

## Supporting Information

### B=P Double Bonds Relieved from Steric Encumbrance: Matrix-Isolation Infrared Spectroscopy of the Phosphaborene F<sub>2</sub>B=P=BF and the Triradical B=PF<sub>3</sub>

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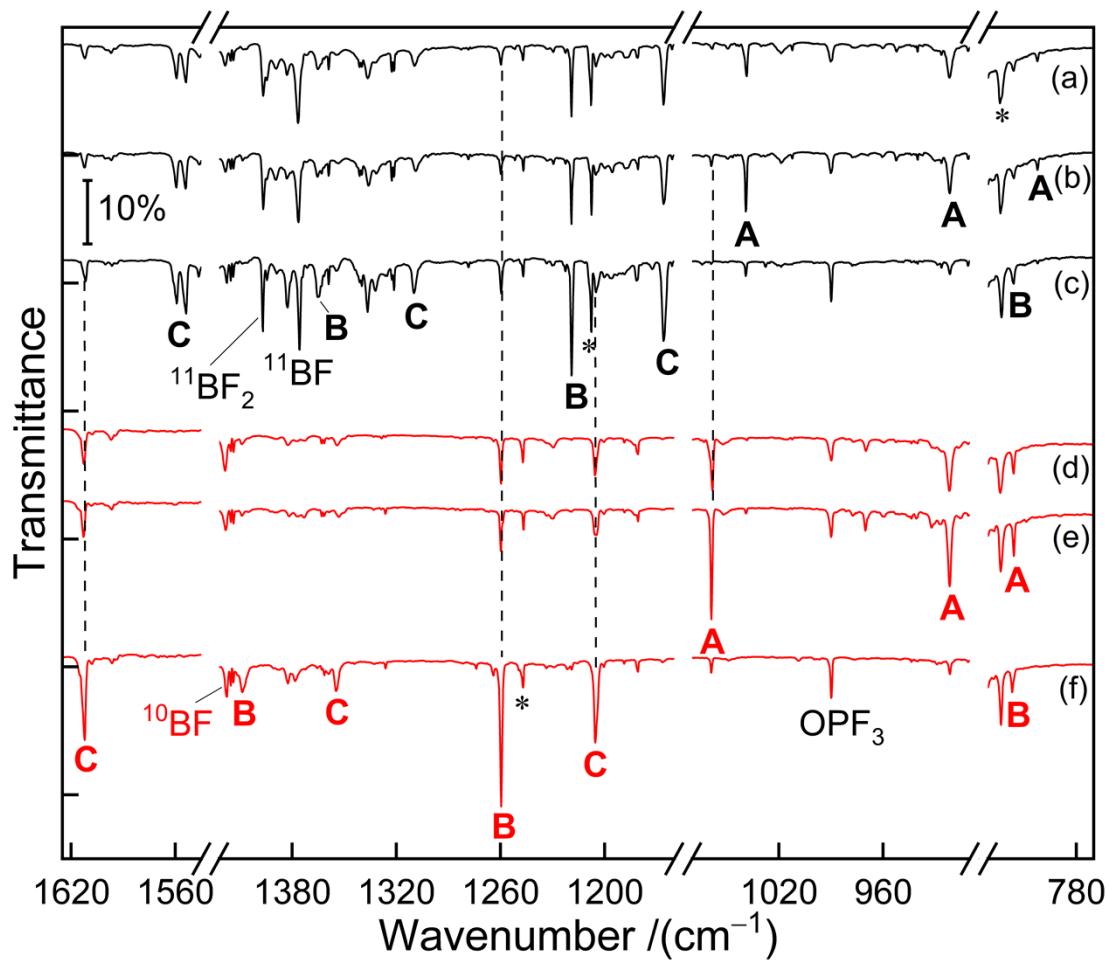
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## **Experimental methods**

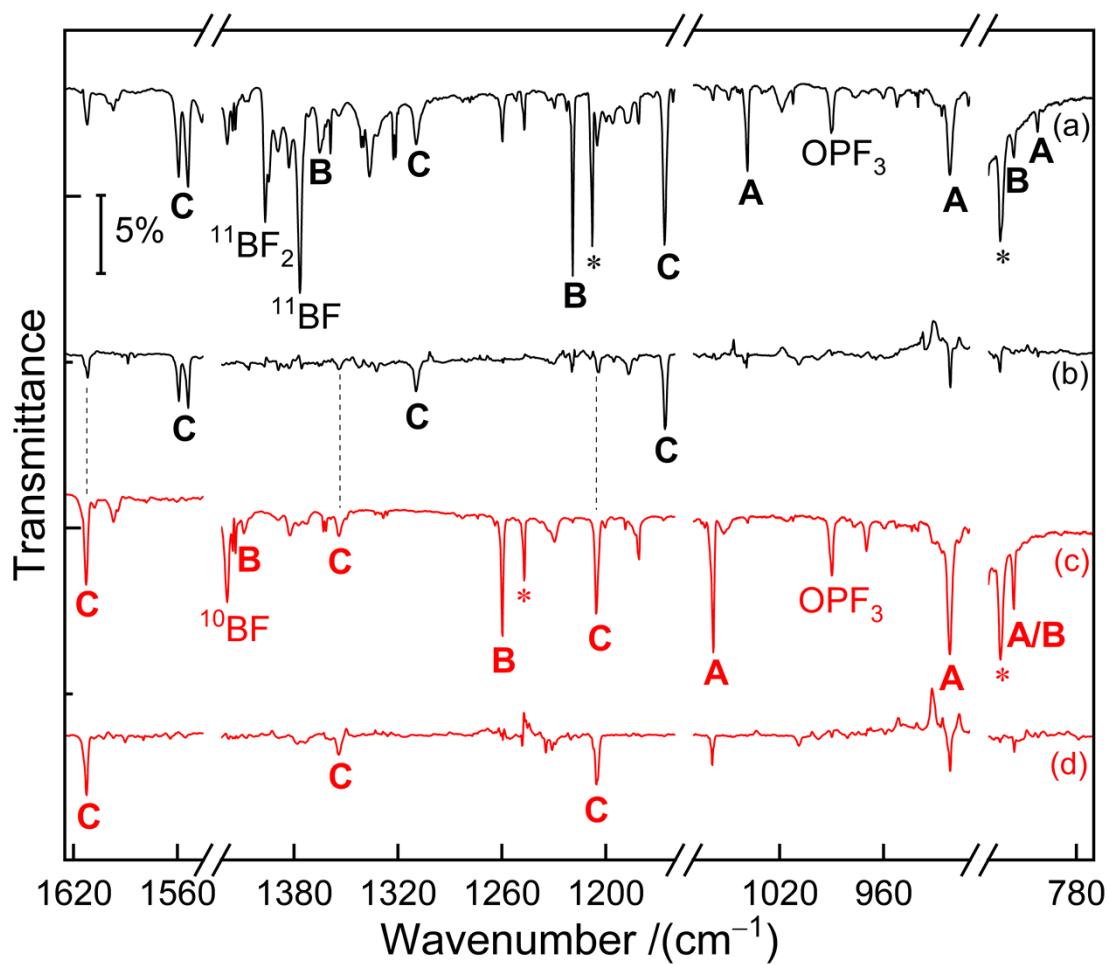
The experimental setup for matrix isolation infrared spectroscopy has been described in more detail in our previous works.<sup>[2]</sup> Briefly, the 1064 nm fundamental of a Nd:YAG laser (Continuum, Minilite II, 10 Hz repetition rate) with energy of 50–65 mJ per 10 ns pulse was used to ablate a rotating bulk boron target to produce boron atoms. Natural abundance boron (<sup>10</sup>B, 19.8%; <sup>11</sup>B, 80.2%) or <sup>10</sup>B-enriched (> 95%) targets were used. The ablated boron atoms were co-deposited with 0.05% PF<sub>3</sub> (99%) in neon inside a high vacuum chamber onto a gold-plated copper mirror cooled to 5 K by using a closed-cycle helium cryostat (Sumitomo Heavy Industries, RDK-205D). FTIR spectra were recorded with a Bruker Vertex 80v spectrometer at 0.5 cm<sup>-1</sup> resolution in the region between 4000 and 450 cm<sup>-1</sup> using a liquid nitrogen cooled mercury cadmium telluride (MCT) detector. The matrix samples were irradiated with a 470 nm LED (Intelligent LED Solutions ILH-ON04-BLUE-SC211-WIR200) or a mercury arc lamp (Osram HQL 250, 175 W) with the outer globe removed.

## **Theoretical methods**

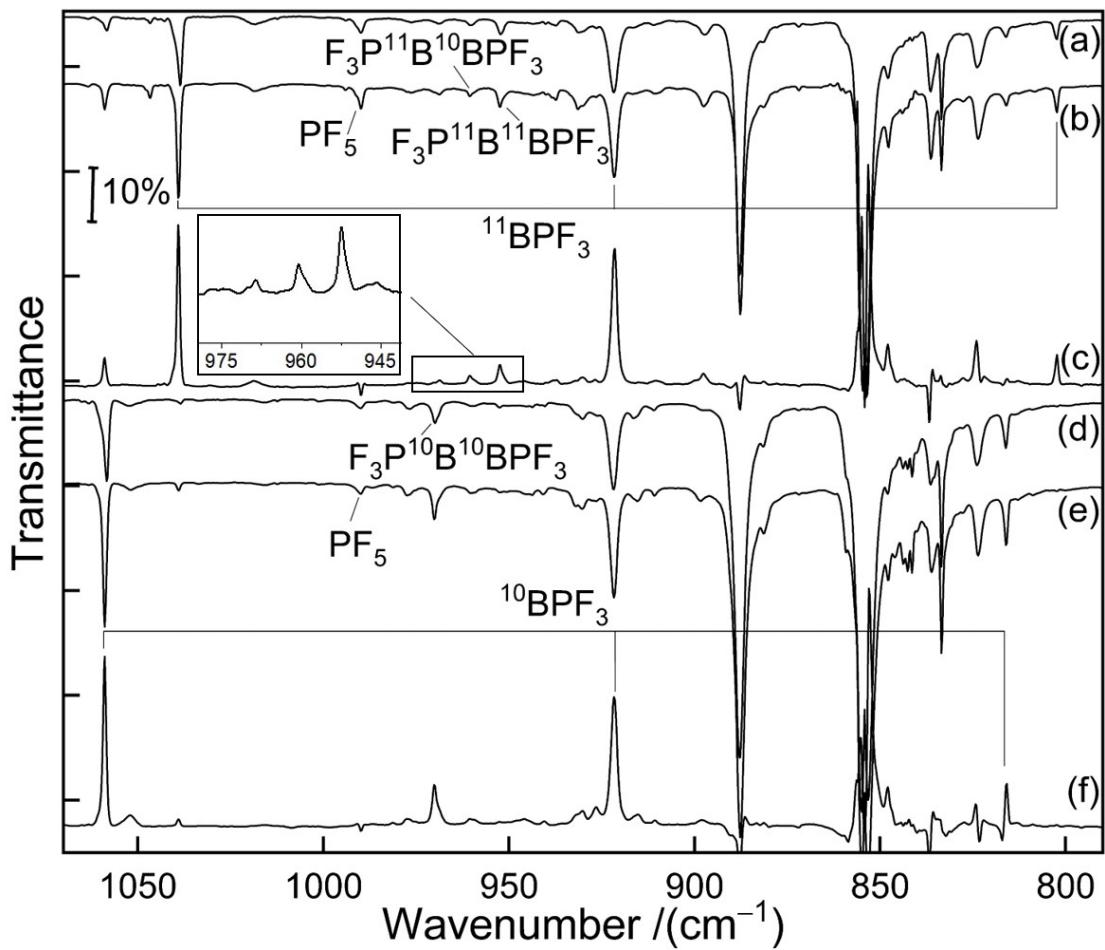
Structures and harmonic frequencies calculated with density functional theory (DFT) were performed using the Gaussian 16 program version A.03 package<sup>[3]</sup> employing the hybrid functional B3LYP.<sup>[4]</sup> The further high level coupled-cluster singles-doubles with perturbational triples excitations (CCSD(T))<sup>[5]</sup> calculations were carried out in the Molpro 2019.1.0. software package.<sup>[6]</sup> For all calculations, Dunning's correlation consistent polarized basis sets of triple-zeta quality with diffuse augmentation functions (aug-cc-pVTZ)<sup>[7]</sup> were used. The further wave-function analysis were carried out by NBO 7.0<sup>[8]</sup> and Multiwfn Version 3.8 (dev).<sup>[9]</sup> The latter software was also used to visualize the molecular orbitals. Molecular structures were visualized with the program Chemcraft version 1.8.<sup>[10]</sup>



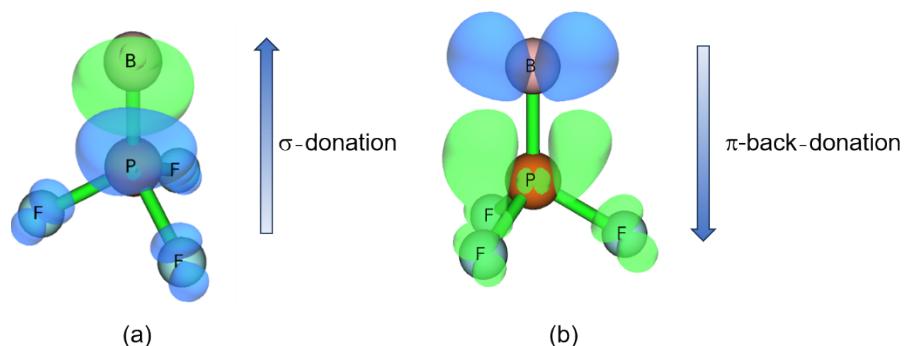
**Figure S1.** Infrared spectra obtained from codeposition of laser-ablated boron atoms in natural-abundance (a, b, c) and  $^{10}\text{B}$ -enriched (d, e, f) with 0.05% PF<sub>3</sub> in neon (a, d), annealing to 9 K (b, e), and 15 min of  $\lambda > 220 \text{ nm}$  irradiation (c, f). A: B=PF<sub>3</sub>, B: F<sub>2</sub>B-PF, C: F<sub>2</sub>B-P=BF, unassigned bands are marked with asterisks.



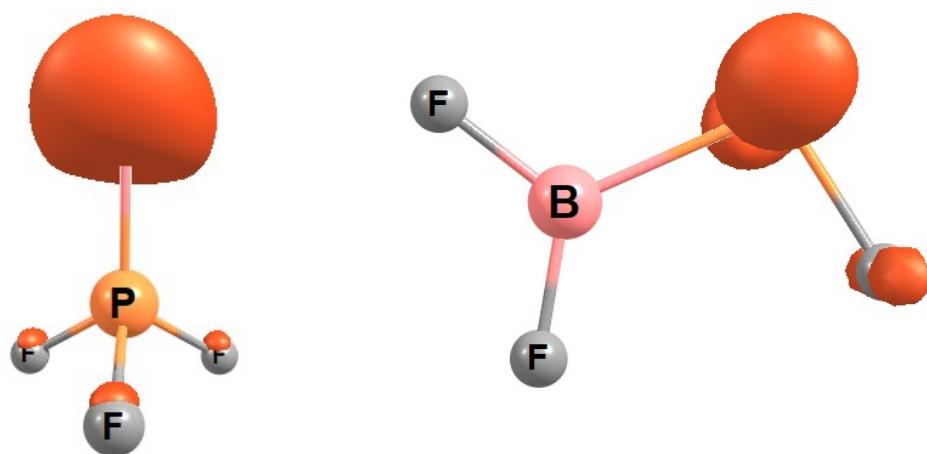
**Figure S2.** Infrared spectra obtained from codeposition of laser-ablated boron atoms in natural-abundance (a, b) and <sup>10</sup>B-enriched (c, d) with 0.05% PF<sub>3</sub> in solid neon. Spectra after 60 min of sample deposition at 5 K (a, c) and difference spectra observed after  $\lambda = 470$  nm LED irradiation for 10 min (b, d). A: B=PF<sub>3</sub>, B: F<sub>2</sub>B–PF, C: F<sub>2</sub>B–P=BF, unassigned bands are marked with asterisks.



**Figure S3.** Infrared spectra obtained from codeposition of laser-ablated atoms in natural-abundance (a, b, c) and  $^{10}\text{B}$ -enriched (d, e, f) with 0.05%  $\text{PF}_3$  in neon (a, d), annealing to 9 K (b, e), and difference spectra observed after 15 min of  $\lambda > 220\text{ nm}$  irradiation (c, f).



**Figure S4.** ETS-NOCV deformation maps for  $\text{B}=\text{PF}_3$  ( $C_{3v}$ ,  ${}^4\text{A}_1$ ). Electron density flows from blue to green upon fragment combination.



**Figure S5.** Spin density of  $\text{B}=\text{PF}_3$  ( $C_{3v}$ ,  ${}^4\text{A}_1$ ) (left) and  $\text{F}_2\text{B}-\text{PF}$  ( $C_s$ ,  ${}^2\text{A}''$ ) (right) at  $0.03 \text{ \AA}^{-3}$  calculated at B3LYP/aug-cc-pVTZ level.

**Table S1.** Calculated stretching wavenumbers  $\nu$  (in  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ) and  $^{10/11}\text{B}$  isotopic shifts ( $\Delta\nu$ ,  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ) at the B3LYP/aug-cc-pVTZ level for  $\text{B}=\text{PF}_3$  (**A**),  $\text{F}_2\text{B}-\text{PF}$  (**B**) and  $\text{F}_2\text{B}-\text{P}=\text{BF}$  (**C**) as well as IR intensities (in  $\text{km mol}^{-1}$ ) in parentheses.

	$\nu(^{10}\text{B})$	$\Delta\nu(^{11}\text{B})$	stretching mode
$\text{B}=\text{PF}_3$ $(C_{3v}, ^4\text{A}_1)$	783.7 (84)	12.2	breathing
	875.9 (160×2)	0.0	antis. $\text{PF}_3$
	1044.8 (219)	21.9	$\text{B}=\text{P}$
$\text{F}_2\text{B}-\text{PF}$ $(C_s, ^2\text{A}')$	629.5 (8)	5.4	$\text{B}-\text{P}$
	803.1 (114)	0.0	$\text{PF}$
	1250.7 (323)	40.0	sym. $\text{BF}_2$
	1426.4 (295)	49.3	antis. $\text{BF}_2$
$\text{F}_2\text{B}-\text{P}=\text{BF}$ $(C_s, ^1\text{A}')$	626.0 (33)	5.0	$\text{B}-\text{P}$
	659.6 (2)	2.8	in-phase $\text{P}=\text{BF}$
	1201.3 (569)	38.4	sym. $\text{BF}_2$
	1361.3 (217)	46.5	antis. $\text{BF}_2$
	1631.1 (548)	57.6	out-of-phase $\text{P}=\text{BF}$

**Table S2.** Calculated stretching wavenumbers  $\nu$  (in  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ) at the B3LYP/aug-cc-pVTZ level for  $\text{F}_2\text{B}-\text{P}=\text{BF}$  (**C**) as well as IR intensities (in  $\text{km mol}^{-1}$ ) in parentheses.

	$\nu(^{10}\text{B}/^{10}\text{B})$	$\nu(^{10}\text{B}/^{11}\text{B})$	$\nu(^{11}\text{B}/^{10}\text{B})$	$\nu(^{11}\text{B}/^{11}\text{B})$	stretching mode
$\text{F}_2\text{B}-\text{P}=\text{BF}$ $(C_s, ^1\text{A}')$	626.0 (33)	620.8 (36)	625.9 (32)	620.6 (35)	$\text{B}-\text{P}$
	659.6 (2)	659.6 (2)	656.8 (1)	656.8 (1)	in-phase $\text{P}=\text{BF}$
	1201.3 (569)	1163.3 (520)	1200.8 (570)	1163.0 (521)	sym. $\text{BF}_2$
	1361.3 (217)	1315.0 (207)	1361.1 (213)	1314.8 (204)	antis. $\text{BF}_2$
	1631.1 (548)	1630.6 (547)	1574.1 (510)	1573.5 (509)	out-of-phase $\text{P}=\text{BF}$

**Table S3.** Observed and calculated stretching wavenumbers  $\nu$  (in  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ) and  $^{10/11}\text{B}$  isotopic shifts ( $\Delta\nu$ ,  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ) at the B3LYP/aug-cc-pVTZ level for the antisymmetric P–B stretching mode of  $\text{F}_3\text{P}-\text{B}\equiv\text{B}-\text{PF}_3$  (**D**) as well as IR intensities (in  $\text{km mol}^{-1}$ ) in parentheses.

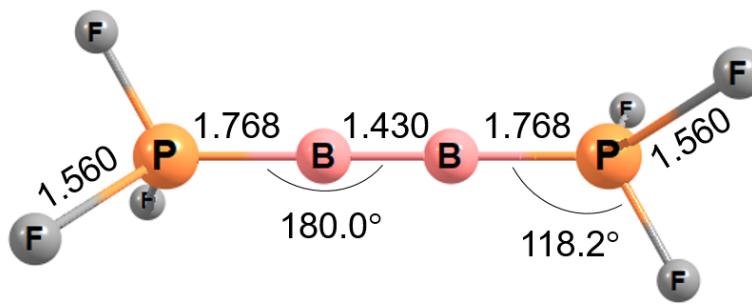
	obs. $\nu$	cal. $\nu$	obs. $\Delta\nu(^{11}\text{B})$	calc $\Delta\nu(^{11}\text{B})$
$\text{F}_3\text{P}-^{11}\text{B}\equiv^{11}\text{B}-\text{PF}_3$ $(D_{3d}, ^1\text{A}_{1g})$	952.5	940.5		
			(2075)	
$\text{F}_3\text{P}-^{11}\text{B}\equiv^{10}\text{B}-\text{PF}_3$ $(D_{3d}, ^1\text{A}_{1g})$	960.4	949.4	7.9	8.9
			(2044)	
$\text{F}_3\text{P}-^{10}\text{B}\equiv^{10}\text{B}-\text{PF}_3$ $(D_{3d}, ^1\text{A}_{1g})$	970.0	960.0	9.6	10.6
			(2015)	

**Table S4** All calculated vibrational wavenumbers  $\nu$  (in  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ) of  $\text{F}_3\text{P}-^{11}\text{B}\equiv^{11}\text{B}-\text{PF}_3$  at the B3LYP/aug-cc-pVTZ level and the IR intensities (in  $\text{km mol}^{-1}$ ) in parentheses.

	cal.
$\text{F}_3\text{P}-^{11}\text{B}\equiv^{11}\text{B}-\text{PF}_3$	3.0 (0)
$(D_{3d}, ^1\text{A}_{1g})$	29.9 (2·1)
	103.5 (2·0)
	220.9 (0)
	271.6 (2·0)
	305.2 (2·0)
	389.1 (2·0)
	393.7 (2·40)
	445.4 (296)
	535.6 (0)
	778.1 (57)
	906.7 (2·310)
	908.3 (2·0)
	918.3 (0)
	940.5 (2075)
	1693.0 (0)

**Table S5** Energies and their differences for the  $^4\text{A}_1$  and  $^2\text{A}'$  states of  $\text{B}=\text{PF}_3$  with different basis sets. All energies were calculated at the geometry optimized with the aug-cc-pVTZ basis set and include ZPE corrections at this level.

Basis set	$E(^4\text{A}_1) / E_h$	$E(^2\text{A}') / E_h$	$\Delta E / \text{kcal mol}^{-1}$
aug-cc-pVTZ	-664.8519085	-664.8545416	1.65
aug-cc-pVQZ	-664.9575655	-664.9578932	0.21
aug-cc-pV5Z	-664.9956937	-664.9947669	-0.58

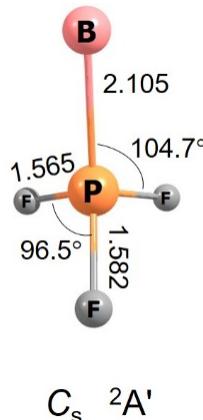


$D_{3d} \quad ^1\text{A}_{1g}$

**Figure S6.** Optimized geometry of  $\text{F}_3\text{P}-\text{B}\equiv\text{B}-\text{PF}_3$  at the B3LYP/aug-cc-pVTZ level of theory. Bond lengths ( $\text{\AA}$ ) and bond angles ( $^\circ$ ) are annotated.

**Table S6.** Calculated stretching wavenumbers  $\nu$  (in  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ) and  $^{10/11}\text{B}$  isotopic shifts ( $\Delta\nu$ ,  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ) at the B3LYP/aug-cc-pVTZ and CCSD(T)/aug-cc-pVTZ levels for  $\text{B-PF}_3$  ( $C_s$ ,  $^2\text{A}'$ ). IR intensities (in  $\text{km mol}^{-1}$ ) in parentheses.

	cal. (B3LYP) $\nu(^{10}\text{B})$	cal. (CCSD(T)) $\nu(^{10}\text{B})$	cal. (B3LYP) $\Delta\nu(^{11}\text{B})$	cal. (CCSD(T)) $\Delta\nu(^{11}\text{B})$	mode
$\text{B-PF}_3$ ( $C_s$ , $^2\text{A}'$ )	345.3 (27)	362.7	7.5	8.4	BP stretch/ $\text{PF}_3$ bend
	485.1 (18)	503.1	1.4	1.8	BP stretch/ $\text{PF}_3$ bend
	800.5 (227)	850.0	0.1	0.1	PF stretch
	850.5 (231)	884.5	0.2	0.3	$\text{PF}_2$ symmetric stretch
	877.3 (156)	915.5	0.0	0.0	$\text{PF}_2$ antisymmetric stretch



**Figure S7.** Optimized geometry of doublet  $\text{B-PF}_3$  at the CCSD(T)/aug-cc-pVTZ level of theory. Bond lengths ( $\text{\AA}$ ) and bond angles ( $^\circ$ ) are annotated.

**Table S7.** Selected calculated properties of  $\text{F}_2\text{B-P=BF}$  at B3LYP and HF//CCSD(T) levels, both with aug-cc-pVTZ basis set.

property	B3LYP	HF//CCSD(T)
BPB angle	$86.5^\circ$	$83.3^\circ$
B···B distance	2.513 $\text{\AA}$	2.445 $\text{\AA}$
Wiberg B···B bond order in NAO basis	0.16	-
multi-center <sup>[11]</sup> BPB bond order in NAO basis	0.18	-
Mayer B···B bond order <sup>[12]</sup>	0.26	0.26
Mulliken B···B bond order <sup>[13]</sup>	0.12	0.12

**Table S8.** Orbital contributions to Mulliken bond order for the B=P bond of F<sub>2</sub>B–P=BF based on the Hartree-Fock wavefunction using the structure optimized at CCSD(T)/aug-cc-pVTZ level. Leading contributions are highlighted.

Orbital	Symmetry	Energy	Contributes
HOMO-15	A'	-1.71405	-0.02263053
HOMO-14	A'	-1.65166	0.00017158
HOMO-13	A'	-1.61806	-0.00449140
<b>HOMO-12</b>	A'	-0.90035	<b>0.27726266</b>
HOMO-11	A'	-0.85729	-0.02900871
HOMO-10	A'	-0.81639	-0.00083665
HOMO-9	A'	-0.76887	-0.00505582
HOMO-8	A'	-0.76880	0.00236880
HOMO-7	A"	-0.76397	-0.01793687
HOMO-6	A"	-0.71977	-0.00005339
HOMO-5	A'	-0.71420	0.13396779
HOMO-4	A"	-0.66633	-0.00009835
HOMO-3	A'	-0.65920	-0.00031986
HOMO-2	A'	-0.50454	<b>0.41667067</b>
<b>HOMO-1</b>	A'	-0.43368	0.05974367
<b>HOMO</b>	A"	-0.35270	<b>0.45568582</b>
Total Mulliken bond order:		1.26477285	

**Table S9.** Orbital occupancy-perturbed Mayer bond order<sup>[1]</sup> for the B=P bond of F<sub>2</sub>B–P=BF based on the Hartree-Fock wavefunction using the structure optimized at CCSD(T)/aug-cc-pVTZ level. Leading contributions are highlighted.

Orbital	Symmetry	Energy	Variance
HOMO-15	A'	-1.71405	0.022549
HOMO-14	A'	-1.65166	-0.006054
HOMO-13	A'	-1.61806	-0.000123
<b>HOMO-12</b>	A'	-0.90035	<b>-0.189162</b>
HOMO-11	A'	-0.85729	0.014529
HOMO-10	A'	-0.81639	-0.063331
HOMO-9	A'	-0.76887	-0.019265
HOMO-8	A'	-0.76880	-0.020841
HOMO-7	A"	-0.76397	-0.016175
HOMO-6	A"	-0.71977	-0.005656
HOMO-5	A'	-0.71420	-0.182590
HOMO-4	A"	-0.66633	-0.000377
HOMO-3	A'	-0.65920	-0.013569
<b>HOMO-2</b>	A'	-0.50454	<b>-0.514335</b>
HOMO-1	A'	-0.43368	-0.141084
<b>HOMO</b>	A"	-0.35270	<b>-0.652683</b>
Total Mayer bond order:		1.86922	

**Table S10.** Orbital contributions to Mulliken bond order for the P–B bond of F<sub>2</sub>B–P=BF based on the Hartree-Fock wavefunction using the structure optimized at CCSD(T)/aug-cc-pVTZ level. Leading contributions are highlighted.

Orbital	Symmetry	Energy	Contributes
HOMO–15	A'	-1.71405	-0.00181459
HOMO–14	A'	-1.65166	0.00106377
HOMO–13	A'	-1.61806	0.00084860
<b>HOMO–12</b>	A'	-0.90035	<b>0.27315894</b>
HOMO–11	A'	-0.85729	0.05764208
HOMO–10	A'	-0.81639	0.08151648
HOMO–9	A'	-0.76887	-0.00008063
HOMO–8	A'	-0.76880	-0.00600820
HOMO–7	A"	-0.76397	0.01098869
HOMO–6	A"	-0.71977	-0.00126161
HOMO–5	A'	-0.71420	-0.10245818
HOMO–4	A"	-0.66633	-0.00066567
HOMO–3	A'	-0.65920	0.00666790
HOMO–2	A'	-0.50454	<b>0.24213504</b>
<b>HOMO–1</b>	A'	-0.43368	0.11381947
<b>HOMO</b>	A"	-0.35270	<b>0.19537098</b>
Total Mulliken bond order:		0.87518037	

**Table S11.** Orbitals occupancy-perturbed Mayer bond order<sup>[1]</sup> for the P–B bond of F<sub>2</sub>B–P=BF based on the Hartree-Fock wavefunction using the structure optimized at CCSD(T)/aug-cc-pVTZ level. Leading contributions are highlighted.

Orbital	Symmetry	Energy	Variance
HOMO–15	A'	-1.71405	-0.001394
HOMO–14	A'	-1.65166	-0.008582
HOMO–13	A'	-1.61806	-0.001618
<b>HOMO–12</b>	A'	-0.90035	<b>-0.289185</b>
HOMO–11	A'	-0.85729	-0.123285
HOMO–10	A'	-0.81639	-0.035805
HOMO–9	A'	-0.76887	-0.002634
HOMO–8	A'	-0.76880	-0.006593
HOMO–7	A"	-0.76397	-0.019961
HOMO–6	A"	-0.71977	-0.014623
HOMO–5	A'	-0.71420	0.011819
HOMO–4	A"	-0.66633	0.000127
HOMO–3	A'	-0.65920	-0.016436
<b>HOMO–2</b>	A'	-0.50454	<b>-0.352437</b>
HOMO–1	A'	-0.43368	-0.147845
<b>HOMO</b>	A"	-0.35270	<b>-0.225629</b>
Total Mayer bond order:		1.206548	

**Table S12.** Orbital contributions to Mulliken bond order for the B···B interaction in F<sub>2</sub>B–P=BF based on the Hartree-Fock wavefunction using the structure optimized at CCSD(T)/aug-cc-pVTZ level. Leading contributions are highlighted.

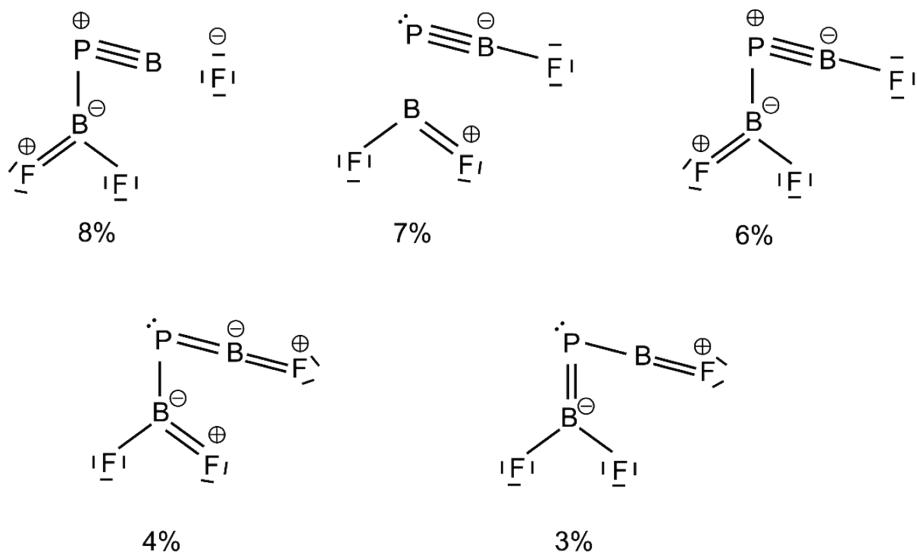
Orbital	Symmetry	Energy	Contributes
HOMO-15	A'	-1.71405	0.00958452
HOMO-14	A'	-1.65166	0.00777727
HOMO-13	A'	-1.61806	-0.00555579
<b>HOMO-12</b>	A'	-0.90035	<b>0.09153395</b>
HOMO-11	A'	-0.85729	0.02833409
HOMO-10	A'	-0.81639	0.01580359
HOMO-9	A'	-0.76887	0.00164331
HOMO-8	A'	-0.76880	0.00484815
HOMO-7	A"	-0.76397	-0.03737224
HOMO-6	A"	-0.71977	0.00248406
HOMO-5	A'	-0.71420	-0.04458106
HOMO-4	A"	-0.66633	-0.00059706
HOMO-3	A'	-0.65920	0.00031735
HOMO-2	A'	-0.50454	-0.10990616
<b>HOMO-1</b>	A'	-0.43368	<b>0.10525781</b>
<b>HOMO</b>	A"	-0.35270	<b>0.05099353</b>
Total Mulliken bond order:		0.11922158	

**Table S13.** Orbital occupancy-perturbed Mayer bond order<sup>[1]</sup> for the B···B interaction in F<sub>2</sub>B–P=BF based on the Hartree-Fock wavefunction using the structure optimized at CCSD(T)/aug-cc-pVTZ level. Leading contributions are highlighted.

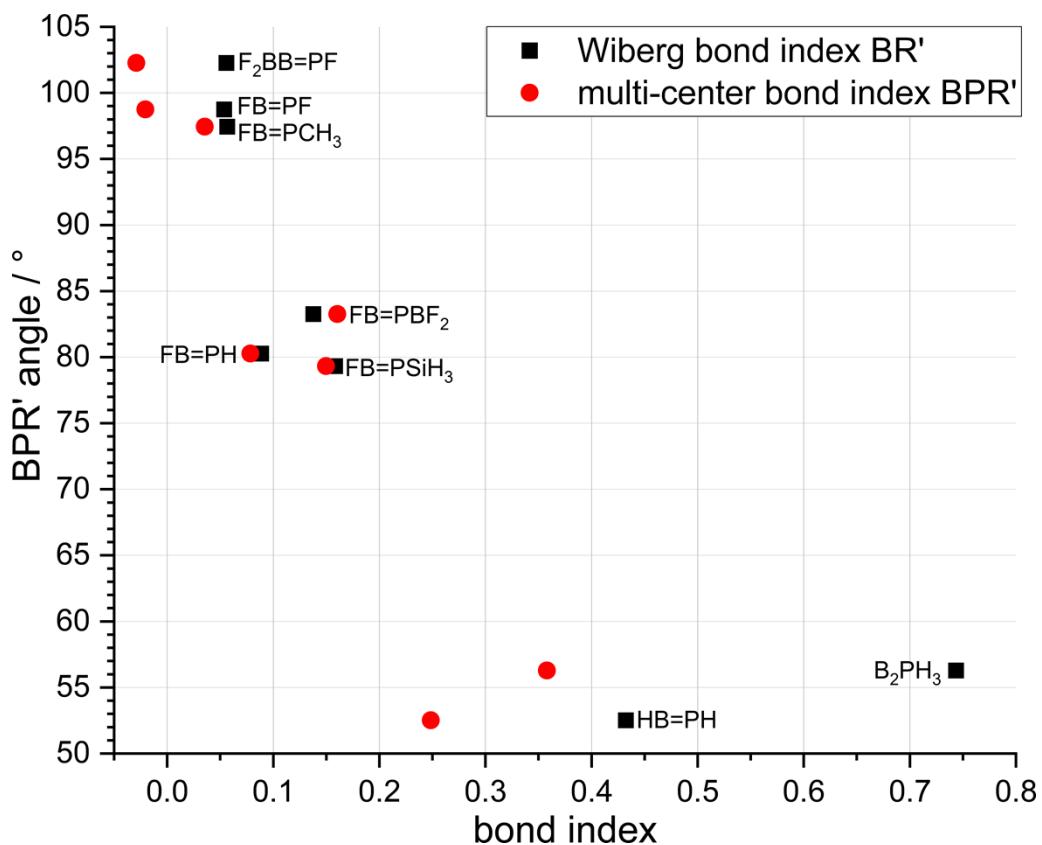
Orbital	Symmetry	Energy	Variance
HOMO-15	A'	-1.71405	-0.021041
<b>HOMO-14</b>	A'	-1.65166	<b>-0.050223</b>
HOMO-13	A'	-1.61806	0.002624
<b>HOMO-12</b>	A'	-0.90035	<b>-0.030174</b>
HOMO-11	A'	-0.85729	-0.000453
HOMO-10	A'	-0.81639	0.009016
HOMO-9	A'	-0.76887	-0.007897
HOMO-8	A'	-0.76880	0.002680
HOMO-7	A"	-0.76397	-0.006245
HOMO-6	A"	-0.71977	-0.007986
HOMO-5	A'	-0.71420	0.016624
HOMO-4	A"	-0.66633	-0.000373
HOMO-3	A'	-0.65920	-0.011383
HOMO-2	A'	-0.50454	0.168299
<b>HOMO-1</b>	A'	-0.43368	<b>-0.074272</b>
<b>HOMO</b>	A"	-0.35270	<b>-0.084940</b>
Total Mayer bond order:		0.259286	

**Table S14.** Wiberg bond order decomposition in NAO basis for the B···B interaction in F<sub>2</sub>B–P=BF based on the Hartree-Fock wavefunction using the structure optimized at the CCSD(T)/aug-cc-pVTZ level.

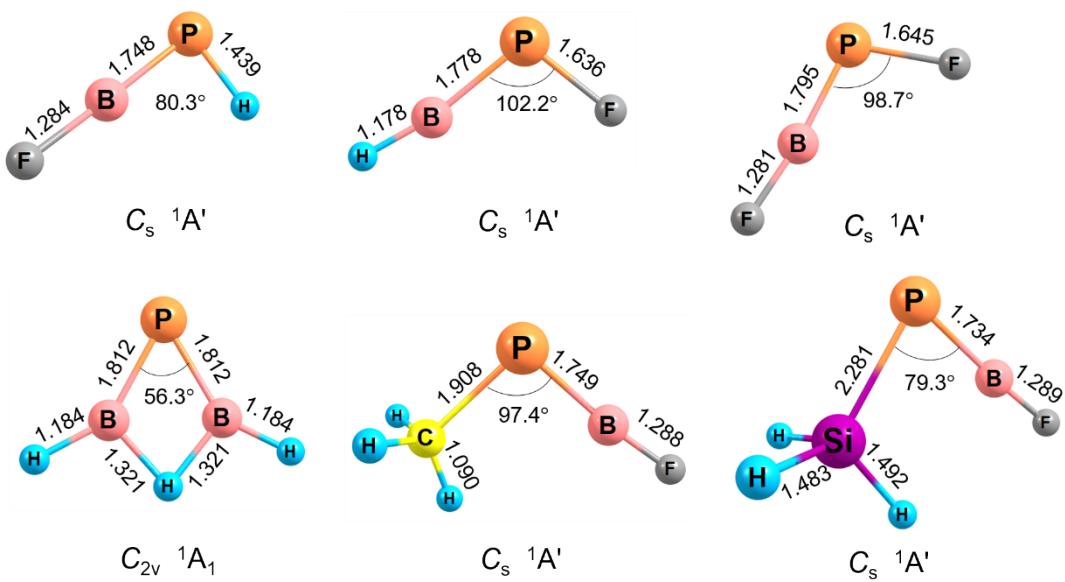
Contri.	NAO type		NAO type
0.0022	Val( 2s) s	---	Val( 2s) s
0.0097	Val( 2s) s	---	Val( 2p) px
0.0270	Val( 2s) s	---	Val( 2p) py
0.0059	Val( 2p) px	---	Val( 2s) s
0.0030	Val( 2p) px	---	Val( 2p) px
0.0037	Val( 2p) px	---	Val( 2p) py
0.0023	Val( 2p) py	---	Val( 2s) s
0.0025	Val( 2p) py	---	Val( 2p) px
0.0315	Val( 2p) py	---	Val( 2p) py
0.0455	Val( 2p) pz	---	Val( 2p) pz



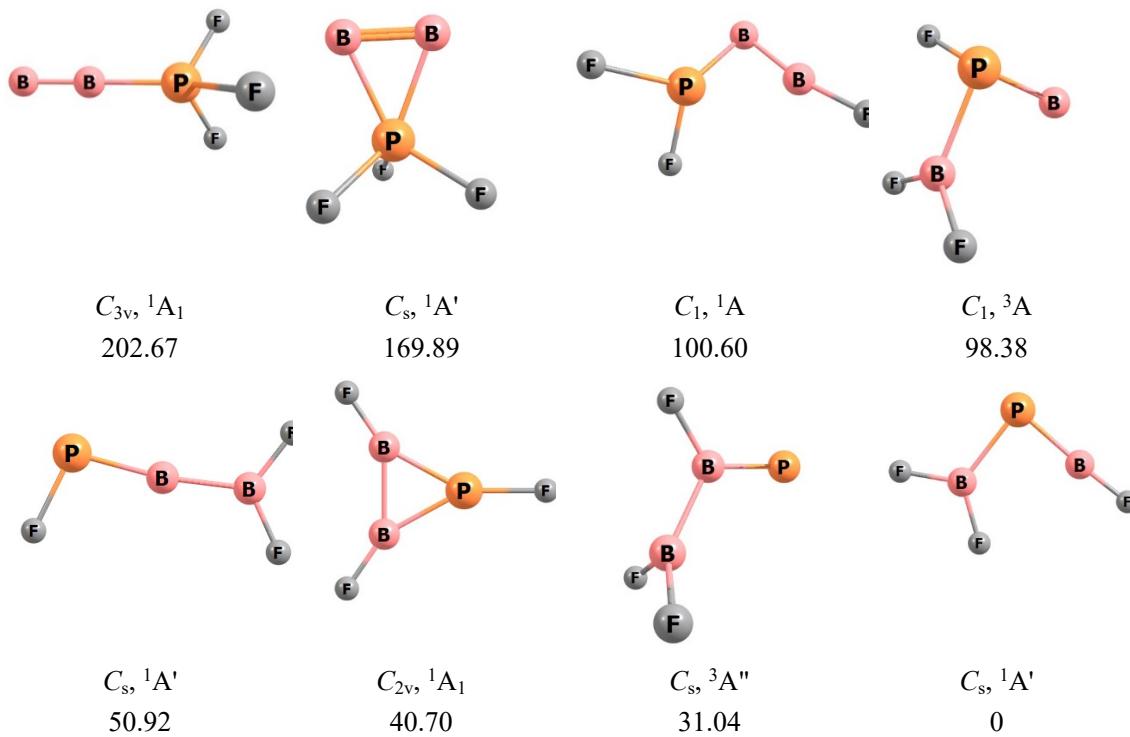
**Figure S8** Further resonance structures with weights between 2 and 8% for  $\text{F}_2\text{B}-\text{P}=\text{BF}$  at B3LYP/aug-cc-pVTZ level.



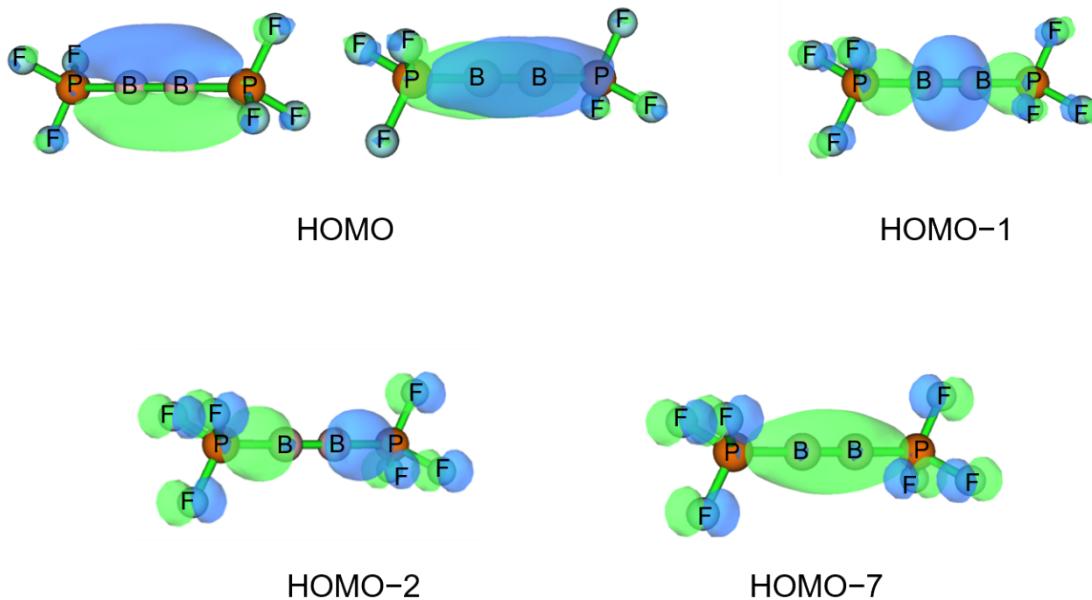
**Figure S9.** Correlation between the Wiberg bond index for the  $\text{BR}'$  interaction, the multi-center bond index<sup>[11]</sup> for the  $\text{BPR}'$  moiety (both in natural atomic orbital (NAO) basis) and the  $\text{BPR}'$  angle for different small phosphaborenes  $\text{RB}=\text{PR}'$ , calculated at HF/aug-cc-pVTZ//CCSD(T)/aug-cc-pVTZ level.



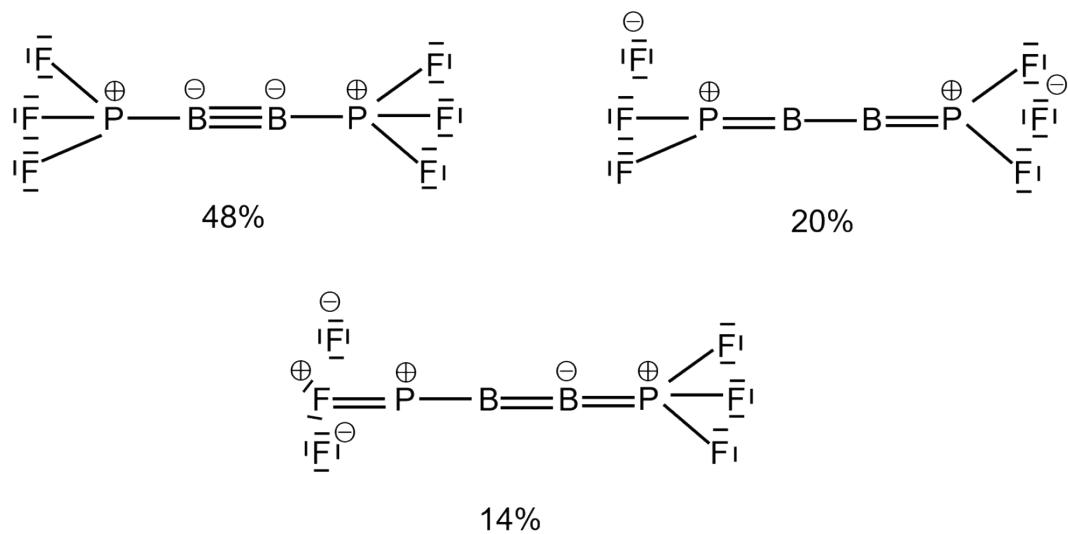
**Figure S10.** Optimized structures for different small phosphaborenes  $\text{RB=PR}'$  at the CCSD(T)/aug-cc-pVTZ level. Bond lengths ( $\text{\AA}$ ), bond angles (deg) and molecular symmetries are annotated.



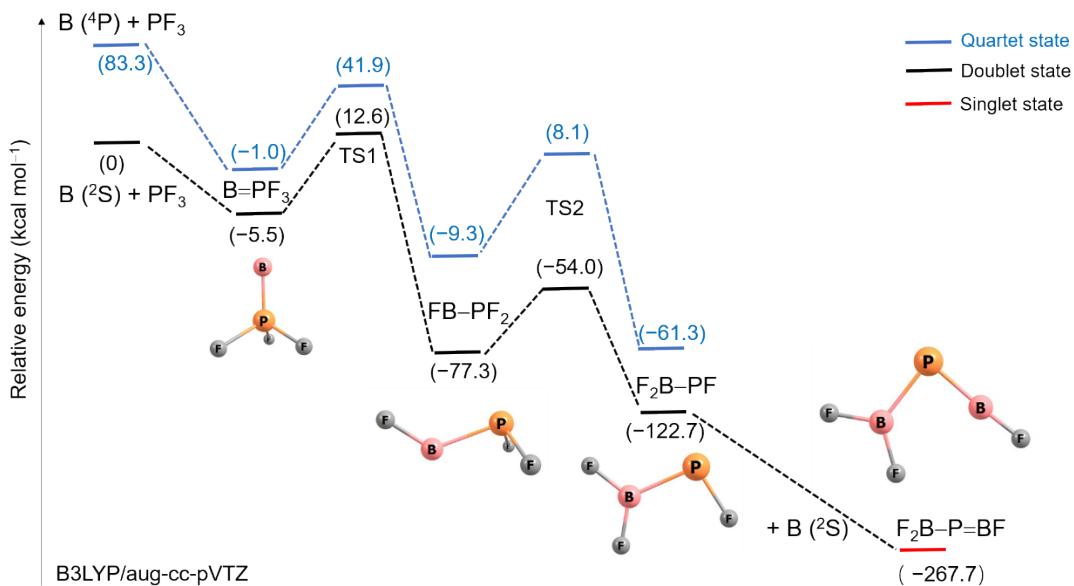
**Figure S11.** Isomers of the formula  $\text{B}_2\text{PF}_3$  with relative stabilities (electronic energies + ZPE correction) in  $\text{kcal mol}^{-1}$  calculated at B3LYP/aug-cc-pVTZ level of theory.



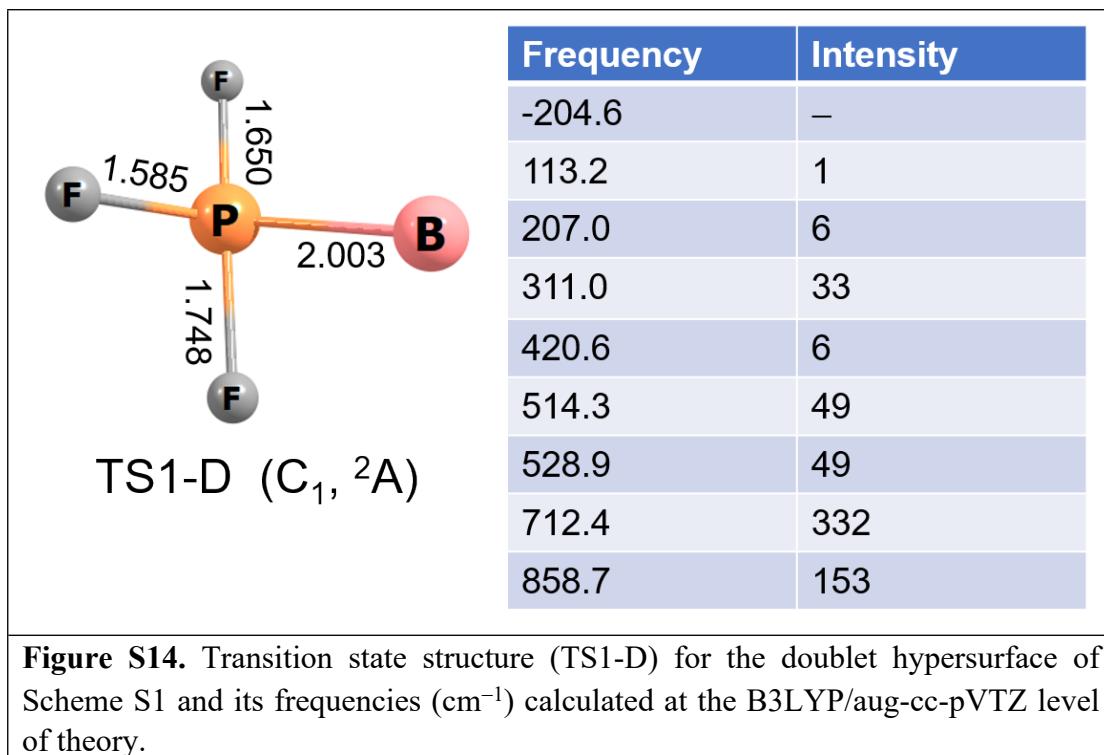
**Figure S12.** B–B and B–P bonding molecular orbitals of  $\text{F}_3\text{P}-\text{B}\equiv\text{B}-\text{PF}_3$  calculated at B3LYP/aug-cc-pVTZ level of theory.

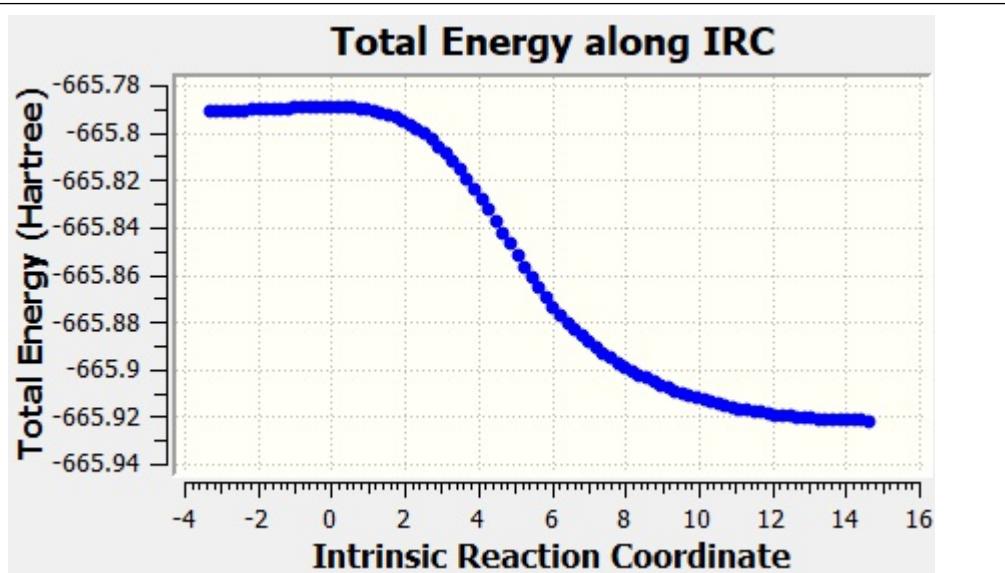


**Figure S13.** Leading resonance structure motifs for dimer  $\text{F}_3\text{P}-\text{B}\equiv\text{B}-\text{PF}_3$  from natural resonance theory (NRT). The weights of structures with the same  $\text{P}-\text{B}-\text{B}-\text{P}$  bond orders, irrespective of the  $\text{P}-\text{F}$  fluorine bond orders, were added up.

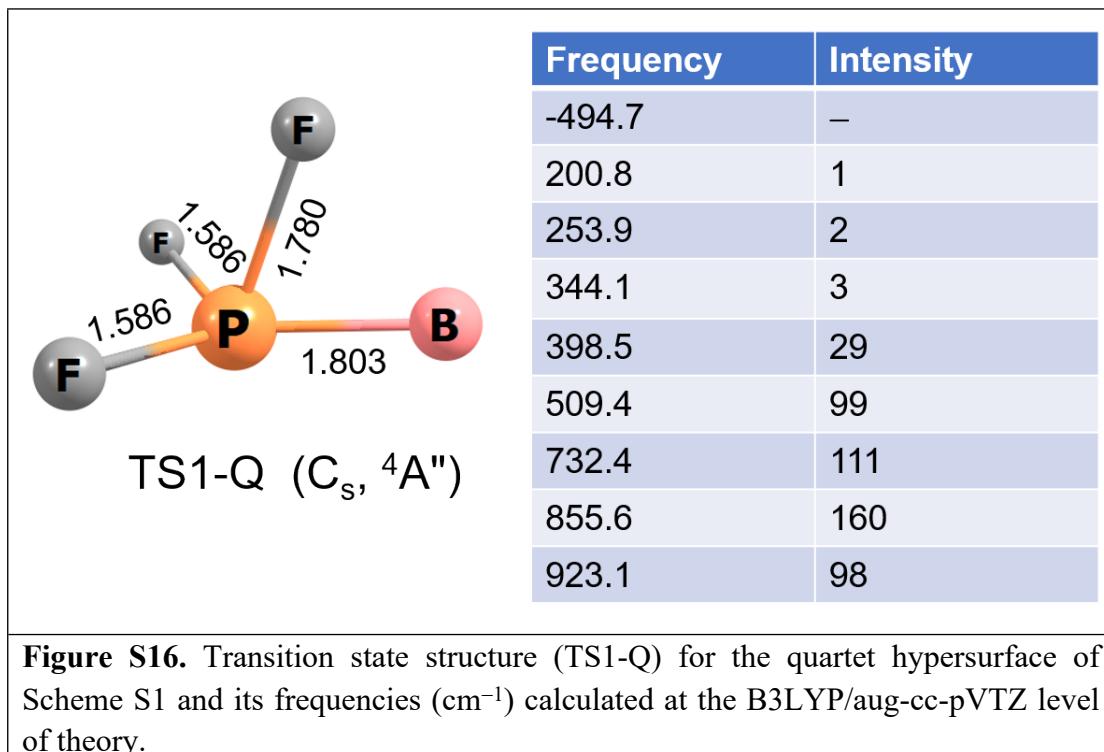


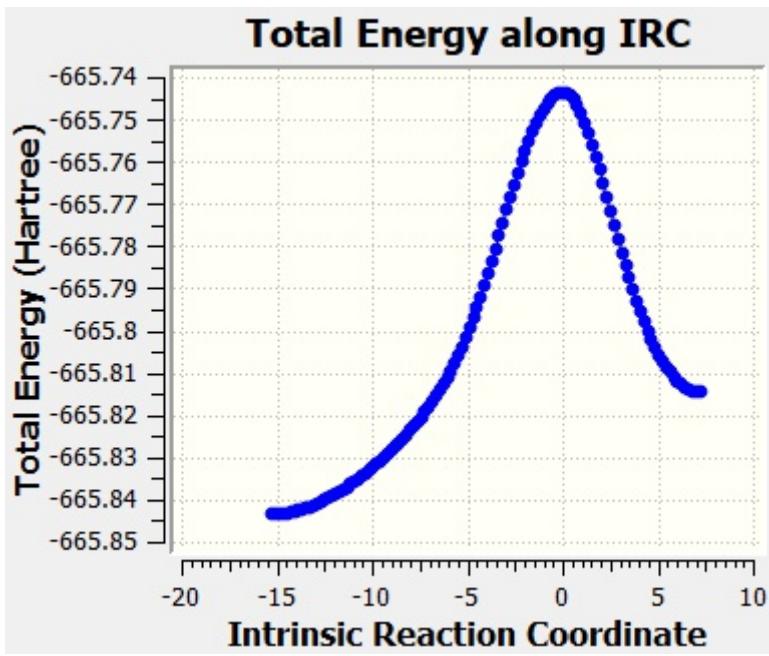
**Scheme S1.** Relative stabilities (electronic energies + ZPE correction) in kcal mol<sup>-1</sup> for species formed from laser ablated boron atoms with PF<sub>3</sub> at the B3LYP/aug-cc-pVTZ level (distances not to scale).



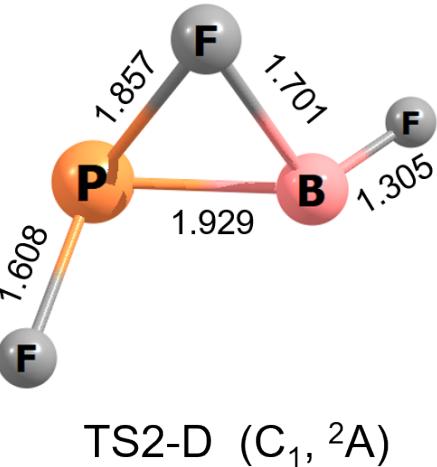


**Figure S15.** Intrinsic reaction coordinate (IRC) via the transition state TS1-D (Scheme S1) for the mutual isomerization of doublet B-PF<sub>3</sub> ( $C_s$ ,  $^2A'$ ) and doublet FB-PF<sub>2</sub> ( $C_1$ ,  $^2A$ ) obtained at the B3LYP/aug-cc-pVTZ level of theory.



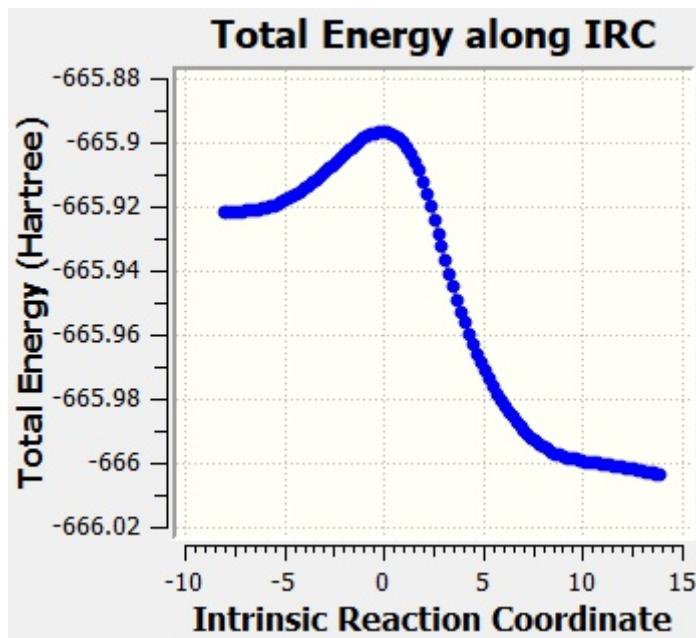


**Figure S17.** Intrinsic reaction coordinate (IRC) via the transition state TS1-Q (Scheme S1) for the mutual isomerization of quartet B=PF<sub>3</sub> ( $C_{3v}$ ,  $^4A_1$ ) and quartet FB-PF<sub>2</sub> obtained at the B3LYP/aug-cc-pVTZ level of theory.

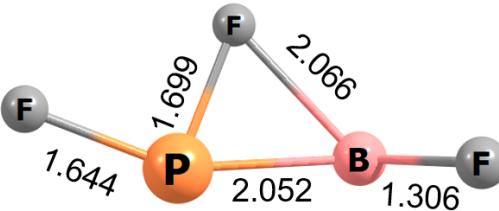


Frequency	Intensity
-375.7	-
117.5	9
222.2	4
298.1	3
385.7	2
557.7	79
619.4	58
802.0	153
1331.2	379

**Figure S18.** Transition state structure (TS2-D) for the doublet hypersurface of Scheme S1 and its frequencies ( $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ) calculated at the B3LYP/aug-cc-pVTZ level of theory.



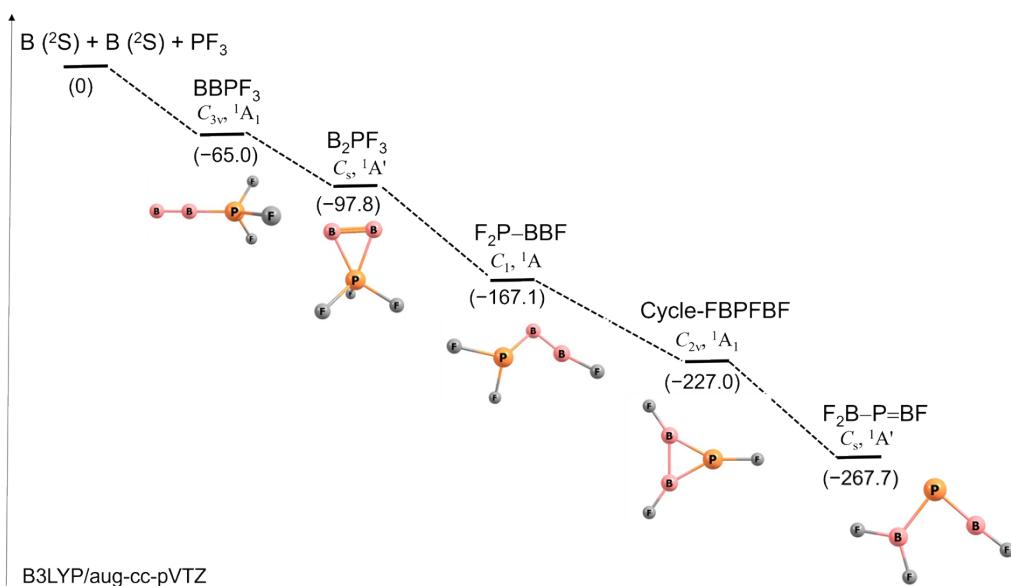
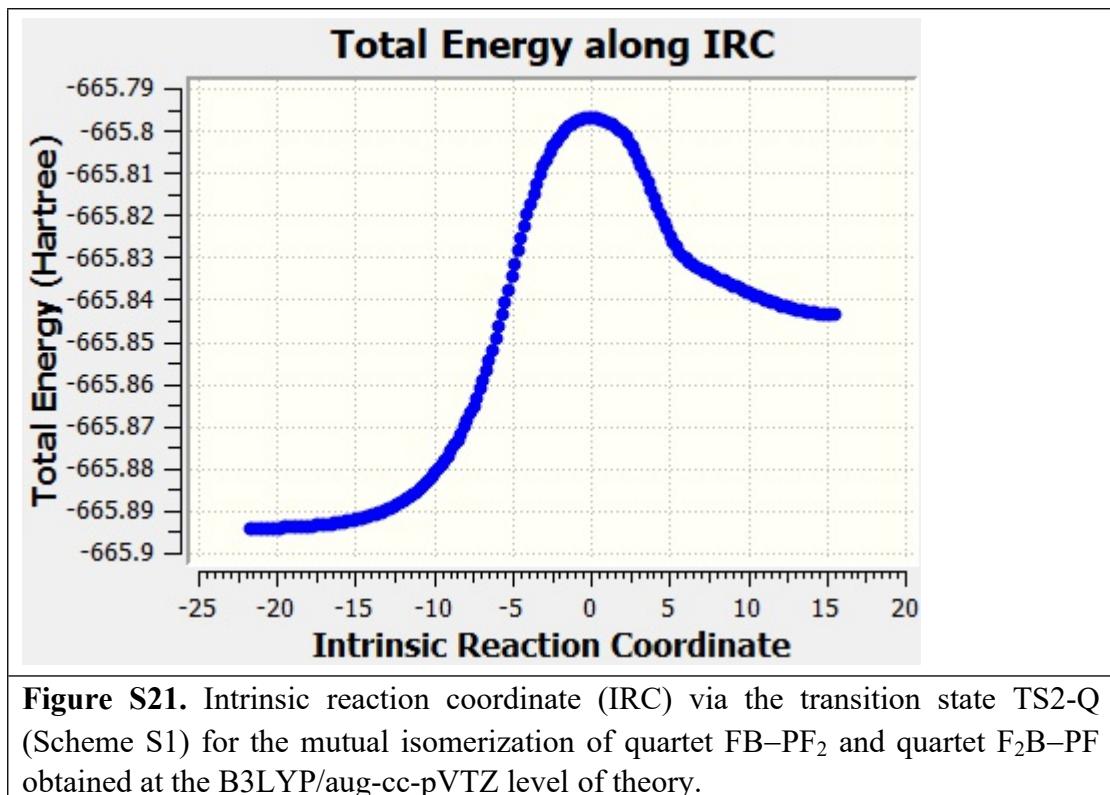
**Figure S19.** Intrinsic reaction coordinate (IRC) via the transition state TS2-D (Scheme S1) for the mutual isomerization of doublet FB-PF<sub>2</sub> and doublet F<sub>2</sub>B-PF obtained at the B3LYP/aug-cc-pVTZ level of theory.



TS2-Q ( $C_1$ ,  $^4A$ )

Frequency	Intensity
-210.3	-
116.4	5
141.7	2
279.3	1
367.6	9
487.7	85
633.6	38
729.3	146
1312.9	235

**Figure S20.** Transition state structure (TS2-Q) for the quartet hypersurface of Scheme S1 and its frequencies ( $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ) calculated at the B3LYP/aug-cc-pVTZ level of theory.



**Scheme S2.** Relative stabilities (electronic energies + ZPE correction) in kcal mol<sup>-1</sup> for F<sub>2</sub>B-P=BF species formed from laser ablated two boron atoms with PF<sub>3</sub> at the B3LYP/aug-cc-pVTZ level (distances not to scale).

Calculated atomic coordinates (in Å) of species for optimized structures at B3LYP/aug-cc-pVTZ level.

$\text{BPF}_3$   $^4\text{A}_1$  ( $C_{3v}$ )

P	0.00000000	0.00000000	0.24969200
F	0.00000000	1.37392500	-0.51029900
F	-1.18985400	-0.68696200	-0.51029900
F	1.18985400	-0.68696200	-0.51029900
B	0.00000000	0.00000000	2.00653900

$\text{BPF}_3$   $^2\text{A}'$  ( $C_s$ )

B	2.10344100	0.93327600	0.00000000
P	0.24109500	-0.07352800	0.00000000
F	-0.52346800	-1.47676000	0.00000000
F	-0.52346800	0.54041000	1.23338600
F	-0.52346800	0.54041000	-1.23338600

$\text{F}_2\text{PBF}$   $^2\text{A}$  ( $C_1$ )

F	0.31100690	0.80161472	1.33215440
F	0.31100690	0.80161472	-1.33215440
F	-0.02647023	-2.38272985	0.00000000
P	-0.51372484	0.50941220	0.00000000
B	0.46616201	-1.23311982	0.00000000

$\text{F}_2\text{PBF}$   $^4\text{A}''$  ( $C_s$ )

F	0.31958700	-2.41283600	0.00000000
F	0.31958700	1.24948100	1.18076300
F	0.31958700	1.24948100	-1.18076300
P	-0.39452600	0.42039800	0.00000000
B	-0.54219200	-1.41622200	0.00000000

$\text{F}_2\text{BPF}$   $^2\text{A}''$  ( $C_s$ )

F	1.283354126	1.119793743	0.000000000
F	-0.871231959	1.829134604	0.000000000
F	0.724901785	-1.761781536	0.000000000
B	-0.002281607	0.830587579	0.000000000
P	-0.680620345	-0.989597389	0.000000000

$\text{F}_2\text{BPF}$   $^4\text{A}_2$  ( $C_{2v}$ )

F	0.00000000	1.13835200	-1.79130900
F	0.00000000	-1.13835200	-1.79130900
F	0.00000000	0.00000000	2.63199100
B	0.00000000	0.00000000	-1.13466700
P	0.00000000	0.00000000	0.94859800

$\text{F}_2\text{BPBF}$   $^1\text{A}'$  ( $C_s$ )

F	1.33402400	0.95651800	0.00000000
F	-0.49333500	2.27333900	0.00000000
F	1.13633100	-2.28277600	0.00000000

B	0.00000000	1.04226900	0.00000000
P	-1.23935000	-0.42704300	0.00000000
B	0.15941500	-1.46588700	0.00000000
TS1-D <sup>2</sup> A (C <sub>1</sub> )			
P	0.07552200	-0.10199600	-0.26439500
F	-1.64999800	0.16179700	-0.34985200
F	1.70040200	-0.38140700	-0.19312400
F	0.22913900	1.26465700	0.52375000
B	-0.72974500	-1.57509800	0.82779200
TS1-Q <sup>4</sup> A" (C <sub>s</sub> )			
P	-0.44531400	-0.08750000	0.00000000
F	1.28205400	-0.51695400	0.00000000
F	-0.21125100	0.85234300	1.25648800
F	-0.21125100	0.85234300	-1.25648800
B	-0.21125100	-1.87541500	0.00000000
TS2-D <sup>2</sup> A (C <sub>1</sub> )			
F	1.81714600	-0.50006200	-0.50740300
F	-0.40471000	1.21774200	-0.28032900
F	-2.15009400	-0.53999100	0.02948500
P	0.74389400	0.02908400	0.56706700
B	-0.90389600	-0.40709100	-0.33635400
TS2-Q <sup>4</sup> A (C <sub>1</sub> )			
F	-2.33674200	-0.20375500	-0.34739100
F	2.09559100	-0.12452800	-0.22932400
F	0.14419400	1.16663200	0.02614500
P	0.53336200	-0.48348100	0.13780300
B	-1.42556300	-0.05858600	0.57761900
F <sub>3</sub> PBBPF <sub>3</sub> <sup>1</sup> A <sub>1g</sub> (D <sub>3d</sub> )			
P	0.00000000	0.00000000	2.48280100
F	0.00000000	1.37540800	3.21976800
F	1.19113900	-0.68770400	3.21976800
F	-1.19113900	-0.68770400	3.21976800
B	0.00000000	0.00000000	0.71490900
P	0.00000000	0.00000000	-2.48280100
F	-1.19113900	0.68770400	-3.21976800
F	0.00000000	-1.37540800	-3.21976800
F	1.19113900	0.68770400	-3.21976800
B	0.00000000	0.00000000	-0.71490900

Calculated atomic coordinates (in Å) of species for optimized structures at CCSD(T)/aug-cc-pVTZ level.

$\text{BPF}_3$   $^4\text{A}_1$  ( $C_{3v}$ )

P	-0.000008263	0.000000000	-0.235793905
F	1.365090707	0.000000000	0.514615238
F	-0.682537079	-1.182190443	0.514595530
F	-0.682537079	1.182190443	0.514595530
B	-0.000008286	0.000000000	-1.998128599

$\text{BPF}_3$   $^2\text{A}'$  ( $C_s$ )

B	2.099889777	0.913607960	0.000000000
P	0.236597227	-0.064726255	0.000000000
F	-0.500472577	-1.464542222	0.000000000
F	-0.530941213	0.539734258	1.222213980
F	-0.530941213	0.539734258	-1.222213980

$\text{F}_2\text{PBF}$   $^2\text{A}$  ( $C_1$ )

F	-0.769760422	1.335360351	-0.316191135
F	-1.438081167	-1.002822946	-0.320083268
F	2.378735456	-0.070126500	0.022337676
P	-0.508092766	-0.012568756	0.520449189
B	1.223511899	-0.439383149	-0.454077461

$\text{F}_2\text{PBF}$   $^4\text{A}''$  ( $C_s$ )

F	0.329413417	-2.401066767	0.000000000
F	0.321339691	1.241846469	1.165977190
F	0.321339691	1.241846469	-1.165977190
P	-0.395584769	0.424415172	0.000000000
B	-0.554465030	-1.416739343	0.000000000

$\text{F}_2\text{BPF}$   $^2\text{A}''$  ( $C_s$ )

F	-1.047088012	1.338529181	-0.000028966
F	-1.875622712	-0.775827646	-0.000000428
F	1.795483922	0.642823494	0.000003156
B	-0.830569276	0.038062301	-0.000006542
P	0.954284078	-0.737473330	0.000017779

$\text{F}_2\text{BPF}$   $^4\text{A}_2$  ( $C_{2v}$ )

F	0.000000000	-1.137759285	1.782569742
F	0.000000000	1.137759285	1.782569742
F	0.000000000	0.000000000	-2.610781676
B	0.000000000	0.000000000	1.123007830
P	0.000000000	0.000000000	-0.942187278

$\text{F}_2\text{BPBF}$   $^1\text{A}'$  ( $C_s$ )

F	1.326575047	0.886162081	0.000000000
F	-0.459718333	2.258017295	0.000000000
F	1.169454279	-2.201833692	0.000000000
B	-0.007634862	1.011588587	0.000000000

P	-1.284441205	-0.428991901	0.000000000
B	0.152850074	-1.428522369	0.000000000
FBPH $^1\text{A}'$ ( $C_s$ )			
P	-0.106262398	-1.218741190	0.000000000
B	-0.004278009	0.526228466	0.000000000
H	1.323443088	-1.058800760	0.000000000
F	0.038297319	1.809716483	0.000000000
HBPF $^1\text{A}'$ ( $C_s$ )			
P	-0.068763595	-1.093794200	0.000000000
B	-0.017108476	0.683178238	0.000000000
H	-0.186278844	1.848888661	0.000000000
F	1.519896535	-1.484006388	0.000000000
FBPF $^1\text{A}'$ ( $C_s$ )			
F	-0.330121324	2.195624319	0.000000000
P	0.657062866	-0.711430516	0.000000000
B	-0.008145425	0.956041352	0.000000000
F	-0.759839116	-1.546188156	0.000000000
$\text{H}_2\text{BPBH}$ $^1\text{A}_1$ ( $C_{2v}$ )			
B	-0.854861196	-0.775382696	0.000000000
P	0.000003719	0.822401911	0.000000000
B	0.854861480	-0.775386265	0.000000000
H	1.903797054	-1.323741234	0.000000000
H	-1.903799680	-1.323732048	0.000000000
H	-0.000002376	-1.781989668	0.000000000
$\text{CH}_3\text{PBF}$ $^1\text{A}'$ ( $C_s$ )			
B	0.960620542	-0.038234764	-0.000078580
P	-0.621171727	-0.784185087	0.000068358
C	-1.651770909	0.821524335	0.000123999
H	-2.283167555	0.807784499	0.888551872
H	-2.283343335	0.807730070	-0.888178149
H	-1.061829139	1.736310367	0.000036935
F	2.172463122	0.396767580	-0.000189436
$\text{CH}_3\text{PBF}$ $^1\text{A}'$ ( $C_s$ )			
B	-1.145878939	0.036890237	0.000000325
P	0.076015537	1.267276195	0.000000248
Si	1.368933092	-0.611848666	0.000000481
H	2.226873974	-0.614286363	1.209647015
H	2.226872041	-0.614288567	-1.209647387
H	0.567435149	-1.869797013	-0.000000148
F	-2.111002854	-0.817557822	0.000000466

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