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Advanced Research on Internal Combustion Engines and Engine Fuels

Edited by
Zongyu Yue and Haifeng Liu

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About the Editors

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Editorial

Advanced Research on Internal Combustion Engines and Engine Fuels

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Abstract: Internal combustion (IC) engines serve as power devices that are widely applied in the fields of transport, engineering machinery, stationary power generation, etc., and are evolving towards the goal of higher efficiency and lower environmental impacts. In this Editorial, the role of IC engines for future transport and energy systems is discussed, and research directions for advancing IC engine and fuel technologies are recommended. Finally, we introduce the 14 technical papers collected for this Special Issue, which cover a wide range of research topics, including diesel spray characteristics, combustion technologies for low- and zero-carbon fuels, advanced combustion mode, fuel additive effects, engine operation under extreme conditions and advanced materials and manufacturing processes.

Keywords: internal combustion engine; fuel; renewable energy; carbon neutral; Special Issue

1. Introduction

Internal combustion (IC) engines have driven the development of human civilization and global economic growth, serving as a power device that is widely applied in the fields of transport, engineering machinery, stationary power generation, etc. The current global stock of passenger cars is around 1.19 billion, and the number of commercial vehicles totals 249 million, of which almost 99% are powered by IC engines, accounting for 81.3% of the oil demand in the transport sector [1]. Following that, maritime and aviation vehicles, which are also primarily powered by combustion engines, account for 7.9% and 7.1% of the transport oil demand, respectively [1]. Overall, the transport sector, including road, railway, aviation and shipping vehicles, accounts for 25.5% of global energy consumption [2] and contributes 16.2% of total global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions as the fourth-largest source of emissions following industry (29.4%), agriculture, forestry and land use (18.4%) and construction (17.5%) [3]. Therefore, IC engines are a leading source of GHG emissions, and significant effort is needed to reduce their carbon footprint.

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2. Current Status and Trends in IC Engine and Fuel Technologies

2.1. Progress in IC Engine Technologies

Since its conception in the late-19th century, the IC engine has undergone a continuous and rapid evolution and is now a complex assembly of numerous advanced technologies. To meet the ever-stringent emission regulations, tremendous effort has been dedicated to research and development aiming at an improvement in combustion efficiency and reduction in pollution emissions. The main harmful emissions generated from IC engine exhaust include particulate matter (PM), nitrogen oxide (NOx), carbon monoxide (CO) and unburnt hydrocarbon (UHC). Figure 1 presents the trends in the US federal emission limits on PM, NOx and non-methane organic gas (NMOG) emissions for light-duty fleet vehicles [4], which have been tightened significantly since their adoption in 1994. Over the past 40 years, including in the pre-regulation age, the emission levels of these harmful pollutants from IC engines have been effectively reduced by 100–1000 times. Taking the