

Triboelectric Charging of Graphene Suspended in Liquid CO₂ for Flowable Ultracapacitor Energy Storage Using Cavitation-Based Phase Cycling

**Infinity Turbine
LLC**

[TEL] +1-608-238-6001 (Chicago)

[Email] greg@infinityturbine.com

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Overview:

This paper introduces a novel energy storage concept that combines flowable ultracapacitor technology, triboelectric charge generation, and liquid CO₂ phase dynamics to create a self-recycling, high power-density energy system. Graphene particles are suspended in liquid CO₂, which acts both as the carrier fluid and as a dielectric medium. The system uses cavitation-induced pressurization to drive CO₂ through a charging cycle where triboelectric effects occur during rapid expansion across Teflon or similar triboelectric surfaces. The system then re-condenses CO₂ to repeat the cycle.

System Components and Operation:

1. Suspension Medium: Liquid CO₂

- Functions as a low-viscosity carrier for graphene flakes or platelets.
- Serves as an environmentally benign, non-flammable working fluid.

2. Charge Carrier: Graphene

- Known for high surface area (~2600 m²/g) and superior electrical conductivity.
- Remains suspended in liquid CO₂ for optimal contact and flow-through efficiency.

3. Pressurization via Cavitation Dynamics

- A cavitation-based system (e.g., venturi or ultrasonic-driven) temporarily compresses and pressurizes liquid CO₂.
- Prepares the fluid for controlled expansion across triboelectric surfaces.

4. Triboelectric Charging Phase

- As CO₂ transitions from high-pressure liquid to gas through nozzles or porous Teflon, the rapid expansion produces static charge separation via the triboelectric effect.
- The Teflon surface donates electrons to the flow, and the resulting electric field induces charge polarization on suspended graphene particles.

5. Charge Capture and Storage

- Charged graphene flows through a collector electrode structure, allowing for electrostatic discharge, forming the ultracapacitor phase of the system.
- Energy can be drawn or stored as needed via external circuitry.

6. CO₂ Re-condensation

- The gas-phase CO₂ is then cooled and re-pressurized back to liquid form using a thermal management loop.
- The cycle repeats with minimal fluid loss in a closed-loop configuration.

Potential Advantages:

- No external electric power required for initial charge — energy derived from pressure differential and triboelectric conversion.
- Combines power and energy density through hybrid supercapacitor mechanics.

Concept

Expanding CO₂ over Teflon (PTFE) creates an electrostatic charge — likely due to triboelectric effects (Teflon is highly electronegative in the triboelectric series).

- Propose combining this charge separation phenomenon with graphene suspended in a flow system — possibly creating a pressure/phase-change-induced flowable ultracapacitor.
- The goal is to use CO₂ expansion (phase change and pressure drop) as a mechanism to both drive flow and generate charge, which could be captured and stored electrostatically in graphene particles.

Assessment of the Components:

1. Triboelectric Effect from Expanding CO₂ on Teflon

- Teflon is well-known for generating static charge, especially when subjected to friction or flowing gases.
- When CO₂ expands rapidly, especially from supercritical or high-pressure states, it causes high-velocity shear flow and molecular collisions, which could lead to electron transfer from gas molecules to the Teflon surface.
- This generates a localized electric field, which in a confined system could polarize or charge nearby materials.

2. Integration with Graphene Flow System

- Graphene flakes or platelets suspended in a liquid can hold charge on their surfaces — this is the basic principle behind flowable ultracapacitors.
- If these particles are exposed to the electric field generated by triboelectric charging, they could be charged in motion and later discharged through an electrode interface.
- This turns the system into a dynamic, flow-driven capacitor, with CO₂ expansion replacing or supplementing external power input.

3. Phase Change and Pressure Drop as a Trigger

- Using CO₂ expansion to simultaneously:
 - Create flow pressure to move the fluid,
 - Generate triboelectric charge, and
 - Potentially cool the system (due to the endothermic nature of expansion)

This is an elegant multipurpose mechanism, where:

- Mechanical energy (pressure drop)
 - Electrical potential (triboelectric charging)
 - Fluidic transport (moving the charged slurry)
- are all linked.

Feasibility and Engineering Challenges:

Theoretical Positives:

- No need for direct electrical input to generate charge (triboelectric effect supplies it)
- Highly scalable: More flow and pressure = more charge potential
- CO₂ is non-toxic and recyclable, and can act as a working fluid and dielectric

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Graphene Flow Battery

Instead of having a solid electrode:

- You suspend graphite or graphene particles in a liquid electrolyte, allowing them to flow through the system (like a flow battery).
- The particles can store charge on their large surface area, much like traditional EDLC (electric double-layer capacitor) systems.
- This creates a kind of flowable supercapacitor or hybrid ultracapacitor.

Potential Benefits:

1. Increased Surface Area

- Graphene, in particular, has a massive theoretical surface area (~2630 m²/g).
- Suspending it in a liquid (rather than pressing into solid form) may allow more of that surface area to remain electrochemically accessible.

2. Scalability & Design Flexibility

- A flow system allows you to separate the energy storage medium from the power delivery cell — just like in a flow battery.
- You can scale capacity by adding tanks, and power by scaling cells.

3. High Power Density

- Ultrafast charge/discharge is possible due to short ionic diffusion paths in the liquid and across the capacitor interface.
- Conductive additives (e.g., carbon nanotubes, metal particles) can enhance current flow.

4. Possible Energy Density Boost

- Traditional supercapacitors are limited to ~5–10 Wh/kg.
- With advanced graphene, pseudocapacitive effects, or hybrid chemistries, this could be pushed up significantly — possibly toward 20–50 Wh/kg in advanced systems.

Challenges and Considerations:

1. Suspension Stability

- Graphene and graphite tend to agglomerate or settle in liquid — maintaining a stable colloidal suspension is difficult over time.
- Requires use of surfactants or stabilizers (which may affect conductivity).

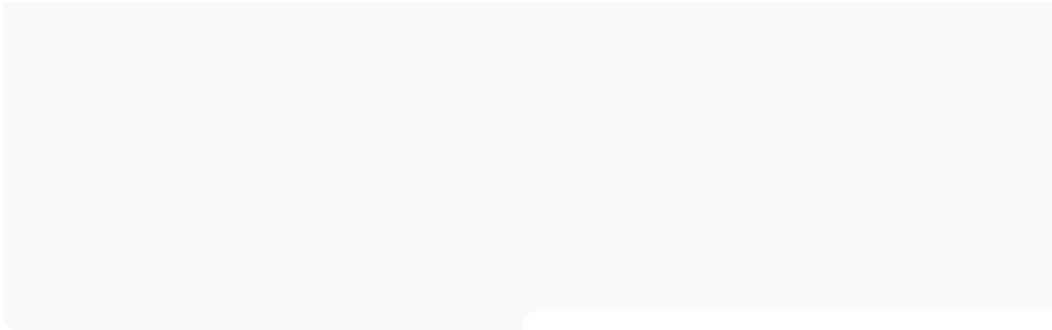
2. Conductivity and Viscosity

- Higher concentrations of active material increase energy, but also increase viscosity, reducing flow efficiency and increasing pumping energy.
- Trade-off between energy density and system complexity.

3. Electrochemical Efficiency

- Not all surface area may be utilized due to electrolyte access limitations, even in liquid form.

More will need to be done to optimize the flow battery design, which may require specialized materials and structural flow elements.



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