ROC reported 159 in Pittsburgh in 2002. Similarly, ROC levels during SOAS are higher than all non-urban sites 160 reported in Heald et al.¹⁴, as well as the Manitou Forest site where Hunter et al.¹⁵ report average 161 ROC concentrations of 26.7 µgCm⁻³. Despite the substantial differences in ROC abundance and 162 163 speciation during CalNex and SOAS, we find that organic aerosol contributes ~5% of ROC in both environments. 164

Figure 2a demonstrates that ROC concentrations peak in the early afternoon for both SOAS and CalNex. This maximum is driven by isoprene for SOAS (this daytime peak is dampened by the night-time peak in monoterpenes), and OA, acetone, and propane for CalNex. There are modest differences between weekday and weekend ROC, with slightly higher values (<10%) on weekends in both Pasadena and Centreville. The slightly higher weekend concentrations of biogenics such as isoprene during SOAS may be the result of lower NOx and lower OH over the weekend extending the lifetime of these primary species.

We note that our analysis includes only the identified and calibrated S/IVOC (semi-volatile to intermediate volatility, with saturation vapor pressures $C^*=1-10^5 \ \mu g \ m^{-3}$) species measured by SV-TAG during SOAS ³⁰; these compounds contribute 0.25 $\mu g \ Csm^{-3}$. A preliminary calibration of all the additional SV-TAG measured compounds with the formulas $C_{15}H_{24}$ and $C_{15}H_{22}^{31}$, which should provide an upper-bound on sesquiterpene concentrations, indicates that sesquiterpenes contribute less than 100 ngCm⁻³ throughout the SOAS campaign. It is not clear how much additional mass may be contributed by unmeasured/unidentified S/IVOC species. We also note 179 that a nitrate CIMS was deployed during SOAS which detected an additional 87 compounds which make a negligible contribution to ROC mass concentrations (0.03 µgCsm⁻³) and are not included 180 in further analysis. No online speciated S/IVOC measurements are available during CalNex. 181 Unspeciated gas-phase SVOC concentrations (C*=1 μ g m⁻³) estimated by Ma et al. ³² average 2.77 182 μ g m⁻³ (assuming an OM:OC=1.3, equivalent to ~2.1 μ gC m⁻³), or less than 3% of the measured 183 ROC. Zhao et al. ³³ report 3-hour integrated IVOC measurements (both speciated and unspeciated, 184 equivalent to C12-C22 n-alkanes) made offline from Tenax glass tubes during CalNex, with a 185 campaign average concentration of primary IVOC of 6.3 µgm⁻³ (assuming an OM:OC of 1.1 for a 186 C15 n-alkane this gives ~5.7 µgCsm⁻³). This represents an additional 8% in ROC mass 187 concentrations. Measurement and quantification challenges for these samples are discussed in 188 Zhao et al. 33 . 189

190

191 *3.2: OH Reactivity*

192 We translate the observed mass concentrations during CalNex and SOAS into calculated OH reactivity (cOHR), which is defined here as $\Sigma(k_{OH+Xi} [X_i])$, the sum of OH reactivity contributed 193 by each species (X_i). We note that this includes not only ROC species, but also other key gas phase 194 species that react with OH (CO, O₃, NO, NO₂, SO₂, OH, HO₂). We use here reaction rate constants 195 (k_{OH+Xi}) at 298K, taken from JPL kinetics compilation ³⁴, the IUPAC evaluated kinetic data ³⁵ the 196 GEOS-Chem chemical mechanism v12.7.0 (www.geos-chem.org), or from EPI Suite ³⁶ (see 197 Tables S1 and S2). As in Hunter et al. ¹⁵, we make no effort to adjust reaction rates for ambient 198 199 temperatures during SOAS and CalNex; this is reasonable for SOAS where average temperatures are similar to 298K, but likely leads to a slight overestimate of cOHR at night during CalNex when 200 temperatures drop to ~288K. Aerosols are not expected to contribute significantly to OHR. For 201

example, following equation 3.38 of Seinfeld and Pandis ³⁷, we calculate that under moderately polluted conditions (50 μ gm⁻³, assuming a mean diameter of 200nm) the upper-limit first order rate coefficient for OH loss to particles (given an average molecular velocity of OH of 609 ms⁻¹ and assuming an upper limit for the uptake coefficient of 1) is 0.23 s⁻¹, equivalent to ~1% of the measured OHR during CalNex and SOAS (see below). It is therefore reasonable to neglect the aerosol contribution to OHR during these campaigns.

Figure 3 shows the average cOHR for CalNex and SOAS. The total cOHR for SOAS is 16.6 s⁻¹, 208 with a large contribution of 9.4 s⁻¹ from a single species, isoprene, and a further 0.7 s⁻¹ from its 209 immediate oxidation products MVK and methacrolein. Monoterpenes contribute an additional 2.9 210 s⁻¹. Over 85% of cOHR at the SOAS site is from ROC species, largely biogenics. By contrast, the 211 average cOHR during CalNex (13.9 s⁻¹) is dominated by NOx (4.7 s⁻¹), with ROC species 212 contributing 51% of the reactivity. Despite the urban nature of this site, isoprene remains the single 213 largest ROC contributor to reactivity during CalNex (0.9 s⁻¹), though the amount is an order of 214 magnitude lower than for SOAS. Washenfelder et al. ³⁸ noted that oak and eucalyptus trees upwind 215 of Pasadena likely represent a local biogenic source during CalNex. The second most important 216 individual ROC contributor to reactivity during CalNex is acetaldehyde, a product of ethanol and 217 alkene oxidation, concentrations of which have increased in ambient air, including over California, 218 in recent decades due to ethanol fuel additives and VCP emissions ^{22, 29}. In general, we find that 219 many of the measured ROC species that contribute to mass concentrations during CalNex (Figure 220 221 1) do not substantially impact calculated reactivity (Figure 3), suggesting that OH loss in southern 222 California is not primarily driven by anthropogenic (or biogenic) ROC emissions. The reactivity per mass concentration of ROC is more than 4 times higher for SOAS than for CalNex (0.10 for 223

CalNex vs 0.42 for SOAS). However, we note that despite all of these differences, the total cOHR
estimated for CalNex and SOAS are quite similar.

Figure 2b shows that the diurnal cycle for cOHR is even more muted during CalNex than ROC concentrations shown in Figure 2a, given that cOHR from highly-reactive alkenes peaks at night ³⁹, compensating for the daytime peak driven by isoprene and acetaldehyde. The large contribution of isoprene to reactivity during SOAS enhances the diurnal cycle observed in ROC concentrations at that site (Figures 2a and 2b). Weekday and weekend differences in cOHR are negligible (not shown).

During both SOAS and CalNex measurements of total OHR were deployed using laser-induced 232 fluorescence techniques and both datasets were corrected for chemical interferences ⁴⁰⁻⁴¹. Thus, 233 234 these measurements and the cOHR compiled here provide a critical opportunity to contrast the "missing OH reactivity" at two very different sites in the United States. However, as discussed in 235 236 Section 1, operational differences in measured OHR may remain. Measured OHR is similar at Pasadena and Centreville, with average values of 20.1 and 19.3 s⁻¹, respectively. Figure 3 shows 237 that 31 and 14% of the measured reactivity is not accounted for by the cOHR (6.3 s⁻¹ for for CalNex 238 and 2.6 s⁻¹ for SOAS). The "missing reactivity" for SOAS is well within the uncertainty of the 239 240 OHR measurement and rate constants used to estimate cOHR, and may indicate that all the reactivity is accounted for at this site. Kaiser et al. ⁴² suggest that in their analysis missing OHR 241 242 during SOAS may be attributed to unmeasured primary emissions (e.g. sesquiterpenes). Some studies⁴³⁻⁴⁴ (though not all⁴⁵) have shown that sesquiterpene concentrations peak at night this may 243 offer an explanation for Figure 2b which shows a nighttime peak in missing OHR, with little 244 missing OHR in daytime. However, while sesquiterpene measurements made by SV-TAG during 245 SOAS (see Section 3.2) show a pronounced nighttime peak, concentrations were substantially 246

247 lower than monoterpene concentrations, consistent with previous studies that suggest that sesquiterpene concentrations are relatively low outside of the forest canopy ⁴⁴, and thus unlikely 248 to fully explain the missing OHR at night. In Pasadena, however, there may be a larger reservoir 249 of unmeasured ROC species (or inorganics). As shown in McDonald et al.²², the ROC 250 measurements during CalNex (including the expanded suite of species measured by GC-MS, see 251 Table 1) capture much of the reactivity from VCP sources, however they also suggest that 252 unmeasured ROC species from VCP sources could contribute additional OHR (see Table S8 of 253 that study). An analysis of comprehensive ROC measurements at Manitou Forest in Colorado 254 during 2011 suggested that previously unmeasured S/IVOCs compounds, contributed ~25% of the 255 OHR at that site. S/IVOC compounds may also make an important contribution to OHR in 256 Southern California and in the SEUS. However, the subset of SVOCs measured by SV-TAG 257 during SOAS contribute only $3\% (0.56 \text{ s}^{-1})$ of the cOHR. Applying OH reaction rates to the average 258 primary IVOCs concentrations measured offline during CalNex (see Tables S5 and S7 of ³³), yields 259 an additional 0.33 s⁻¹ of cOHR, suggesting that these IVOC contribute only \sim 5% of the missing 260 OHR during CalNex. The missing OHR during CalNex appears to be consistent throughout the 261 day (Figure 2b), and therefore is not suggestive of a clear local primary emission signature. 262

263

264 **3.3: Ozone Production**

We can use the estimated cOHR to explore ozone formation associated with ROC during CalNex and SOAS. Ozone formation is initiated by the reaction of peroxy radicals with NO, as described by Jacob ⁴⁶ and applied in Sinha et al. ⁴⁷:

268 $P_{O3} = 2k[RO_2][NO]$ (1)

with the resulting NO₂ photolyzing to produce ozone. If we assume the rapid cycling of radicals in a polluted atmosphere:

$$k_{OH+ROC}[ROC][OH] = k[RO_2][NO]$$
(2)

therefore,

273

$$P_{O3} = 2OHR_{ROC}[OH]$$
(3)

274 Figure 2c shows the estimated diurnal pattern in P_{03} based on equation 3 for both CalNex and SOAS. As described in Section 3.2, CalNex is characterized by much lower ROC reactivity (7.1 275 s^{-1}) than SOAS (15.5 s^{-1}), however OH concentrations during CalNex are about a factor of four 276 higher than during SOAS, with mid-day peaks of $4x10^6$ molec cm⁻³ and $1x10^6$ molec cm⁻³, 277 278 respectively. Thus the resulting ozone production rate is about 50% higher during CalNex, with peak early afternoon values of ~9 ppb hr⁻¹, compared to ~6 ppb hr⁻¹ for SOAS. We note that there 279 is little weekday-weekend difference in measured OH during CalNex in contrast with estimated 280 OH concentrations based on simple-steady state models⁴⁸; constraining these estimates to 281 measured OHR yields better agreement with measured OH⁴¹. 282

283 Figure 2d shows the mid-day increase in ozone concentrations observed during CalNex and SOAS. CalNex is characterized by ~40 ppb increase over 7 hours, with a more modest increase of ~15 284 ppb over the same time interval for SOAS. These daytime increases likely reflect local production 285 integrated over the immediate upwind region, as well as the mixing down of the residual layer 286 from the previous day. The diurnal profile of typical ozone deposition velocities for urban and 287 forested land classes ⁴⁹ produce a small sink of 0.3-0.6 ppb hr⁻¹ peaking mid-day; this is negligible 288 compared to the daytime ozone production rates calculated at Pasadena and Centreville. The 289 observed ozone increase in Southern California is roughly consistent with the ozone production 290

rate calculated using equation 3, however this relationship appears to substantially overestimate the observed daytime increase in ozone in the SEUS. This is true even when the calculated ozone production rate is tempered by the estimated ozone dry deposition flux over forested land.

The lower ozone formation during SOAS is the result of NO_x limitations at this forested site. This 294 can be illustrated by a metric (ϑ =OHR_{NOx}/OHR_{ROC}) suggested by Kirchner et al. ⁵⁰ to assess ozone 295 296 production regimes. The observations at CalNex produce an average ϑ of 0.52 which is well above the 0.2 boundary to indicate VOC-limitation. Average early afternoon ϑ is lower on weekends due 297 to lower NO, but stays above 0.35 consistent with VOC-limitation, whereas using an alternate 298 metric Griffith et al.⁴¹ suggest that observations during afternoons on weekends are NOx-limited 299 during CalNex. We note that if we assume that all of the missing OHR comes from unmeasured 300 ROC species, the re-calculated ϑ briefly dips below the 0.2 boundary on weekend afternoons 301 suggesting a transition from VOC to NOx limited. Conversely, the average ϑ at SOAS exhibits a 302 strong diurnal cycle where ϑ drops below the NOx limitation boundary (0.01) from 9am-4pm on 303 average (on both weekday and weekends), and increases over night (campaign average ϑ of 0.012). 304 305 Thus, despite very high reactivity from ROC in the SEUS, the lower daytime OH and NOx depress the ozone production potential of these organics during SOAS. 306

We note that the OHR from IVOC during CalNex discussed in Section 3.2 could contribute an additional $\sim 5\%$ to the ozone production rate calculated using equation 3; well within the uncertainty associated with estimating the ozone production rate from its observed daytime increase in Figure 2c. However, if the remaining missing OHR during CalNex were attributed to ROC, the resulting calculated ozone production would substantially exceed the observed rise in ozone concentrations. This suggests that either (1) some of the missing OHR may be the result of non-ROC species, or (2) conditions during CalNex may not be uniformly NOx-saturated (as assumed in equation 3), reducing ozone production efficiency, or (3) that there are larger, unaccounted for, sinks of ozone during CalNex. Deployment of instrumentation at an upwind site, as well as an O₃ reactivity instrument ⁵¹, alongside the suite of instrumentation deployed in Pasadena during CalNex, could provide further insight into the role of ROC in controlling ozone concentrations in the LA basin.

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320 3.4: SOA Formation Potential

ROC oxidation leads to the formation of secondary organic aerosol (SOA), a substantial and sometimes dominant contributor to fine particulate matter ⁵². The vast potential number of precursors which produce SOA at varying timescales, coupled with gaps in our understanding of this chemistry, combined with the addition of primary organic aerosol, complicate any assessment of regional SOA formation. Here we explore the instantaneous SOA formation potential of ROC at Centreville and Pasadena.

To estimate the SOA formation potential (the potential amount of SOA formed from the measured 327 328 precursors), we multiply mass concentrations of ROC with carbon yields (Y_C) based on the approach of Hunter et al.¹⁵. A subset of yields for more well-studied SOA precursors (aromatics, 329 isoprene, monoterpenes) are taken from Hunter et al.¹⁵ based on chamber studies. The remaining 330 yields are estimated based on the vapour pressure of each species taken from EPI Suite ³⁶, 331 converted to the saturation vapor pressure (C*), and then to yield using the functional form of 332 Donahue et al. ⁵³ (as given in caption of Table S1). The resulting yields vary from <1% to 19% (see 333 Table S1). We employ this approach as it allows us to systematically estimate the SOA yields for 334 all considered species, however, we note that the uncertainty on these estimated yields is high; 335 Hunter et al.¹⁵ suggest a factor of three. While a detailed review of all estimated yields is beyond 336

the scope of this study, we note that the systematic application of the relationship between vapor pressure and carbon yield ⁵³ leads to large estimated yields for alcohols (Y_C=3-5%); however, there is no laboratory evidence to date to suggest that the oxidation of alcohols yields appreciable SOA, in fact some previous CalNex studies assume that the SOA yield from alcohols is zero ^{22, 54}. Thus, in what follows, we assume zero SOA potential for alcohols (SOA potentials for these species as calculated using the approach of Donahue et al. ⁵³ are given in brackets in Table S1). In addition, we note that the SOA potential metric as used here only captures SOA formed in the gas-phase.

Figure 4 summarizes the SOA formation potential at Pasadena and Centreville. CalNex SOA 344 formation potential is 1.46 µgCsm⁻³, with large contribution from aromatics (0.45 µgCsm⁻³, Yc=2-345 11%); propionic acid, toluene, and m-p xylenes have the highest SOA potential. Applying the SOA 346 yields from Zhao et al. ³³ (see their Tables S5 and S7) to the reported average mass concentrations 347 and assuming an OM:OC of 2 for the SOA formed would give an additional 0.80 µgCsm⁻³ from 348 IVOC. This is equivalent to more than half of the SOA formation potential of all the online 349 measured species, consistent with the major role that IVOCs play in SOA formation in southern 350 California, as suggested by Hayes et al. ⁵⁴. 351

The SOA formation potential at SOAS (0.90 μ gCsm⁻³) is a little more than half of that during 352 CalNex. More than half of this is from isoprene and monoterpenes (0.15 and 0.36 μ gCsm⁻³). The 353 dominance of monoterpene SOA is consistent with the analysis of observed SOA concentrations 354 in the SEUS by Zhang et al. 55. This is considerably less than the SOA formation potential of 1.4 355 µgCsm⁻³ reported for a ponderosa forest site ¹⁵, however approximately half of the SOA formation 356 potential assessed at that site was estimated to come from previously unmeasured S/IVOCs, some 357 of which are not measured during SOAS. Sesquiterpenes, with their high SOA yields ⁵⁶, could also 358 contribute to SOA in this region, however, as noted in Section 3.2, concentrations of these species 359

are small during SOAS and even assuming 100% yield would contribute less than 0.1 μ gCsm⁻³ to the SOA potential. Using an apportionment analysis of FIGAERO-CIMS, Lee et al.⁵⁷ also rule out any substantial contribution of sesquiterpene SOA to OA measured during SOAS.

SOA formation potential cannot be directly compared to the observed OA concentrations which 363 reflect contributions from up-wind (both primary and secondary), as well as multi-phase 364 chemistry. However, for context, we note that observed OA concentrations from CalNex (3.37 365 μgCsm⁻³) and SOAS (1.84 μgCsm⁻³) are both more than double the instantaneous SOA formation 366 potential estimated at these sites. Furthermore, oxidation flow reactor (OFR) measurements during 367 CalNex report an average of 10.5 μ gsm⁻³ (~5.25 μ gCsm⁻³)⁵⁸, ~1.9 μ gCsm⁻³ above ambient loading. 368 Our estimated SOA potential (including IVOCs) of 2.3 µgCsm⁻³, is similar, but the OFR constraint 369 may suggest that our yields for SOA potential are overestimated. Similar analysis of the SOAS 370 OFR measurements suggest an enhancement over ambient of 1.2 µgCsm⁻³, ~30% higher than our 371 estimated SOA potential. Thus the application of estimated yields based primarily on vapor 372 pressures (with the exception of aromatics and primary biogenics, for which we follow Hunter et 373 al.¹⁵) may overestimate SOA potential in an urban environment and underestimate SOA potential 374 in a biogenic environment. Further exploration of how estimated SOA potential compares with 375 OFR measurements at various sites, particularly with better constrained contributions from 376 S/IVOCs, may provide constraints on assumed SOA yields. 377

378

379 4. Discussion

Reactive organic carbon (ROC) is a key fuel for atmospheric chemical transformations and the production of secondary pollutants. In this study we contrast the mass concentrations, OH 382 reactivity, and SOA formation potential of ROC in two very different environments in the United States: Southern California and the SEUS. This comparison allows us to explore how these simple 383 metrics can be used to characterize and contrast the local atmospheric environment. We find that 384 the average ROC mass concentration during CalNex is twice that observed during SOAS, with the 385 former dominated by anthropogenic species, and the later characterized by biogenics. Despite 386 these considerable differences, we find that the OHR is similar at the two sites; however, only 387 about half of the cOHR observed during CalNex comes from organics. Thus, the ROC measured 388 in Southern California is, on average, about a factor of 4 less reactive with OH than that in the 389 390 SEUS. This could translate to much higher ozone production in the SEUS, however NOxlimitation and lower OH concentrations depress ozone production rates compared to Southern 391 California. In addition, the lower OH in the SEUS extends the isoprene lifetime, increasing the 392 observed reactivity ⁵⁹. Finally, the SOA formation potential for all the ROC species measured in 393 CalNex is almost twice that estimated for SOAS, largely driven by aromatics. Thus we conclude 394 that the ROC species in Southern California are more abundant, less reactive, and (due to the 395 presence of elevated NOx and OH) more efficiently produce ozone and SOA than the ROC species 396 present in the SEUS. 397

This analysis is based on a bottom-up characterization of ROC, by adding up the contributions of measured individual species. Given the absence of any top-down total carbon measurement, we cannot assess the degree of mass closure obtained with this suite of measurements. However, the total OHR measurements from these campaigns suggest that the bottom-up tally of cOHR is short by 14% (SOAS) and 31% (CalNex). This missing OHR likely represents some combination of missing primary species (e.g. sesquiterpenes and oxygenated VCP emissions) and unmeasured secondary products. We highlight throughout the potential role of intermediate volatility species,

using as an example the offline measurements made during CalNex ³³. While these species likely 405 make a modest contribution to mass concentrations, OHR, and ozone formation, they may well 406 contribute more than a quarter of the SOA formation potential in that region. This illustrates the 407 importance of characterizing the role of IVOC species in PM formation, particularly in urban 408 environments. For SOAS, the missing reactivity is limited to the nighttime and is much more 409 410 modest, perhaps within the uncertainty of the measurements. This raises the interesting question of how measurement and reaction rate uncertainties may dictate the limit of how OHR 411 measurements can be used to constrain ROC. 412

Of the 112 different organic species measured during CalNex and SOAS, many are not routinely 413 414 reported in field campaigns or simulated in models, however the importance of these constituents varies with location. For example, the chemical mechanism used in the GEOS-Chem global model 415 represents the majority of the species reported during SOAS, and could represent (individually or 416 417 lumped) 87-95% of the mass, OHR, and SOA formation potential reported here. This same chemical mechanism could represent 85% of the mass concentrations measured during CalNex, 418 but only 80% of the SOA formation potential and 76% of the OHR. Thus, the more diverse suite 419 of anthropogenic compounds emitted in urban environments may be challenging to represent in 420 current models. The number of species routinely detected by new instrumentation deployed in the 421 field continues to grow (e.g.⁶⁰), and as future campaigns likely report a greater fraction of the ROC 422 in the atmosphere, it may become more challenging for simplified models to represent this 423 diversity and the resulting chemistry. 424

The results presented here represent a snapshot in time: 2010 in Southern California, and 2013 in the SEUS. Anthropogenic emissions of many key pollutants and precursors continue to decline in the United States, driven by the Clean Air Act. Thus the emissions of ROC, as well as the chemical 428 environment into which these species are emitted, are dynamic. In particular, NO_x concentrations in Southern California have decreased considerably since the CalNex campaign. The NO2 429 measurements reported at Pasadena (EPA AQS site 06-037-2005) fell by 30% from 2010 to 2019. 430 This alone would imply a decrease in OHR of 7% (1.4 s⁻¹) from 2010. Warneke et al. ²¹ show that 431 anthropogenic hydrocarbon concentrations in Los Angeles declined at a rate of 7.5%yr⁻¹ from 1960 432 to 2010; it is unclear if that trend has continued over the last decade. Though the ratio of NO_x 433 reactivity to ROC reactivity shown here suggests that Pasadena was, on average, in the VOC-434 limited regime during CalNex, Griffith et al.⁴¹ suggest that the region was on the cusp of the 435 transition between NOx-limited and VOC-limited at that time. If indeed NOx reductions have 436 outpaced decreases in ROC reactivity, Pasadena could have moved into an NOx-limited ozone 437 production regime in recent years. Laughner and Cohen⁶¹ suggest that this is the case for the 438 greater Los Angeles region based on trends in satellite-derived NO_x lifetimes. Furthermore, the 439 precipitous decline in OHR in the region suggests that OHR in Southern California is currently 440 substantially lower than OHR in the SEUS, a conclusion which emphasizes the importance of 441 biogenic emissions in driving atmospheric reactivity. This is also illustrative of the potential for 442 the modern urban environment in the United States and elsewhere, to move towards the air quality 443 trajectory of cleaner remote regions. 444

As shown here, comprehensive ROC measurements alongside ancillary gas-phase measurements and top-down constraints such as OHR can be used to better understand the atmospheric chemical environment and how precursors translate to pollutants of interest. The routine deployment of such measurements is critically needed to accurately characterize the effectiveness of air pollution policies over time. **FIGURES** 451



Figure 1. Average ROC mass concentrations for CalNex and SOAS field campaigns at standard temperature and pressure (STP).





Figure 2. Mean diurnal cycle for CalNex (blue) and SOAS (green) campaigns of a) observed ROC mass
concentrations at STP, b) observed OH reactivity and calculated OHR (cOHR, dotted lines)), c) estimated
ozone production rate, and d) observed O3 mixing ratios.





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Figure 3. Average calculated OH reactivity for CalNex and SOAS field campaigns. The missing reactivity is defined as the difference between the measured total OH reactivity and the summed calculated OH reactivity. The uncertainty on individual OHR measurements is given as 30% and 20% for CalNex and SOAS respectively (see Tables 1 and 2). The calculated standard error (defined as θ/\sqrt{N}) on campaign average OHR is 0.32 s⁻¹ and 0.28 s⁻¹ respectively (too small to be shown on the plot).



468 Figure 4. Average estimated SOA potential for CalNex and SOAS field campaigns.

470 TABLES

Table 1. Description of measurements used to explore reactive organic carbon during CalNex

Measurement	Instrument	Operational	Uncertainty	Reference	PI
		Dates During CalNex			
OA	High Resolution Time of Flight Aerosol mass spectrometer (HR-ToF-AMS)	May 15-June 16, 2010	38%	Hayes et al., 24	Jimenez
НСНО	Hantzsch reaction	May 15-June 16, 2010	10%	Rappenglück et al., ⁶²	Rappenglück
СНОСНО	Broadband Cavity Enhanced Absorption Spectrometer (IBBCEAS/CRDS)	May 15-June 16, 2010	40 pptv + 15%	Washenfelder et al., ³⁸	Washenfelder, Young
PAN, PPN	Gas Chromatograph with Electron Capture Detector (GC-ECD)	May 15-June 16, 2010	15%+0.005ppb 20%+0.005ppb	Roberts et al., 63	Roberts
HNCO, HCOOH, acrylic acid, propionic acid, methacrylic acid, pyruvic acid	Negative Ion Proton Transfer Chemical Ionization Mass Spectrometer (NI-PT-CIMS)	May 15-June 16, 2010	15-35%	Veres et al., ⁶⁴	Veres and Roberts
Ethane, propane, i-butane, n- butane, i-pentane, n-pentane, hexane, nonane, undecane, ethene, propene, acetylene, 2- methyl-propene, 1-butene, cis2- butene, trans2-butene, 1,3- butadiene, benzene, toluene, o- xylene, m+p-xylene, 1-ethyl- benzene, styrene, ipropyl- benzene, npropyl-benzene, 1 ethyl-3,4methyl-benzene, 1 ethyl-2methy-benzene, 1 35TMB, 124TMB, 123TMB, 1 3dichlorobenzene, isoprene, alpha-pinene, beta-pinene, limonene, acetaldehyde, propanal, butanal, benzaldehyde, acetone, MVK, methacrolein, 2- butanone, methanol, ethanol, iso- propanol, bromoform, DMS, acetonitrile, 2,3-butadione,	Gas Chromatography Mass Spectrometer (GC-MS-TACOH)	May 15-June 16, 2010	15-25% for hydrocarbons, 20-35% for oxygenates	Kuster et al., 65	Gilman
2methyl-pentane, 3methyl- pentane, n-heptane, 2methyl- hexane, 3methyl-hexane, i- octane, n-octane, methyl-acetate, 1,3-methyl-butene, trichlorofluoromethane,	Extended analysis of GC-MS	May 15-June 16, 2010		McDonald et al., ²²	Gilman

trichloroethene, chloroform, dichloromethane, cyclohexane, cis1,3dimethyl-cyclohexane, methyl-cyclohexane, trans1,2dimethyl-cyclohexane, trans1,3dimethyl-cyclohexane, methyl-cyclopentane, methyl- formate, 3-furanaldehyde, n- hexanal, nitromethane, 2methyl- propanal, 2-propenal, vinyl- acetylene, ethyl-nitrate					
total monoterpenes	Proton Transfer Reaction Ion Trap Mass Spectrometer (PIT-MS)	May 15-June 16, 2010	15-25%	Warneke et al., ⁶⁶	Warneke, de Gouw, Graus
OH, HO ₂ , OHR	Fluorescent Assay by Gas Expansion	May 15-June 16, 2010	38% (OH, HO ₂), 30% (OHR)	Griffith et al., ⁴¹ ; Hansen et al. ⁶⁷	Stevens
O ₃ , SO ₂ , NO, NO ₂	Thermo Scientific (49c, 48i-TLE, 42i- TL)	May 16-June 16, 2010	4%, 4%, 4%, 6%	Lefer et al., ⁶⁸ Luke et al. ⁶⁹ Pollack et al. ⁷⁰ Drummond et al. ⁷¹	Lefer
СО	VUV resonance fluorescence AeroLaser AL5002	May 15-June 16, 2010	4%	Gerbig et al.,	Holloway

Table 2. Description of measurements used to explore reactive organic carbon during SOAS

Measurement	Instrument	Operational Dates	Uncertainty Accuracy	Reference	PI
		During SOAS			
Organic aerosol	High Resolution Time of Flight Aerosol mass spectrometer (HR-ToF-AMS)	June 6-July 15, 2013	38%	Hu et al., ⁷³	Jimenez
НСНО	Fiber-Laser Induced Fluorescence (FiLIF-II)	June 1-July 15, 2013	15%	DiGangi et al., ⁷⁴ ; Hottle et al. ⁷⁵	Keutsch
СНОСНО	Madison Laser Induced Phosphorescence (Mad-LIP)	June 1-July 15, 2013	9%	Huisman et al., ⁷⁶	Keutsch
Formic acid, HCN, HAC (hydroxyacetone), PAA (peroxyacetic acid), C5H8O3 (HPALD), C5H10O3 (IEPOX+ISOPOOH), ethanol nitrate, propanone nitrate, isoprene nitrate	Caltech Chemical Ionization Time of Flight Mass Spectrometer (CIT-ToF-CIMS)	June 1-July 3, 2013	100 ppt +30- 50% [X]	Nguyen et al. ⁷⁷	Wennberg

PNs (peroxynitrates)	Thermal Dissociation – Laser Induced Fluorescence (TD-LIF)	June 1-July 15, 2013	15%	Romer et al., ⁷⁸	Cohen
Ethane, ethene, propane, propene, ethyne, i-butane, n-butane, i-pentane, n- pentane, n-hexane, n-decane, benzene, toluene, 1ethyl-benzene, m-xylene+p- xylene, o-xylene, 1ethyl-3and4methyl- benzene, 135TMB, 124TMB, isoprene, alpha-pinene, beta-pinene, limonene, camphene, myrcene,p-cymene, acetaldehyde, methanol, ethanol, propanal, butanal, benzaldehyde, acetone, MVK, methacrolein, MEK, DMS, acetonitrile, butadiene-23, 1ethyl-nitrate, ipropyl-nitrate	Gas Chromatography Mass Spectrometer (GC-MS TACOH)	June 1- July 15, 2013	20%	Gilman et al., ⁷⁹	Goldstein & de Gouw
total monoterpenes	Proton Transfer Mass Spectrometer (PTR- MS)	June 16- July 5, 2013	20%	Graus et al., ⁸⁰	Goldstein, Guenther
3-hydroxyglutaric acid, pinic acid, pinonic acid, 2-methylthreitol, 2- methylerythritol, 3methyl-2,3,4- trihydroxy-butene, cis2methyl-1,3,4, trihidroxy-butene, 2-methylglyceric acid. levoglucosan	Semi-Volatile Thermal desorption Aerosol Gas chromatograph (SV-TAG)	June 4-July 15, 2013	20%	Isaacman Van Wertz et al., ³⁰	Goldstein,
OH, HO ₂ , OHR	Ground Based Tropospheric Hydrogen Oxides Sensor (GTHOS)	June 1- July 15, 2013	2% 20%	Feiner et al., ⁴⁰ ; Faloona et al., ⁸¹	Brune
	Other measurements (operated by SEARCH network)				
O ₃	Thermo Scientific UV absorption (49i)	June 1- July 15, 2013	6.1%		Edgerton
СО	Thermo Scientific, IR absorption with gas filter correlation (GFC) (48i)	June 1- July 15, 2013	7.4%		Edgerton
SO ₂	Thermo Scientific, pulsed UV fluorescence (43i)	June 1- July 15, 2013	6.1%		Edgerton
NO, NO ₂	Thermo Scientific, Chemiluminscence (42i)	June 1- July 15, 2013	5.5%, 15%		Edgerton

480 ASSOCIATED CONTENT

481 Supporting Information: Table S1 with reaction rates, SOA yields and ROC mass
482 concentrations, cOHR, and SOA potential for each species measured during SOAS and CalNex.

483

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- 499 CLH designed the study and undertook the analysis. JDG, GIVW, AHG, ABG, PLH, WH, JLJ,
- 500 FNK, ARK. PKM, BR, JMR, PSS, RAW, CW, CJY provided measurements used in the analysis.

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