# **Supporting information**

### Using Frustrated Lewis pairs to explore C-F bond activation

Alvaro I. Briceno-Strocchia, Timothy C. Johnstone, and Douglas W. Stephan

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## [PhC(O)CF2C(OSiMe2tBu)CF3Ph] 1



Figure S1: <sup>1</sup>H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) spectrum of **1**.



Figure S2: <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) spectrum of **1**.



Figure S3: 19F{H} NMR (377 MHz. CDCl3) spectrum for 1.



[PhC(CF<sub>2</sub>)OP(MeNCH<sub>2</sub>CH<sub>2</sub>)<sub>3</sub>N][BFPh<sub>3</sub>] 2

Figure S4: 1H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl3) spectrum of 2



Figure S5 : 13C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl3) spectrum of 2



Figure S6: 19F NMR (377 MHz, CDCl3) spectrum of 2.



### $[PhC(CF_2)OP(MeNCH_2CH_2)_3N][O_3SCF_3] 3$



Figure S9: 19F{1H} NMR (377 MHz, CDCl3) spectrum of 3.



Figure S10: 31P{1H} NMR (162 MHz, CDCl3) spectrum of 3

## [PhC(CF(H))OP(MeNCH<sub>2</sub>CH<sub>2</sub>)<sub>3</sub>N][O<sub>3</sub>SCF<sub>3</sub>] 3



Figure S11: 1H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl3) spectrum of 4.



Figure S12 13C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl3) spectrum of 4.



Figure S13: 19F NMR (377 MHz, CDCl3) spectrum of 4.



Figure S14: 31P NMR (162 MHz, CDCl3) spectrum of 4.



Figure S15: 1H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl3) spectrum of 5.



Figure S16: 13C NMR (500 MHz, CDCl3) spectrum of 5.



Figure S17: 19F NMR (377 MHz, CDCl3) spectrum of 5.



Figure S18: 31P{1H} NMR (162 MHz, CDCl3) spectrum of 5.





Figure S19: 1H NMR (500 MHz, CD2Cl2) spectrum of 6



Figure S20: 13C NMR (100 MHz, CD2Cl2) spectrum of 6



Figure S21: 19F NMR (377 MHz, CD2Cl2) spectrum of 6.



Figure S22: 31P NMR (162 MHz, CDCl3) spectrum of 6.



Figure S23: 11B NMR (128 MHz, CD2Cl2) spectrum of 6.

#### Computations

Calculations were carried out with the Gaussian 09 package,<sup>7</sup> All geometry optimizations were performed with the PBE1PBE functional. The optimizations also implemented Grimme's D3 empirical dispersion with Beck-Johnson damping (GD3BJ)<sup>8</sup> alongside SMD solvent correction. Def2-SVPP basis set was used for all the atoms. Frequency calculations at the same level of theory, with the same corrections, were performed to identify the number of imaginary frequencies and provide the thermal corrections of Gibbs free energy. Intrinsic Reaction Coordinates (IRC) were performed for transition state structures to determine corresponding two minima.

Single-point energy calculations were performed at the PBE1PBE/Def2-TZVPP level of theory alongside the SMD solvent correction and Grimme's GD3BJ. The Gibbs energy corrections from frequency calculations were added to the single-point energies to obtain the Gibbs free energies in solution. All the solution-phase free energies reported in the paper correspond to the reference state of 1 mol/L, 298K.

All geometry optimization and frequency calculations were performed using Gaussian 09. The PBE0 functional with def2-SVPP basis set was used. Stefan Grimme's D3 dispersion with added Becke-Johnson damping function for the empirical dispersion correction was implemented alongside the SMD model for solvent correction. The single-point energy calculations were performed with the same functional, empirical dispersion correction, and solvent corrections as

the geometry and frequency calculations, but the basis set used was def2-TZVPP. Minimum stationary states were identified by the absence of imaginary frequencies, whilst the transition states resulted in a single imaginary frequency.

Compound	Single point energy	Thermal correction to	Sum of Electronic
	(Hartree)	Gibbs Free Energy	and Thermal
		(Hartree)	Enthalpy (Hartree)
1	-682.194021429	0.079532	-682.1144894
2	-915.410104705	0.272955	-915.1371497
3	-719.260113261	0.235419	-719.0246943
TS1	-1597.61033494	0.380213	-1597.230122
4	-1597.61298337	0.381474	-1597.231509
5	-1597.62420599	0.379641	-1597.244565
TS2	-2316.88643402	0.635210	-2316.251224
6	-1497.69719234	0.382257	-1497.314935
7	-819.229559691	0.233689	-818.9958707

T 11 C	4	<b>T</b> 1 1		•	1	1			1 1	
Table S	1.	Thermod	vnamie	interme	diates :	and 1	transition	state	calculation	energies
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Scheme S1: Proposed mechanism for DFEP[FB( $C_6H_5$ )<sub>3</sub>]



Figure S24: Thermodynamic and kinetic prediction using DFT for generation of DFEP[FBPh<sub>3</sub>]. Energy's for stationary points, italicized, in kcal/mol.









TS1





5



TS2



Figure S25: Approximated structures (SMD(DCM)/PBEO-GD3BJ/def2-TZVPP//SMD(DCM)/PBEO-GD3BJ/def2-SVPP) used for calculation thermodynamic profile for DFEP[FBPH<sub>3</sub>] formation. The computational approximations' coordinates for all the atoms are listed in the X, Y, Z Cartesian. The elemental symbols (i.e. P, N, O, C, B, F, H) are all for ground state electronic configurations. Therefore, the elemental symbols P, N, O, C, B, F, and H correspond to 15, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, and 1 atomic numbers, respectively, in the singlet electronic configuration.

Optimized (SMD(DCM)/PBE0-GD3BJ/def2-TZVPP//SMD(DCM)/PBE0-GD3BJ/def2-svpp) Cartesian coordinates for 1

С	-4.22270200	0.06235800	1.49168600	Н	-4.66903700	3.44600900	1.50427300
С	-2.83106200	0.01396100	1.48988400	Н	-5.97694700	1.32271000	1.49894300
С	-2.09001200	1.20702900	1.49262500	С	-0.61238200	1.25552400	1.49055100
С	-2.76325200	2.43981700	1.49717900	0	0.02904300	2.27755400	1.47940800
С	-4.15136900	2.48246500	1.49985000	С	0.17470700	-0.07883900	1.50552600
С	-4.88308600	1.29160700	1.49698700	F	1.47721500	0.15053700	1.51330700
Н	-4.79613500	-0.86890500	1.48899300	F	-0.12579500	-0.80059200	2.58839100
Н	-2.33859100	-0.96023200	1.48547800	F	-0.11019300	-0.81557500	0.42839800
Н	-2.17303100	3.35977600	1.49922900				

Optimized (SMD(DCM)/PBE0-GD3BJ/def2-TZVPP//SMD(DCM)/PBE0-GD3BJ/def2-svpp) Cartesian coordinates for 2

Р	2.93932600	1.30957700	5.88622200	Н	0.54844300	-1.00342000	5.23424000
Ν	2.64177000	1.43144000	2.51661700	Н	2.49254400	-0.90517300	4.00593200
Ν	1.37344000	0.97237100	5.26380300	Н	4.17026200	-1.39054900	3.72176600
Ν	3.30830700	2.82309800	5.15959200	Н	-0.32712100	1.55010700	4.22662000
Ν	3.93670300	0.22014400	5.00716800	Н	0.96286200	2.76171100	4.27263800
С	4.02982900	2.97557200	3.91805700	Н	2.48719100	3.74411600	6.84109400
С	0.63156300	-0.09901100	5.87366200	Н	2.01398700	4.52224500	5.30926000
С	3.51067000	-0.50966500	3.83640300	Н	3.66890100	4.74883600	5.95406900
С	0.76967100	1.67940300	4.15893700	Н	0.97674400	0.20854100	2.57830200
С	2.85058300	4.01051300	5.83081500	Н	0.64367500	1.86098600	2.02842500
С	1.23477200	1.26680500	2.76040800	Н	4.51980600	0.60540200	2.27316900
С	3.49568200	0.27552900	2.52242400	Н	3.19335400	-0.43261400	1.71915600
С	3.22642400	2.73909200	2.63666200	Н	2.41423500	3.48405200	2.56295500
С	5.28939600	0.04232000	5.46397600	Н	3.90840200	2.93748700	1.78016500
Н	4.45415000	3.99706800	3.89157000	Н	5.40713300	0.51562800	6.45685000
Н	4.89152400	2.28296900	3.91122600	Н	5.54350600	-1.03163500	5.57344000
Н	1.13568800	-0.40840800	6.80845800	Н	6.04852500	0.49931500	4.79432700
Н	-0.39734900	0.21894400	6.13829400				

В	-0.49401600	0.22117600	0.00302600	С	3.89936300	0.22027700	-0.00370100
С	1.07302200	0.22096300	0.00080300	Н	3.74622000	-1.36872400	1.45604900
С	1.80642000	-0.67811300	0.80061300	Н	3.74233400	1.80937600	-1.46294100
С	1.80430100	1.11973100	-0.80128700	Н	4.99418600	0.21999200	-0.00546500
С	3.20033600	-0.67127600	0.81269300	С	-1.27720900	1.56596900	-0.17964800
Н	1.27128000	-1.38869900	1.43888300	С	-2.51589300	1.60697600	-0.85054600
С	3.19817200	1.11219800	-0.81783700	С	-0.77037900	2.78219800	0.32023100
Н	1.26745400	1.83056800	-1.43784200	С	-3.20824700	2.80377200	-1.02809800

Н	-2.93815500	0.68159000	-1.25542400	С	-2.51419700	-1.16411500	0.86153700
С	-1.47043800	3.97853100	0.17201100	С	-1.47150200	-3.53601800	-0.16305200
Н	0.18748400	2.78671700	0.85034300	Н	0.18501600	-2.34458100	-0.84544800
С	-2.68905300	3.99194400	-0.50977300	С	-3.20635800	-2.36076100	1.04084400
Н	-4.16055900	2.81131100	-1.56781600	Н	-2.93536900	-0.23859400	1.26724700
Н	-1.06254800	4.90702600	0.58405900	С	-2.68855200	-3.54910800	0.52152600
Н	-3.23584500	4.93173700	-0.63793800	Н	-1.06472400	-4.46464800	-0.57589300
С	-1.27704500	-1.12343000	0.18778900	Н	-4.15743400	-2.36805000	1.58274000
С	-0.77159700	-2.33982600	-0.31308900	Н	-3.23521100	-4.48878500	0.65110300

Optimized (SMD(DCM)/PBE0-GD3BJ/def2-TZVPP//SMD(DCM)/PBE0-GD3BJ/def2-svpp) Cartesian coordinates for TS1

Р	-0.13318700	-0.37481800	0.10527800	Н	2.13290300	0.01646300	3.25140000
Ν	0.06959800	-0.05112600	3.30176800	Н	1.37933800	1.52052900	3.80829900
Ν	1.31294700	0.34512200	0.58452600	Н	-0.87584000	-1.85516900	3.65136900
Ν	-1.34929900	0.61004300	0.74599000	Н	0.81071600	-1.81025400	4.19650600
Ν	-0.24920000	-1.84237200	0.94345300	Н	-1.01443600	1.70454200	3.30570300
С	-2.02441500	0.30862200	1.99311100	Н	-1.82323100	0.36095500	4.13063700
С	2.57617900	-0.10248300	0.03936400	Н	-2.06389000	-2.31485900	-0.01348500
С	0.58961000	-2.15186400	2.08526800	Н	-0.98695900	-3.71380900	0.26674300
С	1.38397500	1.30052400	1.67600100	Н	-1.89573700	-2.97661300	1.62304200
С	-1.55304900	1.93082800	0.18976300	С	-3.79450600	0.39284600	-2.58061600
С	1.27743000	0.69120500	3.07486200	С	-2.58756700	-0.22631600	-2.25988500
С	0.12831200	-1.48338900	3.38200800	С	-1.36851600	0.37760400	-2.59445200
С	-1.19959000	0.61756300	3.24708600	С	-1.38901600	1.60621200	-3.26487600
С	-1.34217800	-2.75493300	0.69083600	С	-2.59384500	2.22636600	-3.58801900
Н	-2.96875600	0.88238600	2.01543300	С	-3.80367500	1.62280800	-3.24175300
Н	-2.31166800	-0.75525200	2.00894300	Н	-4.73787200	-0.08879300	-2.30490600
Н	2.40527700	-0.78040300	-0.80649600	Н	-2.60770000	-1.18097000	-1.73210500
Н	3.16108600	0.75579600	-0.33895400	Н	-0.42965000	2.06674800	-3.51468100
Н	3.18904900	-0.63362800	0.79529500	Н	-2.58924400	3.18777800	-4.11152000
Н	1.62764700	-1.84806400	1.87308200	Н	-4.75339300	2.10840400	-3.48734200
Н	0.60769700	-3.25003800	2.20904800	С	0.00829500	-0.17811900	-2.27683900
Н	2.34162500	1.84276700	1.58089600	0	1.01085900	0.52861400	-2.47524000
Н	0.59199900	2.05810900	1.56065700	С	0.19381300	-1.66638000	-2.64925500
Н	-0.79929500	2.13765000	-0.58600300	F	1.35184100	-2.15312200	-2.19629500
Н	-1.44588300	2.71033700	0.96825600	F	-0.76595500	-2.49720600	-2.22382700
Н	-2.55520600	2.03599100	-0.26828600	F	0.22385900	-1.77145300	-3.98693700

01				С	0.15000800	-1.32787200	2.87501000
Р	-0.14309500	-0.78338100	-0.48696100	С	-0.96384800	0.85091500	2.40511400
Ν	0.22883800	0.06072100	2.52020400	С	-1.58048800	-2.88034800	0.55377800
Ν	1.38952700	-0.17895400	-0.21114000	Н	-2.74688700	1.10651500	1.18573900
Ν	-1.22263300	0.42126400	-0.04448300	Н	-2.28471000	-0.57363800	1.46271000
Ν	-0.37180500	-2.08153600	0.55935100	Н	2.31377300	-1.70955500	-1.31559200
С	-1.87770400	0.42804100	1.25096900	Н	3.19039100	-0.16862100	-1.30253900
С	2.58012200	-0.85252600	-0.68674400	Н	3.19907600	-1.21396400	0.15827600
С	0.48920100	-2.26877700	1.71722400	Н	1.54047300	-2.12334200	1.42237300
С	1.61157500	0.95709100	0.66876700	Н	0.39868500	-3.32173300	2.03852800
С	-1.29233400	1.63747200	-0.83123500	Н	2.61727100	1.35495500	0.44695000
С	1.49744600	0.62547300	2.15681200	Н	0.90349300	1.76518600	0.42660400

Н	-0.55324500	1.60286700	-1.64691300	С	-1.45621300	0.48433200	-4.07950400
Н	-1.06280900	2.52325900	-0.20902400	С	-2.61313200	1.07221700	-4.58750300
Н	-2.29477900	1.77466600	-1.27730100	С	-3.86247300	0.69362200	-4.09358300
Н	2.28597800	-0.09431700	2.43663700	Н	-4.91407500	-0.59079300	-2.70614600
Н	1.70439700	1.55473700	2.72987900	Н	-2.87150500	-1.63411900	-1.82281700
Н	-0.87502600	-1.53613500	3.22838600	Н	-0.46172700	0.77067300	-4.43214700
Н	0.82803200	-1.56740200	3.72230200	Н	-2.54031100	1.83313900	-5.37156000
Н	-0.66281000	1.90400400	2.26736400	Н	-4.77472700	1.15684900	-4.48289100
Н	-1.56158700	0.81769100	3.34105000	С	-0.16068700	-1.03609500	-2.60406000
Н	-2.30108600	-2.50387900	-0.18508200	0	0.87443100	-0.44034500	-3.03692500
Н	-1.36220200	-3.93779600	0.31589700	С	-0.10493800	-2.56879100	-2.83459000
Н	-2.07743000	-2.84246100	1.54114400	F	1.00492300	-3.11908200	-2.32348100
С	-3.93974500	-0.28358700	-3.09944500	F	-1.13628500	-3.26501300	-2.32879000
С	-2.77833900	-0.87268900	-2.59906600	F	-0.08614000	-2.81628200	-4.15024400
С	-1.52084000	-0.48875200	-3.07793100				

Optimized (SMD(DCM)/PBE0-GD3BJ/def2-TZVPP//SMD(DCM)/PBE0-GD3BJ/def2-svpp) Cartesian coordinates for 5

Р	0.03720300	0.00220800	-0.03754600	Н	-2.88944600	1.39225400	-1.12290100
0	0.06492300	0.01485600	1.57019400	Н	-2.25708000	-0.77881700	-1.66388600
Ν	0.15830200	-0.02088300	-2.82171800	Н	-1.89685500	-2.50625200	-1.75624200
Ν	-0.85592000	1.28044300	-0.56668000	Н	-0.97179100	2.98959400	-1.74641600
Ν	1.64681600	0.03415600	-0.39910800	Н	0.66627200	2.35146200	-1.53482000
Ν	-0.63879800	-1.43473200	-0.49573500	Н	2.20738200	1.14723600	1.29636200
С	-0.72309200	0.84540900	2.42092500	Н	2.73940300	1.86474700	-0.25644100
С	2.13975600	-0.66400500	-1.58167500	Н	3.54426700	0.40064600	0.39719900
С	-1.83523600	0.24838100	3.06128300	Н	-1.57052000	1.05767100	-3.20477000
С	-2.25973100	1.42250800	-0.21354400	Н	-0.09916700	1.82381600	-3.84415300
С	-1.43151700	-1.50794300	-1.71522500	Н	0.12977000	-2.07279600	-3.10146300
С	-3.72417600	0.21928500	4.64521800	Н	-1.24217500	-1.23591100	-3.85614900
С	-0.38433400	2.05786000	-1.70027400	Н	1.97499800	0.96176600	-2.99382800
С	2.57570700	0.91658000	0.28933600	Н	1.96957900	-0.65243700	-3.73861500
С	-2.62217400	0.85691400	4.09152900	Н	0.48851700	-2.48016400	0.93965700
С	-2.27607100	-1.05092800	2.65748600	Н	-1.01768000	-3.28886500	0.43253200
С	-4.13377500	-1.05430500	4.22914200	Н	0.40481900	-3.27765000	-0.65993800
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