

Unravelling ionic liquid solvent effects for a non-polar Cope rearrangement reaction.

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Section 1. Synthesis

Synthesis and Characterisation of ILs

[C₄C₁im][NTf₂], [C₄C₁C₁im][NTf₂], [C₄C₁pyrr][NTf₂] were synthesised from their bromide or chloride precursors via salt metathesis. [C₄C₁im][OTf] was available from lab stock and was characterised before use. The halide precursors [C₄C₁im]Cl, [C₄C₁C₁im]Br, [C₄C₁pyrr]Br were used from stock in the lab and characterised before use.

Characterisation of halide IL-precursors

1-Butyl-1-methylpyrrolidinium bromide [C₄C₁pyrr]Br

¹H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO) δ 3.51 – 3.37 (m, 4H, Pyrr CH₂-CH₂-N-CH₂-CH₂), 3.35 – 3.24 (m, 2H, N-CH₂-CH₂-CH₂-CH₃), 2.97 (s, 3H, N-CH₃), 2.07 (s, 4H, Pyrr CH₂-CH₂-N-CH₂-CH₂), 1.67 (m, 2H, N-CH₂-CH₂-CH₂-CH₃), 1.31 (m, 2H, N-CH₂-CH₂-CH₂-CH₃), 0.97 – 0.89 (m, 3H, N-CH₂-CH₂-CH₂-CH₃).
¹³C{¹H} NMR (101 MHz, DMSO) δ 63.35 (Pyrr CH₂-CH₂-N-CH₂-CH₂), 62.78 (N-CH₂-CH₂-CH₂-CH₃), 47.45 (N-CH₃), 24.93 (N-CH₂-CH₂-CH₂-CH₃), 21.05 (Pyrr CH₂-CH₂-N-CH₂-CH₂), 19.31 (N-CH₂-CH₂-CH₂-CH₃), 13.52 (N-CH₂-CH₂-CH₂-CH₃).

MS (ES): +ve ion m/z calculated (142.27) found (142.15), -ve ion m/z calculated (79.90) found (78.75)

1-Butyl-2,3-dimethylimidazolium bromide [C₄C₁C₁im]Br

¹H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO) δ 7.67 (d, J = 2.1 Hz, 1H, im-N-CH-CH-N), 7.64 (d, J = 2.1 Hz, 1H, im-N-CH-CH-N), 4.11 (t, J = 7.3 Hz, 2H, N-CH₂-CH₂-CH₂-CH₃), 3.75 (s, 3H, N-CH₃), 2.58 (s, 3H, im-CH₃), 1.74 – 1.58 (m, 2H, N-CH₂-CH₂-CH₂-CH₃), 1.27 (dt, J = 14.7, 7.4 Hz, 2H, N-CH₂-CH₂-CH₂-CH₃), 0.90 (t, J = 7.4 Hz, 3H, N-CH₂-CH₂-CH₂-CH₃).
¹³C{¹H} NMR (101 MHz, DMSO) δ 144.21 (im-N-C(CH₃)-N), 122.29 (im-N-CH-CH-N), 120.86 (im-N-CH-CH-N), 47.26 (N-CH₂-CH₂-CH₂-CH₃), 34.68 (N-CH₃), 31.17, (im-N-C(CH₃)-N), 18.86 (N-CH₂-CH₂-CH₂-CH₃), (13.39 N-CH₂-CH₂-CH₂-CH₃), 9.18 (N-CH₂-CH₂-CH₂-CH₃).

MS (ES): +ve m/z calculated (153.25) found (153.1), -ve m/z calculated (79.90) found (78.9, 80.9)

1-Butyl-3-methylimidazolium chloride [C₄C₁im]Cl

¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 10.46 (s, 1H, im-N-CH-N), 7.61 (d, J = 1.9 Hz, 1H, im-N-CH-CH-N), 7.44 (d, J = 1.9 Hz, 1H, im-N-CH-CH-N), 4.23 (t, J = 7.4 Hz, 2H, N-CH₂-CH₂-CH₂-CH₃), 4.02 (s, 3H N-CH₃), 1.80 (m, 2H, N-CH₂-CH₂-CH₂-CH₃), 1.27 (m, 2H, N-CH₂-CH₂-CH₂-CH₃), 0.85 (t, J = 7.3 Hz, 3H, N-CH₂-CH₂-CH₂-CH₃).
¹³C{¹H} NMR (101 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 137.72 (im-N-CH-N), 123.68 (im-N-CH-CH-N), 121.98(im-N-CH-CH-N), 49.67 (N-CH₂-CH₂-CH₂-CH₃), 36.46 (N-CH₃), 32.09 (N-CH₂-CH₂-CH₂-CH₃), 19.37 (13.39 N-CH₂-CH₂-CH₂-CH₃), 13.36 (N-CH₂-CH₂-CH₂-CH₃).

MS (ES): +ve m/z calculated (139.12) found (139.11)

Synthesis and Characterisation of the ILs

1-Butyl-3-methylimidazolium bis(trifluoromethylsulfonyl)imide [C₄C₁im][NTf₂]

[C₄C₁im]Cl (12.49g, 71.5 mmol, 1eq) was dissolved in CH₂Cl₂ (50ml). LiNTf₂ (24.6g, 85.2 mmol 1.10eq) was dissolved in water (80ml). Under stirring the solution of LiNTf₂ was slowly added to the solution of [C₄C₁im]Cl. The reaction was stirred overnight. The reaction mixture was extracted with water until halide free (tested with aq. AgNO₃). The organic phase was dried over MgSO₄, filtered and evaporated to yield the product as a clear colourless liquid (27.7g, 65.8mmol, 92.0%).

¹H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO) δ 9.10 (d, J = 1.7 Hz, 1H, im-N-CH-N), 7.76 (t, J = 1.8 Hz, 1H im-N-CH-CH-N), 7.69 t, J = 1.7 Hz, 1H, im-N-CH-CH-N), 4.15 (t, J = 7.2 Hz, 2H, N-CH₂-CH₂-CH₂-CH₃), 3.84 (s, 3H), 1.84 – 1.69 (m, 2H, N-CH₂-CH₂-CH₂-CH₃), 1.26 (dq, J = 7.4 Hz, 2H, N-CH₂-CH₂-CH₂-CH₃), 0.90 (t, J = 7.4 Hz, 3H, N-CH₂-CH₂-CH₂-CH₃).

¹³C{¹H} NMR (101 MHz, DMSO) δ 136.51 (im-N-CH-N), 123.63 (im-N-CH-CH-N), 122.27 (im-N-CH-CH-N), 119.49 (d, J = 321.8 Hz,), 48.50 (N-CH₂-CH₂-CH₂-CH₃), 35.74 (N-CH₃), 31.35 (N-CH₂-CH₂-CH₃), 18.77 (N-CH₂-CH₂-CH₂-CH₃), 13.24 (N-CH₂-CH₂-CH₂-CH₃).

¹⁹F NMR (377 MHz, DMSO) δ -78.75 (**CF**₃-SO₂-N⁻-SO₂-**CF**₃).

MS (ES): +ve m/z calculated (139.22) found (139.12), -ve m/z calculated (280.14) found (279.92)

1-Butyl-2,3-dimethylimidazolium bis(trifluoromethylsulfonyl)imide [C₄C₁C₁im][NTf₂]

[C₄C₁C₁im]Br (2.15g, 9.22mmol, 1eq) was dissolved in CH₂Cl₂ (7ml). LiNTf₂ (2.91g, 10.14mmol 1.10eq) was dissolved in water (12ml). Under stirring the solution of LiNTf₂ was slowly added to the solution of [C₄C₁C₁im]Br. The reaction was stirred overnight. The reaction mixture was extracted with water until halide free (tested with aq. AgNO₃). The organic phase was dried over MgSO₄, filtered and evaporated to yield the product as a clear colourless liquid (2.70g, 6.40mmol, 69.9%)

¹H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO) δ 7.64 (d, J = 2.1 Hz, 1H, im-N-CH-CH-N), 7.61 (d, J = 2.1 Hz, 1H, im-N-CH-CH-N), 4.10 (t, J = 7.3 Hz, 2H, N-CH₂-CH₂-CH₂-CH₃), 3.74 (s, 3H, N-CH₃), 2.57 (s, 3H, im-CH₃), 1.74 – 1.62 (m, 2H, N-CH₂-CH₂-CH₂-CH₃), 1.28 (dq, J = 14.8, 7.4 Hz, 2H, N-CH₂-CH₂-CH₂-CH₃), 0.90 (t, J = 7.4 Hz, 3H, N-CH₂-CH₂-CH₂-CH₃).

¹³C NMR{¹H} (101 MHz, DMSO) δ 144.21 (im-N-C(CH₃)-N), 122.29 (im-N-CH-CH-N), 120.86 (im-N-CH-CH-N), 119.48 (q, 323.2 Hz (**CF**₃-SO₂-N⁻-SO₂-**CF**₃)) 47.26 (N-CH₂-CH₂-CH₂-CH₃), 34.68 (N-CH₃), 31.17, (im-N-C(CH₃)-N), 18.86 (N-CH₂-CH₂-CH₂-CH₃), 13.39 (N-CH₂-CH₂-CH₂-CH₃), 9.18 (N-CH₂-CH₂-CH₂-CH₃).

¹⁹F NMR (377 MHz, DMSO) δ -78.73 (**CF**₃-SO₂-N⁻-SO₂-**CF**₃).

MS (ES): +ve m/z calculated (153.25) found (153.13), -ve m/z calculated (280.14) found (279.23)

1-Butyl-1-methylpyrrolidinium bis(trifluoromethylsulfonyl)imide [C₄C₁pyrr][NTf₂]

[C₄C₁pyrr]Br (6.00g, 27.01mmol, 1eq) was dissolved in CH₂Cl₂ (20ml). LiNTf₂ (8.53g, 29.71mmol 1.10eq) was dissolved in water (30ml). Under stirring the solution of LiNTf₂ was slowly added to the solution of [C₄C₁pyrr]Br. The reaction was stirred overnight. The reaction mixture was extracted with water until halide free (tested with aq. AgNO₃). The organic phase was dried over MgSO₄, filtered and evaporated to yield the product as a clear colourless liquid (8.90g, 21.22mmol, 79.5%)

¹H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO) δ 3.52 – 3.36 (m, 4H, **pyrr** CH₂-CH₂-N-CH₂-CH₂), 3.33 – 3.24 (m, 2H, N-CH₂-CH₂-CH₂-CH₃), 2.97 (s, 3H, N-CH₃), 2.15 – 2.02 (m, 4H, **pyrr** CH₂-CH₂-N-CH₂-CH₂), 1.67 (m, 2H, N-CH₂-CH₂-CH₂-CH₃), 1.32 (h, J = 7.4 Hz, 2H, N-CH₂-CH₂-CH₂-CH₃), 0.93 (t, J = 7.4 Hz, 3H, N-CH₂-CH₂-CH₂-CH₃).

¹³C{¹H} NMR (101 MHz, DMSO) δ 119.50 (q, J = 321.8 Hz, **CF**₃-SO₂-N⁻-SO₂-**CF**₃), 63.41 (**pyrr** CH₂-CH₂-N-CH₂-CH₂), 62.93 (N-CH₂-CH₂-CH₂-CH₃), 47.48 (N-CH₃), 24.92 (N-CH₂-CH₂-CH₂-CH₃), 21.06 (**pyrr** CH₂-CH₂-N-CH₂-CH₂), 19.30 (N-CH₂-CH₂-CH₂-CH₃), 13.42 (N-CH₂-CH₂-CH₂-CH₃).

¹⁹F NMR (377 MHz, DMSO) δ -78.77 (**CF**₃-SO₂-N⁻-SO₂-**CF**₃).

MS (ES): +ve m/z calculated (142.27) found (142.15), -ve m/z calculated (280.14) found (279.22)

1-Butyl-3-methylimidazolium trifluoromethanesulfonate [C₄C₁im][OTf] (Used from stock)

¹H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO) δ 9.09 (s, 1H, im-N-CH-N), 7.76 (d, J = 1.8 Hz, 1H, im-N-CH-CH-N), 7.69 (d, J = 2.0 Hz, 1H, im-N-CH-CH-N), 4.16 (t, J = 7.2 Hz, 2H, N-CH₂-CH₂-CH₂-CH₃), 3.84 (s, 3H), 1.76 (p, J = 7.3 Hz, 2H, N-CH₂-CH₂-CH₂-CH₃), 1.26 (m, 2H, N-CH₂-CH₂-CH₂-CH₃), 0.90 (t, J = 7.3 Hz, 3H, N-CH₂-CH₂-CH₂-CH₃).

¹³C{¹H} NMR (101 MHz, DMSO) δ 136.49 (im-N-CH-N), 123.61 (im-N-CH-CH-N), 122.26 (im-N-CH-CH-N), 48.50 (N-CH₂-CH₂-CH₂-CH₃), 120.68 (q, J = 322.08 Hz, -O-SO₂-CF₃), 35.73 (N-CH₃), 31.34 (N-CH₂-CH₂-CH₂-CH₃), 18.76 (13.39 N-CH₂-CH₂-CH₂-CH₃), 13.24 (N-CH₂-CH₂-CH₂-CH₃).

¹⁹F NMR (377 MHz, DMSO) δ -77.82 (-O-SO₂-CF₃).

MS (ES): +ve m/z cation calculated (139.22) found (139.12), -ve m/z anion calculated (149.06) found (148.59)

Synthesis and Characterisation of Dienes

Both the product and the starting material of reaction B are synthesised in a two-step synthesis via *tert*-butyl dicarbonate (Boc) protected cinnamyl alcohol, *tert*-butyl cinnamyl carbonate (figure S1.1). The final dienes are synthesised by a Suzuki coupling between *tert*-butyl cinnamyl carbonate and allylboronic acid pinacol ester.

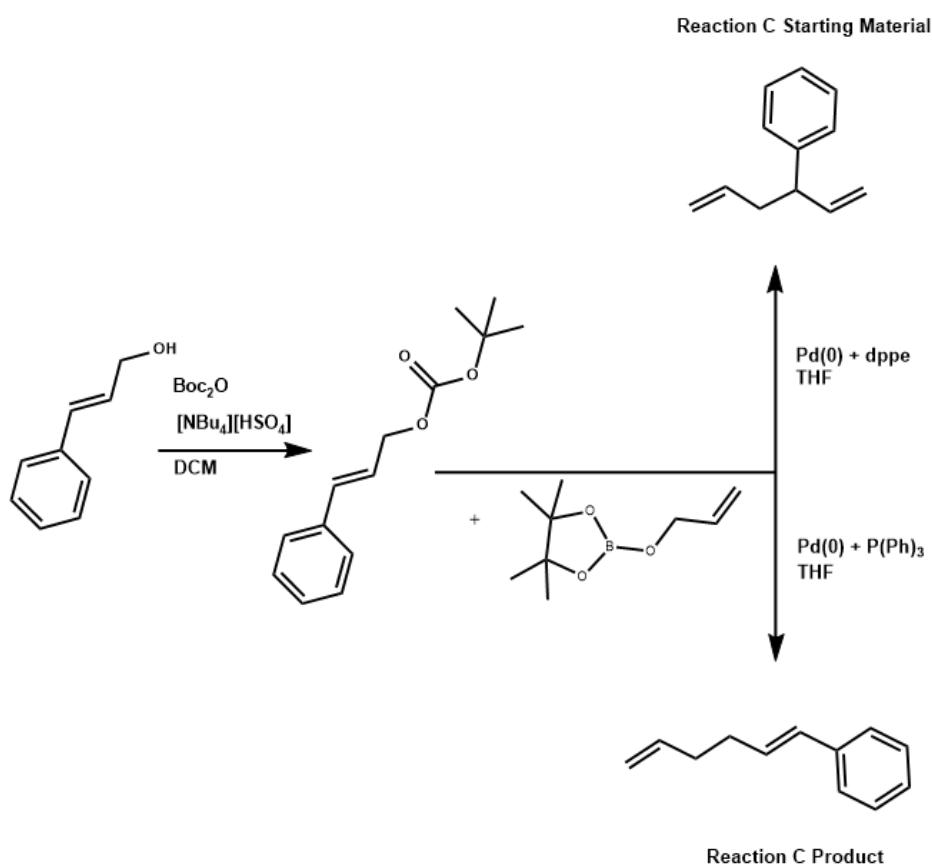


Figure S1.1: Reaction schemes to synthesise the starting material and product of reaction C from cinnamyl alcohol.

tert-Butyl cinnamyl carbonate

Tetrabutylammonium hydrogensulfate (0.1g, 0.3 mmol, 0.02eq) was dissolved in CH_2Cl_2 (7ml). The solution was cooled to 0°C and cinnamyl alcohol (2g, 14.9 mmol, 1eq) was added and stirred until dissolved. Di-*tert*-butyldicarbonate (3.91g, 17.9 mmol, 1.2eq) was added and stirred until dissolved. At 0°C 3M aq. NaOH solution (6ml) was added dropwise over 10 min. The reaction was stirred at 0°C for 30 min. The reaction was warmed to RT and stirred overnight. The reaction is monitored by TLC (1:20 ethyl acetate:hexane) until only trace amounts of the starting material are visible. Additional portions of di-*tert*-butyldicarbonate (0.2eq) were added as required if no further product formation was observed and starting material was still present. Upon completion the reaction mixture was diluted with water and extracted with diethyl ether. The combined organic phases were washed with hydrochloric acid (1 M), water and brine. The organic layer was dried with MgSO_4 , filtered and evaporated under reduced pressure. To remove excess di-*tert*-butyl decarbonate, the crude material was dissolved in CH_2Cl_2 and imidazole (1.01 g, 14.9 mmol, 1eq) was added. The reaction was stirred overnight. The mixture was diluted with water and washed with hydrochloric acid (1%), water and brine. The organic layer was dried with MgSO_4 , filtered and evaporated under reduced pressure. The crude material was passed through a silica gel column (1:20 ethyl acetate:hexane) to yield the product as a colourless liquid (2.3g, 9.8 mmol, 65.8%).

^1H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO) δ 7.50 – 7.43 (m, 2H, 2x Ph-**H**), 7.39 – 7.31 (m, 2H, 2x Ph-**H**), 7.30 – 7.25 (m, 1H, Ph-**H**), 6.68 (dt, J = 16.0, 1.5 Hz, 1H, Ph-**CH**=CH-CH₂-OR), 6.37 (dt, J = 16.0, 6.2 Hz, 1H, Ph-CH=CH-CH₂-OR), 4.68 (dd, J = 6.3, 1.4 Hz, 2H, Ph-CH=CH-**CH**₂-OR), 1.43 (s, 9H, R-O-C(**CH**₃)₃).

$^{13}\text{C}\{\text{H}\}$ NMR (101 MHz, DMSO) δ 152.81 (RO(C=O)OR), 135.90 (**Ph**), 133.31 (Ph-CH=CH-CH₂-OR), 128.70 (**Ph**), 128.09 (**Ph**), 126.55 (**Ph**), 123.49 (Ph-CH=CH-CH₂-OR), 81.55 R-O-C(CH₃)₃, 66.90 (Ph-CH=CH-CH₂-OR), 27.38 (R-O-C(CH₃)₃).

MS (ES): +ve m/z calculated (234.30) found (234.2)

3-Phenyl-1,5-hexadiene

A solution of allyl boronic acid pinacol ester (1.21 g, 7.21 mmol, 1.3eq) and *tert*-butyl cinnamyl carbonate (1.30 g, 5.55 mmol, 1eq) in dry and degassed tetrahydrofuran (12 mL) was prepared. A separate solution of tris(dibenzylideneacetone)dipalladium(0) (0.254 g, 0.277mmol, 0.05eq) and 1,2-bis(diphenylphosphino)ethane (0.192 g, 0.555 mmol, 0.1eq) in dry, degassed tetrahydrofuran (6 mL) was prepared. This solution was stirred for 5min to ensure the catalyst was fully dissolved during which time it turned deep red. Under inert conditions the solution of allyl boronic acid pinacol ester and *tert*-butyl cinnamyl carbonate was slowly added to the solution of Pd-catalyst. The reaction was heated under nitrogen at 60°C overnight. Upon completion, the reaction mixture was allowed to cool and diluted with diethyl ether. The mixture was filtered over a silica plug, washing with diethyl ether. The filtrate was evaporated under reduced pressure. The crude material was passed through a silica gel column (hexane) to yield the product as a colourless liquid (0.53g, 3.35mmol 60.4%).

^1H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO) δ 7.30 (t, J = 7.5 Hz, 2H, Ph-**H**), 7.23 – 7.15 (m, 3H, Ph-**H**), 6.03 – 5.89 (m, 1H, H₂C=CH-CHPh-CH₂-CH=CH₂), 5.75 – 5.60 (m, 1H, H₂C=CH-CHPh-CH₂-**CH**=CH₂), 5.05 – 4.89 (m, 4H H₂C=CH-CHPh-CH₂-CH=CH₂), 3.41 – 3.34 (m, 1H, H₂C=CH-**CH**Ph-CH₂-CH=CH₂), 2.48 – 2.39 (m, 2H, H₂C=CH-CHPh-**CH**₂-CH=CH₂).

$^{13}\text{C}\{\text{H}\}$ NMR (101 MHz, DMSO) δ 143.53 (H₂C=CH-CHPh-CH₂-CH=CH₂), 141.84 (H₂C=CH-CHPh-CH₂-CH=CH₂), 136.60 (H₂C=CH-CHPh-CH₂-CH=CH₂), 128.37 (H₂C=CH-CHPh-CH₂-CH=CH₂), 127.53 (H₂C=CH-CHPh-CH₂-CH=CH₂), 126.17 (H₂C=CH-CHPh-CH₂-CH=CH₂), 116.34 (H₂C=CH-CHPh-CH₂-CH=CH₂).

$\text{CH}=\text{CH}_2$), 114.35 ($\text{H}_2\text{C}=\text{CH}-\text{CHPh}-\text{CH}_2-\text{CH}=\text{CH}_2$), 48.94 ($\text{H}_2\text{C}=\text{CH}-\text{CHPh}-\text{CH}_2-\text{CH}=\text{CH}_2$), 39.25 ($\text{H}_2\text{C}=\text{CH}-\text{CHPh}-\text{CH}_2-\text{CH}=\text{CH}_2$, overlapping with DMSO).

MS (es): +ve m/z calculated (158.24) found (158.1)

1-Phenyl-1,5-hexadiene

A solution of allyl boronic acid pinacol ester (1.40 g, 8.32 mmol, 1.3eq) and *tert*-butyl cinnamyl carbonate (1.50 g, 6.40 mmol, 1eq) in dry and degassed tetrahydrofuran (15 mL) was prepared. A separate solution of tris(dibenzylideneacetone)dipalladium(0) (0.293 g, 0.320mmol, 0.05eq) and 1,2-bis(diphenylphosphino)ethane (0.218 g, 0.832 mmol, 1.3eq) in dry, degassed tetrahydrofuran (7 mL) was prepared. Under inert conditions the solution of allyl boronic acid pinacol ester and *tert*-butyl cinnamyl carbonate was slowly added to solution of Pd-catalyst. The reaction was heated under nitrogen at 60°C overnight. Upon completion the reaction was allowed to cool and diluted with diethyl ether. The mixture was filtered over a silica plug, washing with diethyl ether. The filtrate was evaporated under reduced pressure. The crude material was passed through a silica gel column (hexane) to yield the product as a colourless liquid (0.78g, 4.93mmol 77.0%).

^1H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO) δ 7.41 – 7.34 (m, 2H, **Ph**- $\text{CH}=\text{CH}-\text{CH}_2-\text{CH}_2-\text{CH}=\text{CH}_2$), 7.30 (t, J = 7.6 Hz, 2H, **Ph**- $\text{CH}=\text{CH}-\text{CH}_2-\text{CH}_2-\text{CH}=\text{CH}_2$), 7.23 – 7.16 (m, 1H, **Ph**- $\text{CH}=\text{CH}-\text{CH}_2-\text{CH}_2-\text{CH}=\text{CH}_2$), 6.42 (d, J = 16.0 Hz, 1H, Ph-**CH**= $\text{CH}-\text{CH}_2-\text{CH}_2-\text{CH}=\text{CH}_2$), 6.28 (dt, J = 15.9, 6.5 Hz, 1H, Ph- $\text{CH}=\text{CH}-\text{CH}_2-\text{CH}_2-\text{CH}=\text{CH}_2$), 5.85 (ddt, J = 16.7, 10.2, 6.4 Hz, 1H, Ph- $\text{CH}=\text{CH}-\text{CH}_2-\text{CH}_2-\text{CH}=\text{CH}_2$), 5.12 – 4.95 (m, 2H, Ph- $\text{CH}=\text{CH}-\text{CH}_2-\text{CH}_2-\text{CH}=\text{CH}_2$), 2.33 – 2.14 (m, 4H, Ph- $\text{CH}=\text{CH}-\text{CH}_2-\text{CH}_2-\text{CH}=\text{CH}_2$).

$^{13}\text{C}\{\text{H}\}$ NMR (101 MHz, DMSO) δ 138.10 (Ph- $\text{CH}=\text{CH}-\text{CH}_2-\text{CH}_2-\text{CH}=\text{CH}_2$), 137.23 (**Ph**- $\text{CH}=\text{CH}-\text{CH}_2-\text{CH}_2-\text{CH}=\text{CH}_2$), 129.97 (Ph-**CH**= $\text{CH}-\text{CH}_2-\text{CH}_2-\text{CH}=\text{CH}_2$), 129.90 (**Ph**- $\text{CH}=\text{CH}-\text{CH}_2-\text{CH}_2-\text{CH}=\text{CH}_2$), 128.54 (2x **Ph**- $\text{CH}=\text{CH}-\text{CH}_2-\text{CH}_2-\text{CH}=\text{CH}_2$), 126.95, 125.82 (2x **Ph**- $\text{CH}=\text{CH}-\text{CH}_2-\text{CH}_2-\text{CH}=\text{CH}_2$), 115.20 (Ph- $\text{CH}=\text{CH}-\text{CH}_2-\text{CH}_2-\text{CH}=\text{CH}_2$), 32.99 (Ph- $\text{CH}=\text{CH}-\text{CH}_2-\text{CH}_2-\text{CH}=\text{CH}_2$), 31.78 (Ph- $\text{CH}=\text{CH}-\text{CH}_2-\text{CH}_2-\text{CH}=\text{CH}_2$).

MS (ES): +ve m/z calculated (158.24) found (158.1)

Section 2: Structure Generation, CREST Data and B3LYP Data Reactions A and B

Structures were built and optimised in the gas-phase at the B3LYP-D3BJ/6-311+G(d,p) level and subsequently optimised via GFN2-xTB using default parameters. Conformer searches were performed from the optimised-xTB structure using default parameters for the Conformer–Rotamer Ensemble Sampling Tool (CREST) within xTB version 6.4.1 at the GFN2-xTB level.^{1,2} Subsequently the conformer/rotamer ensemble (CRE) sorting algorithm CREGEN was employed to isolate conformers from rotamers. Default thresholds were employed; energy 6 kcal/mol, RMSD 0.125 Å, conformer pairs 0.05 kcal/mol. If conformer sorting produced more than 50 conformers, the sort criteria for the RMSD value was altered in intervals of 0.5 (and smaller intervals in some cases) until ≈50 conformers were obtained.

The conformers obtained were subsequently optimized at the B3LYP-D3BJ/6-311-G+(d,p) level. Thus, not all conformers have been sampled at a higher level, but a proportion of the full range of accessible conformers has been examined. B3LYP conformers with identical or near identical energy were compared visually in Jmol³ and the Jmol compare and rotate translate feature was used. This functionality compares two models and reorients the first model relative to the second based on a given atom-atom coordinate pairing or quaternion-based group-group orientation pairing.⁴⁻⁶ Subsequently the lowest Gibbs Free energy conformer was used for the reaction energies, and where additional conformer analysis is undertaken conformers within 5 kJ/mol (at the B3LYP-D3BJ/6-311+G(d,p) level) of the lowest energy conformer were selected. In some cases the lowest G conformer differs from the lowest E conformer.

¹ CREST: Pracht, P.; Bohle, F.; Grimme, S.; *Phys. Chem. Chem. Phys.*, **2020**, 22, 7169-7192. DOI: 10.1039/C9CP06869D

² <https://crest-lab.github.io/crest-docs/>

³ Jmol: an open-source Java viewer for chemical structures in 3D, <http://www.jmol.org/>

⁴ Berthold K. P. Horn, *J. Opt. Soc. Amer. A*, **1987**, Vol. 4, pp. 629-64.

⁵ G. R. Kneller, *Molecular Simulation*, **1991**, Vol. 7, pp. 113-119.

⁶ <https://chemapps.stolaf.edu/jmol/docs/#compare>

Reaction A (Cope-Pr) Reactant

Rotamers & conformers: 434

default conformer search: 228

rthr=0.5 conformer search: 211

rthr=1.0 conformer search: 175

rthr=1.5 conformer search: 118

rthr=2.0 conformer search: 39 (selected)

| No. | xTB | | | xTB No. | B3LYP | | |
|-----|------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|------------|----------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| | Energy kJ/mol | Boltzmann $\exp(-\Delta E/RT)$ | Probability Q=4.73 | | ΔG kJ/mol | Boltzmann $\exp(-\Delta G/RT)$ | Probability Q=4.80 |
| 1 | 0.00 | 1.00 | 0.21 | 1 | 0.00 | 1.000 | 0.21 |
| 2 | 0.44 | 0.84 | 0.18 | 2 | 0.44 | 0.836 | 0.17 |
| 3 | 1.80 | 0.48 | 0.10 | 3 | 1.88 | 0.468 | 0.10 |
| 4 | 2.29 | 0.40 | 0.08 | 4 | 2.34 | 0.389 | 0.08 |
| 5 | 2.77 | 0.33 | 0.07 | 8 | 2.58 | 0.354 | 0.07 |
| 6 | 3.14 | 0.28 | 0.06 | 5 | 2.88 | 0.313 | 0.07 |
| 7 | 3.50 | 0.24 | 0.05 | 24 | 3.26 | 0.268 | 0.06 |
| 8 | 3.89 | 0.21 | 0.04 | 6 | 3.27 | 0.268 | 0.06 |
| 9 | 4.33 | 0.17 | 0.04 | 7 | 3.38 | 0.256 | 0.05 |
| 10 | 4.70 | 0.15 | 0.03 | 13 | 5.16 | 0.125 | 0.03 |
| 11 | 5.06 | 0.13 | 0.03 | 10 | 5.29 | 0.118 | 0.02 |
| 12 | 5.19 | 0.12 | 0.03 | 14 | 6.60 | 0.070 | 0.01 |
| 13 | 6.04 | 0.09 | 0.02 | 15 | 6.82 | 0.064 | 0.01 |
| 14 | 6.62 | 0.07 | 0.01 | 9 | 7.28 | 0.053 | 0.01 |
| 15 | 7.13 | 0.06 | 0.01 | 17 | 7.52 | 0.048 | 0.01 |
| 16 | 8.49 | 0.03 | 0.01 | 11 | 8.09 | 0.038 | 0.01 |
| 17 | 8.86 | 0.03 | 0.01 | 12 | 8.65 | 0.030 | 0.01 |
| 18 | 9.29 | 0.02 | 0.00 | 19 | 8.75 | 0.029 | 0.01 |
| 19 | 9.68 | 0.02 | 0.00 | 30 | 10.65 | 0.014 | 0.00 |
| 20 | 10.78 | 0.01 | 0.00 | 16 | 11.01 | 0.012 | 0.00 |
| 21 | 11.41 | 0.01 | 0.00 | 29 | 12.11 | 0.008 | 0.00 |
| 22 | 11.50 | 0.01 | 0.00 | 22 | 12.12 | 0.008 | 0.00 |
| 23 | 12.64 | 0.01 | 0.00 | 18 | 12.18 | 0.007 | 0.00 |
| 24 | 12.90 | 0.01 | 0.00 | 20 | 13.29 | 0.005 | 0.00 |
| 25 | 14.27 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 21 | 13.37 | 0.005 | 0.00 |
| 26 | 15.17 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 25 | 13.40 | 0.004 | 0.00 |
| 27 | 16.43 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 23 | 13.60 | 0.004 | 0.00 |
| 28 | 16.59 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 31 | 16.56 | 0.001 | 0.00 |
| 29 | 17.01 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 32 | 18.60 | 0.001 | 0.00 |
| 30 | 18.28 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 26 | 18.72 | 0.001 | 0.00 |
| 31 | 18.65 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 27 | 19.41 | 0.000 | 0.00 |
| 32 | 19.69 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 28 | 19.65 | 0.000 | 0.00 |
| 33 | 20.56 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 34 | 21.98 | 0.000 | 0.00 |
| 34 | 21.15 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 33 | 22.25 | 0.000 | 0.00 |
| 35 | 21.52 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 35 | 23.48 | 0.000 | 0.00 |
| 36 | 22.54 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 36 | 24.04 | 0.000 | 0.00 |
| 37 | 23.61 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 37 | 24.99 | 0.000 | 0.00 |
| 38 | 24.02 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 39 | 27.72 | 0.000 | 0.00 |
| 39 | 24.38 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 38 | 28.34 | 0.000 | 0.00 |

Table S2.1: Reaction A (Cope-Pr) reactant CREST data

Reaction A (Cope-Pr) Product

Rotamers & conformers: 580

default conformer search: 358

rthr=0.5 conformer search: 240

rthr=1.0 conformer search: 159

rthr=1.5 conformer search: 64

rthr=1.6 conformer search: 44 (selected)

| No. | xTB Energy | Boltzmann | Probability | xTB No. | B3LYP ΔG | Boltzmann | Probability |
|-----|------------|-------------|-------------|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | kJ/mol | exp(-ΔE/RT) | Q=7.89 | | kJ/mol | exp(-ΔG/RT) | Q=9.66 |
| 1 | 0.00 | 1.00 | 0.13 | 16 | 0.00 | 1.00 | 0.11 |
| 2 | 0.23 | 0.91 | 0.12 | 15 | 0.42 | 0.84 | 0.09 |
| 3 | 0.80 | 0.72 | 0.09 | 5 | 0.82 | 0.72 | 0.08 |
| 4 | 1.28 | 0.60 | 0.08 | 11 | 1.03 | 0.66 | 0.07 |
| 5 | 1.65 | 0.51 | 0.07 | 10 | 1.69 | 0.51 | 0.05 |
| 6 | 1.73 | 0.50 | 0.06 | 3 | 1.69 | 0.51 | 0.05 |
| 7 | 1.98 | 0.45 | 0.06 | 4 | 1.70 | 0.50 | 0.05 |
| 8 | 2.44 | 0.37 | 0.05 | 35 | 1.97 | 0.45 | 0.05 |
| 9 | 2.65 | 0.34 | 0.04 | 8 | 2.52 | 0.36 | 0.04 |
| 10 | 3.61 | 0.23 | 0.03 | 7 | 2.70 | 0.34 | 0.04 |
| 11 | 3.64 | 0.23 | 0.03 | 21 | 2.92 | 0.31 | 0.03 |
| 12 | 3.72 | 0.22 | 0.03 | 29 | 3.21 | 0.27 | 0.03 |
| 13 | 4.18 | 0.18 | 0.02 | 27 | 3.38 | 0.26 | 0.03 |
| 14 | 4.61 | 0.16 | 0.02 | 25 | 3.53 | 0.24 | 0.03 |
| 15 | 4.64 | 0.15 | 0.02 | 1 | 3.70 | 0.23 | 0.02 |
| 16 | 4.86 | 0.14 | 0.02 | 13 | 3.70 | 0.23 | 0.02 |
| 17 | 4.87 | 0.14 | 0.02 | 2 | 3.70 | 0.22 | 0.02 |
| 18 | 5.50 | 0.11 | 0.01 | 12 | 3.84 | 0.21 | 0.02 |
| 19 | 5.61 | 0.10 | 0.01 | 14 | 4.03 | 0.20 | 0.02 |
| 20 | 5.73 | 0.10 | 0.01 | 6 | 4.36 | 0.17 | 0.02 |
| 21 | 6.00 | 0.09 | 0.01 | 20 | 4.52 | 0.16 | 0.02 |
| 22 | 6.43 | 0.07 | 0.01 | 9 | 5.05 | 0.13 | 0.01 |
| 23 | 6.56 | 0.07 | 0.01 | 34 | 5.53 | 0.11 | 0.01 |
| 24 | 6.56 | 0.07 | 0.01 | 23 | 5.70 | 0.10 | 0.01 |
| 25 | 6.57 | 0.07 | 0.01 | 30 | 5.70 | 0.10 | 0.01 |
| 26 | 7.13 | 0.06 | 0.01 | 26 | 6.17 | 0.08 | 0.01 |
| 27 | 7.88 | 0.04 | 0.01 | 22 | 6.36 | 0.08 | 0.01 |
| 28 | 7.97 | 0.04 | 0.01 | 32 | 6.54 | 0.07 | 0.01 |
| 29 | 8.18 | 0.04 | 0.00 | 24 | 6.57 | 0.07 | 0.01 |
| 30 | 9.19 | 0.02 | 0.00 | 31 | 6.72 | 0.07 | 0.01 |
| 31 | 9.41 | 0.02 | 0.00 | 18 | 6.96 | 0.06 | 0.01 |
| 32 | 9.64 | 0.02 | 0.00 | 17 | 8.10 | 0.04 | 0.00 |
| 33 | 9.91 | 0.02 | 0.00 | 28 | 8.12 | 0.04 | 0.00 |
| 34 | 10.01 | 0.02 | 0.00 | 33 | 9.58 | 0.02 | 0.00 |
| 35 | 10.20 | 0.02 | 0.00 | 36 | 10.05 | 0.02 | 0.00 |
| 36 | 10.68 | 0.01 | 0.00 | 41 | 16.55 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| 37 | 11.92 | 0.01 | 0.00 | 39 | 17.44 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| 38 | 12.33 | 0.01 | 0.00 | 42 | 17.99 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| 39 | 16.08 | 0.01 | 0.00 | 40 | 18.68 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| 40 | 17.92 | 0.01 | 0.00 | 43 | 21.09 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| 41 | 17.97 | 0.01 | 0.00 | 44 | 25.48 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| 42 | 18.33 | 0.01 | 0.00 | | | | |
| 43 | 20.47 | 0.01 | 0.00 | | | | |
| 44 | 24.96 | 0.00 | 0.00 | | | | |

Table S2.2: Reaction A (Cope-Pr) product CREST data

Reaction B (Cope-Ph) Reactant

Rotamers & conformers: 70

default conformer search: 41 (selected)

rthr=1.0 conformer search: 35

| No. | xTB Energy kJ/mol | Boltzmann $\exp(-\Delta E/RT)$ | Probability Q=7.73 | xTB No. | B3LYP ΔG kJ/mol | Boltzmann $\exp(-\Delta G/RT)$ | Probability Q=8.36 |
|-----|----------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 | 0.00 | 1.00 | 0.13 | 2 | 0.00 | 1.00 | 0.12 |
| 2 | 0.26 | 0.90 | 0.12 | 25 | 0.74 | 0.74 | 0.09 |
| 3 | 1.11 | 0.64 | 0.08 | 1 | 0.74 | 0.74 | 0.09 |
| 4 | 1.31 | 0.59 | 0.08 | 7 | 1.13 | 0.63 | 0.08 |
| 5 | 1.35 | 0.58 | 0.07 | 3 | 1.18 | 0.62 | 0.07 |
| 6 | 1.54 | 0.54 | 0.07 | 8 | 1.24 | 0.61 | 0.07 |
| 7 | 1.95 | 0.45 | 0.06 | 11 | 1.25 | 0.60 | 0.07 |
| 8 | 2.13 | 0.42 | 0.05 | 5 | 1.54 | 0.54 | 0.06 |
| 9 | 2.56 | 0.36 | 0.05 | 6 | 1.59 | 0.53 | 0.06 |
| 10 | 2.71 | 0.34 | 0.04 | 4 | 1.61 | 0.52 | 0.06 |
| 11 | 3.58 | 0.24 | 0.03 | 9 | 2.20 | 0.41 | 0.05 |
| 12 | 3.64 | 0.23 | 0.03 | 10 | 2.44 | 0.37 | 0.04 |
| 13 | 4.37 | 0.17 | 0.02 | 18 | 4.80 | 0.14 | 0.02 |
| 14 | 4.46 | 0.17 | 0.02 | 22 | 4.84 | 0.14 | 0.02 |
| 15 | 4.49 | 0.16 | 0.02 | 15 | 5.08 | 0.13 | 0.02 |
| 16 | 5.21 | 0.12 | 0.02 | 16 | 5.35 | 0.12 | 0.01 |
| 17 | 5.48 | 0.11 | 0.01 | 14 | 5.83 | 0.10 | 0.01 |
| 18 | 5.49 | 0.11 | 0.01 | 24 | 6.08 | 0.09 | 0.01 |
| 19 | 5.77 | 0.10 | 0.01 | 12 | 6.61 | 0.07 | 0.01 |
| 20 | 5.88 | 0.09 | 0.01 | 17 | 7.08 | 0.06 | 0.01 |
| 21 | 6.20 | 0.08 | 0.01 | 23 | 7.56 | 0.05 | 0.01 |
| 22 | 6.43 | 0.07 | 0.01 | 19 | 7.68 | 0.05 | 0.01 |
| 23 | 7.41 | 0.05 | 0.01 | 20 | 7.86 | 0.04 | 0.01 |
| 24 | 7.50 | 0.05 | 0.01 | 34 | 8.40 | 0.03 | 0.00 |
| 25 | 8.32 | 0.03 | 0.00 | 27 | 9.36 | 0.02 | 0.00 |
| 26 | 9.12 | 0.03 | 0.00 | 30 | 14.29 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| 27 | 9.50 | 0.02 | 0.00 | 33 | 14.73 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| 28 | 10.18 | 0.02 | 0.00 | 40 | 19.55 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| 29 | 10.21 | 0.02 | 0.00 | 38 | 20.04 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| 30 | 12.42 | 0.01 | 0.00 | 41 | 21.91 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| 31 | 12.62 | 0.01 | 0.00 | | | | |
| 32 | 12.76 | 0.01 | 0.00 | | | | |
| 33 | 12.79 | 0.01 | 0.00 | | | | |
| 34 | 12.87 | 0.01 | 0.00 | | | | |
| 35 | 13.82 | 0.00 | 0.00 | | | | |
| 36 | 13.91 | 0.00 | 0.00 | | | | |
| 37 | 15.23 | 0.00 | 0.00 | | | | |
| 38 | 15.59 | 0.00 | 0.00 | | | | |
| 39 | 16.82 | 0.00 | 0.00 | | | | |
| 40 | 16.93 | 0.00 | 0.00 | | | | |
| 41 | 17.78 | 0.00 | 0.00 | | | | |

Table S2.3: Reaction B (Cope-Ph) reactant CREST data

Reaction B (Cope-Ph) Product

Rotamers & conformers: 132, rthr=0 conformer search: 69

rthr=0.5 conformer search: 58, rthr=1.0 conformer search: 49 (*selected*)

| No. | xTB Energy | Boltzmann | Probability | xTB No. | B3LYP ΔG | Boltzmann | Probability |
|-----|------------|-------------|-------------|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | kJ/mol | exp(-ΔE/RT) | Q=9.49 | | kJ/mol | exp(-ΔG/RT) | Q=12.29 |
| 1 | 0.00 | 1.00 | 0.11 | 2 | 0.00 | 1.00 | 0.08 |
| 2 | 0.88 | 0.70 | 0.07 | 12 | 0.22 | 0.92 | 0.07 |
| 3 | 0.89 | 0.70 | 0.07 | 24 | 0.22 | 0.91 | 0.07 |
| 4 | 1.41 | 0.57 | 0.06 | 8 | 0.35 | 0.87 | 0.07 |
| 5 | 1.79 | 0.49 | 0.05 | 14 | 0.46 | 0.83 | 0.07 |
| 6 | 1.79 | 0.49 | 0.05 | 19 | 0.46 | 0.83 | 0.07 |
| 7 | 1.89 | 0.47 | 0.05 | 31 | 0.49 | 0.82 | 0.07 |
| 8 | 2.02 | 0.44 | 0.05 | 29 | 0.49 | 0.82 | 0.07 |
| 9 | 2.08 | 0.43 | 0.05 | 4 | 0.78 | 0.73 | 0.06 |
| 10 | 2.09 | 0.43 | 0.05 | 1 | 1.87 | 0.47 | 0.04 |
| 11 | 2.12 | 0.42 | 0.04 | 11 | 1.90 | 0.46 | 0.04 |
| 12 | 2.37 | 0.38 | 0.04 | 15 | 2.34 | 0.39 | 0.03 |
| 13 | 2.43 | 0.38 | 0.04 | 18 | 2.57 | 0.35 | 0.03 |
| 14 | 2.57 | 0.35 | 0.04 | 28 | 2.90 | 0.31 | 0.03 |
| 15 | 3.27 | 0.27 | 0.03 | 21 | 2.90 | 0.31 | 0.03 |
| 16 | 3.28 | 0.27 | 0.03 | 42 | 2.96 | 0.30 | 0.02 |
| 17 | 4.39 | 0.17 | 0.02 | 17 | 2.96 | 0.30 | 0.02 |
| 18 | 5.07 | 0.13 | 0.01 | 9 | 3.27 | 0.27 | 0.02 |
| 19 | 5.13 | 0.13 | 0.01 | 10 | 3.28 | 0.27 | 0.02 |
| 20 | 5.32 | 0.12 | 0.01 | 40 | 3.84 | 0.21 | 0.02 |
| 21 | 5.41 | 0.11 | 0.01 | 35 | 3.84 | 0.21 | 0.02 |
| 22 | 5.58 | 0.11 | 0.01 | 22 | 4.16 | 0.19 | 0.02 |
| 23 | 5.99 | 0.09 | 0.01 | 23 | 4.16 | 0.19 | 0.02 |
| 24 | 6.02 | 0.09 | 0.01 | 39 | 5.50 | 0.11 | 0.01 |
| 25 | 6.54 | 0.07 | 0.01 | 26 | 5.50 | 0.11 | 0.01 |
| 26 | 6.82 | 0.06 | 0.01 | 48 | 8.14 | 0.04 | 0.00 |
| 27 | 6.90 | 0.06 | 0.01 | 46 | 8.14 | 0.04 | 0.00 |
| 28 | 7.15 | 0.06 | 0.01 | 38 | 10.37 | 0.02 | 0.00 |
| 29 | 7.16 | 0.06 | 0.01 | 37 | 10.37 | 0.02 | 0.00 |
| 30 | 7.18 | 0.06 | 0.01 | | | | |
| 31 | 7.26 | 0.05 | 0.01 | | | | |
| 32 | 7.28 | 0.05 | 0.01 | | | | |
| 33 | 7.45 | 0.05 | 0.01 | | | | |
| 34 | 7.65 | 0.05 | 0.00 | | | | |
| 35 | 8.63 | 0.03 | 0.00 | | | | |
| 36 | 8.87 | 0.03 | 0.00 | | | | |
| 37 | 9.49 | 0.02 | 0.00 | | | | |
| 38 | 9.97 | 0.02 | 0.00 | | | | |
| 39 | 10.36 | 0.02 | 0.00 | | | | |
| 40 | 10.72 | 0.01 | 0.00 | | | | |
| 41 | 10.83 | 0.01 | 0.00 | | | | |
| 42 | 11.16 | 0.01 | 0.00 | | | | |
| 43 | 11.24 | 0.01 | 0.00 | | | | |
| 44 | 11.39 | 0.01 | 0.00 | | | | |
| 45 | 11.75 | 0.01 | 0.00 | | | | |
| 46 | 11.92 | 0.01 | 0.00 | | | | |
| 47 | 12.15 | 0.01 | 0.00 | | | | |
| 48 | 12.51 | 0.01 | 0.00 | | | | |
| 49 | 13.41 | 0.00 | 0.00 | | | | |

Table S2.4: Reaction B (Cope-Ph) product CREST data

Section 3. TS Conformers

A starting TS structure was obtained by forming a chair-equatorial conformer and positioning the reactive atoms in a TS like geometry. The structures were then optimised to a transition state using the Berny algorithm. The TS was confirmed by a frequency analysis and visual inspection of the negative (imaginary) mode to confirm the correct TS had been located. IRC scans were performed to confirm the formation of the desired product from the TS.

The TS can take on a boat or chair arrangement of the interacting atoms, in addition the Pr or Ph substituent can take on an equatorial or axial configuration, leading to 4 potential isomers for each Cope reaction, **Figure 4** in the paper. The optimised chair-equatorial TS conformer was altered to a boat form and a fully relaxed TS search performed. Both conformers were then altered to the axial conformer and a fully relaxed TS search was performed.

There is also potential for rotation of the substituents. Rotation of the phenyl substituent was evaluated for the GP equatorial chair TS conformer, the reacting atoms were fixed in place and the dihedral for the phenyl ring rotated. The rotation started from the optimised conformer which has a C-C-C_{Ph} dihedral of 31°, the energy was evaluated at steps of 20°, and a maximum energy barrier of 25 kJ/mol was determined, **Figure S3.1**. Thus the initially obtained optimised conformers are confirmed as the local minima structures.

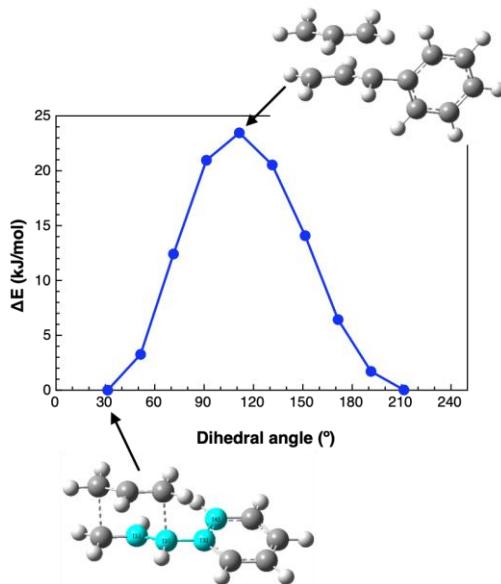


Figure S3.1: Rotational potential energy surface of the Ph substituent for the gas phase Cope-Ph transition state at the B3LYP-D3BJ/6-311+G(d,p) level.

| Cope-Pr | B3LYP | | | | M06-2X | | | | |
|---|-----------------|---------------------|----------------|--------------------|---------------|---------------------|----------------|--------------------|---------------|
| | ΔE_{TS} | chair equatorial | chair axial | boat equatorial | boat axial | chair equatorial | chair axial | boat equatorial | boat axial |
| Gas Phase | 0 | 6 | 32 | 32 | 32 | 0 | 11 | 47 | 43 |
| MeCN | 0 | 6 | 31 | 31 | 31 | 0 | 6 | 43 | 43 |
| Benzene | 0 | 6 | 32 | 32 | 32 | 0 | 7 | 44 | 44 |
| Ethanol | 0 | 6 | 32 | 31 | 31 | 0 | 6 | 44 | 44 |
| [C ₄ C ₁ im][NTf ₂] | 0 | 6 | 32 | 31 | 31 | 0 | 6 | 44 | 44 |

Table S3.1: Reaction A (Cope-Pr) energy difference (kJ/mol) between the TS conformers, $\Delta E_{TS} = E_x - E_{\text{chair-Req}}$.

| Cope-Pr ΔG_{TS} | B3LYP | | | | M06-2X | | | |
|---|---------------------|----------------|--------------------|---------------|---------------------|----------------|--------------------|---------------|
| | chair equatorial | chair axial | boat equatorial | boat axial | chair equatorial | chair axial | boat equatorial | boat axial |
| Gas Phase | 0 | 6 | 27 | 29 | 0 | 9 | 40 | 40 |
| MeCN | 0 | 6 | 26 | 29 | 0 | 7 | 38 | 40 |
| Benzene | 0 | 6 | 27 | 30 | 0 | 8 | 39 | 41 |
| Ethanol | 0 | 6 | 27 | 29 | 0 | 8 | 39 | 41 |
| [C ₄ C ₁ im][NTf ₂] | 0 | 6 | 27 | 29 | 0 | 7 | 39 | 41 |

Table S3.2: Reaction A (Cope-Pr) energy difference (kJ/mol) between the TS conformers, $\Delta G_{TS} = G_x - G_{\text{chair-Req}}$.

| Cope-Pr $\Delta G_{TS} = G_{\text{boat-Req}} - G_{\text{chair-Req}}$ | B3LYP | | M06-2X | |
|---|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| | $\Delta G_{TS,298}$ | $\Delta G_{TS,423}$ | $\Delta G_{TS,298}$ | $\Delta G_{TS,423}$ |
| Gas Phase | 6 | 6 | 9 | |
| MeCN | 6 | 5 | 7 | |
| Benzene | 6 | 6 | 8 | |
| Ethanol | 6 | 6 | 8 | |
| [C ₄ C ₁ im][NTf ₂] | 6 | 6 | 7 | |

Table S3.3: Reaction A (Cope-Pr) Gibbs Free Energy difference (kJ/mol) between the TS *chair* equatorial and axial conformers, $\Delta G_{TS} = G_{\text{Rax}} - G_{\text{Req}}$ at 298.15K and 423.15K.

| Cope-Pr $\Delta G_{TS} = G_{\text{boat-Req}} - G_{\text{chair-Req}}$ | B3LYP | | M06-2X | |
|---|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| | $\Delta G_{TS,298}$ | $\Delta G_{TS,423}$ | $\Delta G_{TS,298}$ | $\Delta G_{TS,423}$ |
| Gas Phase | 27 | 26 | 40 | |
| MeCN | 29 | 25 | 40 | |
| Benzene | 30 | 26 | 41 | |
| Ethanol | 29 | 26 | 41 | |
| [C ₄ C ₁ im][NTf ₂] | 29 | 26 | 41 | |

Table S3.4: Reaction A (Cope-Pr) Gibbs Free Energy difference (kJ/mol) between the TS *equatorial* boat and chair conformers, $\Delta G_{TS} = G_{\text{boat}} - G_{\text{chair}}$ at 298.15K and 423.15K.

| Cope-Ph ΔE_{TS} | B3LYP | | | | M06-2X | | | |
|---|---------------------|----------------|--------------------|---------------|---------------------|----------------|--------------------|---------------|
| | chair equatorial | chair axial | boat equatorial | boat axial | chair equatorial | chair axial | boat equatorial | boat axial |
| Gas Phase | 0 | 16 | 25 | 40 | 0 | 21 | 37 | 53 |
| MeCN | 0 | 17 | 25 | 41 | 0 | 17 | 42 | 54 |
| Benzene | 0 | 17 | 25 | 41 | 0 | 16 | 38 | 55 |
| Ethanol | 0 | 17 | 25 | 41 | 0 | 17 | 38 | 54 |
| [C ₄ C ₁ im][NTf ₂] | 0 | 17 | 25 | 41 | 0 | 16 | 38 | 54 |

Table S3.5: Reaction B (Cope-Ph) energy difference (kJ/mol) between the TS conformers, $\Delta E_{TS} = E_x - E_{\text{chair-Req.}}$

| Cope-Ph ΔG_{TS} | B3LYP | | | | M06-2X | | | |
|---|---------------------|----------------|--------------------|---------------|---------------------|----------------|--------------------|---------------|
| | chair equatorial | chair axial | boat equatorial | boat axial | chair equatorial | chair axial | boat equatorial | boat axial |
| Gas Phase | 0 | 17 | 21 | 37 | 0 | 20 | 32 | 52 |
| MeCN | 0 | 17 | 21 | 37 | 0 | 19 | 34 | 52 |
| Benzene | 0 | 17 | 20 | 39 | 0 | 18 | 33 | 55 |
| Ethanol | 0 | 16 | 21 | 37 | 0 | 19 | 33 | 51 |
| [C ₄ C ₁ im][NTf ₂] | 0 | 16 | 21 | 37 | 0 | 19 | 33 | 51 |

Table S3.6: Reaction B (Cope-Ph) energy difference (kJ/mol) between the TS conformers, $\Delta G_{TS} = G_x - G_{\text{chair-Req.}}$

| Cope-Ph $\Delta G_{TS} = G_{\text{boat-Req}} - G_{\text{chair-Req}}$ | B3LYP | | M06-2X | |
|---|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| | $\Delta G_{TS,298}$ | $\Delta G_{TS,423}$ | $\Delta G_{TS,298}$ | $\Delta G_{TS,423}$ |
| Gas Phase | 17 | 17 | 20 | |
| MeCN | 17 | 16 | 19 | |
| Benzene | 17 | 18 | 18 | |
| Ethanol | 16 | 16 | 19 | |
| [C ₄ C ₁ im][NTf ₂] | 16 | 16 | 19 | |

Table S3.7: Reaction B (Cope-Ph) Gibbs Free Energy difference (kJ/mol) between the TS *chair* equatorial and axial conformers, $\Delta G_{TS} = G_{Rax} - G_{Req}$ at 298.15K and 423.15K. B3LYP=B3LYP-D3BJ/6-311-G+(d,p), M06-2X= M06-2X-D3/6-311-G+(d,p)

| Cope-Ph $\Delta G_{TS} = G_{\text{boat(equatorial)}} - G_{\text{chair(equatorial)}}$ | B3LYP | | M06-2X | |
|---|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| | $\Delta G_{TS,298}$ | $\Delta G_{TS,423}$ | $\Delta G_{TS,298}$ | $\Delta G_{TS,423}$ |
| Gas Phase | 21 | 20 | 32 | |
| MeCN | 21 | 20 | 34 | |
| Benzene | 20 | 18 | 33 | |
| Ethanol | 21 | 20 | 33 | |
| [C ₄ C ₁ im][NTf ₂] | 21 | 20 | 33 | |

Table S3.8: Reaction B (Cope-Ph) Gibbs Free Energy difference (kJ/mol) between the TS *equatorial* boat and chair conformers, $\Delta G_{TS} = G_{\text{boat}} - G_{\text{chair}}$ at 298.15K and 423.15K. B3LYP=B3LYP-D3BJ/6-311-G+(d,p), M06-2X= M06-2X-D3/6-311-G+(d,p)

Section 4. Reaction Energies

$\Delta E(TS) = E_{TS} - E_{\text{reactants}}$ and $\Delta E(\text{Reaction}) = E_{\text{products}} - E_{\text{reactants}}$

Reaction A (Cope-Pr)

| B3LYP | TS | | | | Reaction | | | |
|---|------------|------------|------------|-------------|------------|------------|------------|-------------|
| | ΔE | ΔG | ΔH | $T\Delta S$ | ΔE | ΔG | ΔH | $T\Delta S$ |
| Gas Phase | 132 | 135 | 126 | -10 | -3 | -4 | -1 | 4 |
| MeCN | 130 | 134 | 124 | -10 | -7 | -8 | -4 | 4 |
| Benzene | 131 | 135 | 125 | -10 | -7 | -8 | -4 | 4 |
| Ethanol | 129 | 134 | 123 | -10 | -7 | -7 | -4 | 4 |
| [C ₄ C ₁ im][NTf ₂] | 130 | 134 | 124 | -10 | -7 | -7 | -4 | 3 |

Table S4.1: Reaction A (Cope-Pr) B3LYP-D3BJ/6-311-G+(d,p) thermochemical data (kJ/mol) at 298.15K.

| M06-2X | TS | | | | Reaction | | | |
|---|------------|------------|------------|-------------|------------|------------|------------|-------------|
| | ΔE | ΔG | ΔH | $T\Delta S$ | ΔE | ΔG | ΔH | $T\Delta S$ |
| Gas Phase | 144 | 150 | 139 | -11 | 2 | 0 | 4 | 3 |
| MeCN | 141 | 147 | 136 | -11 | -3 | -4 | -1 | 3 |
| Benzene | 141 | 148 | 137 | -12 | -3 | -4 | -1 | 3 |
| Ethanol | 140 | 146 | 135 | -11 | -3 | -4 | -1 | 3 |
| [C ₄ C ₁ im][NTf ₂] | 140 | 147 | 136 | -12 | -3 | -4 | -1 | 3 |

Table S4.2: Reaction A (Cope-Pr) M06-2X-D3/6-311+G(d,p) thermochemical data (kJ/mol) at 298.15K.

Reaction B (Cope-Ph)

| B3LYP | TS | | | | Reaction | | | |
|---|------------|------------|------------|-------------|------------|------------|------------|-------------|
| | ΔE | ΔG | ΔH | $T\Delta S$ | ΔE | ΔG | ΔH | $T\Delta S$ |
| Gas Phase | 118 | 120 | 111 | -9 | -11 | -11 | -10 | 1 |
| MeCN | 116 | 120 | 110 | -10 | -14 | -13 | -13 | 0 |
| Benzene | 116 | 120 | 110 | -10 | -15 | -14 | -12 | 0 |
| Ethanol | 115 | 119 | 109 | -10 | -14 | -13 | -13 | 0 |
| [C ₄ C ₁ im][NTf ₂] | 115 | 119 | 109 | -10 | -15 | -13 | -14 | -1 |

Table S4.3: Reaction B (Cope-Ph) B3LYP-D3BJ/6-311-G+(d,p) thermochemical data (kJ/mol) at 298.15K.

| M06-2X | TS | | | | Reaction | | | |
|---|------------|------------|------------|-------------|------------|------------|------------|-------------|
| | ΔE | ΔG | ΔH | $T\Delta S$ | ΔE | ΔG | ΔH | $T\Delta S$ |
| Gas Phase | 134 | 138 | 128 | -10 | -9 | -8 | -8 | 0 |
| MeCN | 130 | 136 | 125 | -11 | -12 | -10 | -11 | -1 |
| Benzene | 131 | 136 | 125 | -10 | -13 | -12 | -12 | 0 |
| Ethanol | 129 | 135 | 124 | -11 | -13 | -11 | -12 | -1 |
| [C ₄ C ₁ im][NTf ₂] | 129 | 135 | 124 | -11 | -13 | -11 | -12 | 0 |

Table S4.4: Reaction B (Cope-Ph) M06-2X-D3/6-311+G(d,p) thermochemical data (kJ/mol) at 298.15K

High Temperature

| Reaction A (Cope-Pr) | TS | | | | Reaction | | | |
|---|------------|------------|------------|-------------|------------|------------|------------|-------------|
| | ΔE | ΔG | ΔH | $T\Delta S$ | ΔE | ΔG | ΔH | $T\Delta S$ |
| Gas Phase | 132 | 140 | 126 | -15 | -3 | -8 | -1 | 6 |
| MeCN | 130 | 139 | 124 | -15 | -7 | -9 | -6 | 4 |
| Benzene | 131 | 140 | 125 | -15 | -7 | -10 | -6 | 4 |
| Ethanol | 129 | 139 | 123 | -15 | -7 | -9 | -5 | 4 |
| [C ₄ C ₁ im][NTf ₂] | 130 | 139 | 124 | -15 | -7 | -10 | -6 | 4 |

Table S4.5: Reaction A (Cope-Pr) B3LYP-D3BJ/6-311-G+(d,p) thermochemical data (kJ/mol) at 423.15K.

| Reaction B (Cope-Ph) | TS | | | | Reaction | | | |
|---|------------|------------|------------|-------------|------------|------------|------------|-------------|
| | ΔE | ΔG | ΔH | $T\Delta S$ | ΔE | ΔG | ΔH | $T\Delta S$ |
| Gas Phase | 118 | 126 | 114 | -11 | -11 | -10 | -7 | 3 |
| MeCN | 116 | 125 | 110 | -15 | -14 | -13 | -14 | -1 |
| Benzene | 116 | 125 | 110 | -15 | -15 | -14 | -15 | -1 |
| Ethanol | 115 | 124 | 109 | -14 | -14 | -13 | -14 | -1 |
| [C ₄ C ₁ im][NTf ₂] | 115 | 125 | 109 | -16 | -15 | -12 | -14 | -2 |

Table S4.6: Reaction B (Cope-Ph) B3LYP-D3BJ/6-311-G+(d,p) thermochemical data (kJ/mol) at 423.15K.

DFT check

| Functional | TS | | Benchmark RMSD (ref 42) |
|------------|------------|------------|----------------------------|
| | ΔE | ΔG | |
| B3LYP-D3BJ | 118 | 120 | 6.3 |
| M06-2X-D3 | 134 | 138 | 7.5 |
| M06-L | 125 | 123 | 8.8 |
| PBEO | 153 | 139 | 14.6* |

Table S4.7: Reaction B (Cope-Ph) in the gas-phase DFT functionals (6-311+G(d,p) basis) barrier energy and Gibbs Free Energy (kJ/mol) at 298.15K. Benchmark root mean square deviations (RMSD) in kJ/mol from ref 42 (of the paper) ESI Table S6, *the benchmark study included a D3BJ dispersion correction

Section 5. Solvation Energies

Reaction A (Cope-Pr)

| B3LYP | Reactant | TS Chair eq | Product | E _a |
|---|----------|----------------|---------|----------------|
| Gas Phase | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| MeCN | -21 | -22 | -25 | -2 |
| Benzene | -22 | -23 | -26 | -2 |
| Ethanol | -18 | -21 | -23 | -3 |
| [C ₄ C ₁ im][NTf ₂] | -14 | -17 | -19 | -2 |

Table S5.1: Solvation Energies ΔE (kJ/mol) for reaction A at 298.15K, **B3LYP-D3BJ/6-311-G+(d,p).**

| M06-2X | Reactant | TS Chair eq | Product | E _a |
|---|----------|----------------|---------|----------------|
| Gas Phase | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| MeCN | -22 | -26 | -26 | -3 |
| Benzene | -22 | -25 | -26 | -3 |
| Ethanol | -20 | -25 | -24 | -4 |
| [C ₄ C ₁ im][NTf ₂] | -16 | -20 | -20 | -4 |

Table S5.2: Solvation Energies ΔE (kJ/mol) for reaction A at 298.15K, **M06-2X-D3/6-311+G(d,p).**

Reaction B (Cope-Ph)

| B3LYP | Reactant | TS | Product | E _a |
|---|----------|-----|---------|----------------|
| Gas Phase | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| MeCN | -35 | -37 | -39 | -2 |
| Benzene | -31 | -33 | -36 | -2 |
| Ethanol | -29 | -32 | -33 | -3 |
| [C ₄ C ₁ im][NTf ₂] | -26 | -29 | -30 | -2 |

Table S5.3: Solvation Gibbs Free Energies ΔG (kJ/mol) for reaction A at 298.15K, **B3LYP-D3BJ/6-311+G(d,p).**

| M06-2X | Reactant | TS | Product | E _a |
|---|----------|-----|---------|----------------|
| Gas Phase | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| MeCN | -39 | -42 | -42 | -3 |
| Benzene | -33 | -36 | -37 | -3 |
| Ethanol | -33 | -37 | -37 | -4 |
| [C ₄ C ₁ im][NTf ₂] | -30 | -34 | -34 | -4 |

Table S5.4 Solvation Gibbs Free Energies ΔG (kJ/mol) for reaction A at 298.15K, **M06-2X-D3/6-311+G(d,p).**

Section 6: Structure Generation, CREST Data and B3LYP Data Reaction C

Reaction C (Cope-diPh) reactant

Rotamers & conformers: 164

rthr=0 conformer search: 69

rthr=0.5 conformer search: 55

rthr=1.0 conformer search: 51

rthr=2.0 conformer search: 40 (*selected*)

| No. | xTB Energy kJ/mol | Boltzmann $\exp(-\Delta E/RT)$ | Probability Q=3.89 | xTB No. | B3LYP Gibbs Free Energy kJ/mol | Boltzmann $\exp(-\Delta G/RT)$ | Probability Q=2.10 |
|-----|----------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 | 0.00 | 1.00 | 0.26 | 1 | 0.00 | 1.000 | 0.48 |
| 2 | 1.11 | 0.64 | 0.16 | 2 | 1.62 | 0.521 | 0.25 |
| 3 | 1.49 | 0.55 | 0.14 | 5 | 3.55 | 0.239 | 0.11 |
| 4 | 2.35 | 0.39 | 0.10 | 4 | 5.91 | 0.092 | 0.04 |
| 5 | 3.39 | 0.25 | 0.07 | 9 | 7.24 | 0.054 | 0.03 |
| 6 | 3.61 | 0.23 | 0.06 | 11 | 7.31 | 0.052 | 0.02 |
| 7 | 3.87 | 0.21 | 0.05 | 7 | 7.60 | 0.047 | 0.02 |
| 8 | 4.46 | 0.17 | 0.04 | 10 | 8.22 | 0.036 | 0.02 |
| 9 | 6.05 | 0.09 | 0.02 | 14 | 9.86 | 0.019 | 0.01 |
| 10 | 6.78 | 0.06 | 0.02 | 25 | 9.86 | 0.019 | 0.01 |
| 11 | 7.17 | 0.06 | 0.01 | 29 | 12.52 | 0.006 | 0.00 |
| 12 | 7.45 | 0.05 | 0.01 | 16 | 14.01 | 0.004 | 0.00 |
| 13 | 7.88 | 0.04 | 0.01 | 31 | 14.71 | 0.003 | 0.00 |
| 14 | 8.96 | 0.03 | 0.01 | 37 | 15.47 | 0.002 | 0.00 |
| 15 | 9.51 | 0.02 | 0.01 | 27 | 15.47 | 0.002 | 0.00 |
| 16 | 10.39 | 0.02 | 0.00 | 30 | 15.83 | 0.002 | 0.00 |
| 17 | 10.71 | 0.01 | 0.00 | 24 | 15.83 | 0.002 | 0.00 |
| 18 | 10.95 | 0.01 | 0.00 | 26 | 16.27 | 0.001 | 0.00 |
| 19 | 11.44 | 0.01 | 0.00 | 35 | 19.84 | 0.000 | 0.00 |
| 20 | 11.44 | 0.01 | 0.00 | 32 | 20.35 | 0.000 | 0.00 |
| 21 | 12.06 | 0.01 | 0.00 | 33 | 21.11 | 0.000 | 0.00 |
| 22 | 12.29 | 0.01 | 0.00 | 38 | 27.68 | 0.000 | 0.00 |
| 23 | 12.92 | 0.01 | 0.00 | | | | |
| 24 | 13.38 | 0.00 | 0.00 | | | | |
| 25 | 13.95 | 0.00 | 0.00 | | | | |
| 26 | 14.75 | 0.00 | 0.00 | | | | |
| 27 | 15.07 | 0.00 | 0.00 | | | | |
| 28 | 15.24 | 0.00 | 0.00 | | | | |
| 29 | 17.30 | 0.00 | 0.00 | | | | |
| 30 | 17.51 | 0.00 | 0.00 | | | | |
| 31 | 18.07 | 0.00 | 0.00 | | | | |
| 32 | 18.21 | 0.00 | 0.00 | | | | |
| 33 | 18.62 | 0.00 | 0.00 | | | | |
| 34 | 19.26 | 0.00 | 0.00 | | | | |
| 35 | 19.65 | 0.00 | 0.00 | | | | |
| 36 | 19.81 | 0.00 | 0.00 | | | | |
| 37 | 20.15 | 0.00 | 0.00 | | | | |
| 38 | 23.04 | 0.00 | 0.00 | | | | |
| 39 | 24.15 | 0.00 | 0.00 | | | | |
| 40 | 24.56 | 0.00 | 0.00 | | | | |

Table S6.1: Reaction C (Cope-diPh) reactant CREST data

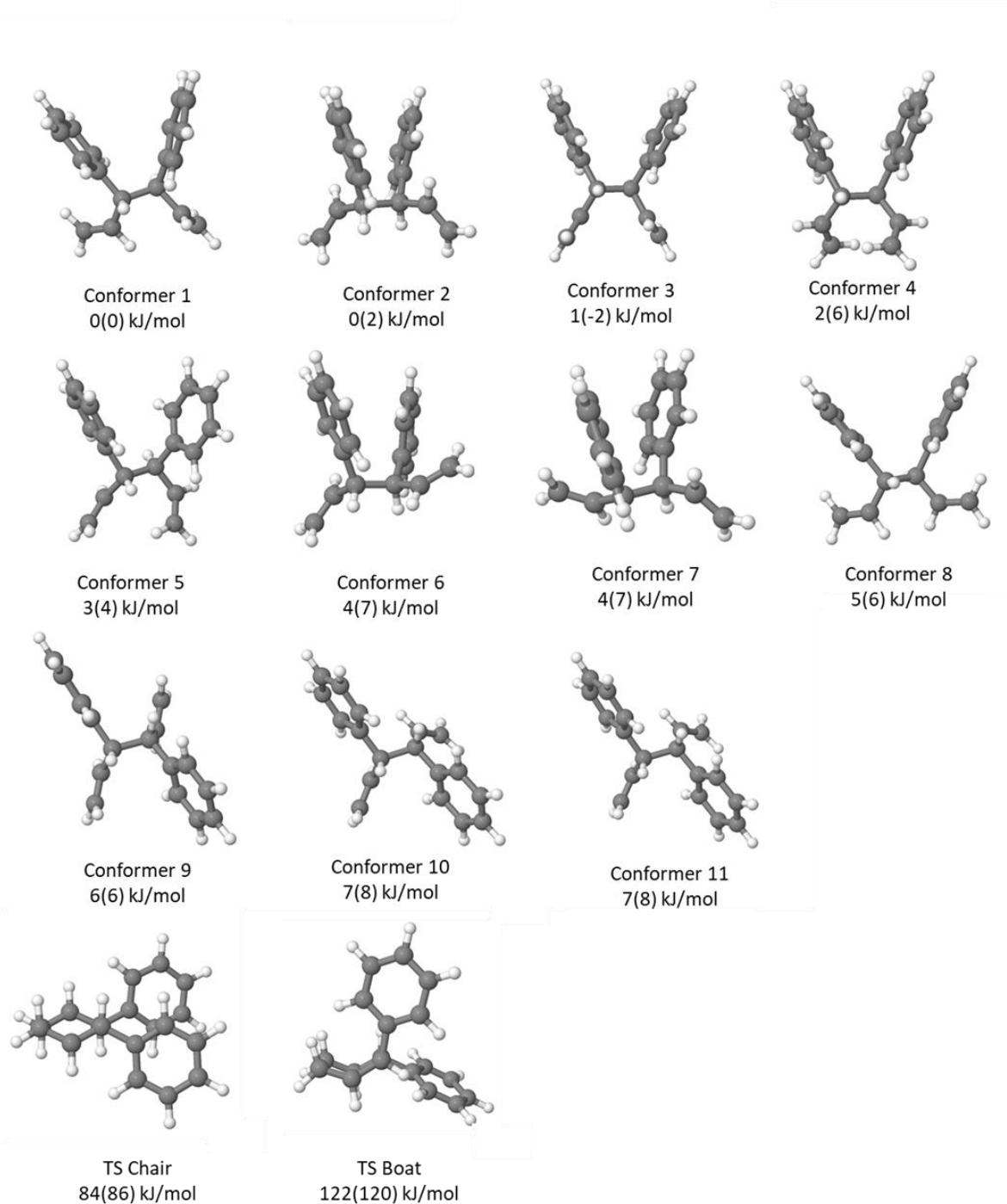


Figure S6.1 Reaction C reactant and TS conformers B3LYP-D3BJ/6-311+G(d,p) with relative energies $\Delta E(\Delta G)$.

Section 7: AIMALL and Jmol Volume Data

CREST derived conformers, re-optimised at the B3LYP-D3BJ/6-311+G(d,p) level, those under 5 and 10 kJ/mol were analysed. AIMALL: Wfn files were generated and QTAIM analysis carried out. The volume from the 0.001 isodensity surfaces was extracted. JMol: The optimised log files were imported into JMol. The 0 radius of the solvent excluded surface was evaluated (this is essentially the smoothed VdW surface) using the command "isosurface resolution 20 volume solvent 0".

AIMALL and JMol Volumes

| Conformer | Energy (kJ/mol) | AIMALL Vol cm ³ /mol | JMol Vol cm ³ /mol |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1 | 0.00 | 205.01 | 231.42 |
| 2 | 0.13 | 204.33 | 231.6 |
| 3 | 0.51 | 205.95 | 231.48 |
| 4 | 2.20 | 203.83 | 231.31 |
| 5 | 3.35 | 204.75 | 231.4 |
| 6 | 3.64 | 203.69 | 231.41 |
| 7 | 3.64 | 203.70 | 231.41 |
| 8 | 4.70 | 204.26 | 231.35 |
| 9 | 6.09 | 205.14 | 231.79 |
| 10 | 7.20 | 204.47 | 231.56 |
| 11 | 7.20 | 204.47 | 231.56 |
| AVG | < 5 kJ/mol | 204.4 ± 0.7 | 231.42 ± 0.08 |
| AVG | < 10 kJ/mol | 204.5 ± 0.7 | 231.48 ± 0.1 |
| TS Chair-R _{eq,eq} | 84.39 | 203.28 | 231.17 |
| TS Boat-R _{eq,ax} | 122.04 | 204.62 | 231.65 |
| ΔV(conf 1) | 0.00 | -1.73 | -0.26 |
| ΔV(AVG) | < 5 kJ/mol | -1.2 ± 0.7 | -0.25 |

Table S7.1 Reaction C, relative energy ΔE(kJ/mol) to the lowest energy structure, and determined volume (cm³/mol) for each conformer using AIMALL and JMol.

| Conformer | Energy (kJ/mol) | AIMALL Vol cm ³ /mol | JMol Vol cm ³ /mol | r(C ¹ -C ⁶) Å |
|--------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| 1 | 0.00 | 146.8 | 162.71 | 5.33 |
| 2 | 0.49 | 146.8 | 162.76 | 6.04 |
| 3 | 0.49 | 146.8 | 162.76 | 6.03 |
| 4 | 0.91 | 147.5 | 162.83 | 5.60 |
| 5 | 1.64 | 147.0 | 162.69 | 5.40 |
| 6 | 1.70 | 146.9 | 162.74 | 5.87 |
| 7 | 2.19 | 146.8 | 162.79 | 5.87 |
| 8 | 2.40 | 147.6 | 162.86 | 4.77 |
| 9 | 2.68 | 147.7 | 162.81 | 5.96 |
| 10 | 2.68 | 147.7 | 162.81 | 5.96 |
| 11 | 3.96 | 146.9 | 162.83 | 4.68 |
| 12 | 4.11 | 146.9 | 162.82 | 4.82 |
| 13 | 4.36 | 146.0 | 162.62 | 5.55 |
| 14 | 4.41 | 147.7 | 162.84 | 4.30 |
| 15 | 4.92 | 146.2 | 162.8 | 5.11 |
| 16 | 4.95 | 146.8 | 162.81 | 5.56 |
| 17 | 4.99 | 146.8 | 162.79 | 3.73 |
| 18 | 5.20 | 146.1 | 162.8 | 3.72 |
| 19 | 5.31 | 146.7 | 162.7 | 5.37 |
| 20 | 5.88 | 146.2 | 162.76 | 3.48 |
| 21 | 5.92 | 146.3 | 162.77 | 4.68 |
| 22 | 6.14 | 146.9 | 162.92 | 5.45 |
| 23 | 6.14 | 146.9 | 162.92 | 5.45 |
| 24 | 6.68 | 146.3 | 162.85 | 4.58 |
| 25 | 7.69 | 146.1 | 162.69 | 5.33 |
| 26 | 8.53 | 146.8 | 162.84 | 3.71 |
| AVG | < 5 kJ/mol | 147.0 ± 0.5 | 162.78 ± 0.06 | |
| AVG | < 10 kJ/mol | 146.8 ± 0.5 | 162.79 ± 0.07 | |
| TS Chair-R _{eq} | 118.21 | 145.1 | 162.2 | 2.20 |
| TS Chair-R _{ax} | 134.48 | 144.1 | 162.2 | 2.22 |
| TS Boat-R _{eq} | 144.07 | 146.3 | 163.5 | 2.36 |
| TS Boat-R _{ax} | 158.39 | 145.3 | 163.5 | 2.39 |
| ΔV(conf 1) | 0.00 | -1.75 | -0.50 | |
| ΔV(AVG) | < 5 kJ/mol | -1.9 ± 0.5 | -0.60 ± 0.06 | |

Table S7.2 Reaction B, relative energy ΔE(kJ/mol) to the lowest energy structure, and determined volume (cm³/mol) for each conformer using AIMALL and JMol.

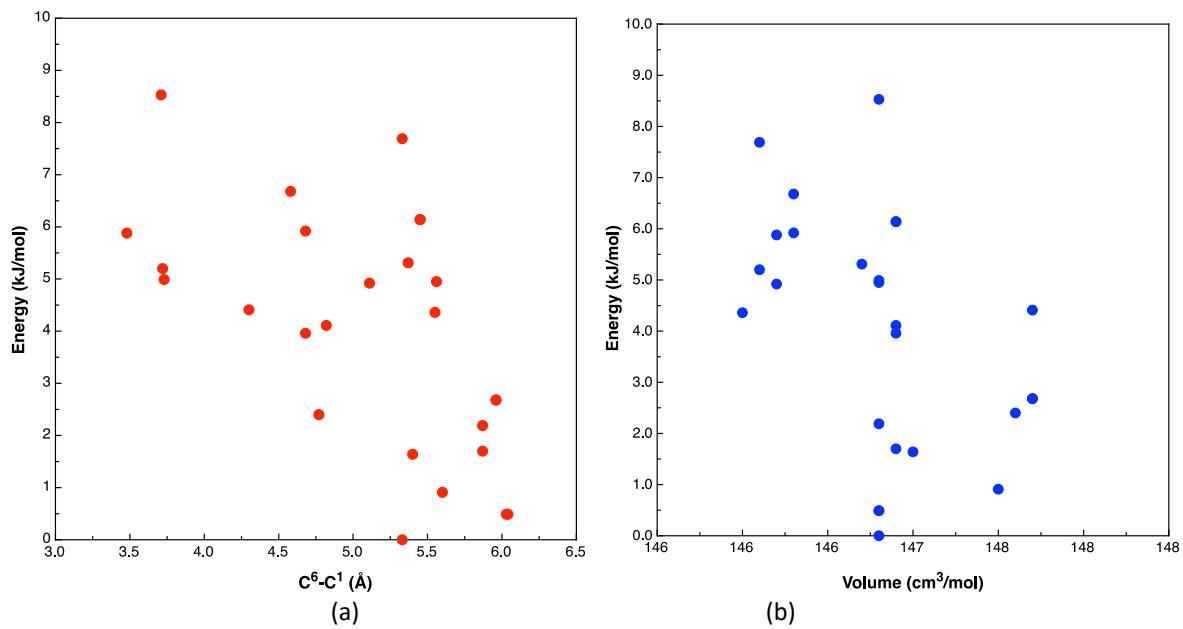


Figure S7.2 (a) $r(C^1-C^6)$ vs energy and (b) AIMALL volume vs energy for reaction B conformers.

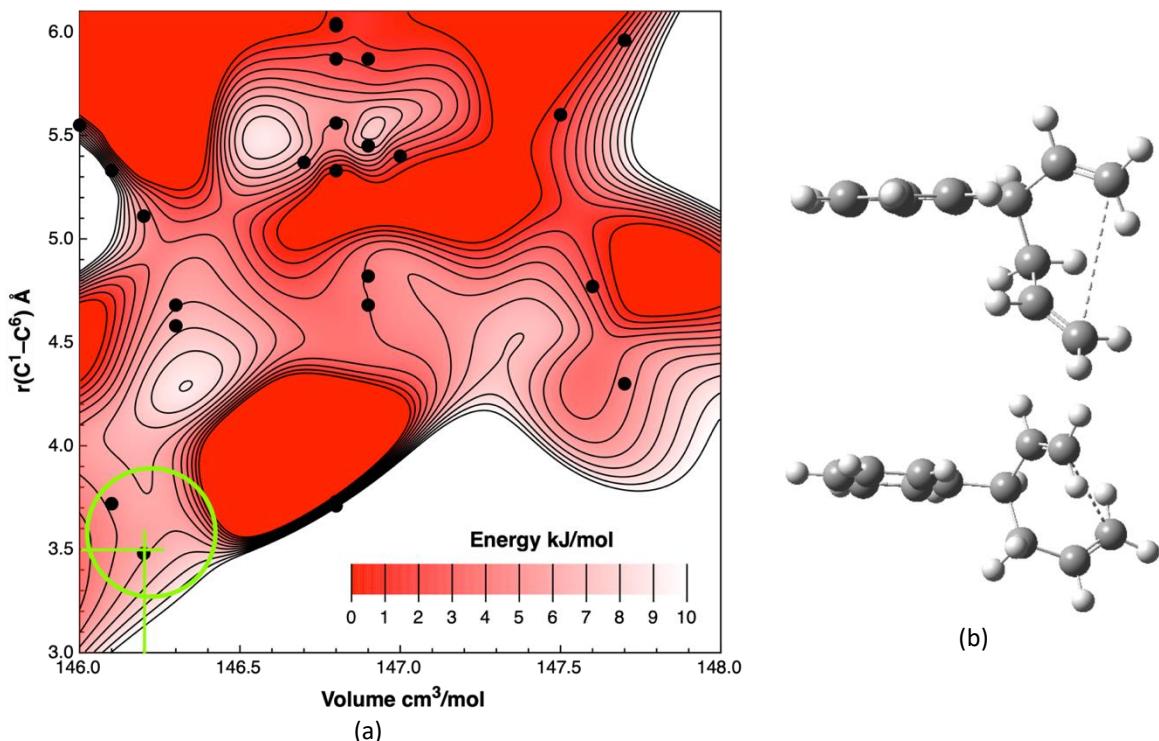


Figure S7.3 (a) $r(C^1-C^6)$ vs volume, with z-axis as energy, data used to interpolate a contour map for reaction B conformers, shortest $r(C^1-C^6)$ and smallest volume conformers emphasises in green, (b) the two structures with the "optimal" volume/ $r(C-C)$ ratio.

Section 8: Structures for TS-solvent cluster analysis

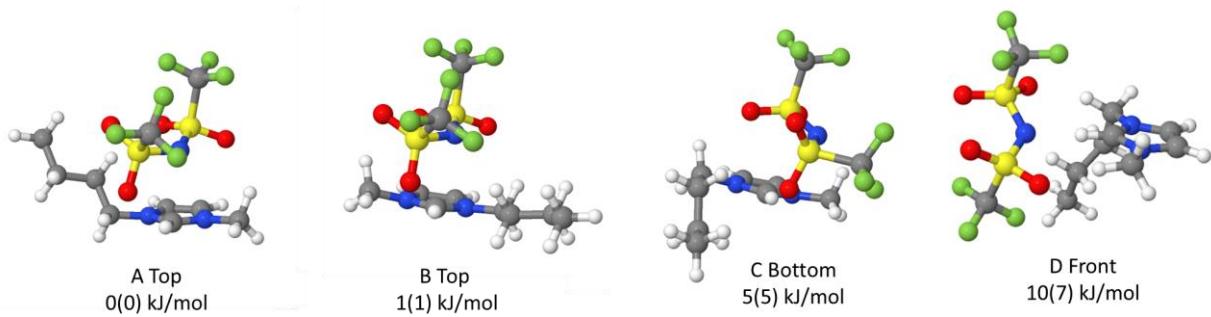


Figure S8.1: Low energy structures of B3LYP-D3BJ/6-311+G(d,p) [C₄C₁im][NTf₂] with relative energies ΔE(ΔG) in kJ/mol.

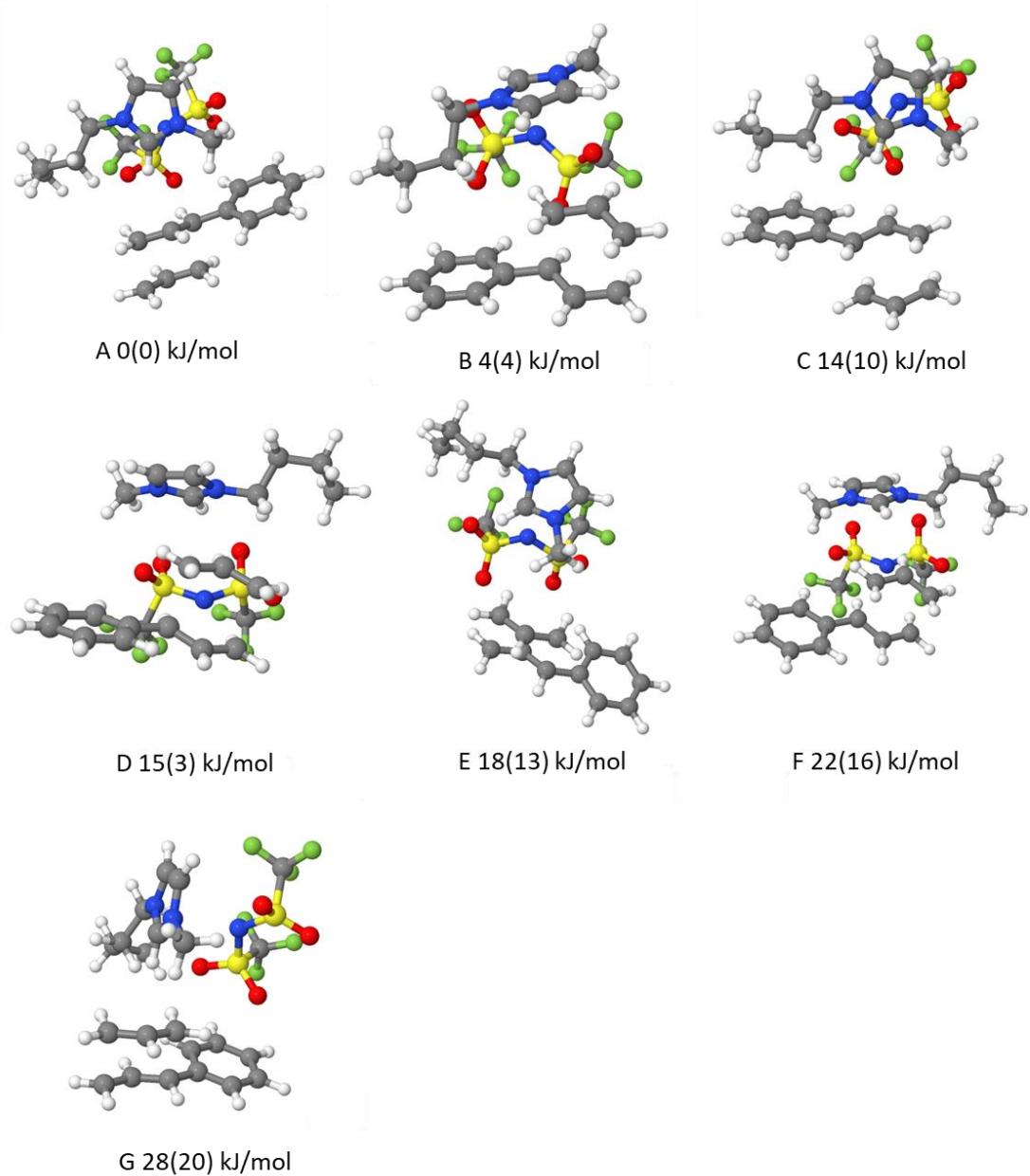


Figure S8.2: Low energy structures of [C₄C₁im][NTf₂] interacting with TS Chair (equatorial) B3LYP-D3BJ/6-311+G(d,p), ΔE(ΔG) in kJ/mol.

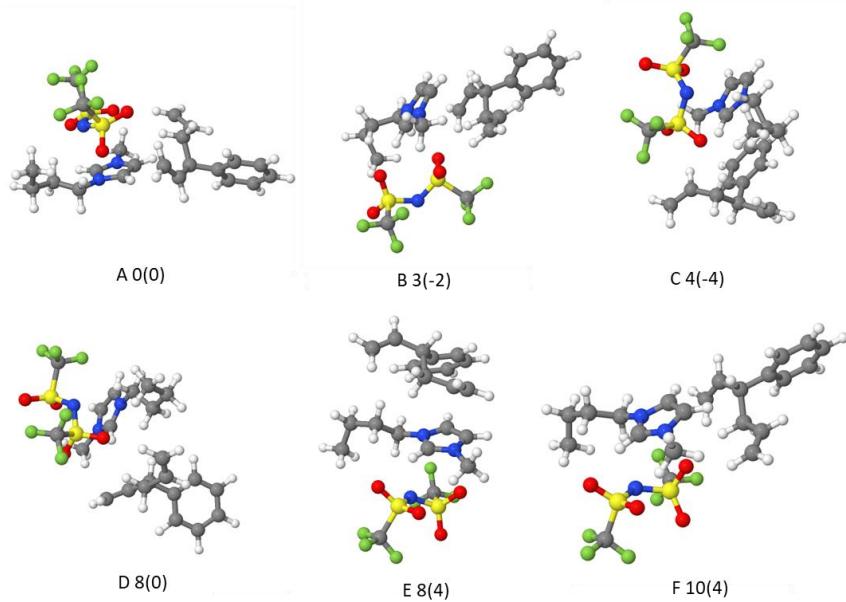


Figure 8.3: Low energy structures of $[C_4C_1\text{im}][\text{NTf}_2]$ interacting with the reactant B3LYP-D3BJ/6-311+G(d,p), $\Delta E(\Delta G)$ in kJ/mol.

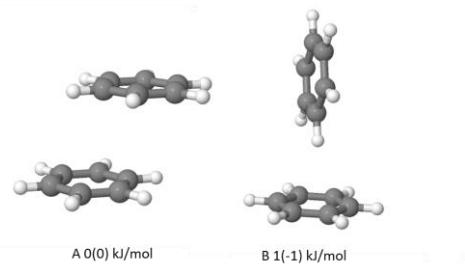


Figure S8.4: Low energy structures of two benzene molecules B3LYP-D3BJ/6-311+G(d,p), $\Delta E(\Delta G)$ in kJ/mol.

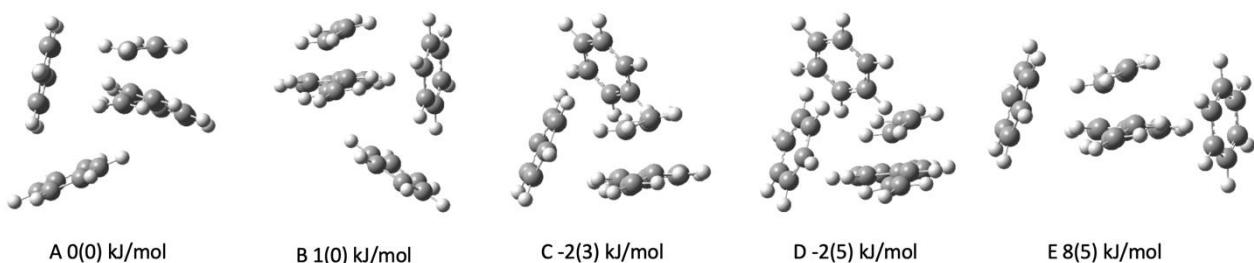


Figure S8.5: Low energy structures of two benzene molecules interacting with TS Chair (eq) B3LYP-D3BJ/6-311+G(d,p), $\Delta E(\Delta G)$ in kJ/mol.

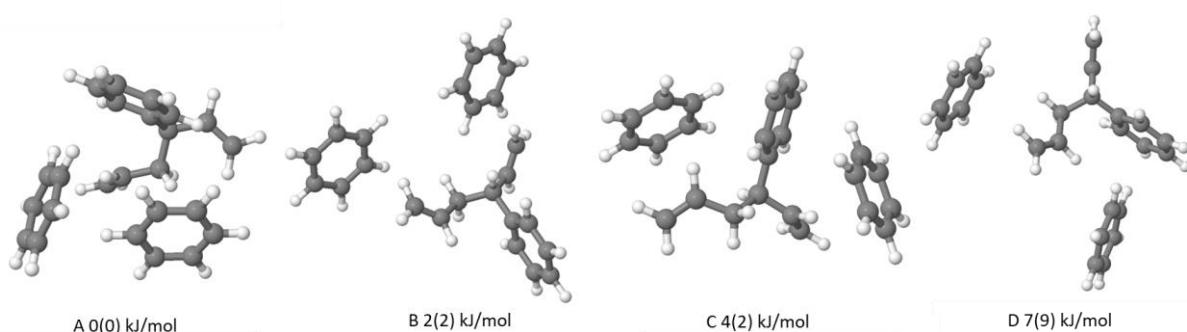


Figure 8.6: Low energy structures of two benzene molecules interacting with the reactant B3LYP-D3BJ/6-311+G(d,p) , $\Delta E(\Delta G)$ in kJ/mol.

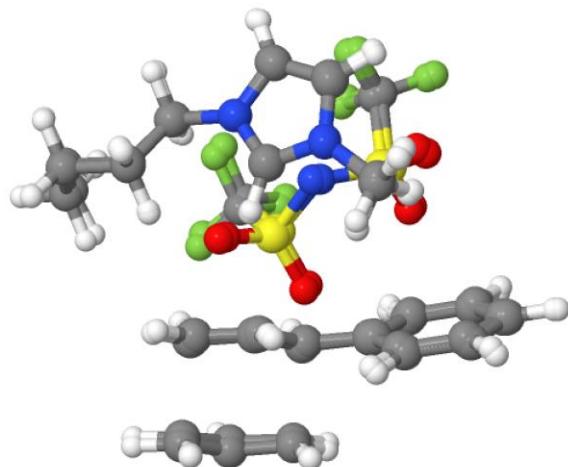


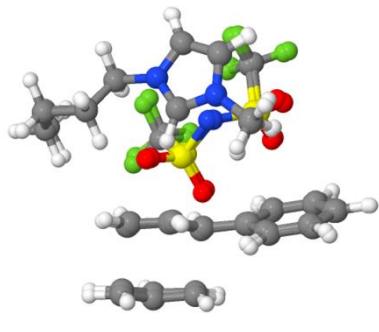
Figure 8.6: Low energy structures of two benzene molecules interacting with the reactant B3LYP-D3BJ/6-311+G(d,p) , $\Delta E(\Delta G)$ in kJ/mol.

Section 9: Association Energy of TS-solvent clusters

| method | React-B | React-B | React-B | TS-B | TS-B | TS-B |
|--|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| | ΔE | ΔH | ΔG | ΔE | ΔH | ΔG |
| IP E_{ass} (kJ/mol) | | | | | | |
| B3LYP | -37 | -30 | +14 | -59 | -52 | 0 |
| B3LYP-ILSMD | -27 | -22 | +30 | -40 | -33 | +21 |
| M06-2X | -47 | -41 | +11 | -67 | -61 | -8 |
| 2Bz E_{ass} (kJ/mol) | | | | | | |
| B3LYP | -39 | -32 | +26 | -45 | -38 | +17 |
| B3LYP -BzSMD | -30 | -24 | +26 | -30 | -25 | +21 |
| M06-2X | -48 | -42 | +16 | -49 | -43 | +16 |

Table S9.1 Solvent association energy $E_{ass}=E_{cluster}-(E_{TS}+E_{solvent})$ in the gas-phase, at the B3LYP, M06-2X level for reaction B.

(a)



(b)

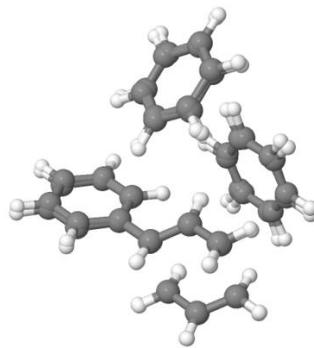


Figure S9.1 Overlay of the cluster structures in the gas-phase and respective SMD environments (a) TS-IL in ILSMD and (b)TS-2Bz in BzSMD.

Section 10: AIM Analysis of TS-solvent clusters

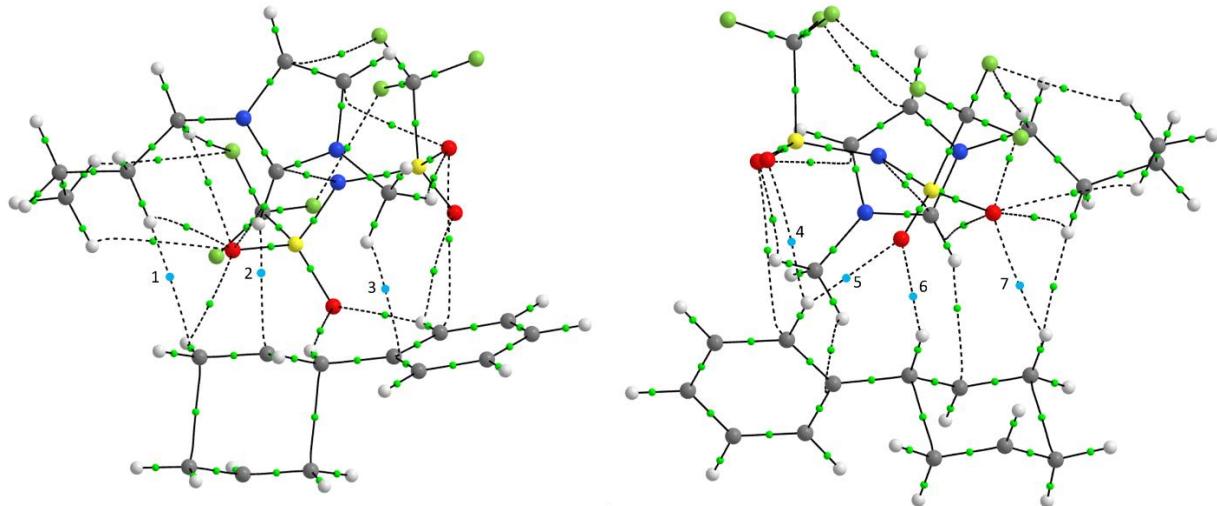


Figure S10.1 AIM analysis of B3LYP-D3BJ/6-311+G(d,p) TS-IL showing BCPs between the cation (left) and the anion (right) and the TS Chair (eq). Relevant BCPs highlighted in blue.

| Number | Connecting atoms | $\rho(r)$ -GP | $\nabla^2\rho(r)$ | $\rho(r)$ -IL |
|--------|------------------|---------------|-------------------|---------------|
| 1 | H-H | 0.005 | 0.015 | 0.005 |
| 2 | H-C | 0.009 | 0.023 | 0.008 |
| 3 | H-C | 0.008 | 0.027 | 0.007 |
| 4 | O-H | 0.005 | 0.016 | - |
| 5 | O-H | 0.011 | 0.035 | 0.010 |
| 6 | O-H | 0.011 | 0.035 | 0.007 |
| 7 | O-H | 0.007 | 0.025 | 0.005 |

Table S10.1 Electron density and the Laplacian for selected bond critical points of the gas-phase B3LYP-D3BJ/6-311+G(d,p) TS-IL structure and the TS-IL structure within the IL-SMD.

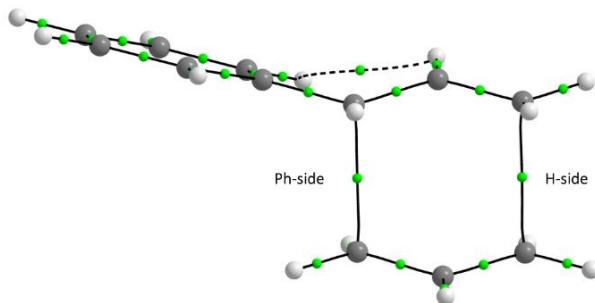


Figure S9.2 Selected bond critical points for the B3LYP-D3BJ/6-311+G(d,p) TS Chair (eq).

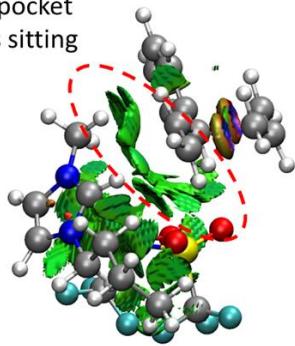
Both BCPs involved in bond breaking/forming shower higher electron density when bound to the IL

| Number | Connecting atoms | $\rho(r)$ | $\nabla^2\rho(r)$ |
|------------------|------------------|-----------|-------------------|
| Just TS Chair | | | |
| 1 (H-Side) | C-C | 0.055 | 0.043 |
| 2 (Ph-Side) | C-C | 0.063 | 0.033 |
| TS Chair + IL | | | |
| 1 + IL (H-Side) | C-C | 0.057 | 0.042 |
| 2 + IL (Ph-Side) | C-C | 0.065 | 0.033 |

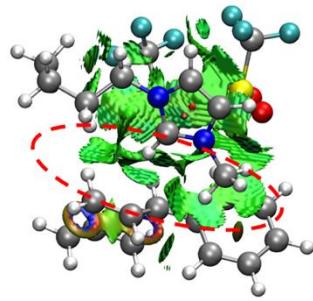
Table S10.2 Electron density and the Laplacian for selected bond critical points of the isolated gas-phase B3LYP-D3BJ/6-311+G(d,p) TS.

Section 11: NCI plots of TS-solvent clusters

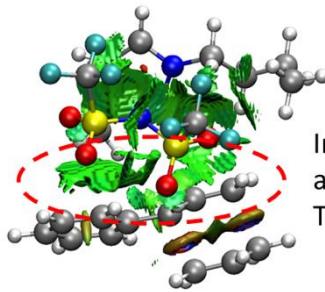
anion cation pocket
in which TS is sitting



Interactions along
front of cation and
TS



Interactions along
anion oxygens and
TS



Interactions
between anion and
cation

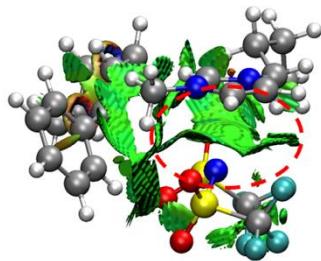


Figure S11.1 NCI plot of $[C_4C_1im][NTf_2]$ interacting with the TSChair equatorial, $B3LYP-D3BJ/6-311+G(d,p)$

Section 12: NBO and CHelpG Charge Analysis

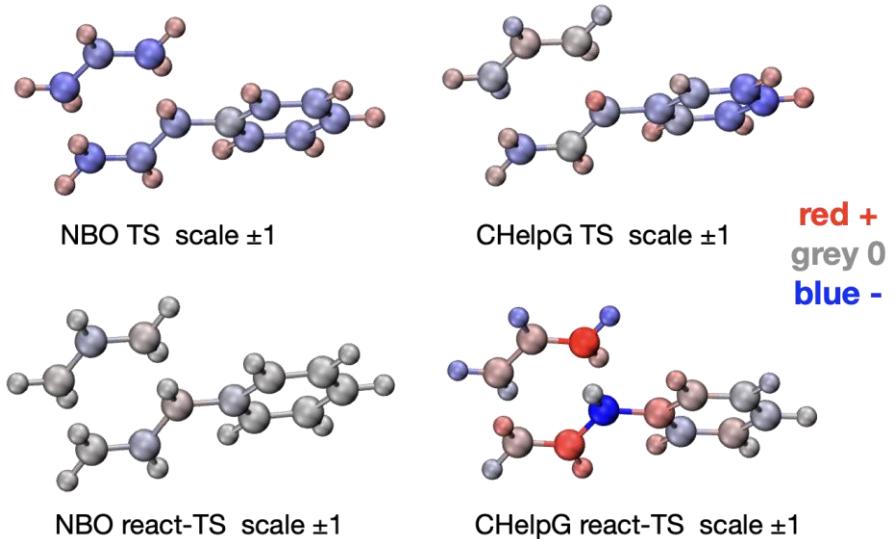


Figure S12.1 NBO and CHelpG charges for the gas-phase B3LYP-D3BJ/6-311+G(d,p) reactant and TS of reaction B, colour scale maxima are -1 (blue) through grey (0) to red (+1).

| reactant | | | | transition state | | | | product | | | |
|----------|-----|--------|--------|------------------|-----|--------|--------|---------|-----|--------|--------|
| no. | atm | ESP | NBO | no. | atm | ESP | NBO | no. | atm | ESP | NBO |
| 1 | C | -0.206 | -0.381 | 1 | C | 0.086 | -0.251 | 1 | C | -0.076 | -0.170 |
| 2 | H | 0.105 | 0.181 | 2 | H | -0.110 | 0.194 | 2 | H | 0.093 | 0.189 |
| 3 | H | -0.055 | 0.191 | 3 | C | -0.057 | -0.365 | 3 | C | -0.596 | -0.383 |
| 4 | C | -0.077 | -0.173 | 4 | H | -0.133 | 0.197 | 4 | H | 0.135 | 0.181 |
| 5 | H | 0.185 | 0.198 | 5 | C | 0.033 | -0.360 | 5 | C | 0.999 | -0.410 |
| 6 | C | -1.370 | -0.401 | 6 | H | -0.050 | 0.209 | 6 | H | -0.324 | 0.210 |
| 7 | H | -0.088 | 0.209 | 7 | H | 0.094 | 0.199 | 7 | H | -0.069 | 0.194 |
| 8 | H | 0.383 | 0.205 | 8 | H | 0.139 | 0.205 | 8 | H | 0.082 | 0.191 |
| 9 | C | 3.328 | -0.265 | 9 | C | -0.006 | -0.226 | 9 | C | -0.535 | -0.150 |
| 10 | H | 0.384 | 0.206 | 10 | H | 0.187 | 0.195 | 10 | H | -0.213 | 0.193 |
| 11 | C | -0.731 | -0.156 | 11 | C | -0.115 | -0.204 | 11 | C | -0.335 | -0.208 |
| 12 | H | -0.232 | 0.190 | 12 | H | 0.353 | 0.208 | 12 | C | 1.756 | -0.424 |
| 13 | C | -0.349 | -0.375 | 13 | C | -0.231 | -0.368 | 13 | H | -0.540 | 0.210 |
| 14 | H | 0.179 | 0.193 | 14 | H | 0.109 | 0.206 | 14 | H | -0.575 | 0.211 |
| 15 | H | -0.226 | 0.184 | 15 | H | 0.145 | 0.198 | 15 | H | 0.219 | 0.202 |
| 16 | C | -0.508 | -0.020 | 16 | C | -0.167 | -0.060 | 16 | C | -0.052 | -0.073 |
| 17 | C | -0.252 | -0.199 | 17 | C | -0.137 | -0.192 | 17 | C | 0.113 | -0.197 |
| 18 | C | 0.003 | -0.211 | 18 | C | -0.100 | -0.199 | 18 | C | -0.227 | -0.185 |
| 19 | C | -0.362 | -0.195 | 19 | C | -0.380 | -0.197 | 19 | C | -0.523 | -0.200 |
| 20 | H | -0.125 | 0.205 | 20 | H | 0.111 | 0.202 | 20 | H | 0.416 | 0.206 |
| 21 | C | -0.408 | -0.195 | 21 | C | -0.312 | -0.195 | 21 | C | -0.601 | -0.201 |
| 22 | H | 0.002 | 0.202 | 22 | H | 0.226 | 0.202 | 22 | H | 0.377 | 0.205 |
| 23 | C | -0.407 | -0.211 | 23 | C | -0.466 | -0.213 | 23 | C | -0.377 | -0.207 |
| 24 | H | 0.305 | 0.206 | 24 | H | 0.231 | 0.205 | 24 | H | 0.130 | 0.205 |
| 25 | H | 0.206 | 0.205 | 25 | H | 0.228 | 0.205 | 25 | H | 0.282 | 0.206 |
| 26 | H | 0.315 | 0.206 | 26 | H | 0.323 | 0.206 | 26 | H | 0.441 | 0.205 |

Table S12.1 NBO and CHelpG charges for the B3LYP-D3BJ/6-311+G(d,p) gas-phase reactant, TS and product of reaction B.

| no. | atm | ESP | NBO |
|-----|-----|-------|-------|
| 1 | C | 0.16 | -0.08 |
| 2 | H | -0.30 | 0.00 |
| 3 | C | 0.15 | 0.02 |
| 4 | H | -0.24 | 0.02 |
| 5 | C | 1.40 | 0.04 |
| 6 | H | 0.04 | 0.00 |
| 7 | H | -0.29 | -0.01 |
| 8 | H | 0.19 | 0.01 |
| 9 | C | 0.72 | -0.07 |
| 10 | H | 0.42 | 0.00 |
| 11 | C | -3.44 | 0.06 |
| 12 | H | -0.03 | 0.00 |
| 13 | C | 0.12 | 0.01 |
| 14 | H | -0.07 | 0.01 |
| 15 | H | 0.37 | 0.01 |
| 16 | C | 0.34 | -0.04 |
| 17 | C | 0.11 | 0.01 |
| 18 | C | -0.10 | 0.01 |
| 19 | C | -0.02 | 0.00 |
| 20 | H | 0.24 | 0.00 |
| 21 | C | 0.10 | 0.00 |
| 22 | H | 0.22 | 0.00 |
| 23 | C | -0.06 | 0.00 |
| 24 | H | -0.07 | 0.00 |
| 25 | H | 0.02 | 0.00 |
| 26 | H | 0.01 | 0.00 |

Table S12.2 NBO and CHelpG charges for the B3LYP-D3BJ/6-311+G(d,p) gas-phase $q_{\text{reactant}} - q_{\text{TS}}$ of reaction B.

Section 13: Density Difference of TS-solvent clusters

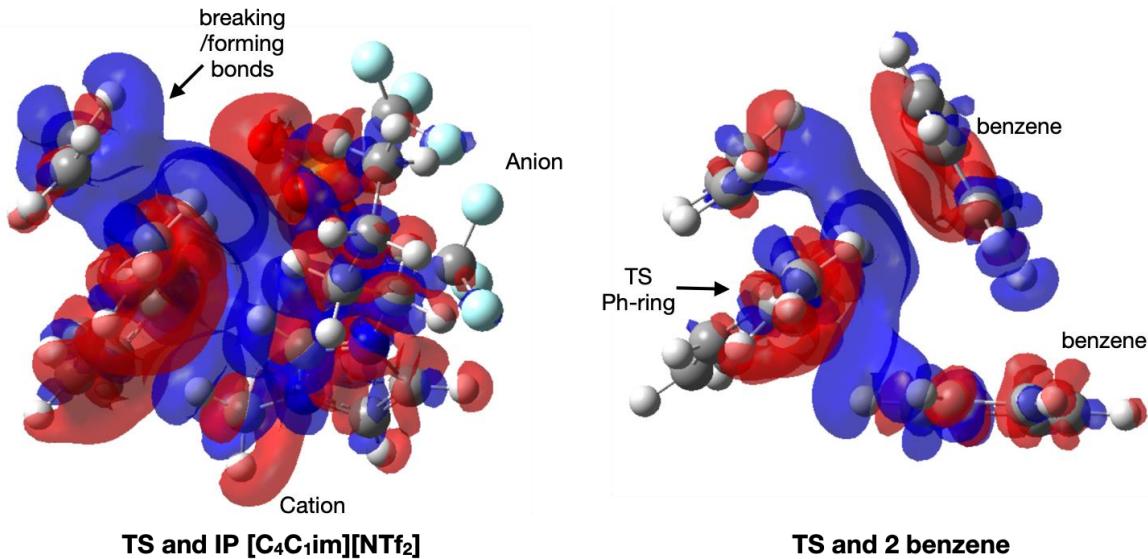


Figure S13.1 Density difference plots for the B3LYP-D3BJ/6-311+G(d,p) TS-solvent clusters evaluated in the gas-phase, mapped to the 0.0002au iso-density surface.

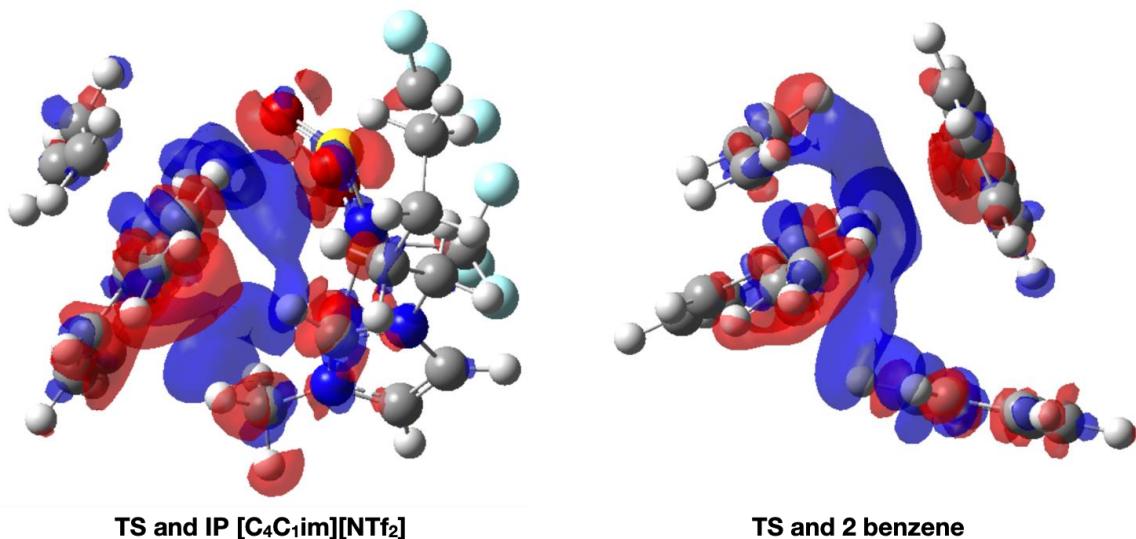


Figure S13.2 Density difference plots for the B3LYP-D3BJ/6-311+G(d,p) TS-solvent clusters evaluated with respective SMD generalised solvent environments, mapped to the 0.0002au iso-density surface.

Section 14: Comparing GP and SMD electrostatic polarisation

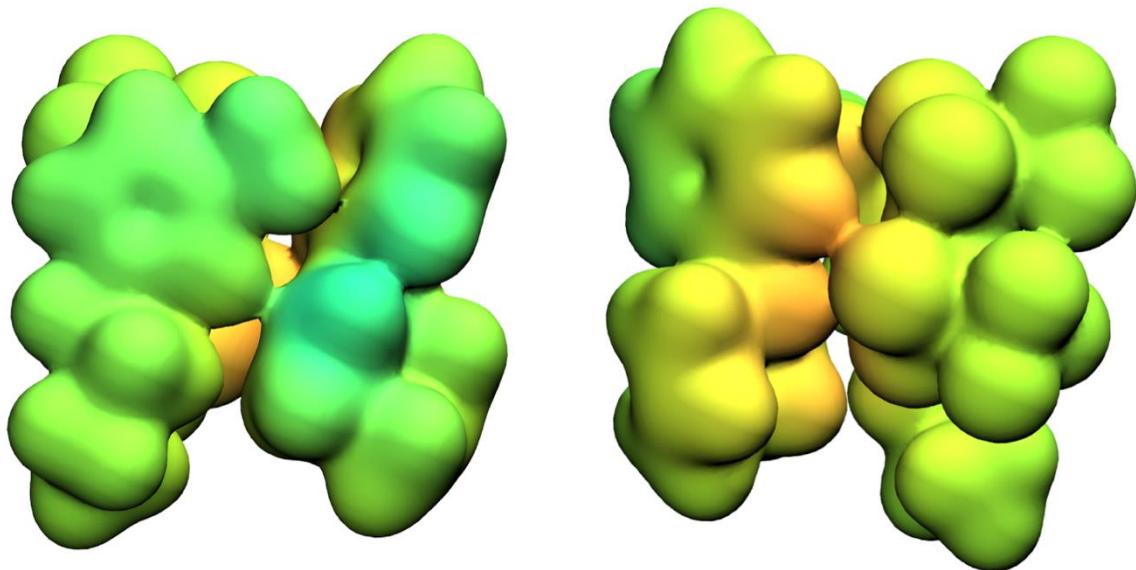


Figure S14.2 Reaction B TS-[C₄C₁C₁im][NTf₂] Δ ESP=ESP_{cluster}-(ESP_{TS}+ESP_{solvent}) mapped onto the 0.007 au (e/a_0^3) density iso-surface.
“Rainbow” colour scheme, blue=negative, green=neutral, red=positive, maximum ± 0.02 au.

Section 15: Computed Alpha

| IL ion | α (a_0^3) |
|--|----------------------|
| [C ₄ C ₁ im] ⁺ | 100 |
| [C ₄ C ₁ pyrr] ⁺ | 106 |
| [C ₄ C ₁ C ₁ im] ⁺ | 113 |
| [C ₈ C ₁ im] ⁺ | 152 |
| [NTf ₂] ⁻ | 95 |
| [OTf] ⁻ | 49 |

Table S15.1 Computed polarizability (α) of the ionic liquid ions, evaluate for B3LYP-D3(BJ)/6-311+G(d,p) optimised gas-phase structures.

Section 16: HPLC Data

HPLC calibration curve: Seven solutions of varying concentration of 1-phenyl-1,5-hexadiene in acetonitrile were prepared. A stock solution of naphthalene standard in acetonitrile was prepared (0.01 mmol/ml). 0.5 ml (0.005 mmol) of naphthalene standard was added to each of the prepared 1-phenyl-1,5-hexadiene solutions. The mixtures were analysed by HPLC and the ratio between product and standard signal was used to generate a calibration curve to quantify the product formation in reaction B.

| Calibration | Volume [ml] | n(Product) [mmol] | A(Standard) | A(Product) | Ratio |
|-------------|-------------|-------------------|-------------|------------|-------|
| 1 | 1.5 | 0.00735 | 593154 | 11789519 | 19.88 |
| 2 | 1 | 0.00490 | 798026 | 10415217 | 13.05 |
| 3 | 0.5 | 0.00245 | 1446191 | 8521449 | 5.89 |
| 4 | 0.4 | 0.00196 | 1442483 | 6828108 | 4.73 |
| 5 | 0.3 | 0.00147 | 1432381 | 5163903 | 3.61 |
| 6 | 0.2 | 0.00098 | 1421133 | 3443107 | 2.42 |
| 7 | 0.1 | 0.00049 | 1424167 | 1677122 | 1.18 |

Table S14.1 Calibration data

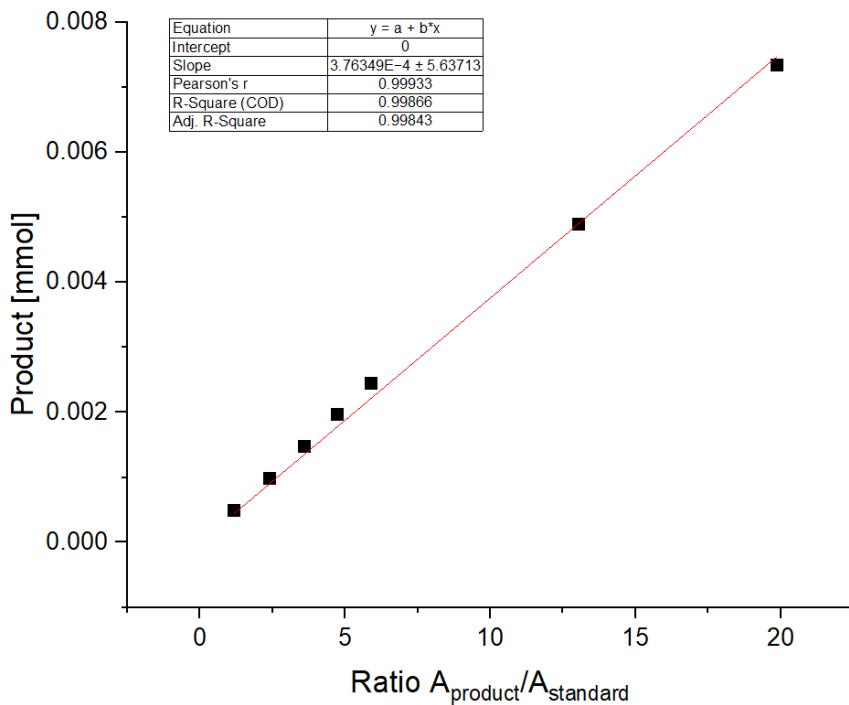


Figure S14.1 Calibration curve used to quantify the product of reaction B.

General procedure for reaction B

A solution of 3-phenyl-1,5-hexadiene in the relevant solvent was prepared, for exact quantities see Table S13.1 (approx. 0.021 mmol/ml). The solution was then transferred to a pressure tube and sealed. The reaction was run at 150°C for 17h. Upon completion the reaction was cooled to RT to stop further rearrangement. For non-viscous samples, a sample (0.6ml) was taken and mixed with the standard. For viscous samples, taking accurate aliquots was not feasible and in these cases the reaction mixture was directly mixed with the standard in the pressure tube. The solution of reaction mixture and standard was diluted with acetonitrile and analysed by HPLC.

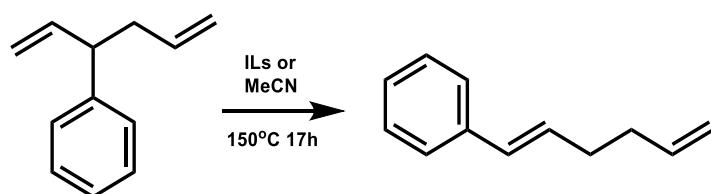


Figure S14.2 Conditions for screening of solvent for Reaction B.

| Solvent | Run | Conc. reaction [mmol/ml] | Volume solvent [ml] | Sample taken [ml] | Sample amount [mmol] |
|--|-----|--------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| MeCN | A | 0.0211 | 3 | 0.6 | 0.0126 |
| | B | 0.0211 | 3 | 0.6 | 0.0126 |
| [C ₄ C ₁ im] [NTf ₂] | A | 0.0209 | 1.2 | whole sample | 0.0251 |
| | B | 0.0209 | 1.1 | whole sample | 0.0230 |
| [C ₄ C ₁ C ₁ im][NTf ₂] | A | 0.0216 | 1.1 | whole sample | 0.0238 |
| | B | 0.0216 | 1.1 | whole sample | 0.0237 |
| [C ₄ C ₁ pyrr][NTf ₂] | A | 0.0212 | 1.2 | whole sample | 0.0254 |
| | B | 0.0212 | 1.2 | whole sample | 0.0254 |
| [C ₄ C ₁ im][OTf] | A | 0.0202 | 1.2 | whole sample | 0.0242 |
| | B | 0.0202 | 1.2 | whole sample | 0.0242 |
| [C ₈ C ₁ im][OTf] | A | 0.0211 | 1.2 | whole sample | 0.0254 |
| | B | 0.0211 | 1.2 | whole sample | 0.0254 |

Table S14.2: Reaction setup for reaction B.

| Solvent | Run | Sample amount [mmol] | A (standard) | A (product) | Ratio | n(product) | conversion % |
|--|-----|----------------------|--------------|-------------|-------|------------|--------------|
| MeCN | A | 0.0126 | 349534 | 600714 | 1.72 | 0.0006 | 5.12 |
| | B | 0.0126 | 348396 | 497851 | 1.43 | 0.0005 | 4.26 |
| [C ₄ C ₁ im] [NTF ₂] | A | 0.0251 | 327400 | 3818131 | 11.66 | 0.0044 | 17.50 |
| | B | 0.0230 | 346548 | 3822888 | 11.03 | 0.0042 | 18.06 |
| [C ₄ C ₁ C ₁ im][NTf ₂] | A | 0.0238 | 336051 | 3516358 | 10.46 | 0.0039 | 16.58 |
| | B | 0.0237 | 324136 | 3554685 | 10.97 | 0.0041 | 17.38 |
| [C ₄ C ₁ pyrr][NTF ₂] | A | 0.0254 | 259036 | 2597177 | 10.03 | 0.0038 | 14.87 |
| | B | 0.0254 | 303296 | 2781154 | 9.17 | 0.0035 | 13.60 |
| [C ₄ C ₁ im][OTf] | A | 0.0242 | 336494 | 3293733 | 9.79 | 0.0037 | 15.22 |
| | B | 0.0242 | 323997 | 3052039 | 9.42 | 0.0035 | 14.64 |
| [C ₈ C ₁ im][NTf ₂] | A | 0.0254 | 322064 | 2692611 | 8.36 | 0.0031 | 12.40 |
| | B | 0.0254 | 323997 | 3052039 | 9.42 | 0.0035 | 13.97 |

Table S14.3 HPLC data and quantified conversion [%] for reaction B.

Section 17: NMR of Relevant Compounds

[C₄C₁im][NTf₂]

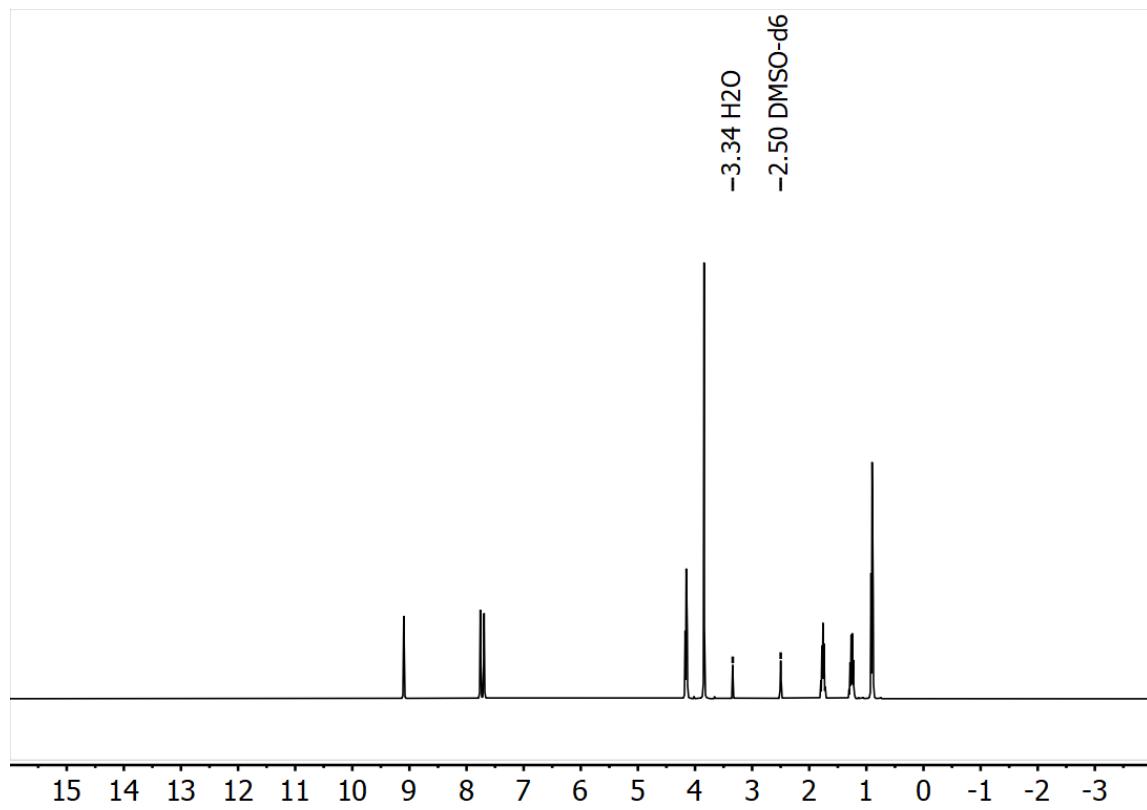


Figure S15.1: ¹H spectra of [C₄C₁im][NTf₂] in DMSO-d₆.

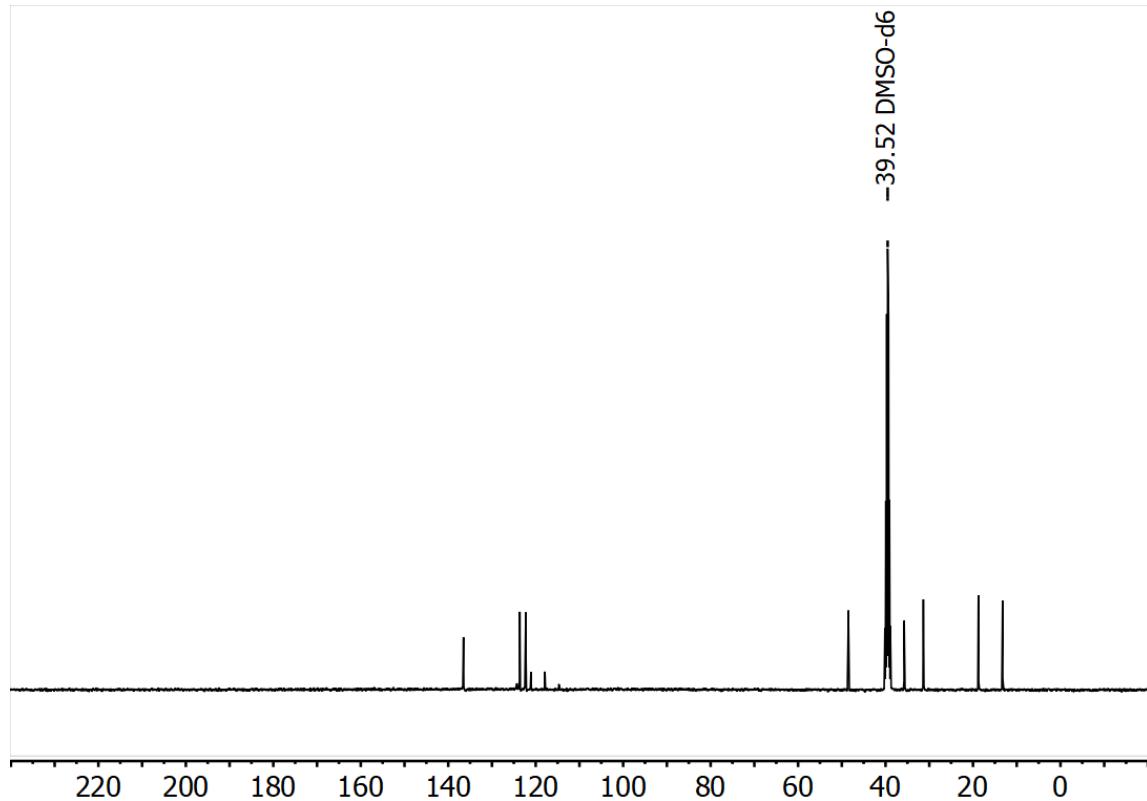


Figure S15.2: ¹³C{¹H} spectra of [C₄C₁im][NTf₂] in DMSO-d₆.

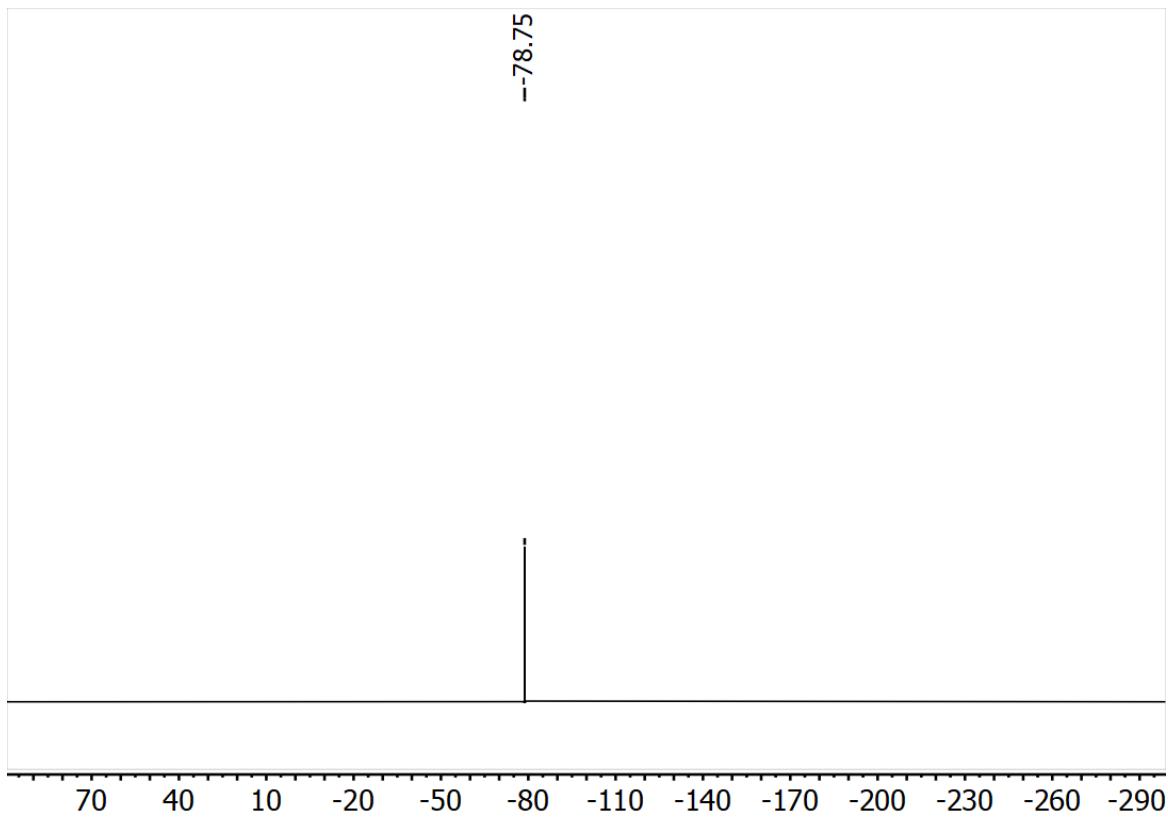


Figure S15.3: ^{19}F spectra of $[\text{C}_4\text{C}_1\text{im}][\text{NTf}_2]$ in DMSO-d_6 .

[C₄C₁im][OTf]

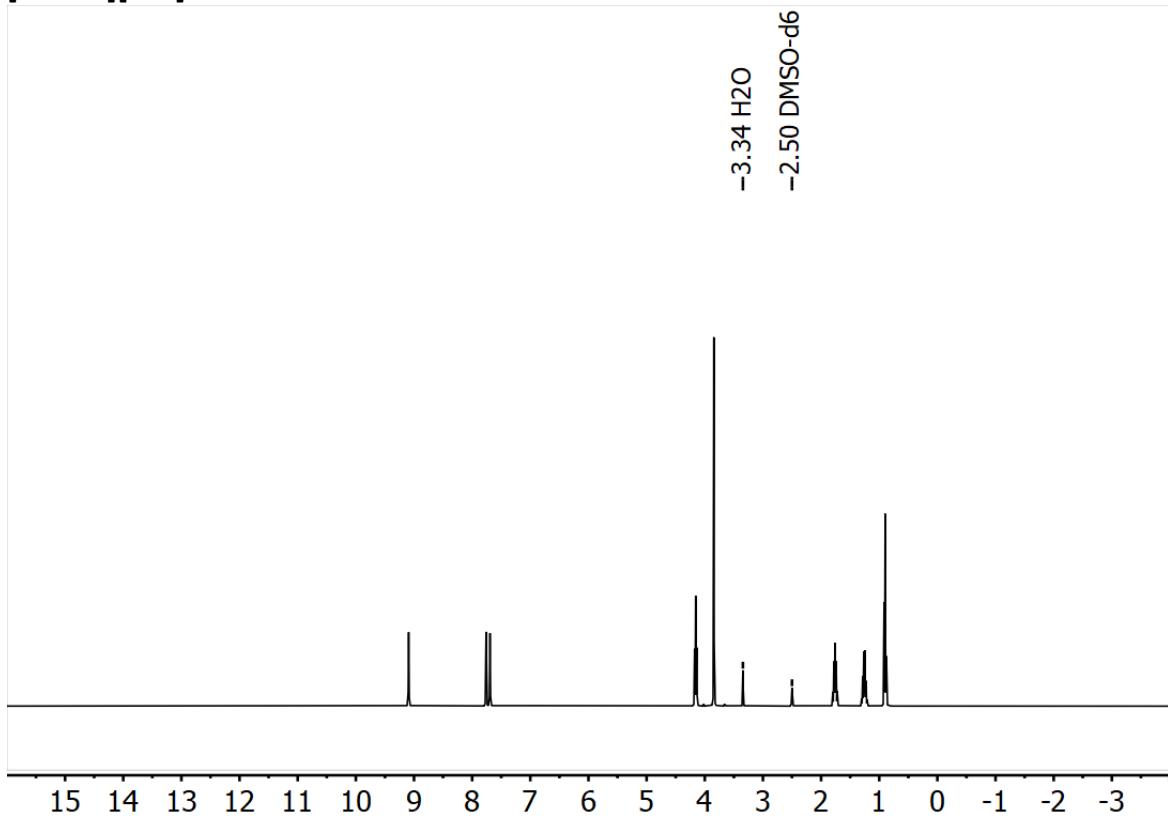


Figure S15.4: ^1H spectra of $[\text{C}_4\text{C}_1\text{im}][\text{OTf}]$ in DMSO-d_6 .

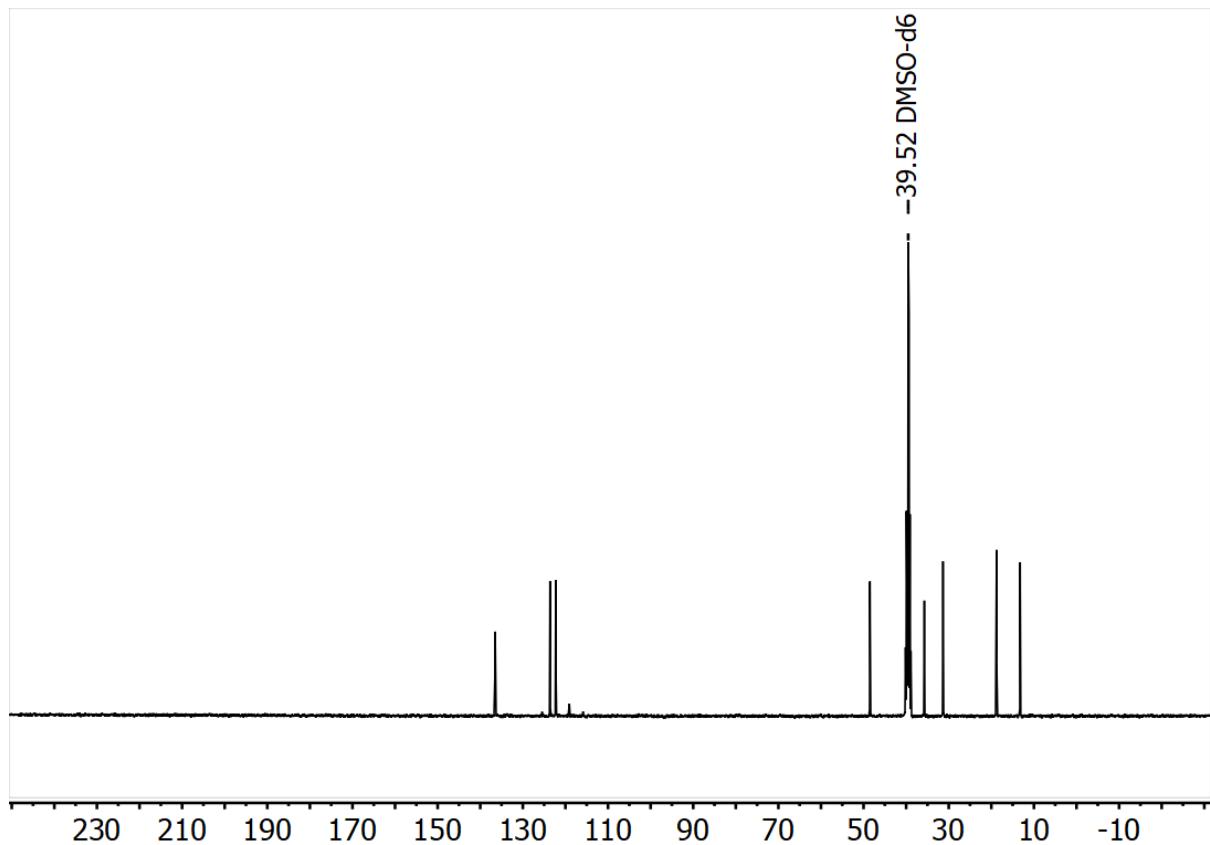


Figure S15.5: $^{13}\text{C}\{^1\text{H}\}$ spectra of $[\text{C}_4\text{C}_1\text{im}][\text{OTf}]$ in DMSO-d_6 .

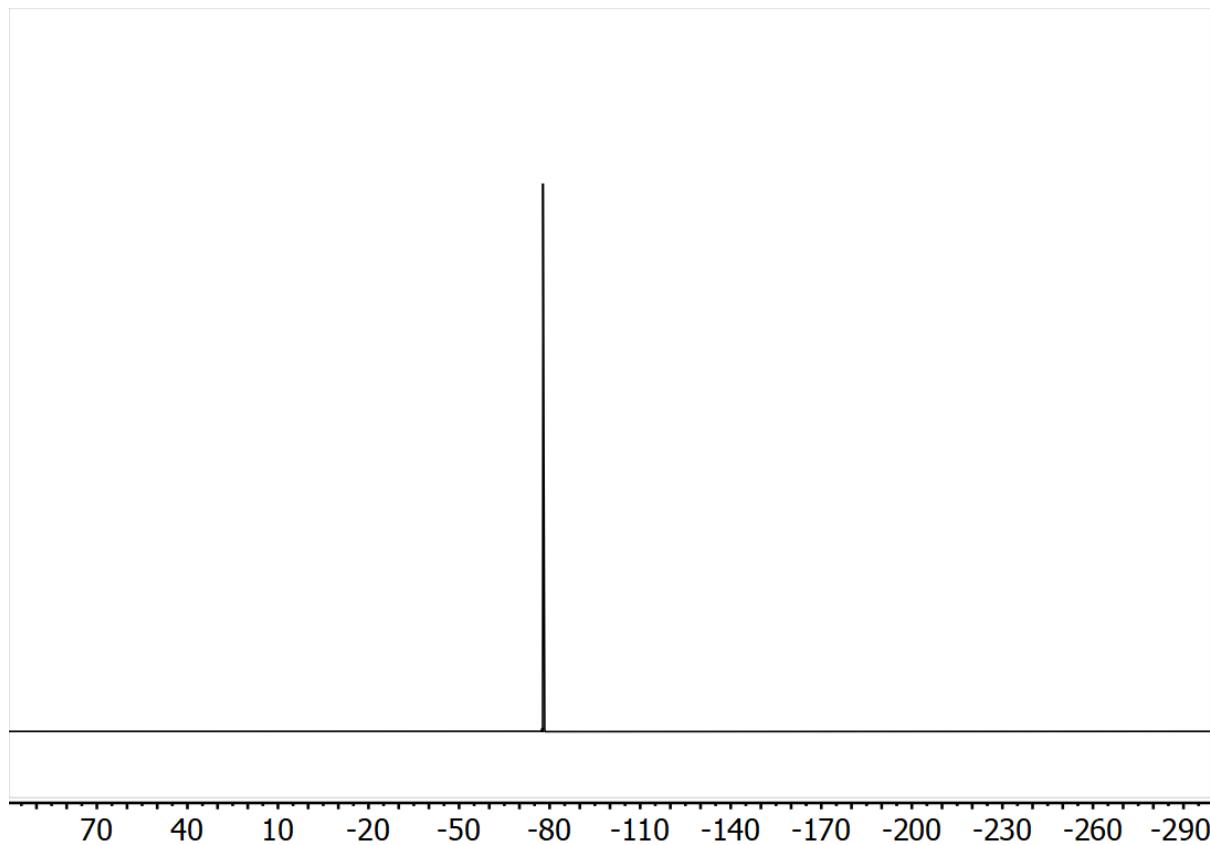


Figure S15.6: ^{19}F spectra of $[\text{C}_4\text{C}_1\text{im}][\text{OTf}]$ in DMSO-d_6 .

[C₄C₁C₁im][NTf₂]

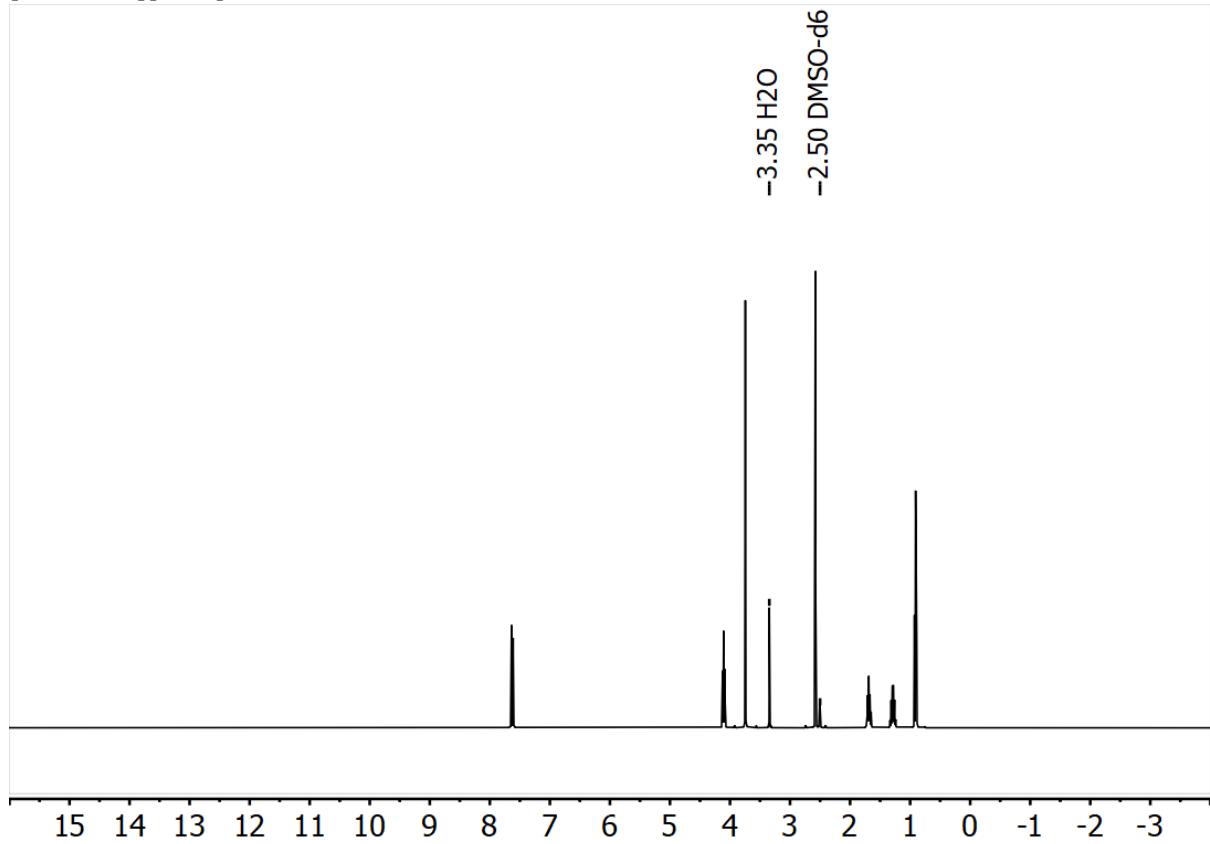


Figure S15.7: ¹H spectra of [C₄C₁C₁im][NTf₂] in DMSO-d₆.

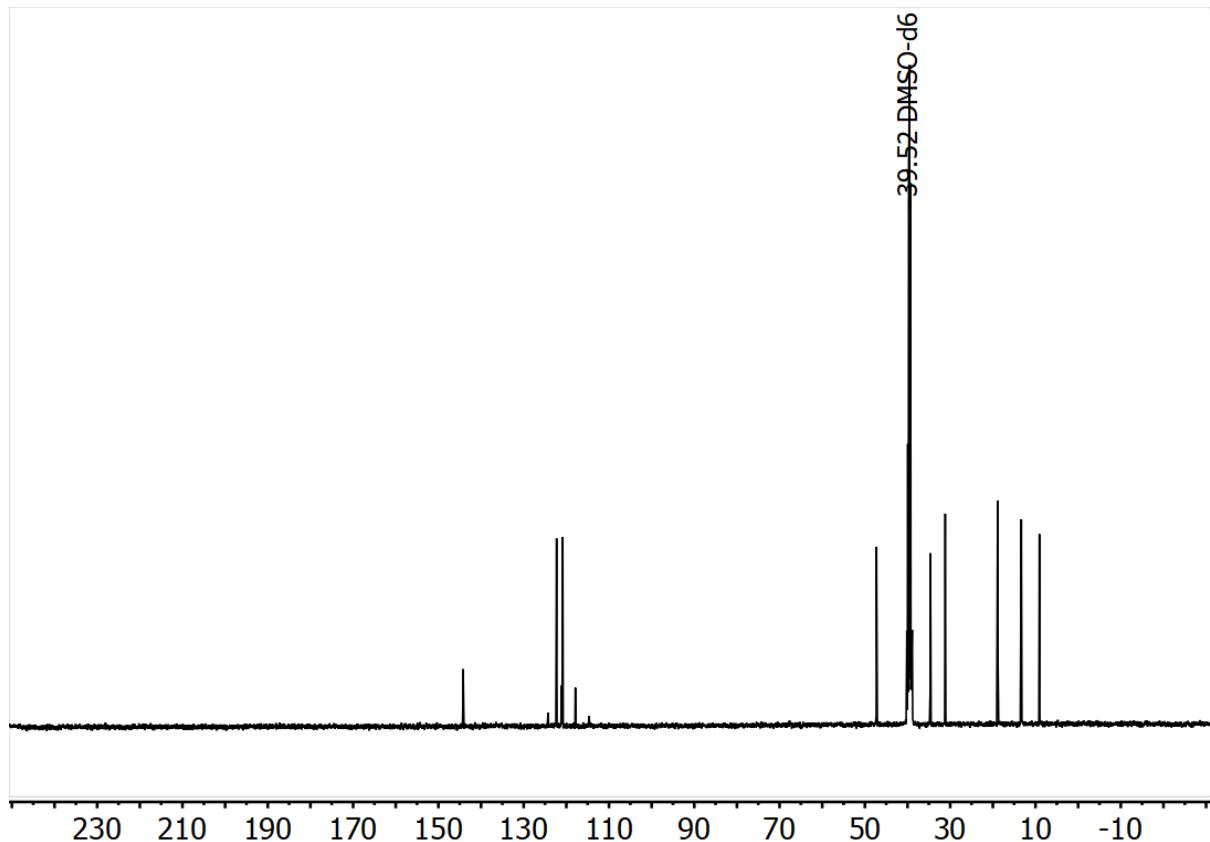


Figure S15.8: ¹³C{¹H} spectra of [C₄C₁C₁im][NTf₂] in DMSO-d₆.

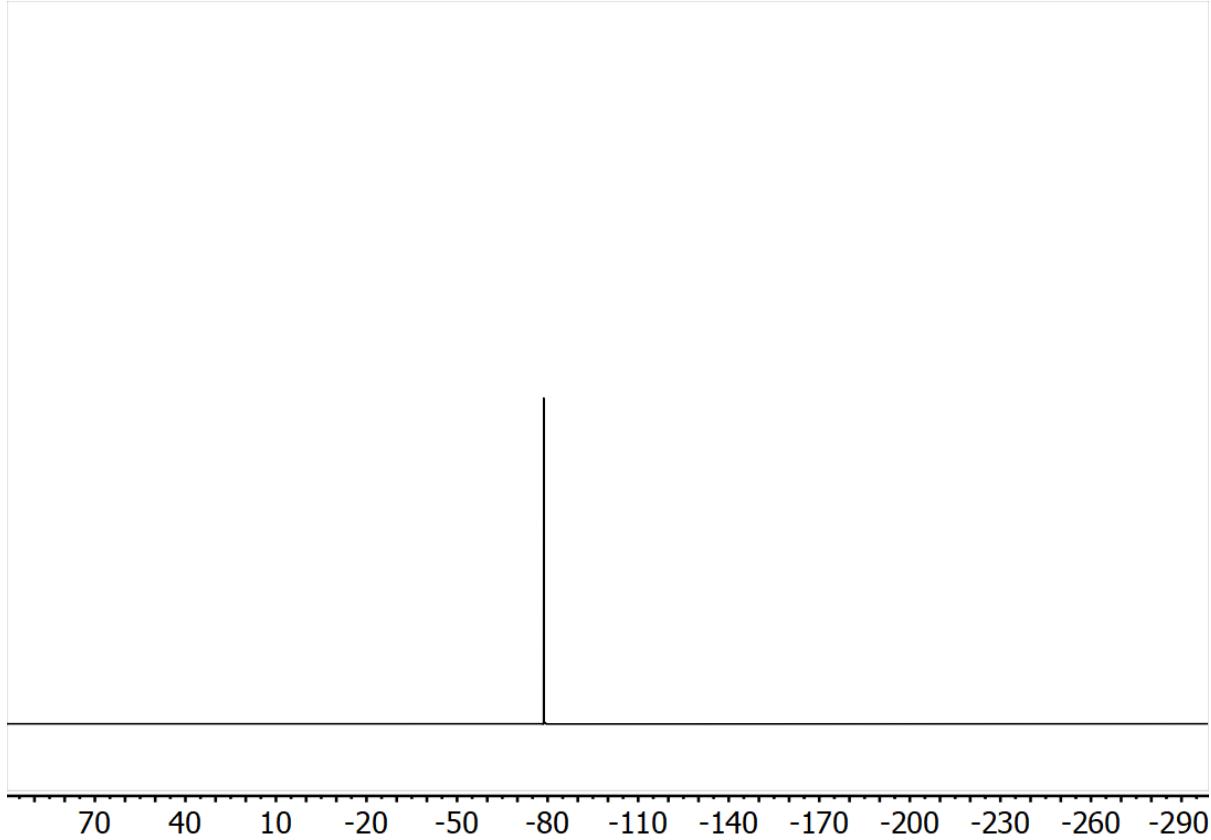


Figure S15.9: ^{19}F spectra of $[\text{C}_4\text{C}_1\text{C}_1\text{im}][\text{NTf}_2]$ in DMSO-d_6 .

[C₄C₁pyrr][NTf₂]

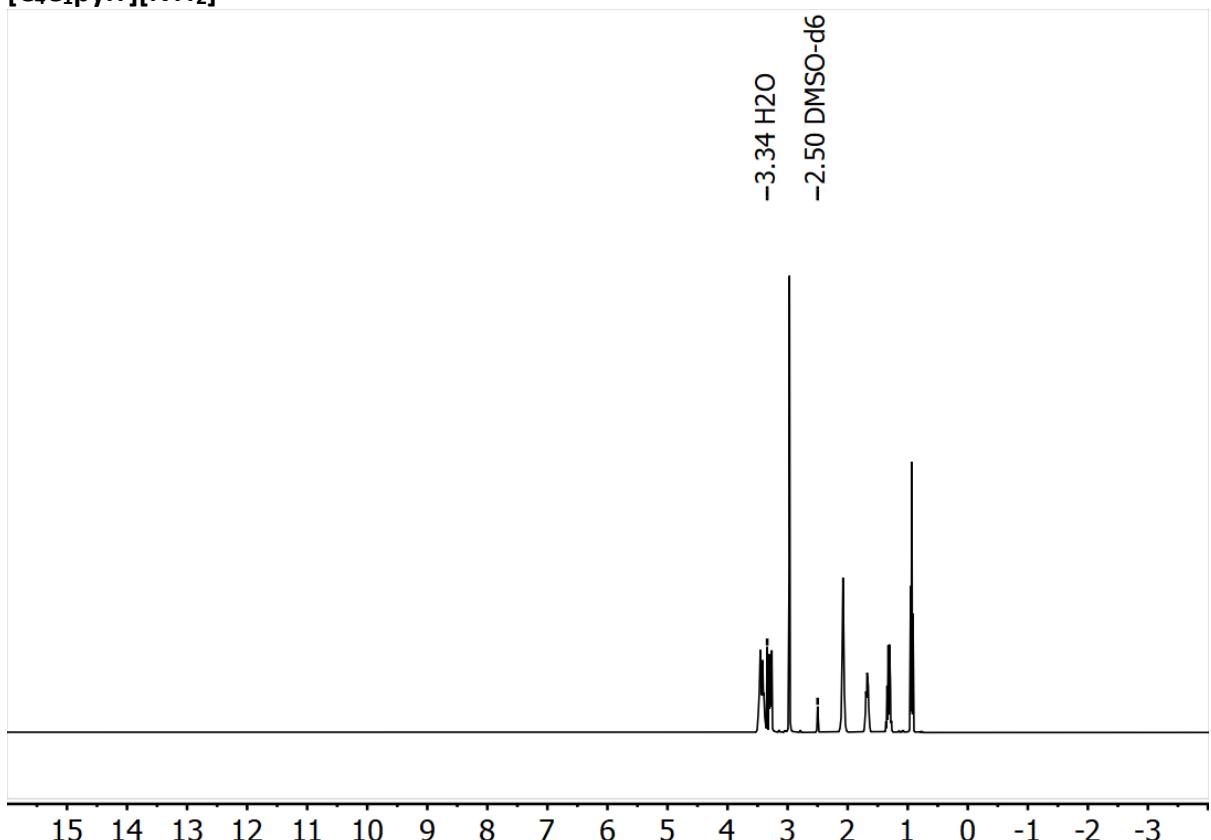


Figure S15.10: ^1H spectra of $[\text{C}_4\text{C}_1\text{pyrr}][\text{NTf}_2]$ in DMSO-d_6 .

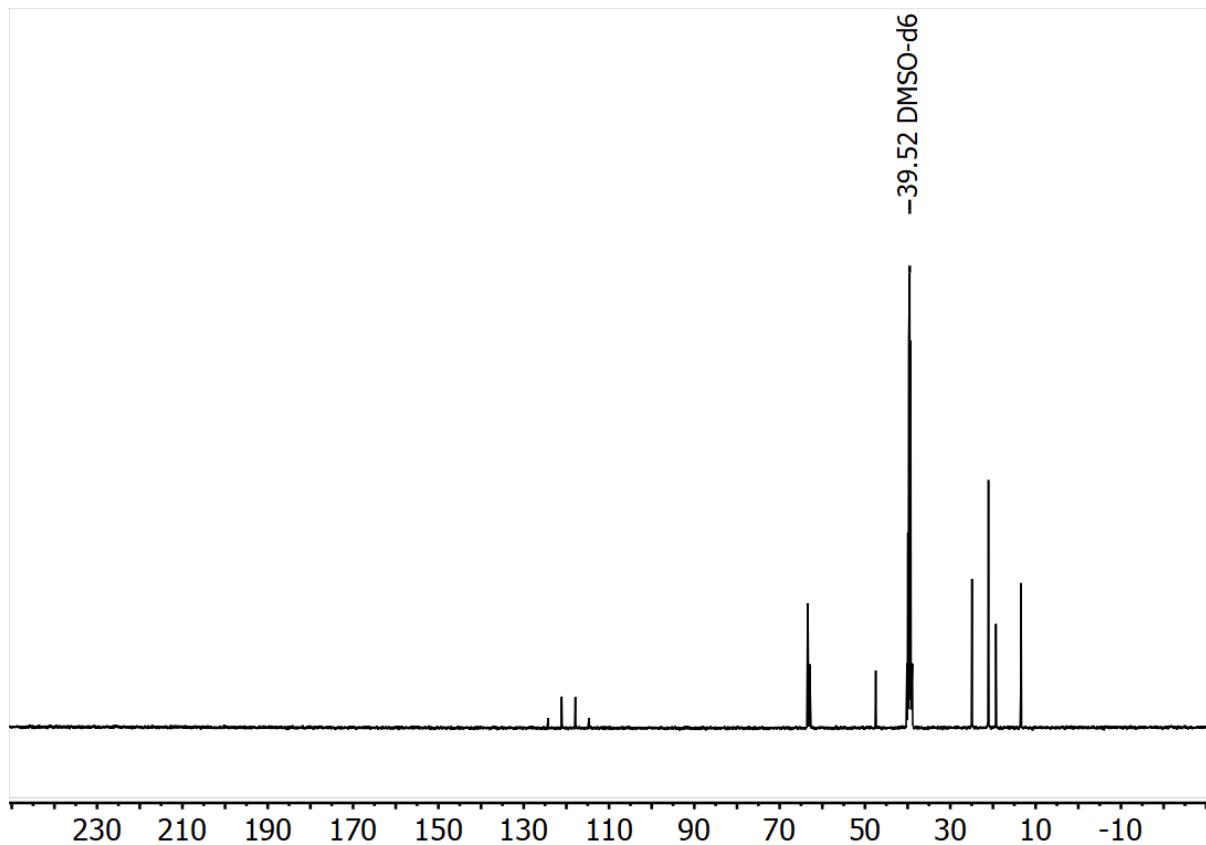


Figure S15.11: $^{13}\text{C}\{{}^1\text{H}\}$ spectra of $[\text{C}_4\text{C}_1\text{pyrr}][\text{NTf}_2]$ in DMSO-d_6 .

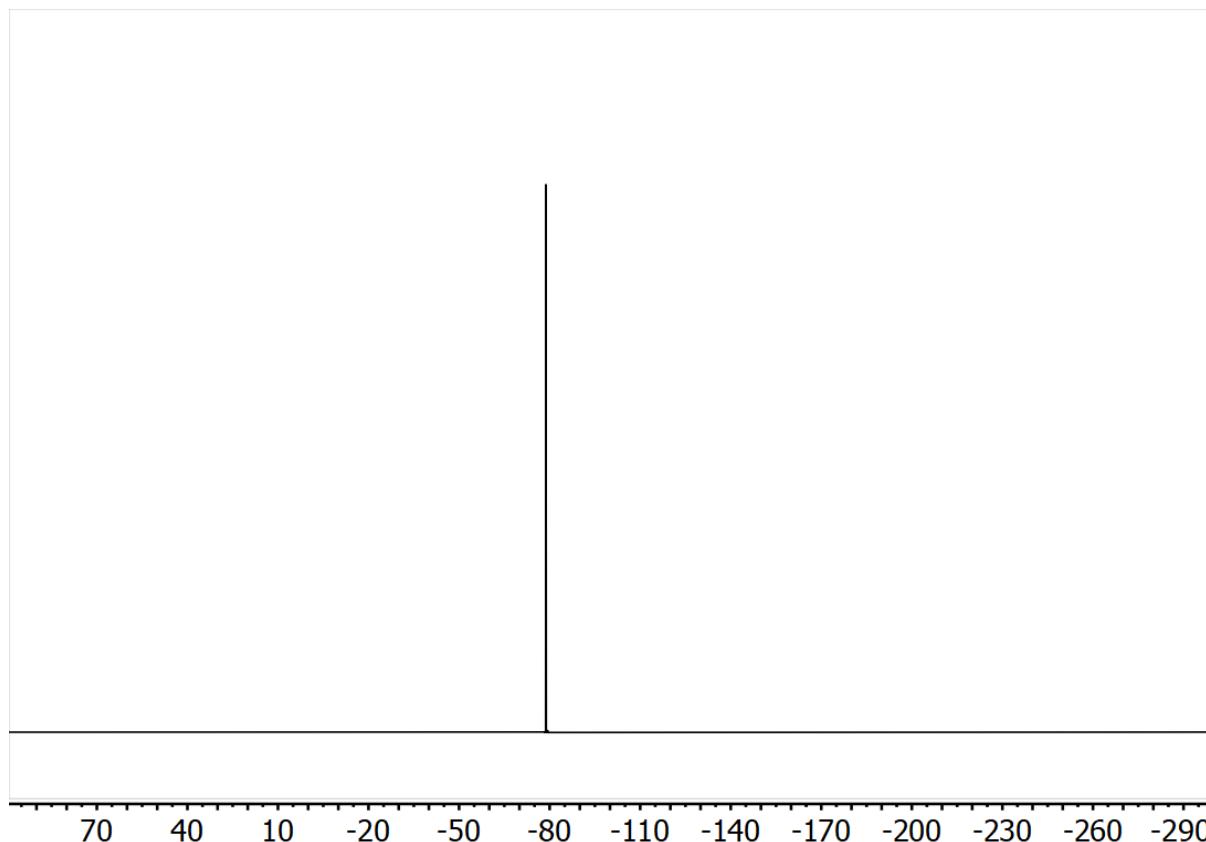


Figure 15.12: ^{19}F spectra of $[\text{C}_4\text{C}_1\text{pyrr}][\text{NTf}_2]$ in DMSO-d_6 .

3-Phenyl-1,5-hexadiene

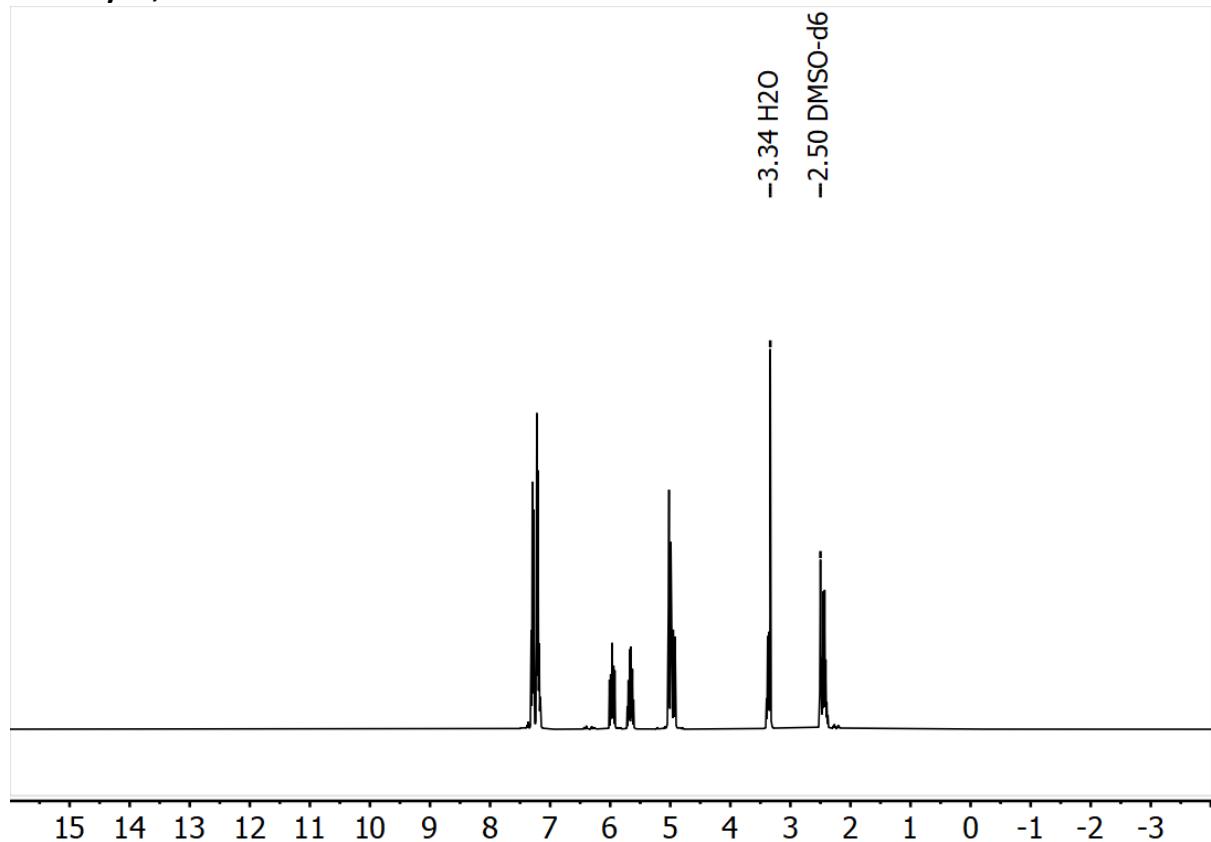


Figure 15.13: ^1H spectrum of 3-phenyl-1,5-hexadiene in DMSO-d_6 .

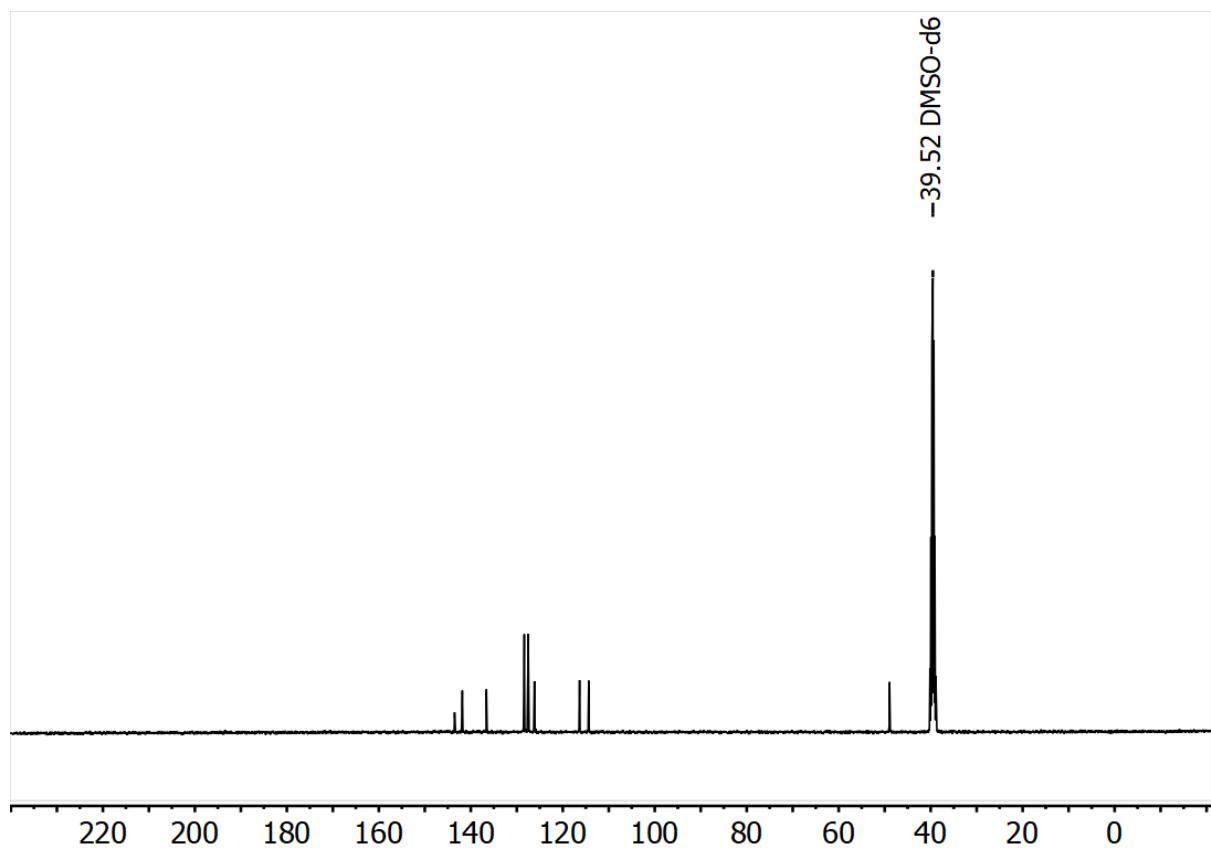


Figure 15.14: $^{13}\text{C}\{^1\text{H}\}$ spectrum of 3-phenyl-1,5-hexadiene in DMSO-d_6 .

1-Phenyl-1,5-hexadiene

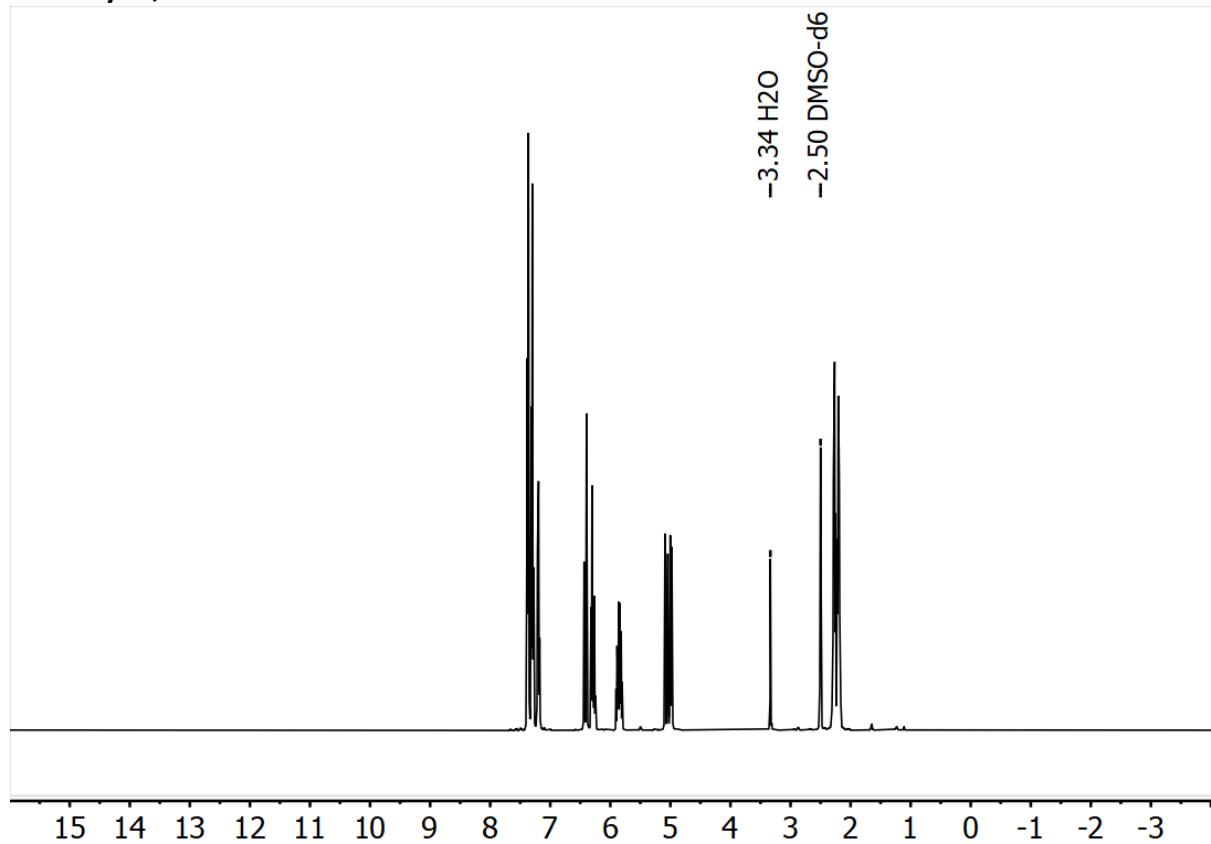


Figure 2: ^1H spectra of 1-phenyl-1,5-hexadiene in DMSO-d_6 .

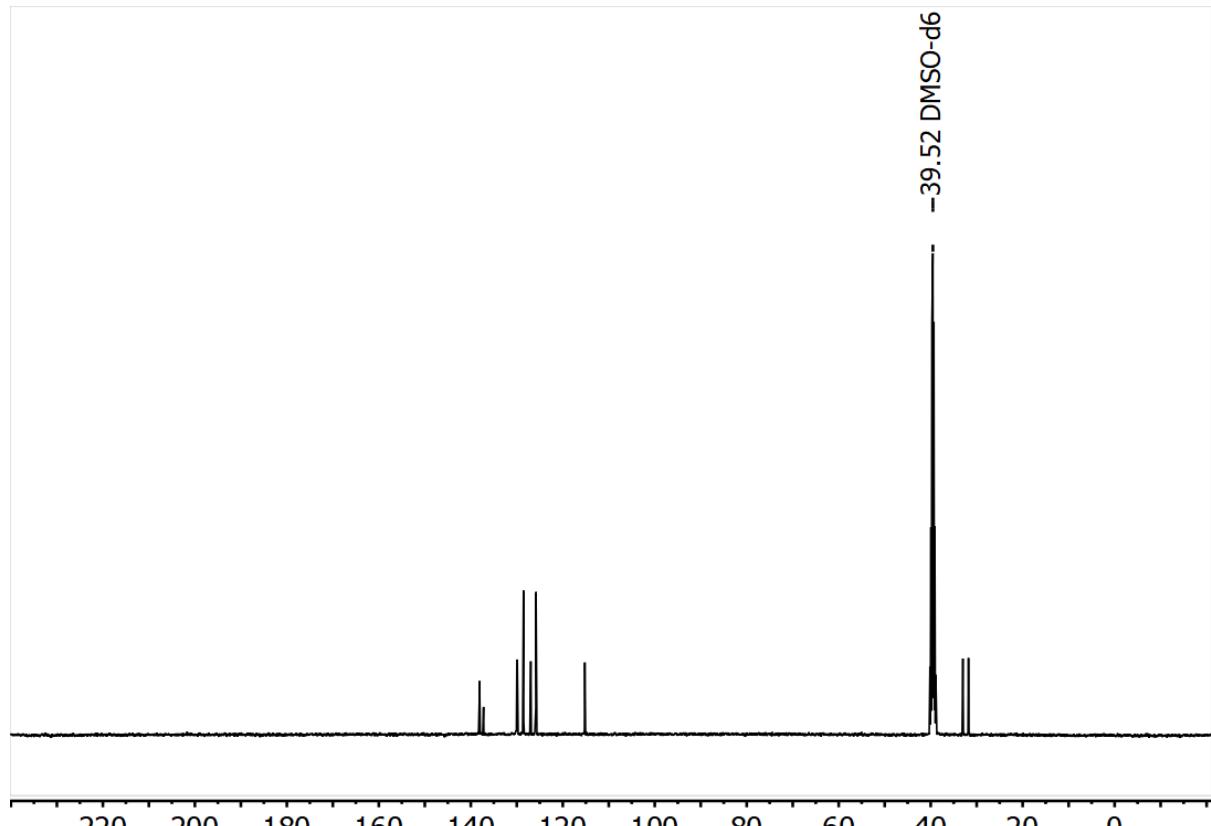


Figure 15.16: $^{13}\text{C}\{^1\text{H}\}$ spectra of 3-phenyl-1,5-hexadiene in DMSO-d₆.