

# 1 Influence of granular activated carbon media properties on natural organic 2 matter and disinfection by-product precursor removal from drinking water

3 D. M. Golea<sup>1</sup>, P. Jarvis<sup>1</sup>, B. Jefferson<sup>1</sup>, G. Moore<sup>2</sup>, S. Sutherland<sup>2</sup>, S. A. Parsons<sup>2</sup>, S. J. Judd<sup>1\*</sup>

4 <sup>1</sup>Cranfield Water Science Institute, Cranfield University, Bedfordshire, UK.

5 <sup>2</sup>Scottish Water, Edinburgh, Scotland.

6 \*Corresponding author, [s.j.judd@cranfield.ac.uk](mailto:s.j.judd@cranfield.ac.uk)

7

## 8 **Abstract**

9 Operational and financial constraints challenge effective removal of natural organic matter  
10 (NOM), and specifically disinfection by-product (DBP) precursors, at remote and/or small  
11 sites. Granular activated carbon (GAC) is a widely used treatment option for such locations,  
12 due to its relatively low maintenance and process operational simplicity. However, its  
13 efficacy is highly dependent on the media capacity for the organic matter, which in turn  
14 depends on the media characteristics.

15 The influence of GAC media properties on NOM/DBP precursor removal has been studied  
16 using a range of established and emerging media using both batch adsorption tests and rapid  
17 small-scale column tests. DBP formation propensity (DBPFP) was measured with reference  
18 to trihalomethanes (THMs) and haloacetic acids (HAAs). All GAC media showed no  
19 selectivity for specific removal of precursors of regulated DBPs; DBP formation was a  
20 simple function of residual dissolved organic carbon (DOC) levels.

21 UV<sub>254</sub> was found to be a good surrogate measurement of DBPFP for an untreated water  
22 source having a high DOC. Due to the much-reduced concentration of DBP precursors, the  
23 correlation was significantly poorer for the coagulation/flocculation-pretreated water source.

24 Breakthrough curves generated from the microcolumn trials revealed DOC removal and  
25 consequent DBP reduction to correlate reasonably well with the prevalence pores in the 5-10  
26 nm range. A 3-6 fold increase in capacity was recorded for a 0.005 to 0.045 cm<sup>3</sup>/g change in  
27 5-10 nm-sized pore volume density. No corresponding correlation was evident with other  
28 media pore size ranges.

29 *Keywords: GAC, NOM, pore size, THM, HAA, formation propensity*

## 30 **1 Introduction**

31 Granular activated carbon (GAC) is used extensively in drinking water treatment in various  
32 roles, including removal of pesticides, heavy metals and other micro pollutants, and more  
33 recently in wastewater reuse (de Almeida Alves et al., 2019, Hoslett et al., 2018; Sun et al.,  
34 2018). The process is also frequently applied downstream of conventional coagulation/  
35 clarification for supplementary removal of natural organic matter (NOM) and to improve the  
36 bio-stability of the water, through removal of assimilable dissolved organic carbon (DOC)  
37 (Bhatnagar and Sillanpää, 2017; Graf et al., 2014; Velten et al., 2011, Liao et al., 2019). It  
38 may also be employed at the beginning of the water treatment works (WTWs) as a  
39 “roughing” filter to aid with NOM and pesticide removal (Ratnayaka et al., 2008; Reckhow  
40 and Singer, 2010; Zeng et al., 2019).

41 One of the key drivers for NOM removal is the reduction of disinfection by-product (DBP)  
42 forming compounds following chemical disinfection (Ndiweni et al., 2019), expressed as the  
43 formation propensity (hence DBPFP). The trihalomethanes (THMs) and haloacetic acids  
44 (HAAs) have been the most extensively studied DBPs since they are usually present at the  
45 highest mass concentration (Gibert et al., 2013; Golea et al., 2017). In the EU, currently only  
46 THMs are regulated, with the maximum permissible combined concentration being 100 µg/L.  
47 Limits of 80 µg/L or 60 µg/L for 9 or 5 HAAs respectively are currently under consideration  
48 in the EU, in alignment with US regulations (USEPA, 2010).

49 NOM is substantially removed by coagulation/clarification in large-scale potable WTWs,  
50 provided rigorous monitoring and control is applied. However, this process is not always  
51 appropriate at small scale in remotely located sites where low-maintenance processes are

52 preferred to reduce labour costs. These include membrane and adsorption technologies, with  
53 GAC sometimes favoured on the basis of cost effectiveness and versatility (Bhatnagar and  
54 Sillanpää, 2017; Iriarte-Velasco et al., 2008). It is known that the high molecular weight  
55 (MW) hydrophobic (HPO) NOM fraction is readily removed by conventional coagulation,  
56 such that the influent NOM to GAC processes in secondary potable treatment stages is  
57 usually dominated by the low MW and relatively hydrophilic (HPI) fractions (Matilainen et  
58 al., 2006). The HPO fraction is generally more reactive with chlorine, with thus a high  
59 DBPFP (Golea et al., 2017). When GAC is used as a roughing filter, the main loading of  
60 NOM is from HPO and high MW organic compounds. In this case, high MW NOM can  
61 block the pores of the adsorbent, preventing other compounds from accessing the adsorbent.  
62 The NOM characteristics and the corresponding required GAC media properties are thus  
63 influenced by the position of the adsorption process in the treatment scheme (Valdivia-Garcia  
64 et al., 2016).

65 One of the most significant GAC media properties is pore size ( $d_p$ ) distribution; the useful  
66 pore size range for NOM has been shown to be the secondary micropores (1-2 nm) and the  
67 mesopores (2-50 nm), with pores smaller than 1 nm offering negligible adsorption (Dastgheib  
68 et al., 2004; Velten et al., 2011). High MW (1-10 kDa) NOM such as humic substances with  
69 molecular diameters above 2 nm are adsorbed largely within the mesopores. However,  
70 adsorption is not solely governed by bulk physical properties, since physicochemical  
71 properties – and specifically surface charge and hydrophobicity – also impact on adsorption;  
72 HPO NOM is preferentially removed over hydrophilic material. It thus follows that the low  
73 MW hydrophilic fraction, whilst less reactive with chlorine, poses the greatest challenge to

74 removal by GAC and may still have a sufficiently high DBPFP to be problematic (Golea et  
75 al, 2017).

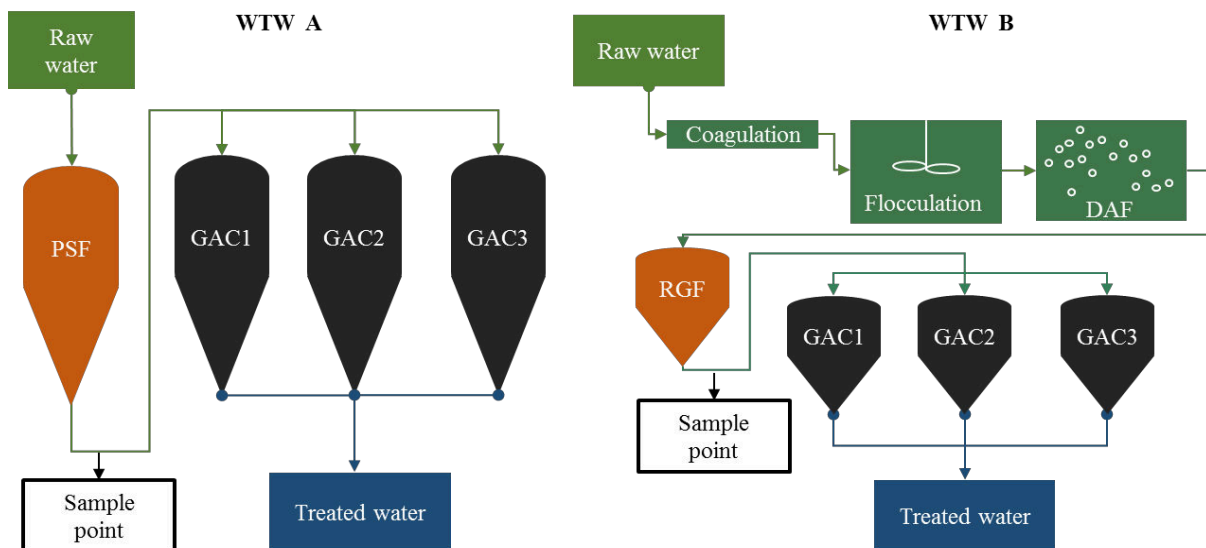
76 Given the above challenge presented by NOM removal by GAC it is of interest to determine  
77 (a) the most effective GAC media for DBP precursor removal from different water sources  
78 and (b) the most effective position of the GAC process in the treatment train. Previous studies  
79 of GAC adsorption of NOM have tended to focus on physicochemical characteristics of the  
80 NOM, rather than those of the GAC (Aschermann et al, 2018; Shimabuku et al, 2017; Velten  
81 et al, 2011), with this work including the key area of competitive adsorption/desorption of  
82 NOM and micropollutants (Aschermann et al, 2018; Piai et al, 2019). However, there have  
83 thus far been few studies quantitatively correlating NOM or DBPFP adsorption with media  
84 characteristics. Those studies that have encompassed GAC media with a range of pore sizes  
85 (Gui et al, 2018) have not quantitatively correlated media capacity with pore-related  
86 parameters.

87 The current study correlates GAC properties, specifically the media pore size distribution,  
88 with NOM and DBPFP removal from two water sources having differing NOM chemistry  
89 with reference to DBPFP. Tests encompassed both batch adsorption measurements and small-  
90 scale media column tests for determining adsorption capacity, and DBPFP both as  
91 trihalomethanes (THMFP) and haloacetic acids (HAAFP). Outcomes can then be expected to  
92 (i) inform decisions regarding GAC media selection for NOM removal, and (ii) direct  
93 developments on novel adsorptive media for maximum NOM capacity.

## 94 2 Methods and materials

### 95 2.1 Sampling

96 Source water was taken from two WTWs of differing process configuration (Fig. 1). WTW A  
97 employs simple media filtration via a pressurised sand filter (PSF) followed by GAC  
98 adsorption. WTW B uses clarification by conventional coagulation-flocculation followed by  
99 dissolved air flotation (DAF), rapid gravity filtration (RGF) and GAC adsorption. The water  
100 used in the current study was sampled from the filtrate, i.e. downstream of the PSF stage at  
101 the WTW A site (*Water A*) and the RGFs at WTW B (*Water B*).



102

103 Figure 1. Water treatment flow sheet at the 2 WTWs featuring rudimentary and advanced pretreatment  
104 respectively. WTW A: Pressure sand filtration; WTW B: Coagulation/flocculation, dissolved air  
105 flotation and rapid gravity filtration.

106

### 107 2.2 GAC media

108 GAC media sourced from four different precursor materials were used, selected to encompass  
109 a range of specific surface areas and  $d_p$  values, and comprised:

- 110 • Bituminous coal: *COL-L900* (Carbon-Activated LTD, Bristol, UK); *Filtrisorb F400*  
111 (Chemviron, Tipton, UK).
- 112 • Coal: *208 EA* (Chemviron); *Hydraffin XC30* (Donau Carbon, Frankfurt, Germany).
- 113 • Coconut shell: *DEO, HT5* (Eurocarb, Bristol, UK); *FY5* (CPL Carbon Link, Wigan, UK))
- 114 • Bovine bones: *Brimac* (Inverclyde, UK).

### 115 **2.3 GAC preparation**

116 For the batch adsorption isotherm tests, the GAC media was crushed and fractionated by  
117 sieving to generate a 38-90  $\mu\text{m}$  size fraction. The media were then washed thoroughly in  
118 ultrapure water, dried overnight at 105°C and kept in a desiccator until use for the adsorption  
119 capacity batch tests. For the rapid small-scale column test (RSSCT), the GAC was crushed  
120 using a hammer mill, and then sieved to between 212 and 300  $\mu\text{m}$ , yielding a column  
121 diameter:grain size ratio of >30:1 and so avoid channelling effects. The media were then then  
122 rinsed and dried as with the isotherm tests (Philippe et al., 2010), then re-wetted prior to  
123 testing by boiling in DI water for 10 minutes. Media preparation in this manner has been  
124 shown to have no significant impact on the internal structural pore features (Ando et al.,  
125 2010).

### 126 **2.4 GAC characterisation using N<sub>2</sub> pore size distribution**

127 The total pore volume  $V_{total}$  of the dried media was measured as the adsorbed volume of N<sub>2</sub>  
128 gas near the saturation volume ( $P/P_0=0.98$ ) (Iriarte-Velasco et al., 2008), and the surface area  
129 calculated from Brunauer–Emmett–Teller (BET) theory (Brunauer et al., 1938). The  $d_p$   
130 distribution was determined using density functional theory (DFT) for pores sizes quantified  
131 between 0.7 and 36 nm (Velten et al., 2011). The DFT model was employed to provide a

132 more accurate interpretation of the isotherm data for non-homogenous liquids on  
133 microporous materials (Lastoskie et al., 1993). Calculations assumed a graphite structure with  
134 slit-like pore geometry (Iriarte-Velasco et al., 2008; Moore et al., 2001) using an *ASAP 2010*  
135 (Micrometrics, St Andrews, UK) physisorption apparatus. GAC were primarily characterised  
136 by the volume of the secondary micropores (1-2 nm) and mesopores (2-50 nm), since smaller  
137 pores have been shown to exhibit negligible adsorption of NOM (Velten et al., 2011). Further  
138 analysis of the  $d_p$  distribution was undertaken to correlate specific pore size ranges with  
139 removal of NOM, with a maximum measured pore size of 30 nm.

## 140 **2.5 Adsorption capacity batch tests**

141 The prepared media were dosed at 0-0.1 g/L, with dose modulated based on the DOC of the  
142 source water, and agitated continuously in an orbital shaker at 200 rpm for 24 hours at 20°C,  
143 which preliminary trials established was a sufficient period for equilibration. The water  
144 samples were then 0.45 µm-filtered prior to analysis. The equilibrium adsorption capacity  
145 ( $q_e$ , mg DOC/g adsorbent) was calculated as the change in solution DOC concentration  $C_i -$   
146  $C_e$ ,  $C_i$  being the initial and  $C_e$  the equilibrium concentration, divided by the adsorbent  
147 concentration  $D_o$ . Base  $D_o$  values of 150 and 50 mg/L for *Water A* and *B* respectively were  
148 established as being appropriate for removing significant organic matter whilst still leaving a  
149 sufficient (>1 mg/L) residual DOC concentration to permit subsequent THMFP and HAAFP  
150 analysis. All tests were carried out in duplicate.

## 151 **2.6 Rapid small-scale column tests**

152 1000 L samples of water were taken from WTW A and B and were passed through media  
153 beds of 15 mm diameter and 140 mm height for 14 days. The RSSCT columns were

154 undertaken according to the recommendations of [Crittenden et al. \(2012\)](#), following the  
155 proportional intra-particle diffusivity (PD) model:

$$156 \quad \frac{EBCT_{SC}}{EBCT_{LC}} = \frac{d_{G,SC}}{d_{G,LC}} = \frac{t_{SC}}{t_{LC}} \quad \text{Equation 1}$$

$$157 \quad M_{SC} = EBCT_{LC} \times \frac{d_{p,SC}}{d_{p,LC}} \times Q_{SC} \times \rho_{LC} \quad \text{Equation 2}$$

158 Where  $EBCT_{LC}$  = empty bed contact time in full-scale adsorber;  $EBCT_{SC}$  = empty bed  
159 contact time for small experimental columns;  $d_{G,SC}$  = diameter of GAC particles in small  
160 column;  $d_{G,LC}$  = diameter of GAC particles in full scale column;  $t_{SC}/t_{FS}$  = time required to  
161 conduct a small-scale test ( $t_{SC}$ ) relative to the time necessary to conduct a large-scale test  
162 ( $t_{FS}$ );  $M_{SC}$  = the mass of media in the small column;  $Q_{SC}$  = the flow in the small column;  $\rho_{LC}$  =  
163 density of the GAC media in the large column. Equation 2 was used to ensure that the  
164 different GAC media densities were accounted for.

165 For NOM removal, the PD approach has proven to work well since the relatively high MW  
166 organic matter diffuses significantly faster into the pores of the GAC when compared to  
167 micropollutants ([Summers et al., 1995](#)). Scaled from an operational empty bed contact time  
168 of 20 minutes for full scale adsorbers as typically used in Scottish Water ( $EBCT_{LC}$ ), this  
169 translated to an EBCT in the experimental columns ( $EBCT_{SC}$ ) of 4.24 minutes for a 25 mL  
170 bed volume.

## 171 **2.7 Sample chlorination and DBP formation potential determination**

172 250 mL water samples were diluted to a concentration of 1 mg C/L and buffered to pH 7 and  
173 dosed with NaOCl at a  $Cl_2$ :DOC weight ratio of 5:1. Samples were then sealed and stored in  
174 the dark at a temperature of 25°C for seven days. The chlorine was then quenched with



175 excess sodium thiosulphate and the THM and HAA concentrations measured. The total THM  
176 concentration (tTHM) was measured using gas chromatography spectrometry with headspace  
177 injection using the standard USEPA 551 method (USEPA, 1998). The total concentration of  
178 the five most predominant HAAs (tHAA<sub>5</sub>) was measured using liquid-liquid separation and  
179 analysis by gas chromatography with mass spectrometric detection following the USEPA  
180 method 552.3 (APHA, 2012), with at least seven injections undertaken for each  
181 measurement.

## 182 **3 Results and discussion**

### 183 **3.1 Source water characterisation**

184 Sample filtrate water quality varied significantly between the two sites (Table 1) due to the  
185 differences in pre-treatment, *Water B* samples receiving full clarification whereas *Water A*  
186 which was treated only by sand filtration (Fig. 1). Whilst the pH and conductivity values  
187 were both lower for the *Water A* samples (6.8 and 166  $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ , cf. 8.1 and 569  $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$  for  
188 *Water B*), reflecting the reduced chemical addition, the DOC of *Water A* was double that of  
189 *Water B* and the UV<sub>254</sub> absorption 3.8 times higher. UV<sub>254</sub> absorption is recognised as  
190 broadly reflecting the HPO content of the water (Bhatnagar and Sillanpää, 2017), which was  
191 commensurately 3.4 times higher for *Water A*. Conversely, the HPI content was 2.8 times  
192 lower. The elevated DOC and HPO concentrations of *Water A* were reflected in THMFP and  
193 HAA<sub>5</sub>FP values, respectively 1.25 and 4.2 times higher on average for *Water A* cf. *Water B*.  
194 These factors increased to 2.4 and 8 respectively under worst-case conditions. No significant  
195 change in the distribution of individual DBP species was observed between the two samples,  
196 with trichloromethane being the predominant THM (85-90% by weight) and the

197 dichloroacetic and trichloroacetic acids making up 80-85% of the tHAA<sub>5</sub> concentration in  
 198 both cases.

199

200

201

202

203

204

205

206

207 **Table 1:** Physicochemical characteristics of the two different water sources.

<i>Parameter</i>	<i>Water A</i>	<i>Water B</i>
pH	6.8	8.1
DOC (mg/L)	5.98	3.12
UV <sub>254</sub> (/cm)	0.254	0.068
SUVA (mg/L/m)	4.25	2.18
tTHM (µg/L)	676.3	282
THMFP (µg/L per mg DOC)	113.1	90.4
tHAA (µg /L)	1006.4	126
HAA <sub>5</sub> FP (µg/L per mg DOC)	168.3	40.4
Colour (mg/L Pt/Co)	33	4.47
Turbidity (NTU)	0.37	0.1
Conductivity (µS/cm)	166	569
HPO (mg/L)	3.44	1
TPI (mg/L)	1.25	0.71
HPI (mg/L)	0.37	1.05

208

### 209 **3.2 Physical media characteristics**

210 Total pore volumes ranged from 0.331 (*DEO*) up to 0.581 cm<sup>3</sup>/g (*HT5*) for the GAC media  
 211 investigated. Mesopore volumes measured for the GAC media studied ranged from as low as  
 212 0.004 cm<sup>3</sup>/g (*FY5*) up to 0.156 cm<sup>3</sup>/g (*XC30*). The secondary micropores were between 0.174  
 213 cm<sup>3</sup>/g (*DEO*) and 0.401 cm<sup>3</sup>/g (*HT5*) (Table 2). None of the media had  $d_p$  values above 27.3

214 nm. The media with the highest total pore volume (*HT5*) had pores that were predominantly  
215 in the 1-2 nm pore size range (0.401 cm<sup>3</sup>/g). The media with the most evenly distributed pore  
216 sizes was the coal media *XC30* with 0.205 (57%) and 0.156 (43%) cm<sup>3</sup>/g distributed between  
217 micro and mesopores respectively (Fig 2). *F400* had a 78:22 distribution of pore volume  
218 between the micropore and mesopore size range. Further examination revealed pore size to be  
219 predominantly below 5 nm, contributing 84.0-99.9% of the total pore volume (Fig 2). The  
220 media with the highest proportion of small pores (<5) nm were the coconut shell media (*FY5*  
221 and *DEO*) at 99.8 and 99.9%. Conversely, the GAC with the smallest proportion of small  
222 pores were the coal-based *XC30* and the bone char media *Brimac*, at 83.9 and 85.7%  
223 respectively.

224 There was good agreement between the specific surface area values measured in the current  
225 study ( $S_{BET}$ ) and those reported by the supplier ( $S_{BET,s}$ ) and other researchers (Table 2). The  
226 exception was the  $S_{BET}$  for *Brimac* (bone char). For *Brimac*,  $S_{BET}$  has been previously reported  
227 as being 130-283 m<sup>2</sup>/g, with a  $V_{total}$  of 0.287 cm<sup>3</sup>/g (Moreno et al., 2010; Nili-Ahmadabadi,  
228 2011), compared to the much higher values of 841 m<sup>2</sup>/g and 0.430cm<sup>3</sup>/g respectively  
229 recorded in the current study. For *F400*, there was a small difference in the  $V_{micropores}$   
230 measured in the current study (0.271 cm<sup>3</sup>/g), a value which was 20-33% lower than the 0.30-  
231 0.41 cm<sup>3</sup>/g range previously reported (Summers et al., 2010, Dastgheib et al., 2004, and  
232 Gibert et al., 2013, Table 2). Differences are likely to reflect the media sample heterogeneity,  
233 a point noted by other researchers (Ando et al., 2010) and differences in the range of pore  
234 sizes quantified during the analysis. The surface area of the *Brimac* media was nonetheless  
235 the lowest measured of all those investigated.

236 **Table 2:** The physicochemical properties of the media used for removal of NOM from two different water sources.

<i>GAC media</i>	$V_{total}^1$ cm <sup>3</sup> /g	$d_p$ nm	$V_{micropores}^2$ cm <sup>3</sup> /g	$V_{meso-pores}^3$ cm <sup>3</sup> /g	$DFT\ area\ (m^2/g)^4$			<i>Granulation</i> <sup>5</sup> mm	$S_{BET,s}^5$ m <sup>2</sup> /g	$S_{BET}$ m <sup>2</sup> /g	$IN^{5,6}$ mg/g	<i>Precursor</i> <sup>5</sup>
					0.7-1.7	1-2	>2					
<i>COL-L900</i>	0.460	≤26.1	0.347	0.112	444	506	72	0.425-1.70	900-1000	977±5	900	Bituminous coal
<i>F400</i>	0.442	≤26.1	0.271	0.073	431	416	49	0.425-1.70	1050	1032±5	1050	Bituminous coal
<i>208EA</i>	0.517	≤16.1	0.301	0.120	424	465	67	0.6-1.7	1000	1078±6	1000	Coal
<i>XC30</i>	0.511	≤26.1	0.205	0.156	325	340	66	0.6-2.36	1000	986±6	950	Coal
<i>DEO</i>	0.331	≤27.3	0.174	0.013	274	285	8	0.6-1.70	800	809±11	825	Coconut shell
<i>HT5</i>	0.581	≤27.3	0.401	0.029	621	652	14	0.42-1.70	1400	1419±12	1300	Coconut shell
<i>FY5</i>	0.400	≤16.1	0.288	0.004	452	471	3	1.40-3.35	1150	1043±11	1100	Coconut shell
<i>Brimac</i>	0.430	≤25	0.246	0.131	334	373	62	0.7-2.38	200	841±3	700	Bovine bones

237 <sup>1</sup>According to DFT (density functional theory), determined to <30nm; <sup>2</sup>1-2 nm pore size range; <sup>3</sup>>2 nm pore size; <sup>4</sup>with reference to pore size range indicated; <sup>5</sup>Data  
 238 sourced from supplier technical sheets; <sup>6</sup>Iodine number.

239

240

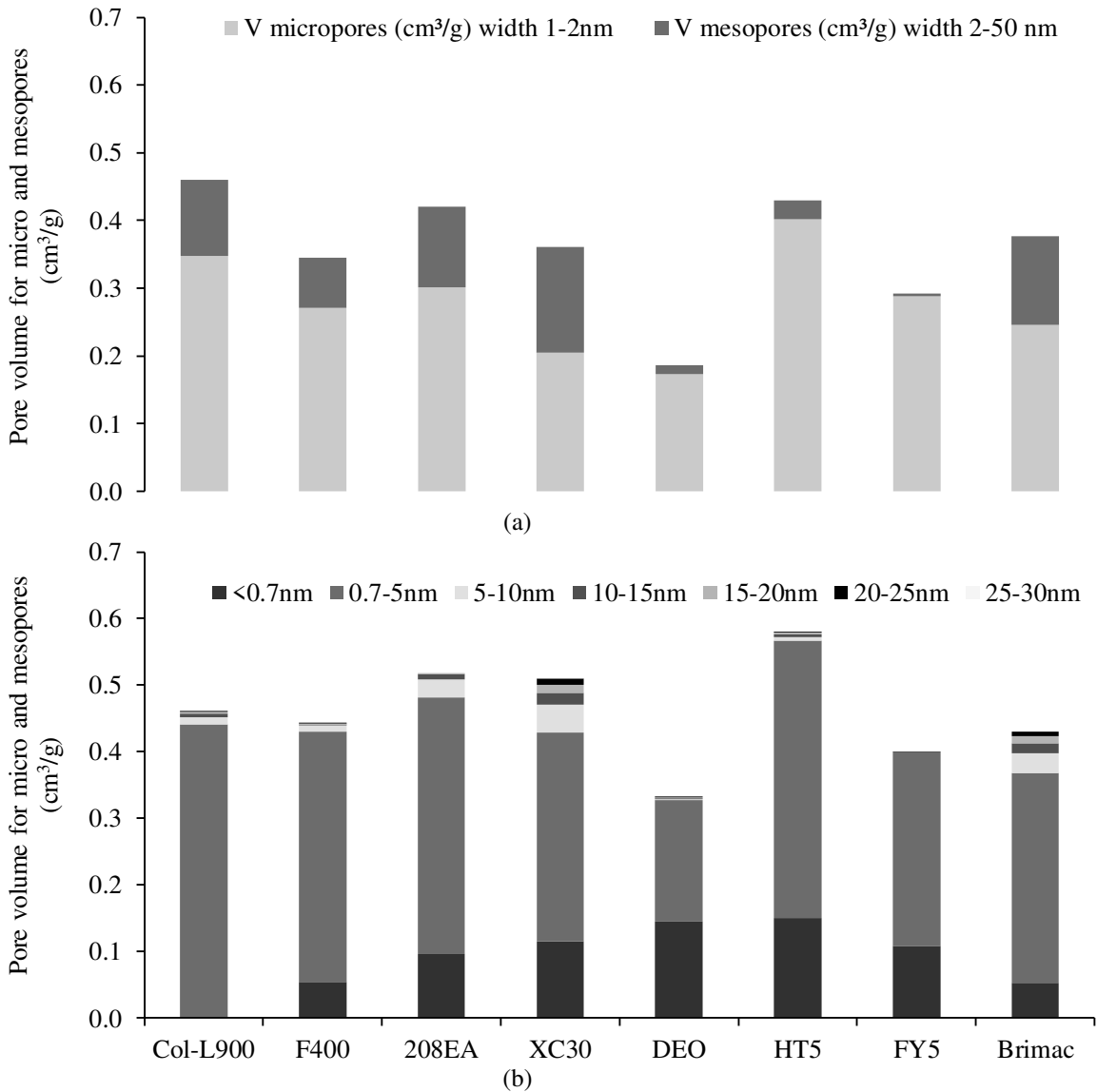
241

**Table 3:** Volumetric pore size distribution, determined from DFT for pores sizes <30 nm.

<i>Media/pore size:</i>	<b>&lt;0.7nm</b>	<b>0.7-5nm</b>	<b>5-10nm</b>	<b>10-15nm</b>	<b>15-20nm</b>	<b>20-25nm</b>	<b>25-30nm</b>	<b>Total</b>
<i>Col-L900</i>	0.001	0.440	0.011	0.006	0.002	0.001	0	0.460
<i>F400</i>	0.055	0.375	0.010	0.002	0	0	0	0.442
<i>208EA</i>	0.096	0.386	0.027	0.008	0.001	0	0	0.517
<i>XC30</i>	0.115	0.314	0.042	0.018	0.012	0.009	0.001	0.511
<i>DEO</i>	0.144	0.183	0.001	0.002	0.000	0	0	0.331
<i>HT5</i>	0.151	0.417	0.005	0.004	0.003	0.002	0	0.581
<i>FY5</i>	0.108	0.291	0	0.001	0	0	0	0.400
<i>Brimac</i>	0.053	0.316	0.029	0.016	0.010	0.007	0	0.430

242

243  
244



245  
246  
247  
248

Figure 2. GAC pore volumes for (a) the micro (1-2 nm) and mesopores (2-50 nm) pore size, and (b) the full distribution of pore sizes.

249

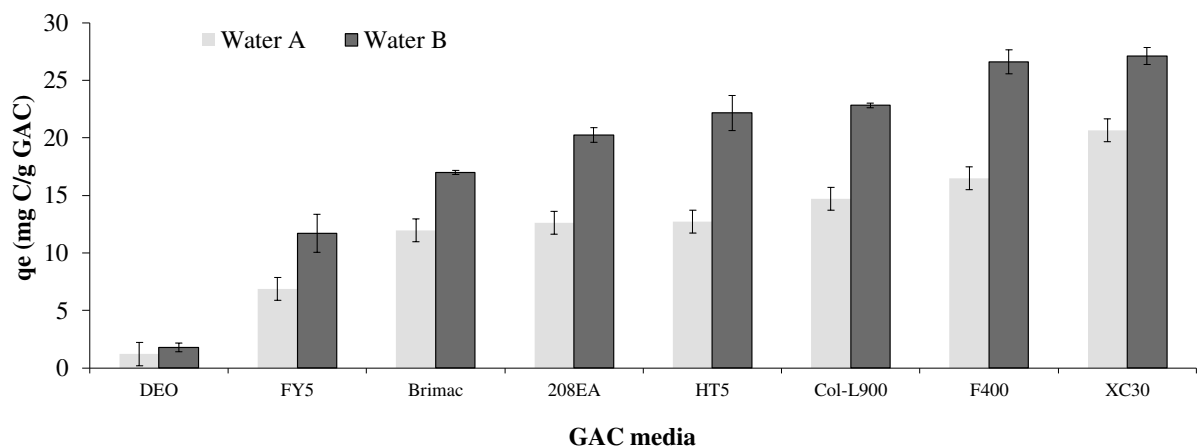
### 250 3.3 Batch adsorption isotherms

251 Batch adsorption isotherms revealed significant differences in DOC capacity across the  
252 different media (Fig. 3), with *DEO* having the lowest capacity (1.19 and 1.76 mg/g for  
253 *Waters A* and *B* respectively) and *XC30* the largest (20.7 and 27.1 mg/g respectively).

254 The higher capacity for the *Water B* organic matter reflects the impact of the  
 255 coagulation pre-treatment on the DOC characteristics, which similarly accounts for the  
 256 difference in THMFP. Increased GAC capacity following coagulation has been noted  
 257 by [Karanfil et al. \(1999\)](#), and was attributed to the removal of high MW HPO NOM  
 258 which otherwise cause pore blockage and so reduce media capacity. Two-fold changes  
 259 in THMFP between raw and treated waters have been previously reported for  
 260 predominantly upland water samples ([Golea et al, 2017](#)).

261 No selective removal of THM precursors was observed for any of the media, the  
 262 THMFP values all lying between 100 and 113  $\mu\text{g THM} / \text{mg DOC}$  for *Water A* and 75-  
 263 83 for *Water B* (Fig. 4a), despite a  $>10$  times change in capacity. THMFP tended to  
 264 decrease with increasing media capacity regardless of the media characteristics, a trend  
 265 more readily recognisable from the non-normalised THM concentration data (Fig. 4b).  
 266 However, no other trend in THM concentration vs bulk media characteristics,  
 267 specifically  $IN$  and  $S_{BET}$ , was evident.

268



269  
270

Figure 3. Organic carbon capacity ( $q_e$ ) of the 8 media.

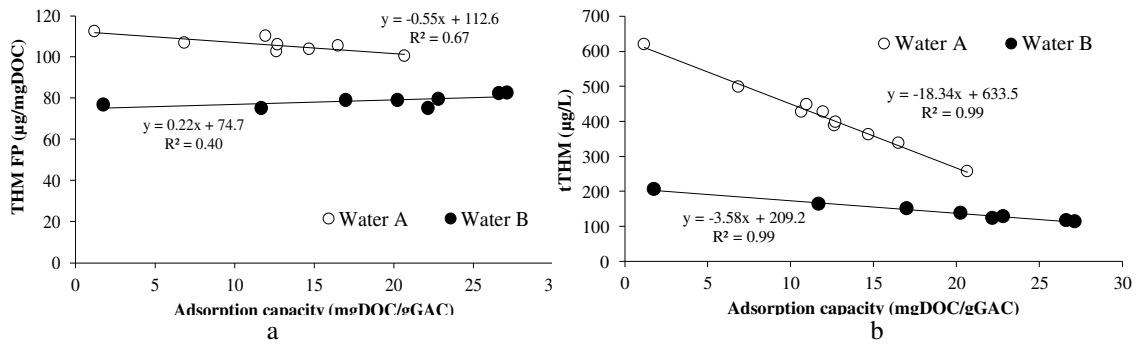


Figure 4. (a) Normalised THMFP and (b) tTHMs for Waters A and B. Each datum corresponds to a single GAC media.

271  
272  
273  
274

275

### 276 3.4 Rapid small-scale column tests

277 The breakthrough curves for the individual media inferred relative capacities which  
 278 generally followed the trends recorded for the batch tests (Fig. 5). Breakthrough curves  
 279 were steeper for Water A due to the higher organic loading for this source water and the  
 280 impact of the larger and HPO organic carbon fraction exhausting the GAC surface area.

281 Overall, the two coal-based media (208EA and XC30) offered the highest capacities,  
 282 reflected in shallower breakthrough curves. For Water A, the DOC removal efficiency  
 283 for these media progressively decreased from 92-94% to 25-27% after 22,000 BVs (Fig.  
 284 5a), the maximum volume reached for this campaign. For Water B, XC30 provided the  
 285 shallowest curve, from 92% DOC removal initially to an end value of 50%, with two  
 286 other coal-based media (F400 and 208EA) removing 90-91% DOC initially and  
 287 progressively declining to 36-38%.

288 Differences in performance between Waters A and B again reflect the impact of  
 289 clarification pre-treatment, which both decreases the DOC concentration and the  
 290 proportion of the high MW organic compounds which otherwise block the media pores.

291 The lower MW NOM fraction, reported to be in the 0.5-5 nm size range (Dastgheib et  
292 al., 2004; Karanfil et al., 1999; Moore et al., 2001; Velten et al., 2011) can then access  
293 the media pores (Graf et al., 2014; Iriarte-Velasco et al., 2008) with the 2-50 nm  
294 mesopores expected to provide the most accessible adsorption sites for such NOM  
295 macromolecules. This was consistent with the two media having the lowest mesopore  
296 volumes (*FY5* and *DEO*, derived from coconut shell, with mesopore volumes of 0.004-  
297 0.013 cm<sup>3</sup>/g) offering the lowest DOC removal (Fig. 5b) despite their relatively high  
298 surface area ( $S_{BET}$  values). Conversely, the mesopore volume of the *208EA* and *XC30*  
299 media were amongst the highest of those tested. The *Brimac* media performed  
300 comparatively well for both water sources despite its low  $S_{BET}$  value due to its high  
301 mesopore volume.

302

303

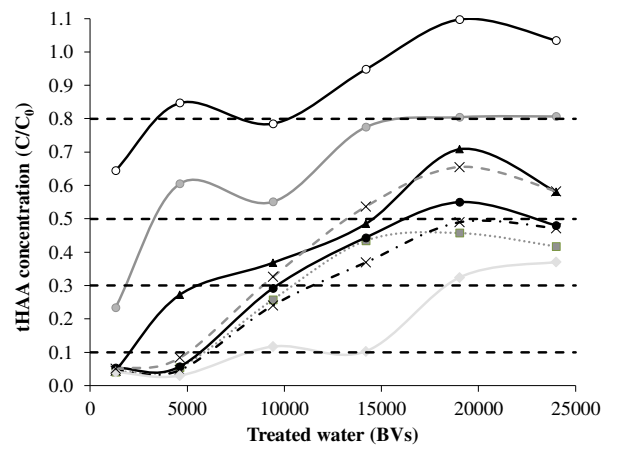
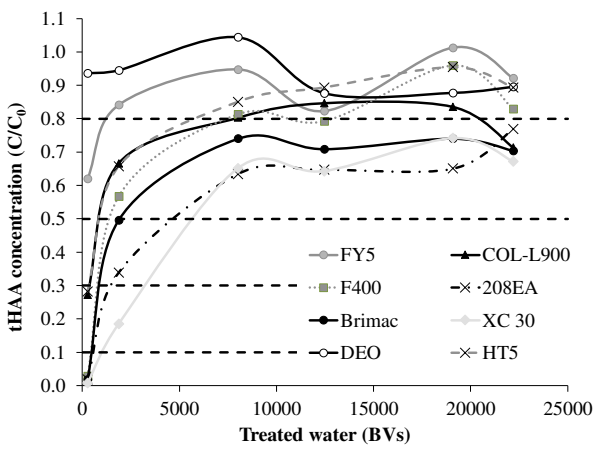
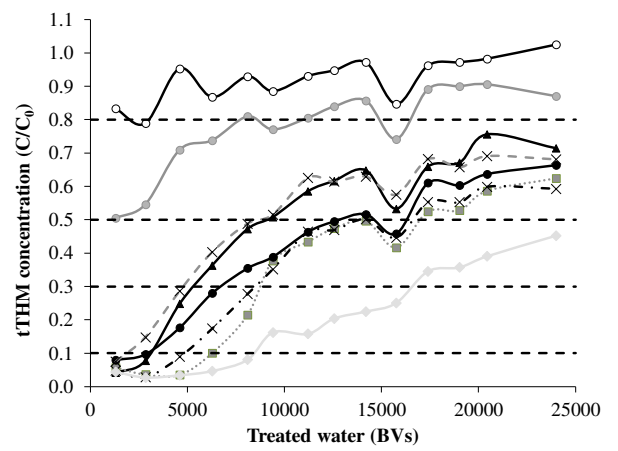
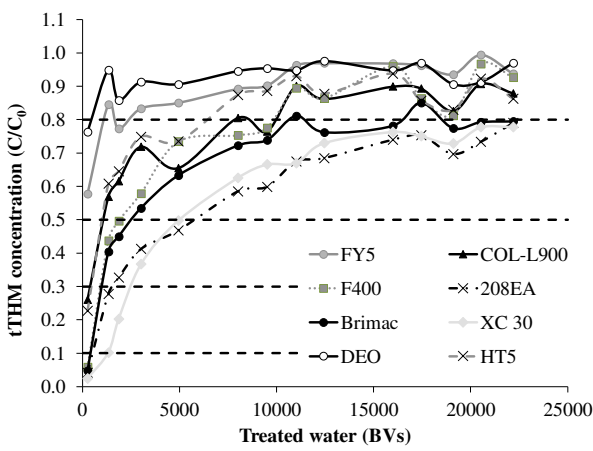
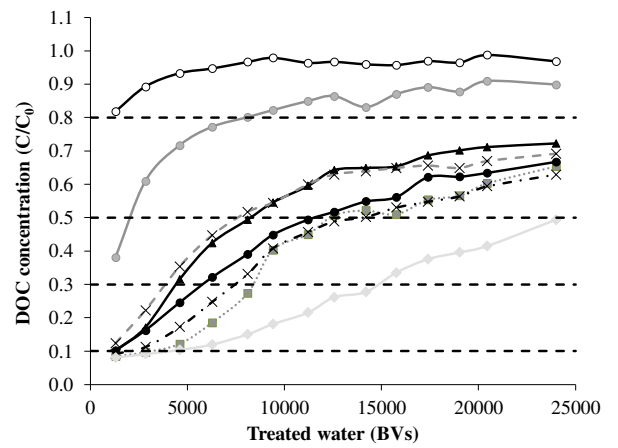
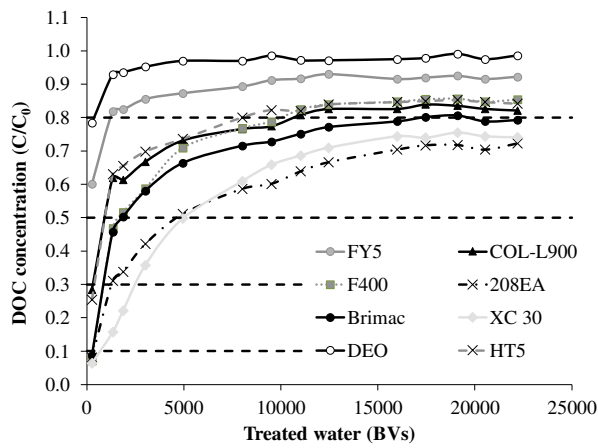
304

305

306

307





308 Figure 5. Removal of (a-b) DOC and precursors of (c-d) tTHM and (e-f) tHAA for waters A (a, c, e)  
 309 and B (b, d, f), for up to 24,000 bed volumes (BV) of treated water.

310

311 The reduction in THMFP (Figure 5c-d) and HAAs (Figure 4e-f) generally followed the  
312 removal profile of the DOC. There was no indication of selective removal of DBP  
313 precursors from either water by any of the GAC media, a result consistent with that  
314 observed from the batch experiments.

315 The throughput to 30, 50 and 80% breakthrough ( $BV_{30}$ ,  $BV_{50}$  and  $BV_{80}$ ) of DOC (Table  
316 4) confirm *XC30* as achieving the highest  $BV_{30}$  for both water sources. For *Water A*,  
317 *XC30* treated almost double the amount of water (2514 BVs) than the next best GAC  
318 (*208EA*), and respectively three and seven times more water than *Brimac* and the best  
319 coconut shell-based media *HT5*. The *Brimac* GAC performed at a similar level to the  
320 *F400* media. Both *FY5* and *DEO* failed to achieve a quantifiable  $BV_{30}$  due to rapid  
321 exhaustion at <267 BVs, the point when the first sample was taken. The same order of  
322 removal was seen when the  $BV_{50}$  was considered, although the differences were less  
323 pronounced, with the best performing media being *XC30* with a  $BV_{50}$  of 5059 compared  
324 with only 946 BVs for *HT5*. The  $BV_{80}$  indicated more significant differences between  
325 the media, with no  $BV_{80}$  value obtained after 23,980 BVs for two of the media (*XC30*  
326 and *208EA*) for *Water A* indicating removal was always >20%. This compares with a  
327  $BV_{80}$  of only 503 for *DEO*. For the other GAC, *Brimac* treated 40% more water than  
328 *F400*, while *COL-L900* treated the same number of BVs as *HT5* (946).

329

330 **Table 4:** Throughput to a filtrate DOC of 30%, 50% and 80% of the feed concentration (BV<sub>30</sub>, BV<sub>50</sub>  
 331 and BV<sub>80</sub> respectively) for the GAC media studied by RSSCT, waters A and B, EBCT<sub>LC</sub> = 20  
 332 minutes.

GAC media	WTW A			WTW B		
	BV <sub>30</sub>	BV <sub>50</sub>	BV <sub>80</sub>	BV <sub>30</sub>	BV <sub>50</sub>	BV <sub>80</sub>
<i>COL-L900</i>	355	946	10,710	4,467	8,284	>>23,980
<i>F400</i>	858	1,775	10,030	8,402	12,308	>>23,980
<i>208EA</i>	1,301	4,704	>>22,194	7,455	13,728	>>23,980
<i>XC30</i>	2,514	5,059	>>22,194	14,911	23,964	>>23,980
<i>DEO</i>	<<267	<<267	503	<<1,302	<<1,302	1,302
<i>HT5</i>	355	946	8,047	3,875	7,633	>>23,980
<i>FY5</i>	<<267	<<267	1,242	<<1,302	2,041	8,284
<i>Brimac</i>	858	1,775	17,101	5,798	11,657	>>23,980

333  
 334 For *Water B*, *XC30* was again the best performing media with a BV<sub>30</sub> of 14,911, a value  
 335 substantially higher than the next best GAC *F400*, having a BV<sub>30</sub> of 8,402. No BV<sub>30</sub>  
 336 value was recorded for *DEO* and *FY5* since the 30% target was exceeded before the first  
 337 sample taken at 1,302 BVs. This was also the case for the BV<sub>50</sub> value for *DEO*, whereas  
 338 the corresponding value for *FY5* was 2,041. This value was less than 10% of the BV<sub>50</sub>  
 339 values recorded for *XC30*. All media other than *FY5* and *DEO* removal achieved  
 340 removal exceeding 20% throughout the run, thus providing no measurable BV<sub>80</sub>, with  
 341 *XC30* maintaining  $\geq 50\%$  removal.

### 342 **3.5 UV<sub>254</sub> for monitoring of DBP formation propensity breakthrough**

343 It is of practical significance to correlate DBP breakthrough with a more readily  
 344 monitored water quality determinant, such as UV<sub>254</sub> absorbance. UV<sub>254</sub> is widely  
 345 acknowledged as being a reasonable analogue measurement for DBPFP due to its  
 346 association with the more labile HPO organic content of the NOM (Bougeard et al.,  
 347 2010; Karapinar et al., 2014). Breakthrough data based on number of BVs passed

348 recorded for 10, 30 and 50% breakthrough ( $BV_{10}$ ,  $BV_{30}$ , and  $BV_{50}$  respectively) for  
349 *Waters A* and *B* (Fig. 6) indicate a consistently better correlation for the former.  $R^2$   
350 values range from 0.98 to 1.00 for *Water A* data, compared with 0.75-0.99 for *Water B*.  
351 This is a consequence of the increased HPO content of the DOC in *Water A* compared  
352 with *Water B*, which was subject to pre-clarification. Similar increases in DBPFP data  
353 scatter for residual DOC following clarification have been reported by [Golea et al](#)  
354 [\(2017\)](#).

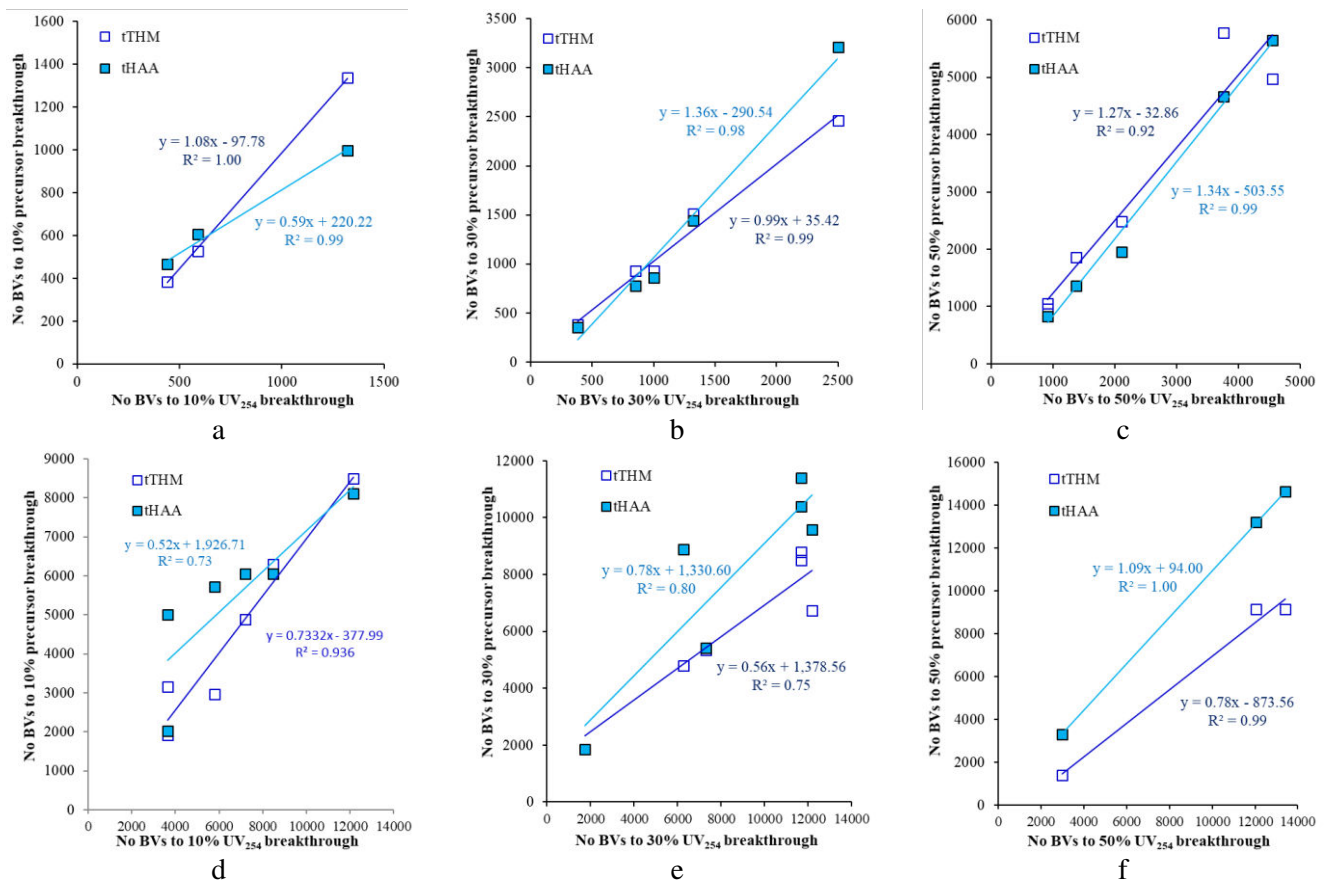
355 However, the slope for these correlations varies significantly across the different data  
356 sets, from 0.99 to 1.36 for *Water A* and 0.52-1.09 for *Water B* with no pattern evident.  
357 This may reflect the vagarious nature of the reactivity of the organic carbon, as noted by  
358 previous authors ([de la Rubia et al, 2008](#); [Golea et al, 2017](#)). Thus, whilst  $UV_{254}$   
359 provides a reasonable representation of DBPFP for both raw and treated waters, and is  
360 apparently unaffected by the GAC media characteristics, the coefficient is dependent on  
361 the DOC characteristics.

362

363

364

365



366  
 367 Figure 6. Correlation of bed volumes passed until target percentage breakthrough is reached, DBP  
 368 precursor concentration vs. UV<sub>254</sub> for waters A (a-c) and B (d-f) at 10% (a, d), 30% (b, e) and  
 369 50% (c, f) breakthrough. For a single correlation each individual datum relates to a single  
 370 GAC media.

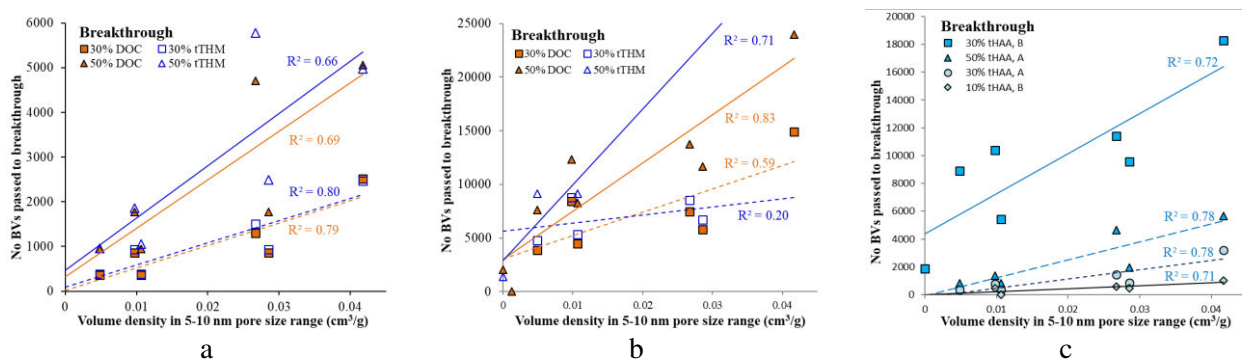
371

### 372 3.6 Correlation of DOC removal with GAC characteristics

373 A consideration of the impact of media characteristics on the removal of DOC and  
 374 THMFP from the RSSCTs (Fig. 7) indicates a reasonable correlation of the BV<sub>30</sub> and  
 375 BV<sub>50</sub> data for both DOC and tTHM concentration with the absolute pore volume density  
 376 for the 5-10 nm pore size range  $V_{p,5-10}$  (Fig. 7a-b). The tHAA breakthrough data also  
 377 correlated reasonably with this pore size range (Fig. 7c). Across these 12 data sets R<sup>2</sup>  
 378 values ranged from 0.59 to 0.83 for all but the BV<sub>30</sub> data set for tTHM breakthrough, for

379 which there was no evident correlation ( $R^2 = 0.20$ ). Against this, all correlations  
 380 between the breakthrough BV and pore volume density produced for the other pore size  
 381 ranges generated  $R^2$  values below 0.27 (Supplementary Information, Table S1).  
 382 Evidence therefore suggests that removal of NOM-derived DOC, and subsequently the  
 383 THM and HAA byproducts generated from the residual DOC in the treated water, is  
 384 primarily a function of the density of 5-10 nm-sized pores in the GAC media. This is a  
 385 result consistent with that of Velten et al (2011), who advocated selection of 1-50 nm  
 386 pore-sized GAC media for NOM removal. The present research suggests that the key  
 387 pore size range to be 5-10 nm.

388



389

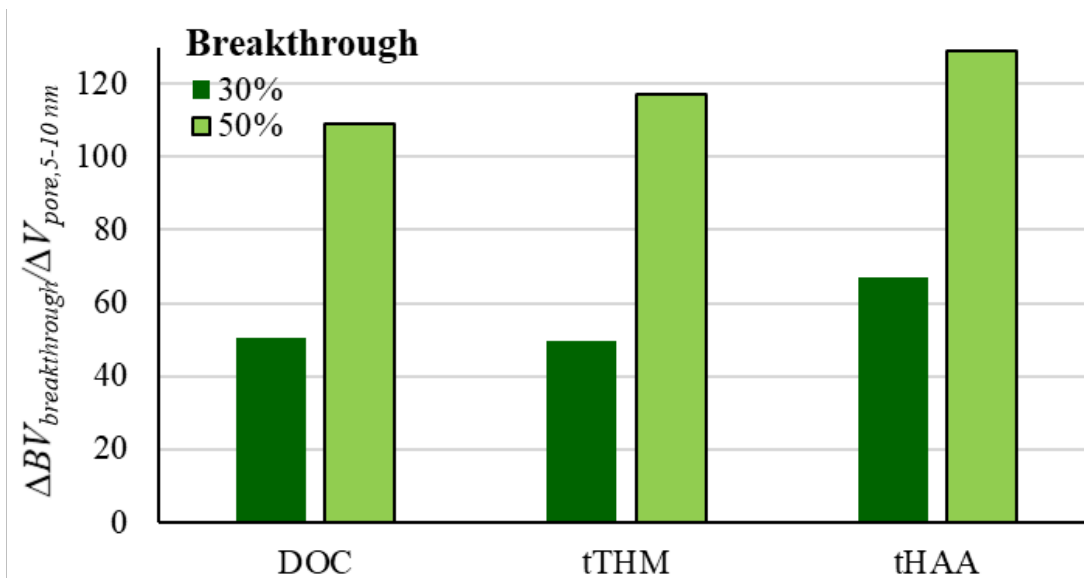
390 Figure 7. No. BVs passed to 30% and 50% breakthrough of DOC and tTHMs vs. total volume of pores  
 391 within 5-10 nm size range for waters (a) A, and (b) B, and for (c) 10-50% breakthrough of  
 392 tHAAs.

393

394 The values of the slopes depicted in Figure 7, i.e.  $\Delta BV_{\text{breakthrough}}/\Delta V_{p,5-10}$ , provide an  
 395 indication of the extent to which the practical adsorption capacity of the media is  
 396 influenced by the 5-10 nm pore volume. Accordingly, in the case of *Water A* (Fig. 8),  
 397 the volume treated to 50% breakthrough increases by 105-125 BVs per cm<sup>3</sup>/kg 5-10nm

398 pore volume density based on either DOC or DBPFP concentration. The corresponding  
 399 range for *Water B*, for an organic carbon concentration around half that of *Water A*, is  
 400 500-670 BVs per cm<sup>3</sup>/kg – the difference being attributable to the pore-blocking effect  
 401 of the HPO in *Water A*. In both cases, the tHAA data forms the top of the range.

402 There is evidently a significant influence of the total 5-10 nm pore volume per kg  
 403 material on the media capacity; 3-6 fold capacity changes arise, the precise value  
 404 depending on the % breakthrough value, as  $V_{p,5-10}$  changes from 0.005 to 0.042 cm<sup>3</sup>/g.  
 405 Whilst previous authors have qualitatively identified the importance of pores above 3  
 406 nm in size, specifically for removing humic and fulvic acid-like substances (Gui et al,  
 407 2018), the quantification of practical capacity in terms of breakthrough volume against  
 408 the total volume provided by pores within a specific size range has not previously been  
 409 reported.



410  
 411 Figure 8. Values of slopes in Fig. 7a and c, i.e. the change in treated volume to breakthrough as a  
 412 function of the volume of pores in the 5-10 μm size range ( $\Delta BV_{\text{breakthrough}}/\Delta V_{p,5-10}$ ) in units of  
 413 BV per cm<sup>3</sup>/kg, for *Water A*.

414 Results are comparable with previous work on NOM removal by GAC, with relatively  
415 low water volumes treated prior to significant breakthrough (e.g. 50% DOC  
416 breakthrough at 5-10,000 BVs for the treatment of water containing ~1 mg/L of DOC  
417 (Li et al., 2007; Velten et al., 2011). In comparison, removal of micropollutants  
418 normally provides higher removal levels for more sustained periods (e.g. 80% removal  
419 of the antibiotic sulfamethoxazole after ~68,000 BVs, Greiner et al., 2018). In the  
420 current study most of the media removed 20-30% DOC after extended run times for  
421 both water sources, with the most effective media removing >50% DOC after >20,000  
422 BVs for water pre-treated by coagulation. This shows potential for continuous precursor  
423 removal, particularly for the two coal-based media and the bone char GAC, provided  
424 20-30% removal is acceptable. However, the relatively fast breakthrough to 50% DOC  
425 and tTHM/tHAA for the higher-DOC, substantially untreated water source (*Water A*)  
426 indicated limited capacity for long-term bulk removal of NOM for source waters having  
427 a high DBP-FP. Against this, GAC was found to be an effective polishing process for  
428 pre-clarified water (*Water B*), where longer term reduction in DOC and DBP precursors  
429 was recorded.

## 430 **4 Conclusions**

431 Granular activated carbon (GAC) media of various origins (coal, coconut shell and  
432 bovine bone), and providing a range of physical characteristics with reference to pore  
433 size, have been appraised with reference to their capacity for natural organic matter  
434 (NOM). Experiments comprised (a) batch adsorption experiments for determination of  
435 equilibrium capacity, and (b) tests on micro-columns to represent capacity under normal



436 operating conditions. Two different water sources were tested, a raw water with  
437 rudimentary pretreatment (pressure sand filtration) and one pre-treated by full  
438 clarification. The media capacity both for organic carbon and for chlorinated  
439 disinfection byproduct formation propensity (DBPFP), with reference to both  
440 trihalomethane (THM) and haloacetic acid (HAA) formation, was determined. The  
441 applicability of  $UV_{254}$  absorption as a surrogate for was also assessed.

442 Results revealed:

- 443 a. The 8 media tested were found to have a wide range of pore size distributions and  
444 pore volume densities ( $V_p$  in  $cm^3/g$ ), specifically within the key range of 5-10 nm  
445 ( $V_{p,5-10}$ ).
- 446 b. There was no evidence of any selectivity for DBPFP removal by any of the media  
447 tested: the ratio of THM and HAA concentrations generated from DOC in treated  
448 waters did not change significantly between the different media.
- 449 c. In view of (b) above,  $UV_{254}$  provided a reasonable surrogate measurement of both  
450 DOC and DBPFP.
- 451 d. Batch adsorption tests provided a good indicator of media performance in terms of  
452 NOM removal: ranking of media capacities from batch testing generated the same  
453 sequence as that from microcolumn testing.
- 454 e. The media capacity, quantified in terms of bed volumes treated to breakthrough, was  
455 found to correlate with the pore volume density of the 5-10 nm pores ( $V_{p,5-10}$ ), in  
456 terms of pore volume provided per unit mass of media. A 3-6 fold increase in  
457 capacity was recorded for a change in  $V_{p,5-10}$  from 0.005 to 0.042  $cm^3/g$ .

458 f. Correlations were stronger for the water with rudimentary treatment than for the  
459 preclarified water due to both its increased organic carbon concentration and the  
460 hydrophobic content, the latter having a higher reactivity.

## 461 **Acknowledgments**

462 The financial and practical support of EPSRC under the *STREAM* programme,  
463 EP/G037094/1, and Scottish Water are gratefully acknowledged.

## 464 **References**

- 465 Ando, N., Matsui, Y., Kurotobi, R., Nakano, Y., Matsushita, T. and Ohno, K. (2010)  
466 ‘Comparison of natural organic matter adsorption capacities of super-powdered  
467 activated carbon and powdered activated carbon.’, *Water Research*, 44(14), 4127–36.
- 468 APHA (2012) *Standard Methods for the Examination of Water and Wastewater*. 22nd  
469 edn. Washington, DC: American Water Works Association, American Public Works  
470 Association, Water Environment Federation.
- 471 Aschermann, G., Zietzschmann, F., and Jekel, M. (2018), ‘Influence of dissolved  
472 organic matter and activated carbon pore characteristics on organic micropollutant  
473 desorption’, *Water Research*, 133, 123-131.
- 474 Bhatnagar, A. and Sillanpää, M. (2017) ‘Removal of natural organic matter (NOM) and  
475 its constituents from water by adsorption - A review’, *Chemosphere*, 166, 497–210.
- 476 Bougeard, C.M.M., Goslan, E.H., Jefferson, B. and Parsons, S.A. (2010) ‘Comparison  
477 of the disinfection by-product formation potential of treated waters exposed to chlorine  
478 and monochloramine’, *Water Research*, 44(3), 729–740.
- 479 Brunauer, S., Emmett, P.H. and Teller, E. (1938) ‘Adsorption of Gases in  
480 Multimolecular Layers’, *Journal of the American Chemical Society*, 60(2), 309–319.
- 481 Crittenden, J.C., Trussell, R.R., Hand, D.W., Howe, K.J., Tchobanoglous, G. and  
482 Borchardt, J.H. (2012) *MWH Water Treatment Principles and Design*. 3rd edn. New  
483 Jersey: Wiley.
- 484 Dastgheib, S. a, Karanfil, T. and Cheng, W. (2004) ‘Tailoring activated carbons for  
485 enhanced removal of natural organic matter from natural waters’, *Carbon*, 42(3), 547–  
486 557.
- 487 de Almeida Alves, A. A., de Oliveira Ruiz, G. L., Campos Martins. Nonato, T. C,  
488 Müller, L. C., Sens, M. L. (2019) Performance of the fixed-bed of granular activated  
489 carbon for the removal of pesticides from water supply, *Environmental Technology*,

490 40(15), 1977-1987.

491 de la Rubia, A., Rodríguez, M., León, V., and Prats, D. (2008), 'Removal of natural  
492 organic matter and THM formation potential by ultra- and nanofiltration of surface  
493 water', *Water Research* 42 (3) (2008) 714–722

494 Gibert, O., Lefèvre, B., Fernández, M., Bernat, X., Paraira, M. and Pons, M. (2013)  
495 'Fractionation and removal of dissolved organic carbon in a full-scale granular activated  
496 carbon filter used for drinking water production.', *Water Research*, 47(8), 2821–9.

497 Golea, D.M., Upton, A., Jarvis, P., Moore, G., Sutherland, S.T., Parsons, S.A. and Judd,  
498 S.J. (2017) 'THM and HAA formation from NOM in raw and treated surface waters',  
499 *Water Research*, 112, 226–235.

500 Goslan, E.H., Krasner, S.W., Bower, M., Rocks, S.A., Holmes, P., Levy, L.S. and  
501 Parsons, S.A. (2009) 'A comparison of disinfection by-products found in chlorinated  
502 and chloraminated drinking waters in Scotland', *Water Research*, 43(18), 4698–4706.

503 Graf, K.C., Cornwell, D.A. and Boyer, T.H. (2014) 'Removal of dissolved organic  
504 carbon from surface water by anion exchange and adsorption: Bench-scale testing to  
505 simulate a two-stage countercurrent process', *Separation and Purification Technology*,  
506 122, 523–532.

507 Greiner, B.G., Shimabuku, K.K. and Summers, R.S. (2018) 'Influence of biochar  
508 thermal regeneration on sulfamethoxazole and dissolved organic matter adsorption',  
509 *Environmental Science Water Research & Technology*, 4 Royal Society of Chemistry,  
510 169–174.

511 Gui, H. J., Li, F. S., Wei, Y. F., and Yamada, T. (2018) 'Adsorption characteristics of  
512 natural organic matter on activated carbons with different pore size distribution',  
513 *International Journal of Environmental Science and Technology*, 15(8), 1619-1628.

514 Hoslett, J., Massara, T.M., Malamis, S., Ahmad, D., van den Boogaert, I., Katsou, E.,  
515 Ahmad, B., Ghazal, H., Simons, S., Wrobel, L. and Jouhara, H. (2018) 'Surface water fi  
516 ltration using granular media and membranes: A review', *Science of the Total*  
517 *Environment*, 639, 1268–1282.

518 Iriarte-Velasco, U., Álvarez-Uriarte, J. I., Chimeno-Alaníc, N., and González-Velasco,  
519 J. R. (2008), 'Natural organic matter adsorption onto granular activated carbons:  
520 Implications in the molecular weight and disinfection byproducts formation', *Industrial*  
521 *and Engineering Chemistry Research*, 47(20), 7868-7876.

522 Karanfil, T., Kitis, M., Kilduff, J.E. and Wington, A. (1999) 'Role of Granular  
523 Activated Carbon Surface Chemistry on the Adsorption of Organic Compounds . 2 .  
524 Natural Organic Matter', *Environmental Science and Technology*, 33(18), 3225–3233.

525 Karapinar, N., Uyak, V., Soylu, S. and Topal, T. (2014) 'Seasonal Variations of NOM  
526 Composition and their Reactivity in a Low Humic Water', *Environmental Progress &*  
527 *Sustainable Energy*, 33(3), 962–971.

528 Lastoskie, C., Gubbins, K. E., and Quirke, N. (1993) 'Pore size distribution analysis of  
529 microporous carbons: A density functional theory approach', *Journal of Physical*

530 Chemistry, 97(18), 4786-4796.

531 Li, F., Yuasa, A., Katamine, Y. and Tanaka, H. (2007) 'Breakthrough of natural organic  
532 matter from fixed bed adsorbers: investigations based on size-exclusion HPLC',  
533 Adsorption, 13(5-6), 569-577.

534 Liao, X. B., Cheng, Y. S., Liu, Z. H., Shen, L. L., Zhao, L., Chen, C., Li, F. and Zhang,  
535 X. J. (2019) 'Performance of BAC for DBPs precursors' removal for one year with  
536 micro-polluted lake water in East-China', Environmental Technology.

537 Matilainen, A., Vieno, N. and Tuhkanen, T. (2006) 'Efficiency of the activated carbon  
538 filtration in the natural organic matter removal', Environment International, 32(3), 324-  
539 31.

540 Moore, B.C., Cannon, F.S., Westrick, J. a., Metz, D.H., Shrive, C. a., DeMarco, J. and  
541 Hartman, D.J. (2001) 'Changes in GAC pore structure during full-scale water treatment  
542 at Cincinnati: a comparison between virgin and thermally reactivated GAC', Carbon,  
543 39(6), 789-807.

544 Moreno, J.C., Gómez, R. and Giraldo, L. (2010) 'Removal of Mn, Fe, Ni and Cu Ions  
545 from Wastewater Using Cow Bone Charcoal', Materials, 3, 452-466.

546 Ndiweni, S. N., Chys, M., Chaukura, N., Van Hulle, S. W. H. and Nkambule, T. T. I.  
547 (2019) 'Assessing the impact of environmental activities on natural organic matter in  
548 South Africa and Belgium', Environmental Technology, 40 (13), 1756-1768.

549 Nili-Ahmadabadi, A.R.M.R.G.G.A. (2011) 'Adsorption of Escherichia coli Using Bone  
550 Char', Journal of Applied Science and Environment Management, 15(1), 57-62.

551 Philippe, K. K., Hans, C., MacAdam, J., Jefferson, B., Hart, J. and Parsons, S. A (2010).  
552 Photocatalytic oxidation, GAC and biotreatment combinations: an alternative to the  
553 coagulation of hydrophilic rich waters?' Environmental Technology, 31(13), pp. 1423-  
554 34.

555 Piai, L., Dykstra, J. E., Adishakti, M. G., Blokland, M., Langenhoff, A. A. M., & van  
556 der Wal, A. (2019). Diffusion of hydrophilic organic micropollutants in granular  
557 activated carbon with different pore sizes. Water Research, 162, 518-527.

558 Ratnayaka, D.D., Brandt, M.J. and Johnson, K.M. (2008) TWORT's Water Supply. 6th  
559 edn. .

560 Reckhow, D.A. and Singer, P.C. (2010) 'Formation and Control of Disinfection By-  
561 Products', in Edzwald, J. K. (ed.) Water Quality & Treatment: A Handbook on  
562 Drinking Water: A Handbook on Drinking Water. 6th edn. New York: McGraw-Hill  
563 Publishing, 1-60.

564 Shimabuku, K. K., Paige, J. M., Luna-Aguero, M., & Summers, R. S. (2017).  
565 Simplified modeling of organic contaminant adsorption by activated carbon and biochar  
566 in the presence of dissolved organic matter and other competing adsorbates.  
567 Environmental Science and Technology, 51(17), 10031-10040.

568 Summers, R.S., Hooper, S. M., Solarik, G., Owen, D. M., Hong, S. (1995) 'Bench-Scale  
569 Evaluation of GAC for NOM Control', Journal American Water Works Association,

570 87(8), 69–80.

571 Summers, R.S., Ph, D., Knappe, D.R.U., Carolina, N. and States, U. (2010) ‘Adsorption  
572 of Organic Compounds by Activated Carbon’, in Edzwald, J. K. (ed.) *Water Quality &  
573 Treatment : A Handbook on Drinking Water: A Handbook on Drinking Water*. 6th edn.  
574 New York: McGraw-Hill Publishing, 1–106.

575 Sun, Y., Angelotti, B., Brooks, M., Dowbiggin, B., Evans, P.J., Devins, B. and Wang,  
576 Z. (2018) ‘A pilot-scale investigation of disinfection by-product precursors and trace  
577 organic removal mechanisms in ozone-biologically activated carbon treatment for  
578 potable reuse’, *Chemosphere*, 210, 539–549.

579 USEPA (1998) ‘National Primary Drinking Water Regulations: Disinfectants and  
580 Disinfection Byproducts. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’, *Federal Register*,  
581 63(241), 69390–69476.

582 USEPA (2010) Stage 2 disinfectants and disinfection byproducts rule. Consecutive  
583 Systems Guidance Manual EPA 815-R-09-017.

584 Valdivia-Garcia, M., Weir, P., Frogbrook, Z., Graham, D.W. and Werner, D. (2016)  
585 ‘Climatic, Geographic and Operational Determinants of Trihalomethanes (THMs) in  
586 Drinking Water Systems’, *Scientific Reports*, 6, 35027.

587 Velten, S., Knappe, D.R.U., Traber, J., Kaiser, H.-P., von Gunten, U., Boller, M. and  
588 Meylan, S. (2011) ‘Characterization of natural organic matter adsorption in granular  
589 activated carbon adsorbers’, *Water Research*, 45(13), 3951–9.

590 Zeng, J., Chen, S., Wan, K., Li, J., Hu, D., Zhang, S. and Yu, X. (2019) ‘Study of  
591 biological up-flow roughing filters designed for drinking water pretreatment in rural  
592 areas: using ceramic media as filter material’, *Environmental Technology*, *in press*.

593

Figure 1

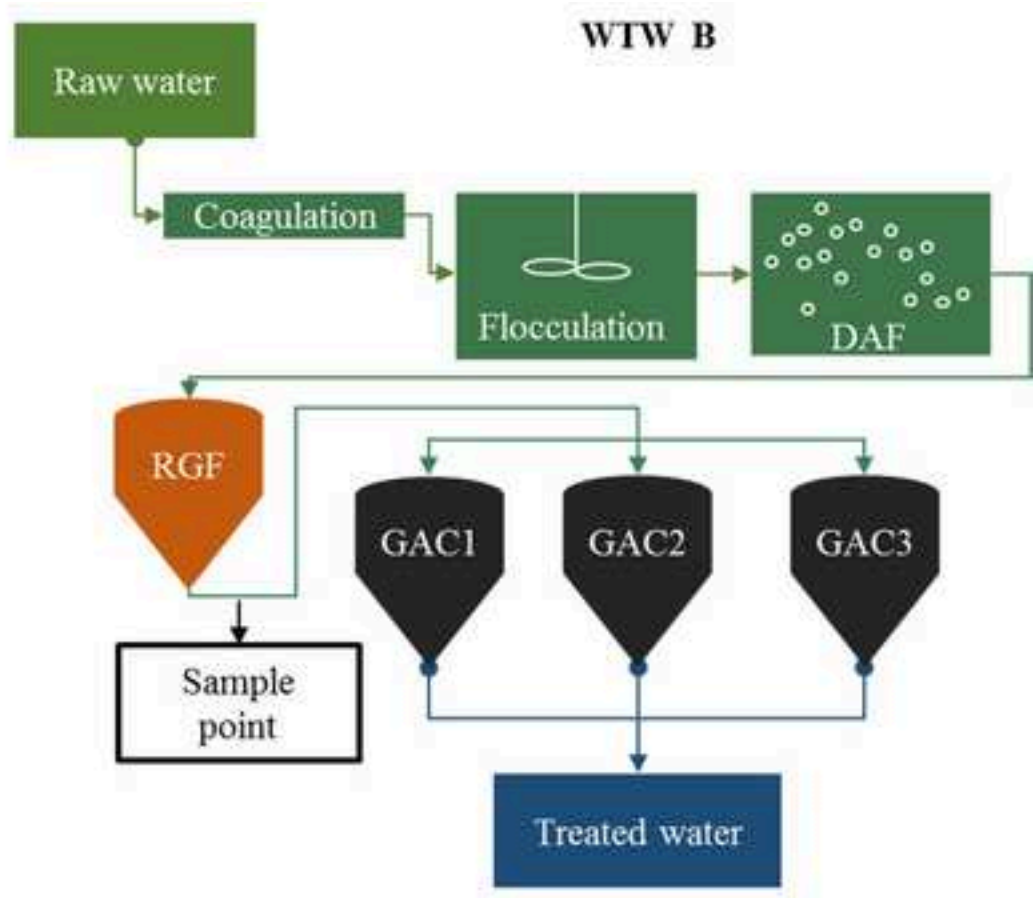
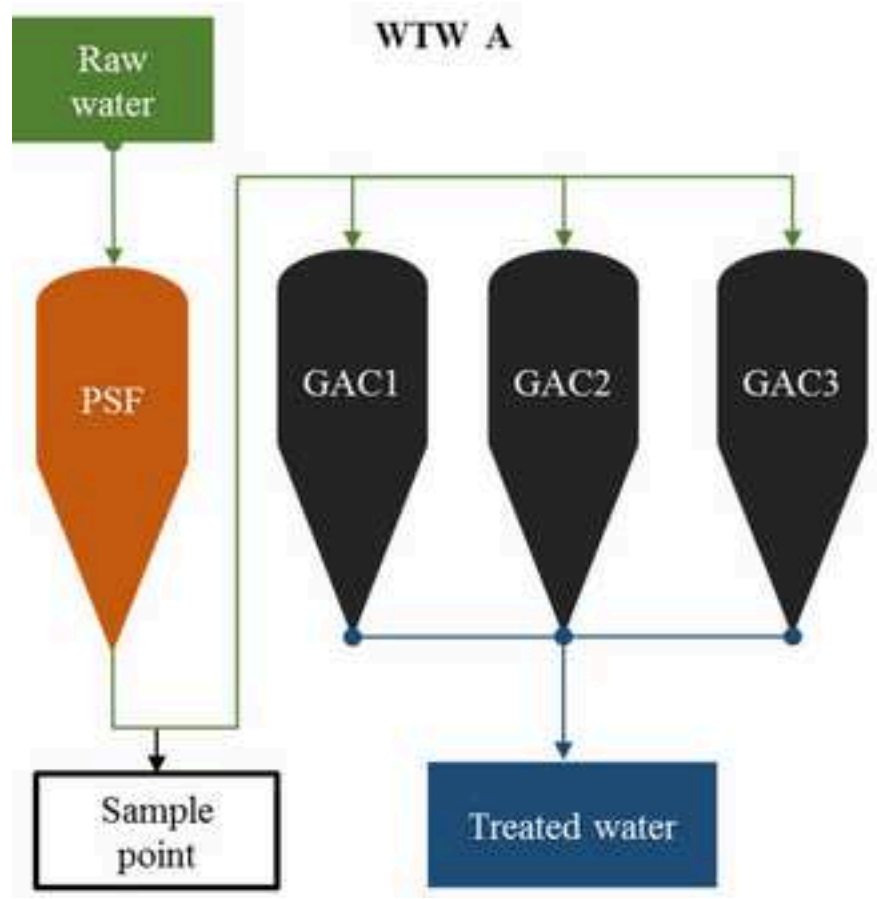


Figure 2a

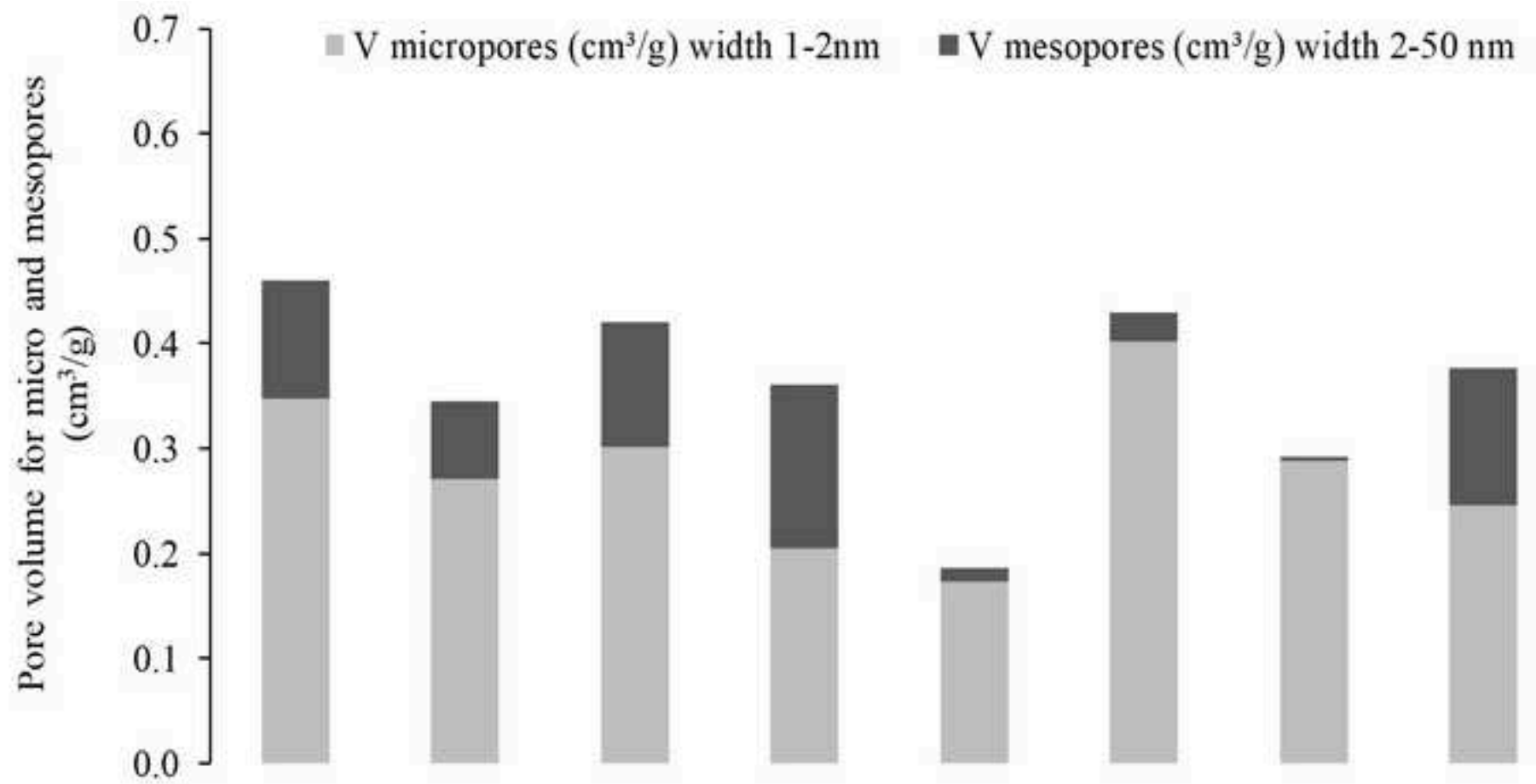


Figure 2b

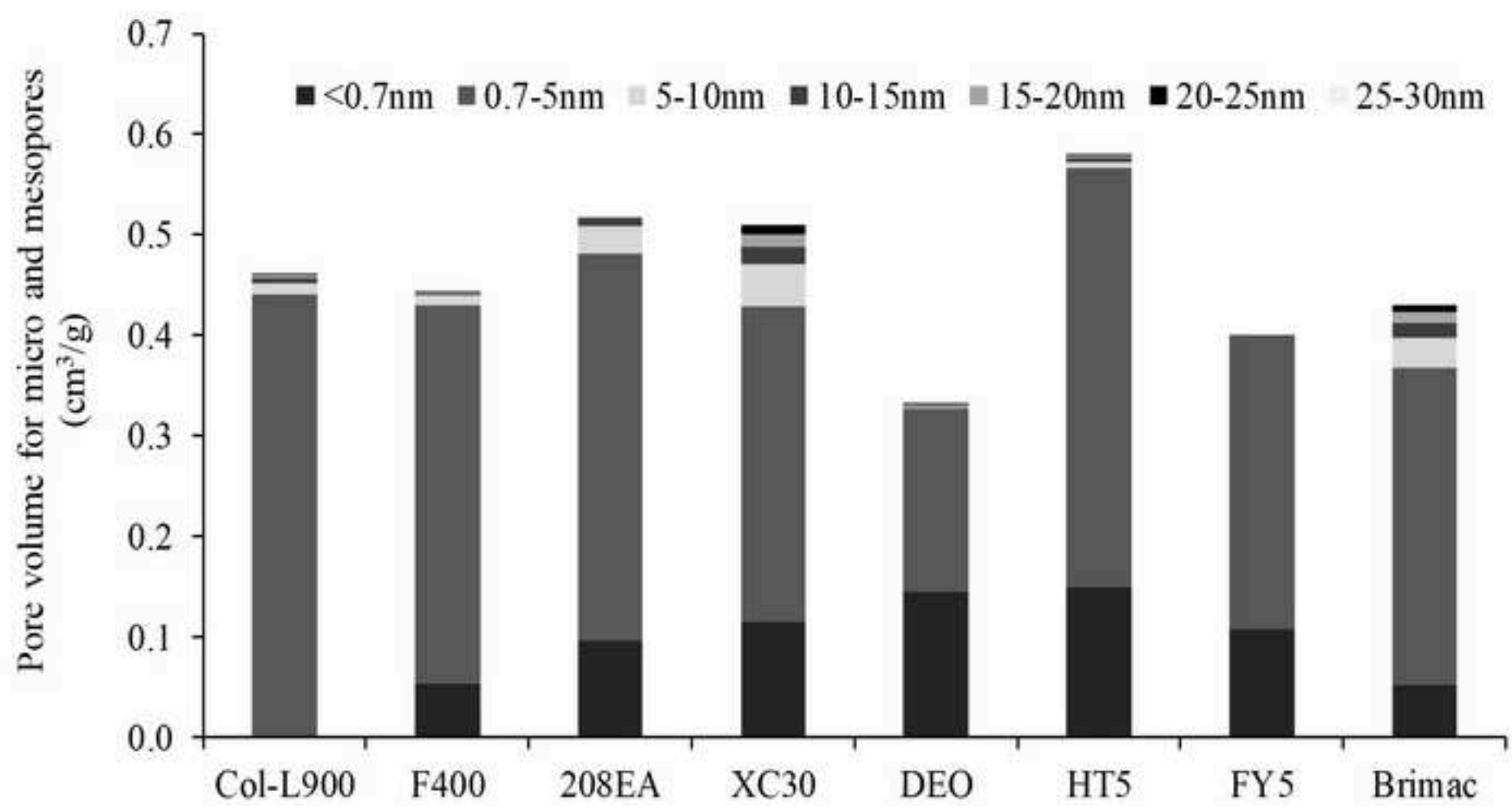




Figure 3

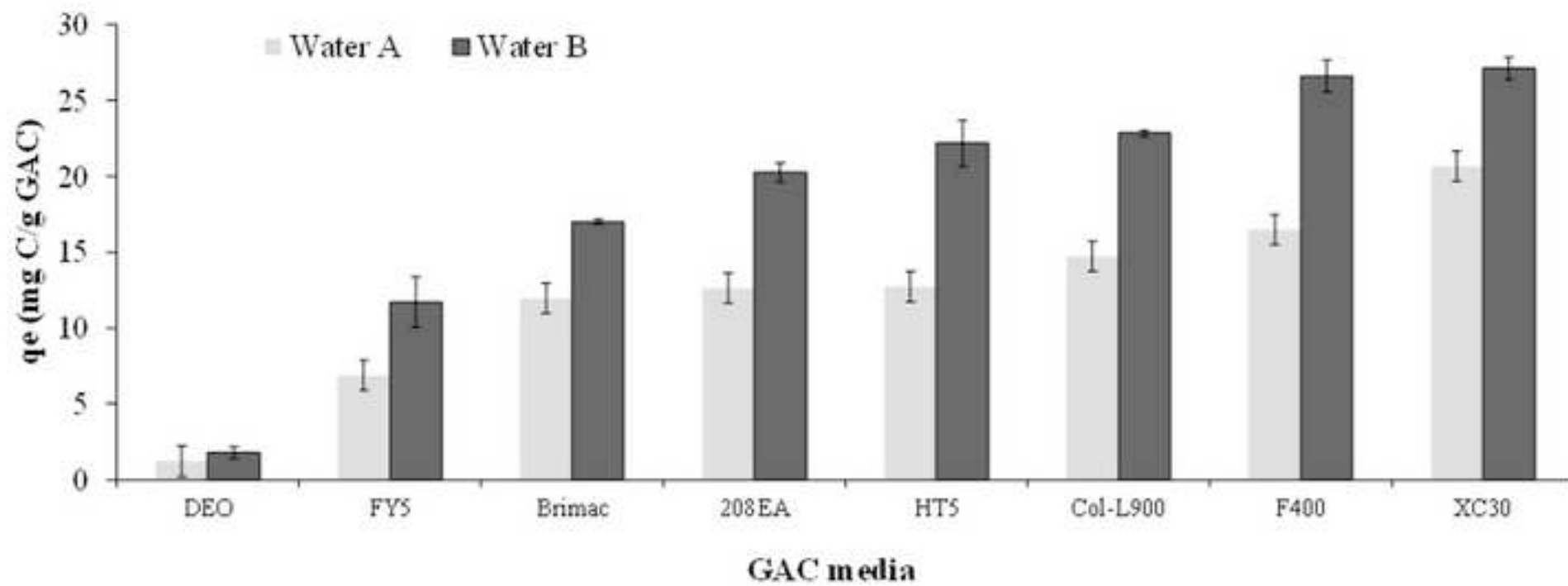


Figure 4a

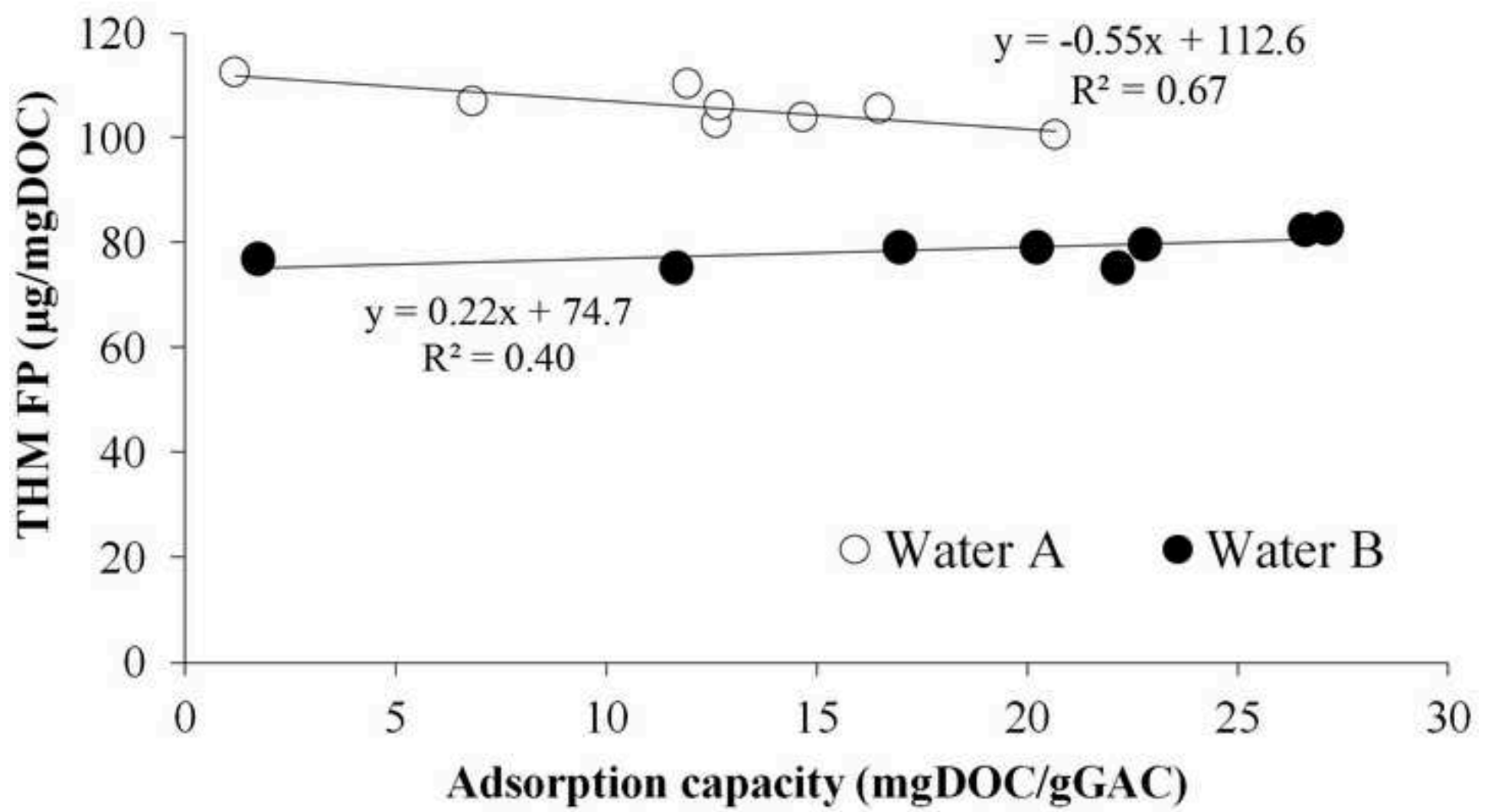


Figure 4b

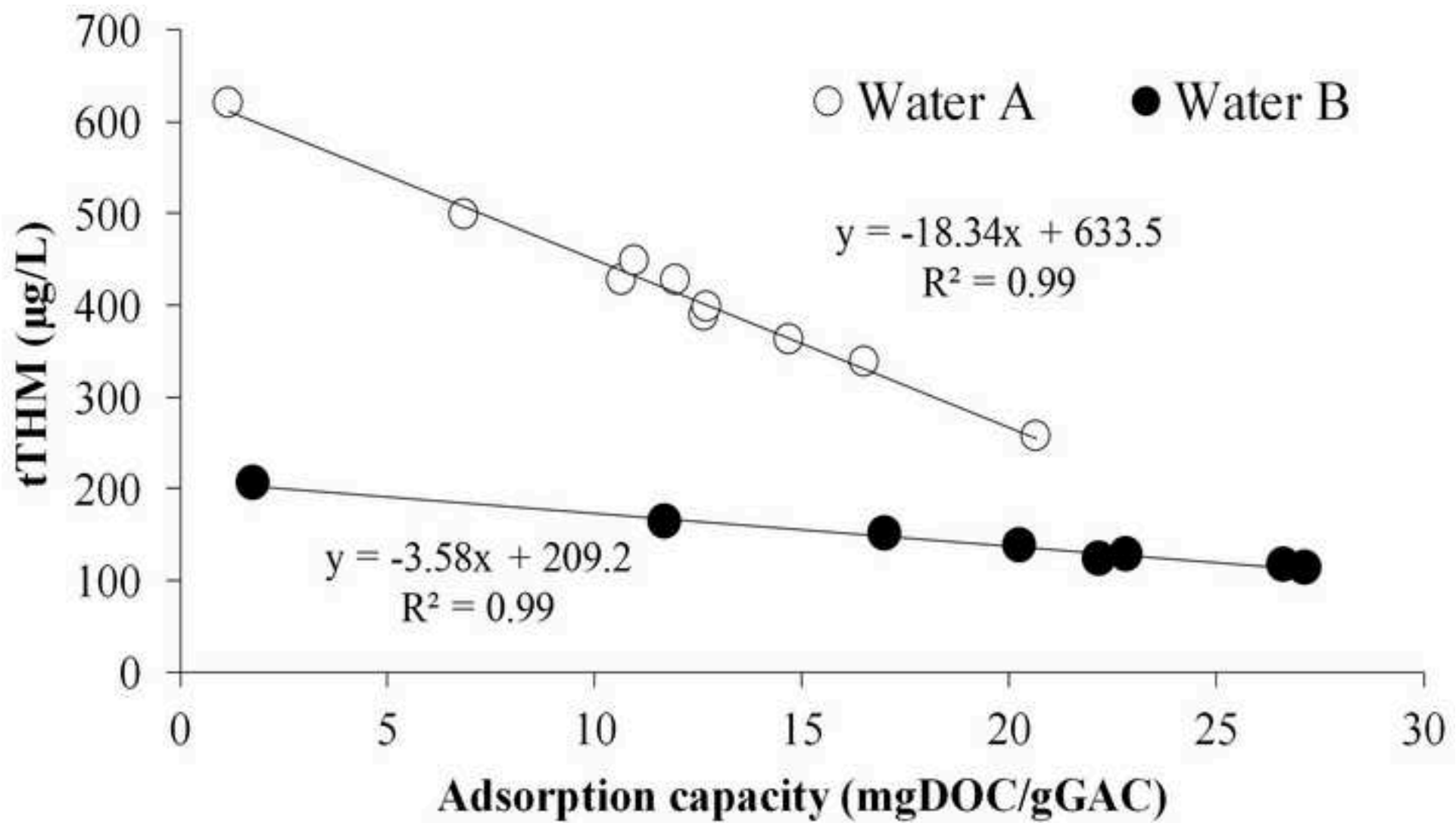


Figure 5a

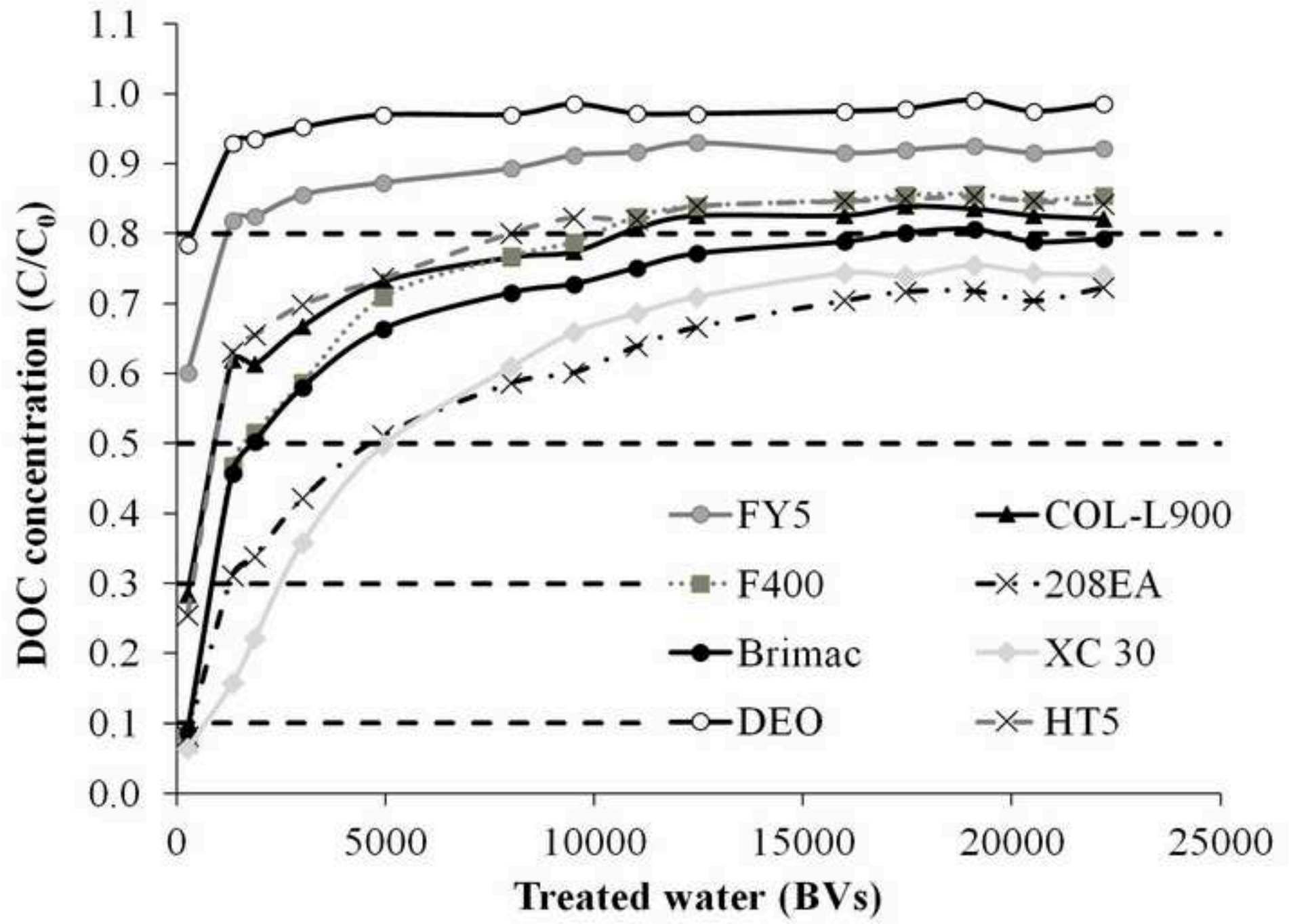


Figure 5b

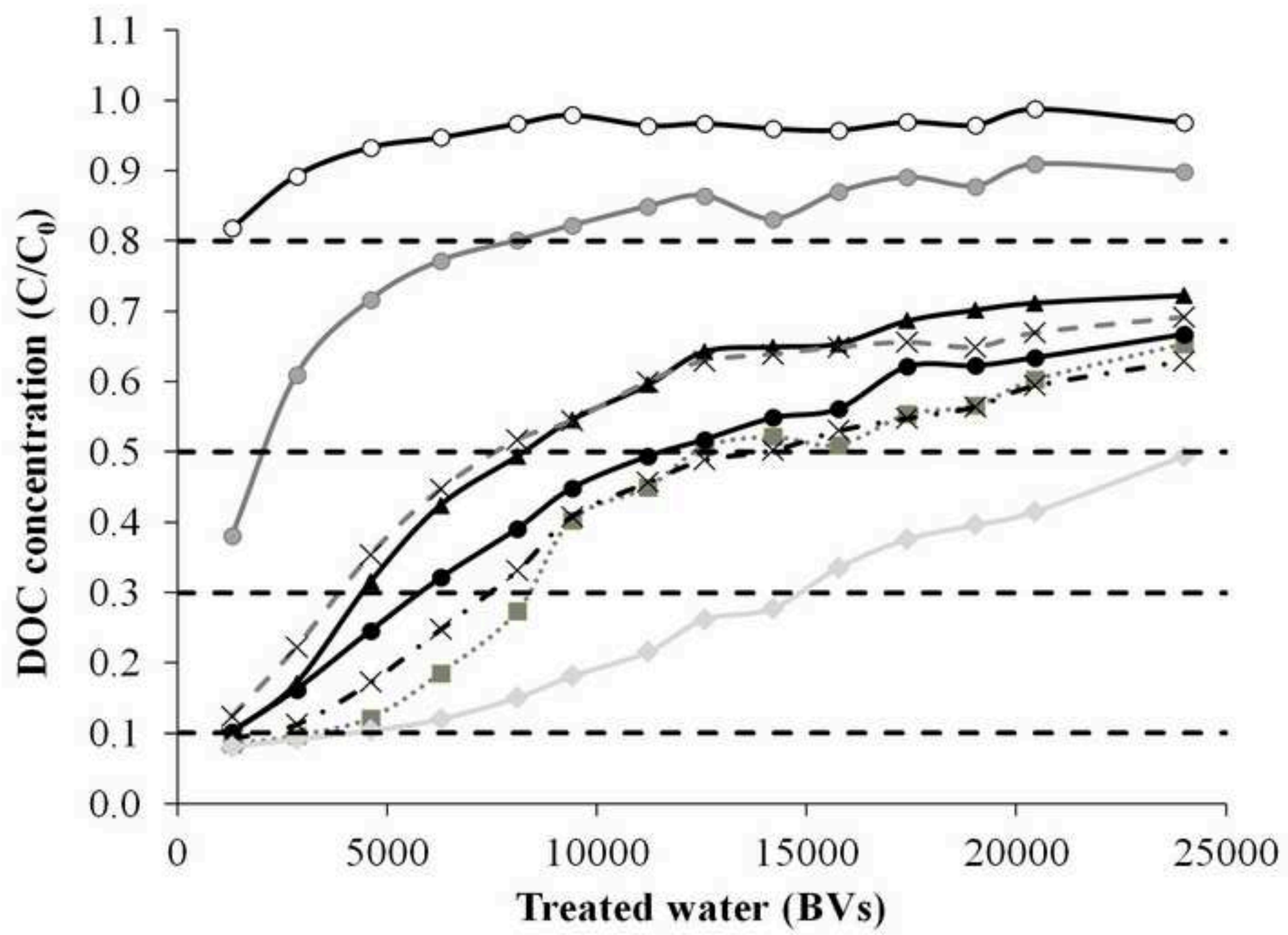


Figure 5c

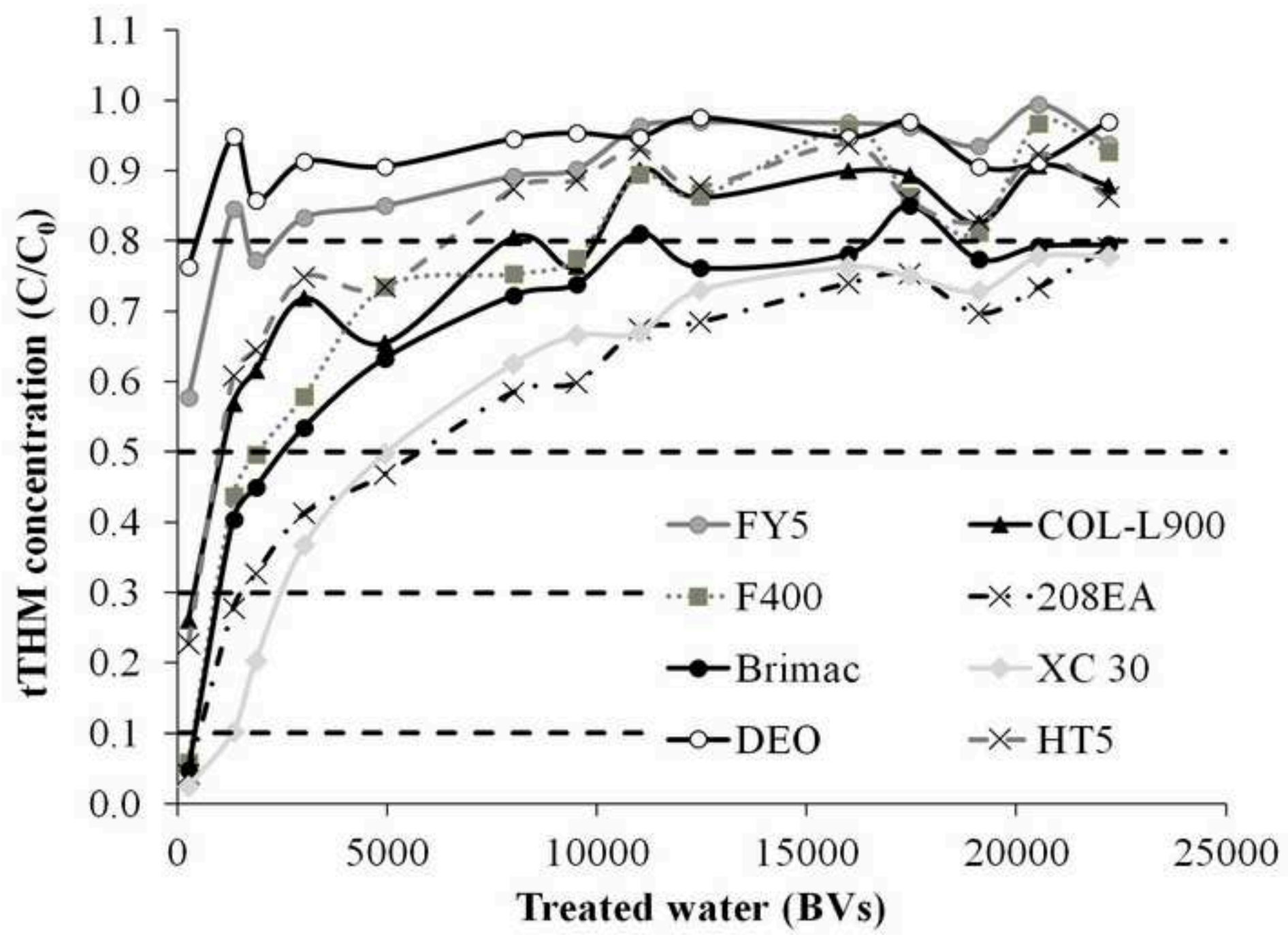


Figure 5d

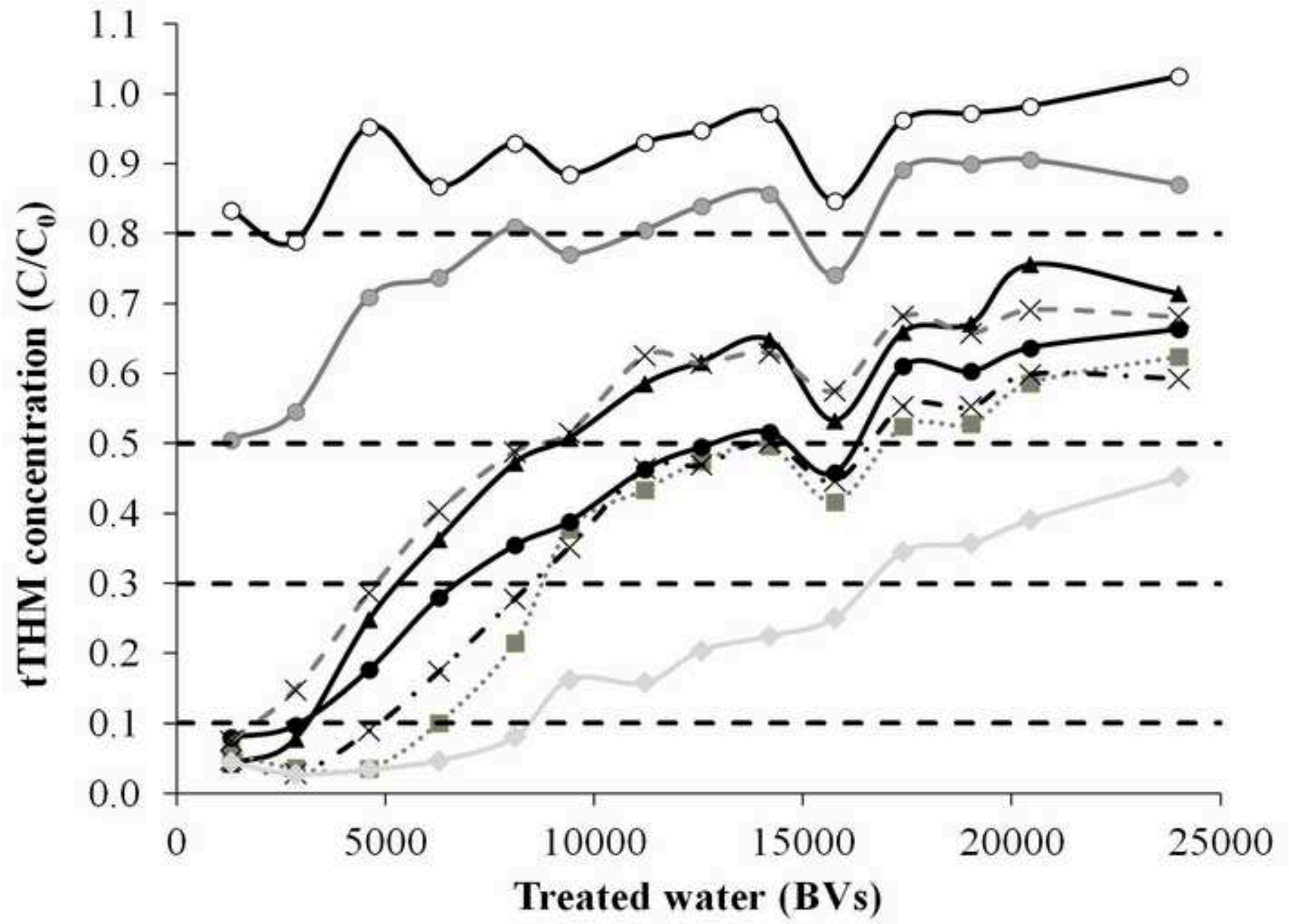


Figure 5e

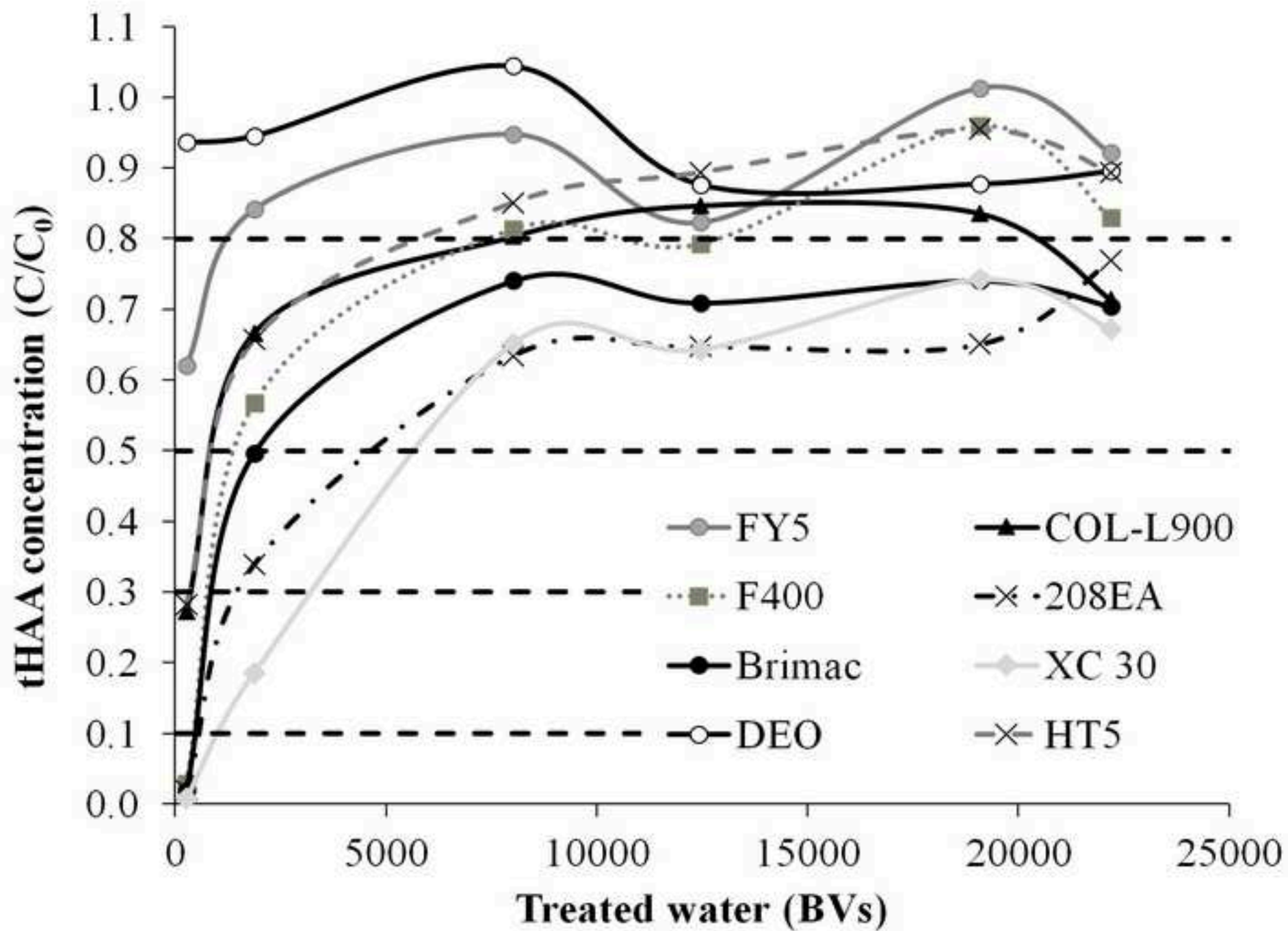




Figure 5f

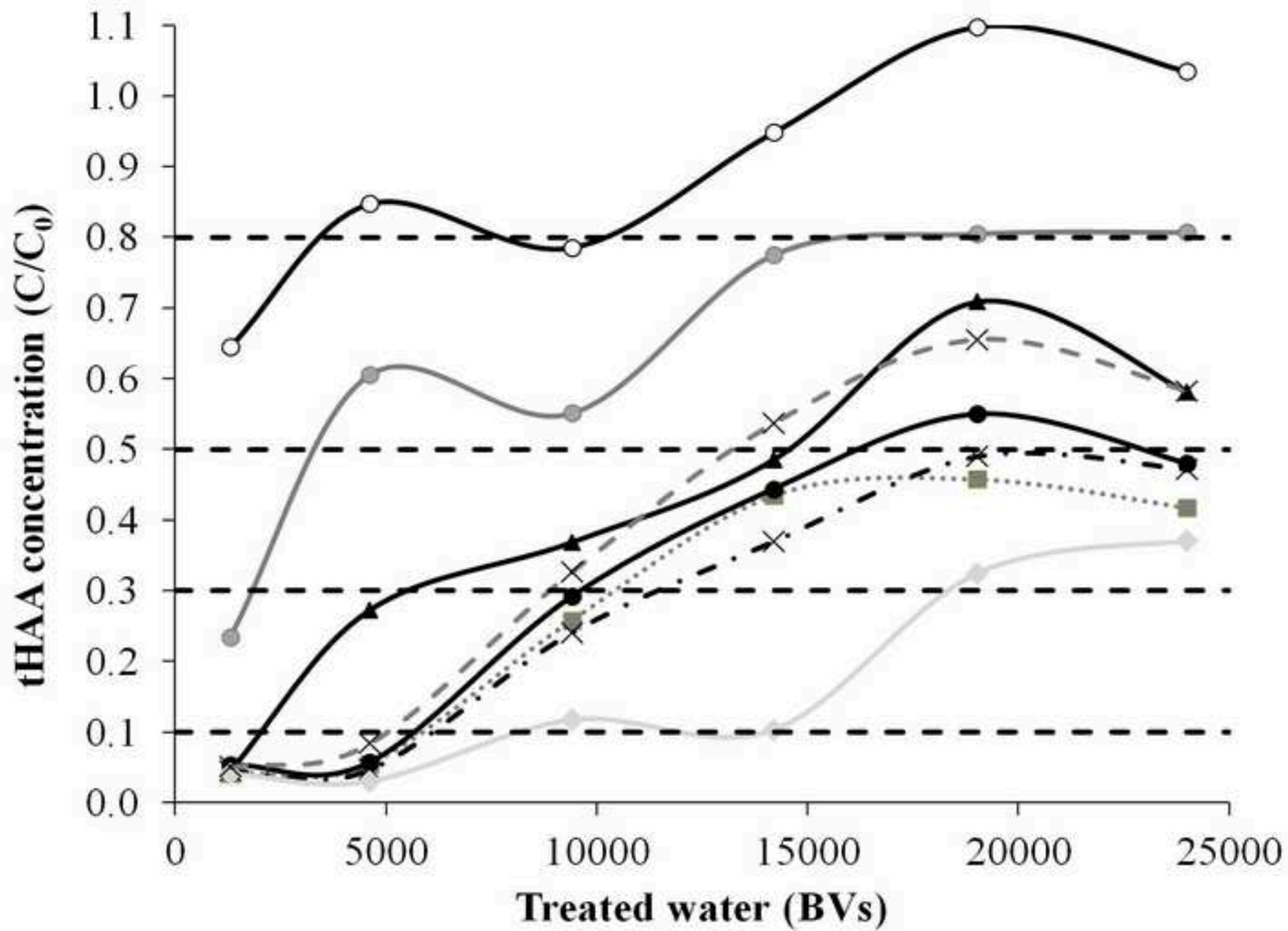


Figure 6a

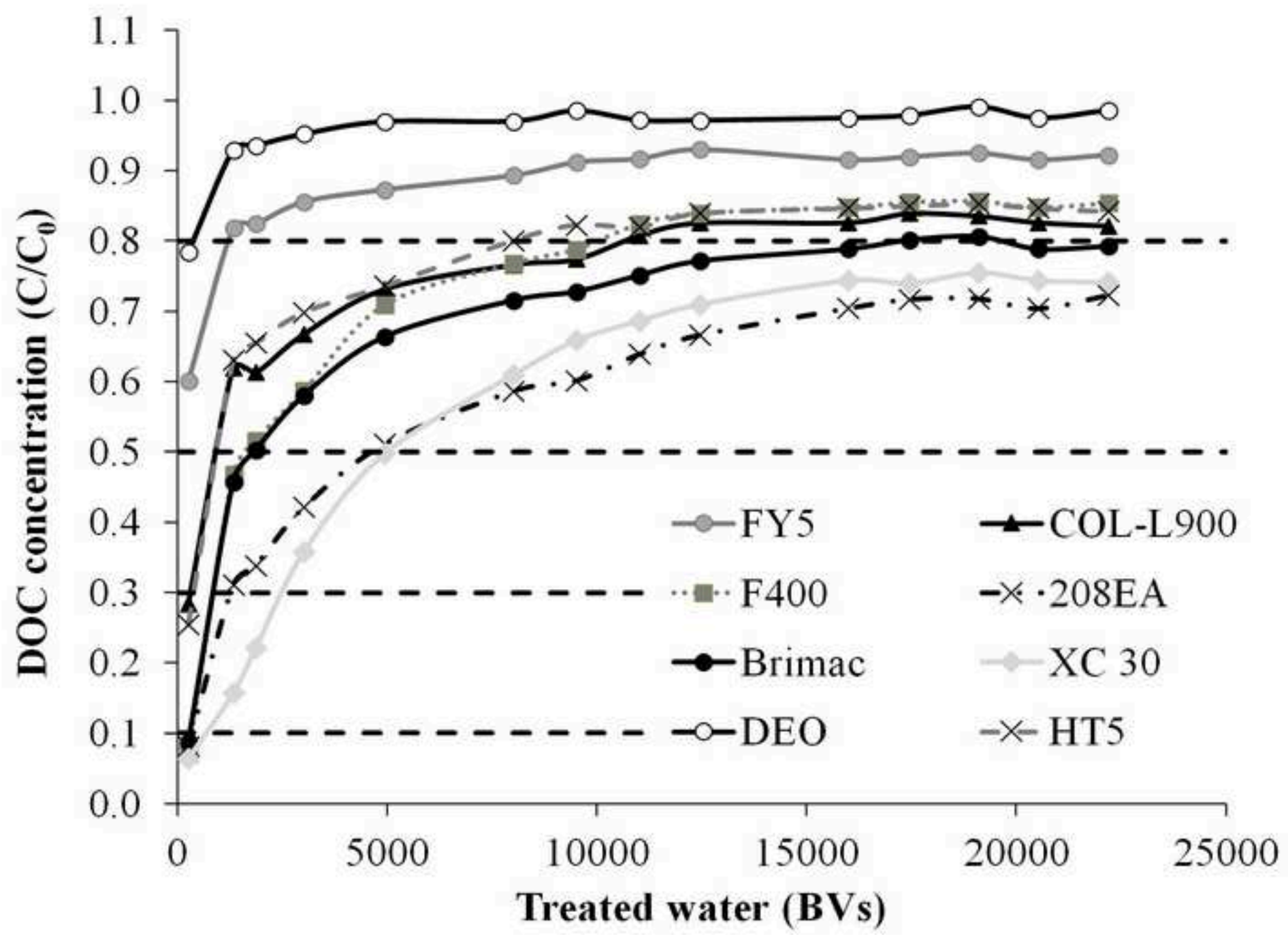


Figure 6b

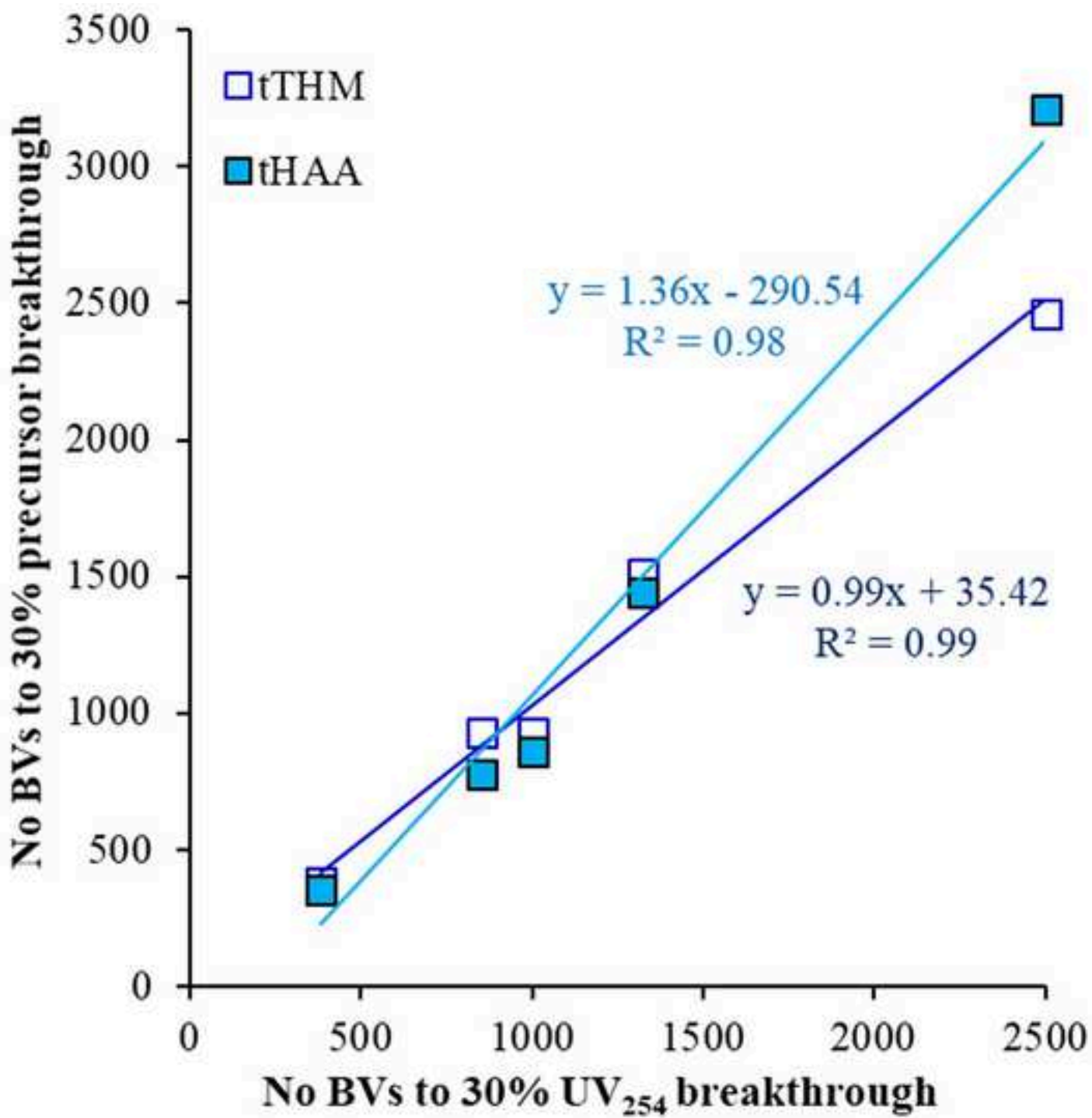


Figure 6c

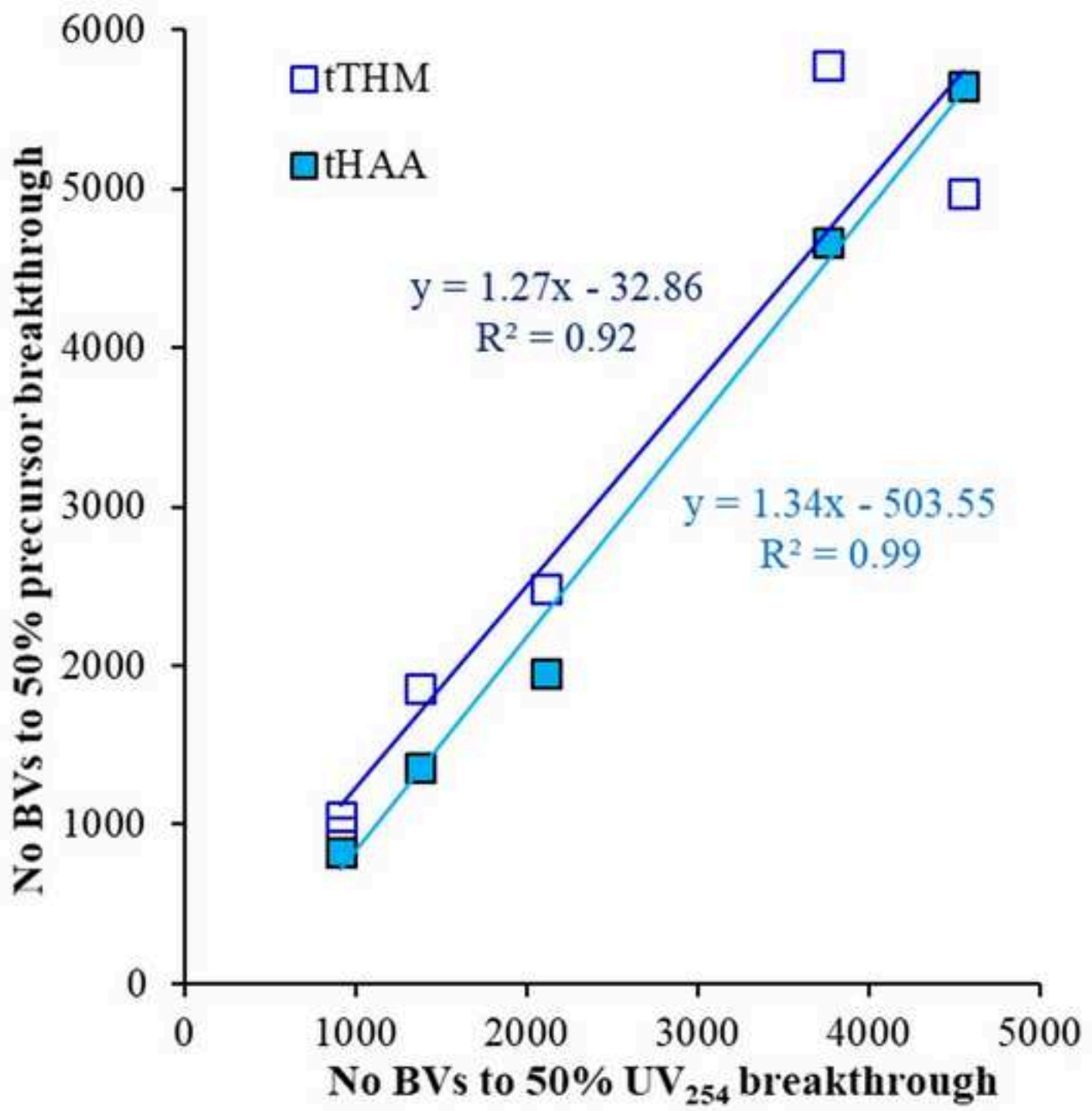


Figure 6d

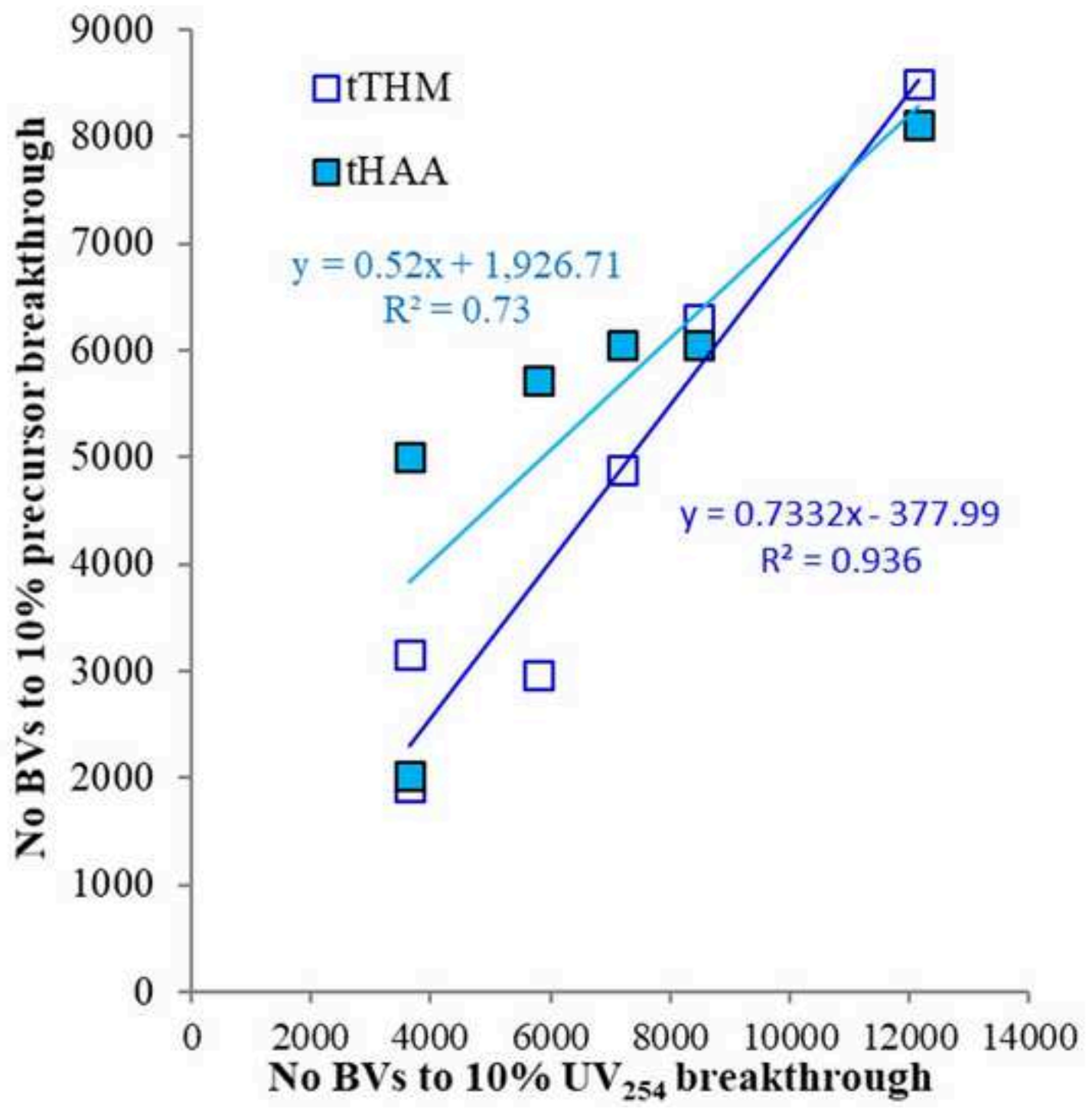


Figure 6e

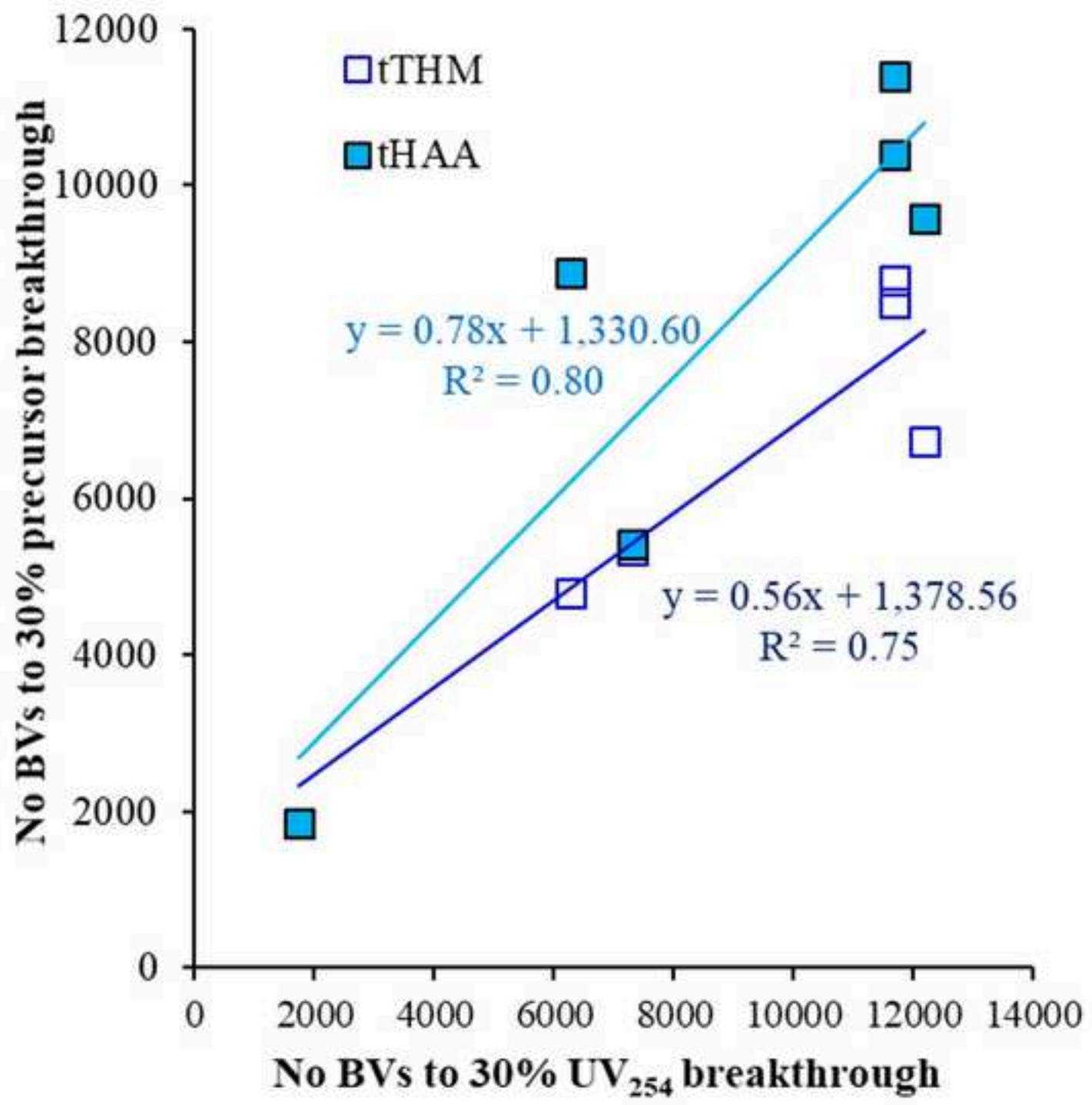


Figure 6f

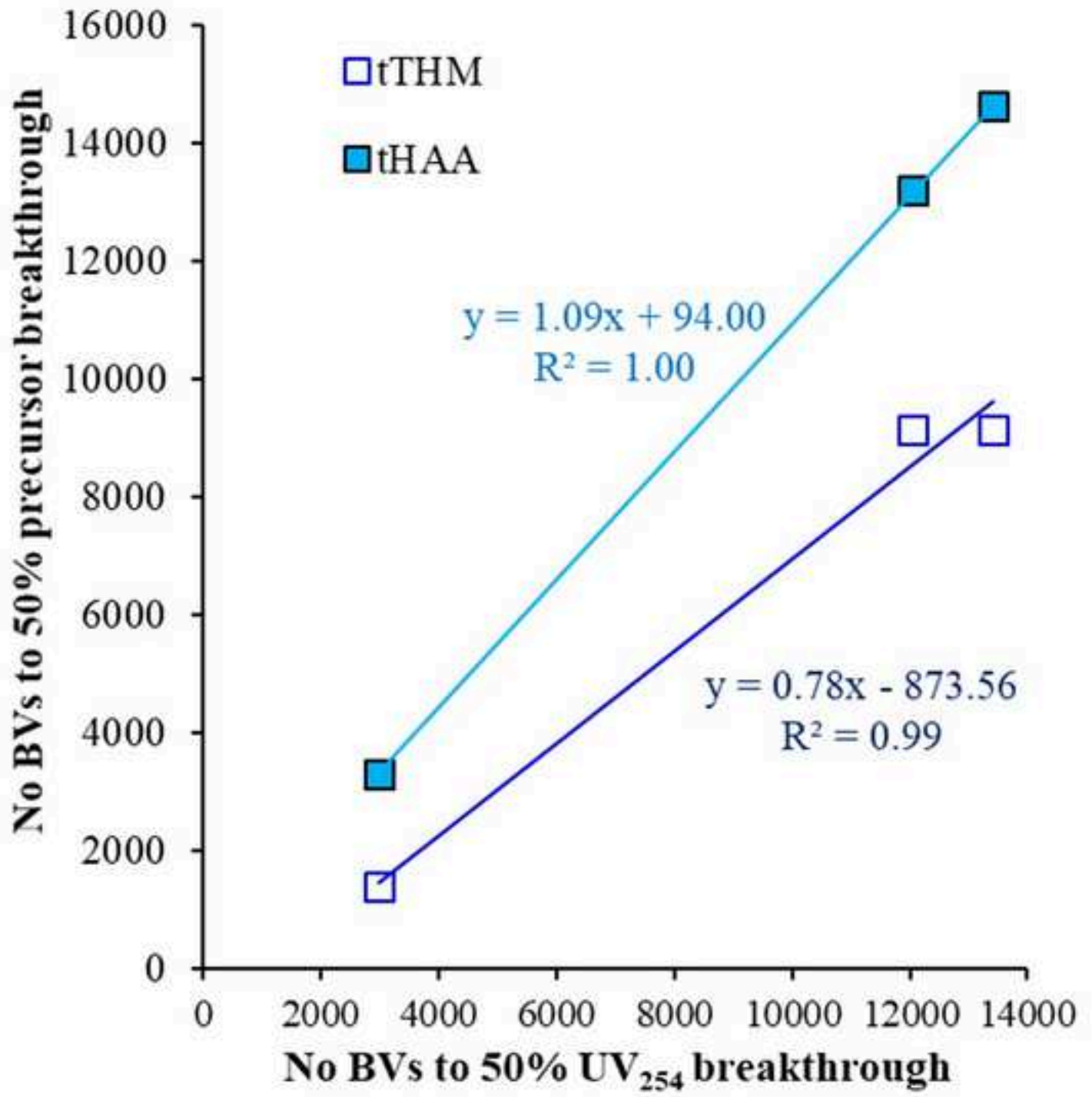


Figure 7a

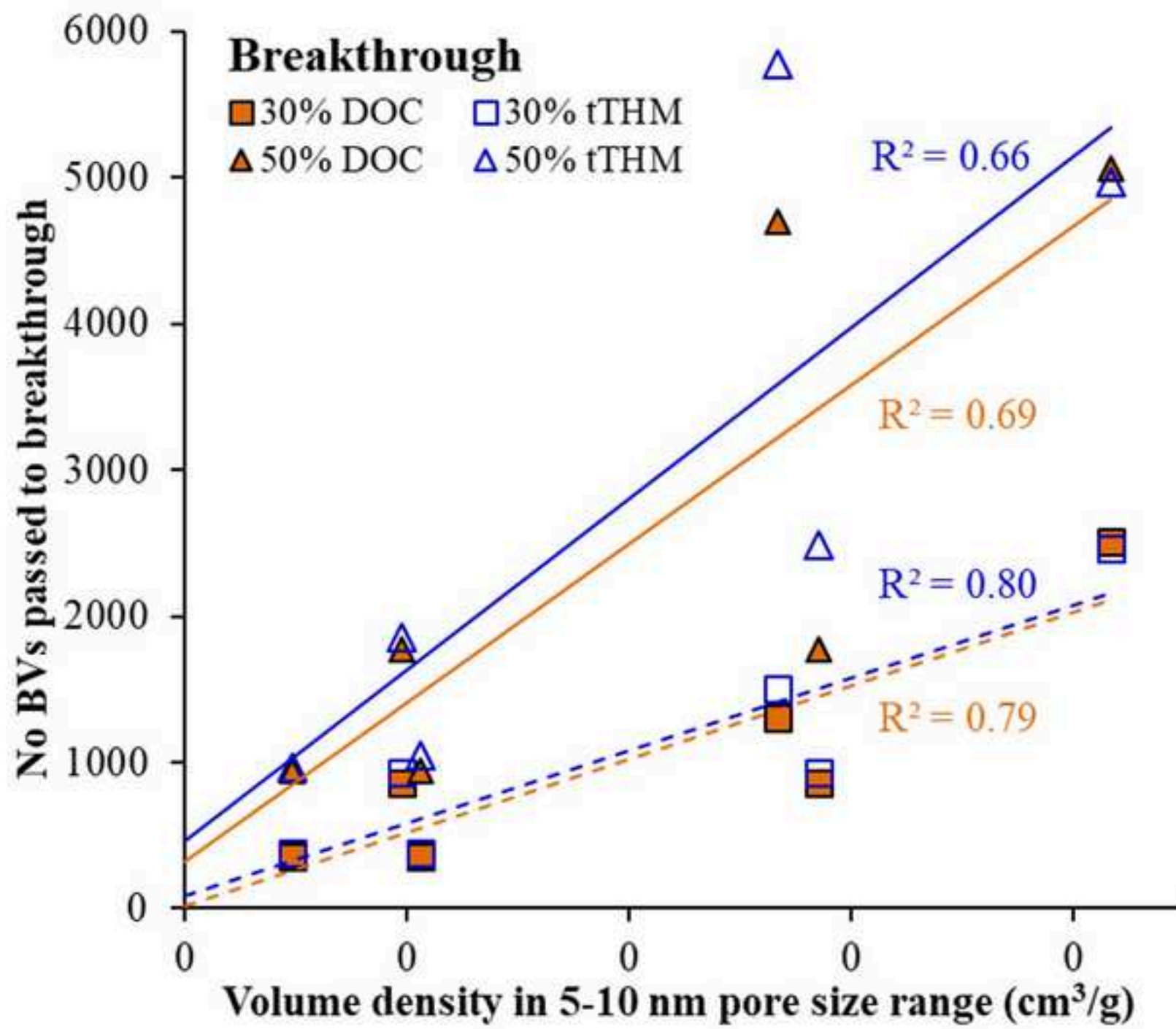




Figure 7b

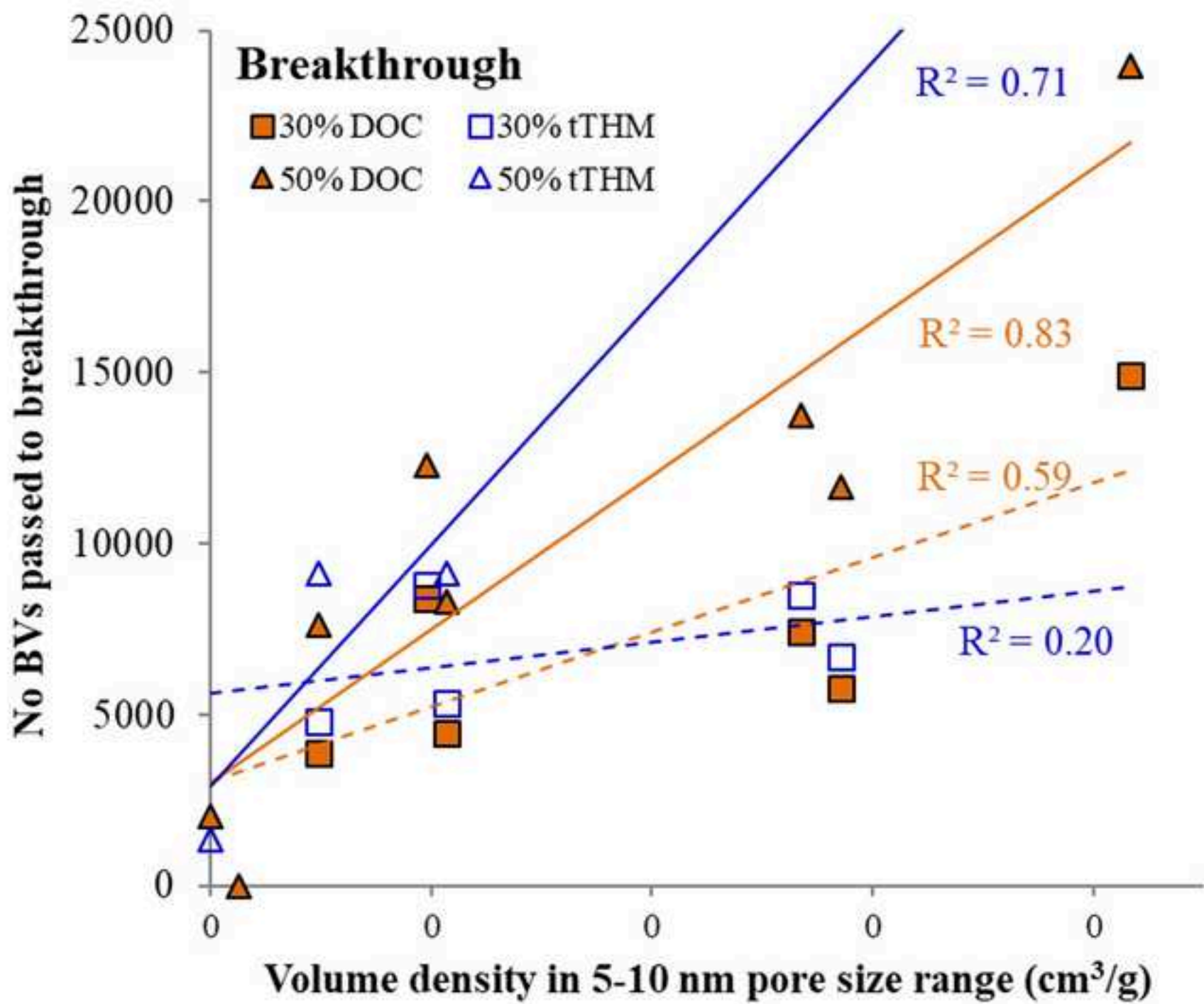


Figure 7c

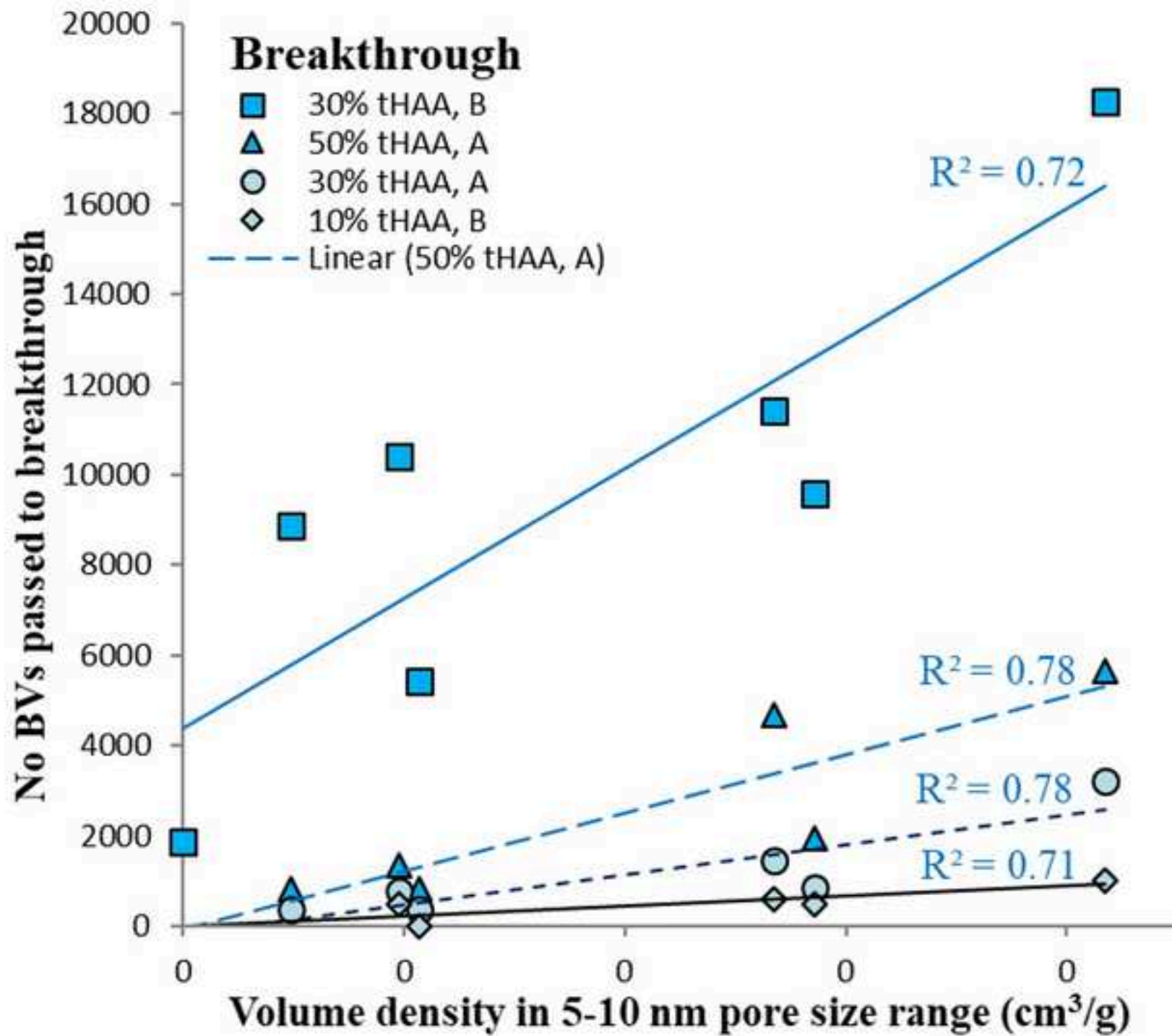
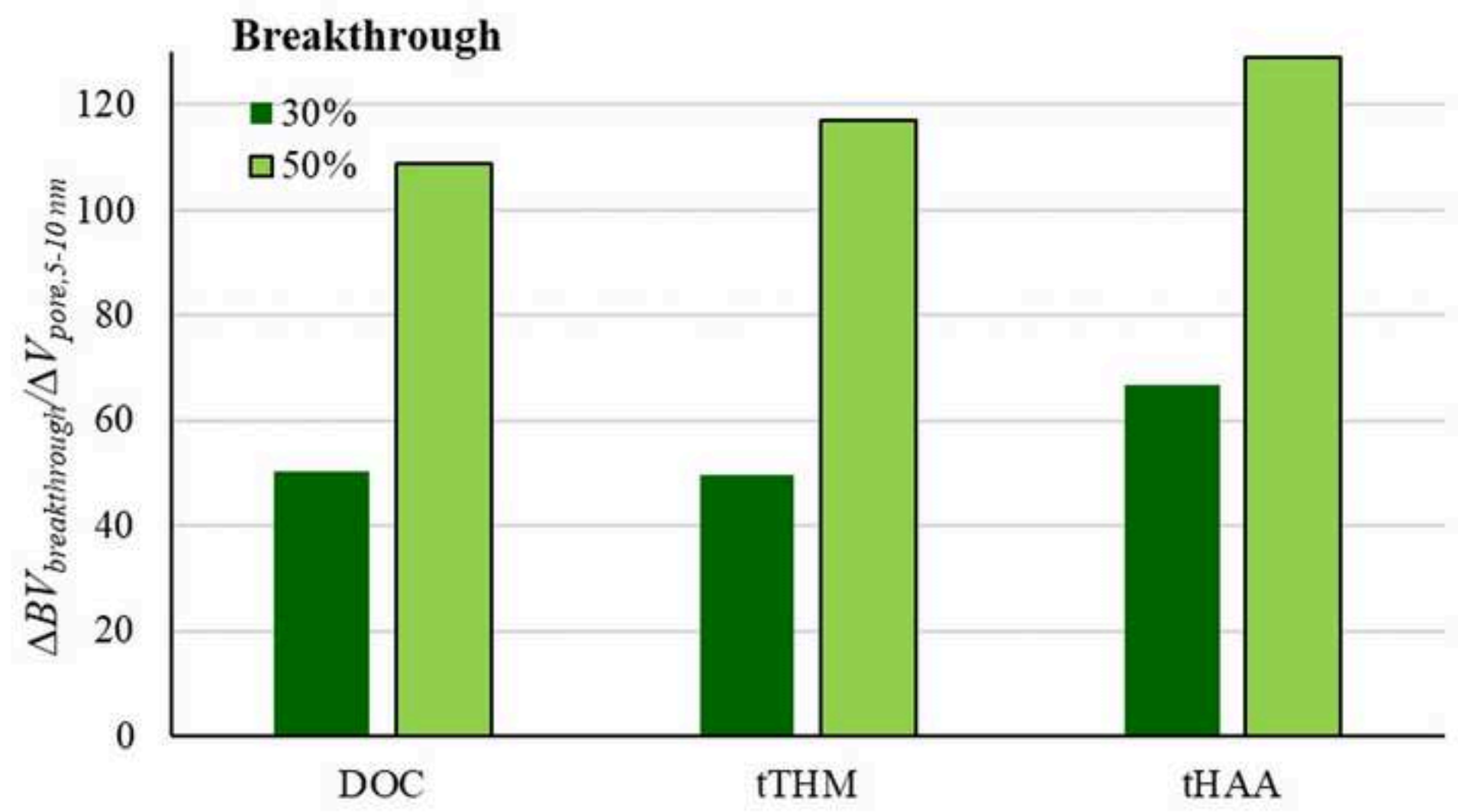


Figure 8



**Table 1:** Physicochemical characteristics of the two different water sources.

<i>Parameter</i>	<i>Water A</i>	<i>Water B</i>
pH	6.8	8.1
DOC (mg/L)	5.98	3.12
UV <sub>254</sub> (/cm)	0.254	0.068
SUVA (mg/L/m)	4.25	2.18
tTHM (µg/L)	676.3	282
THMFP (µg/L per mg DOC)	113.1	90.4
tHAA (µg /L)	1006.4	126
HAA <sub>5</sub> FP (µg/L per mg DOC)	168.3	40.4
Colour (mg/L Pt/Co)	33	4.47
Turbidity (NTU)	0.37	0.1
Conductivity (µS/cm)	166	569
HPO (mg/L)	3.44	1
TPI (mg/L)	1.25	0.71
HPI (mg/L)	0.37	1.05

**Table 2**[Click here to download Table: Table 2.docx](#)**Table 2:** The physicochemical properties of the media used for removal of NOM from two different water sources.

<i>GAC media</i>	$V_{total}^1$ cm <sup>3</sup> /g	$d_p$ nm	$V_{micropores}^2$ cm <sup>3</sup> /g	$V_{meso-pores}^3$ cm <sup>3</sup> /g	$DFT\ area\ (m^2/g)^4$			<i>Granulation</i> <sup>5</sup> mm	$S_{BET,s}^5$ m <sup>2</sup> /g	$S_{BET}$ m <sup>2</sup> /g	$IN^{5,6}$ mg/g	<i>Precursor</i> <sup>5</sup>
					0.7-1.7	1-2	>2					
<i>COL-L900</i>	0.460	≤26.1	0.347	0.112	444	506	72	0.425-1.70	900-1000	977±5	900	Bituminous coal
<i>F400</i>	0.442	≤26.1	0.271	0.073	431	416	49	0.425-1.70	1050	1032±5	1050	Bituminous coal
<i>208EA</i>	0.517	≤16.1	0.301	0.120	424	465	67	0.6-1.7	1000	1078±6	1000	Coal
<i>XC30</i>	0.511	≤26.1	0.205	0.156	325	340	66	0.6-2.36	1000	986±6	950	Coal
<i>DEO</i>	0.331	≤27.3	0.174	0.013	274	285	8	0.6-1.70	800	809±11	825	Coconut shell
<i>HT5</i>	0.581	≤27.3	0.401	0.029	621	652	14	0.42-1.70	1400	1419±12	1300	Coconut shell
<i>FY5</i>	0.400	≤16.1	0.288	0.004	452	471	3	1.40-3.35	1150	1043±11	1100	Coconut shell
<i>Brimac</i>	0.430	≤25	0.246	0.131	334	373	62	0.7-2.38	200	841±3	700	Bovine bones

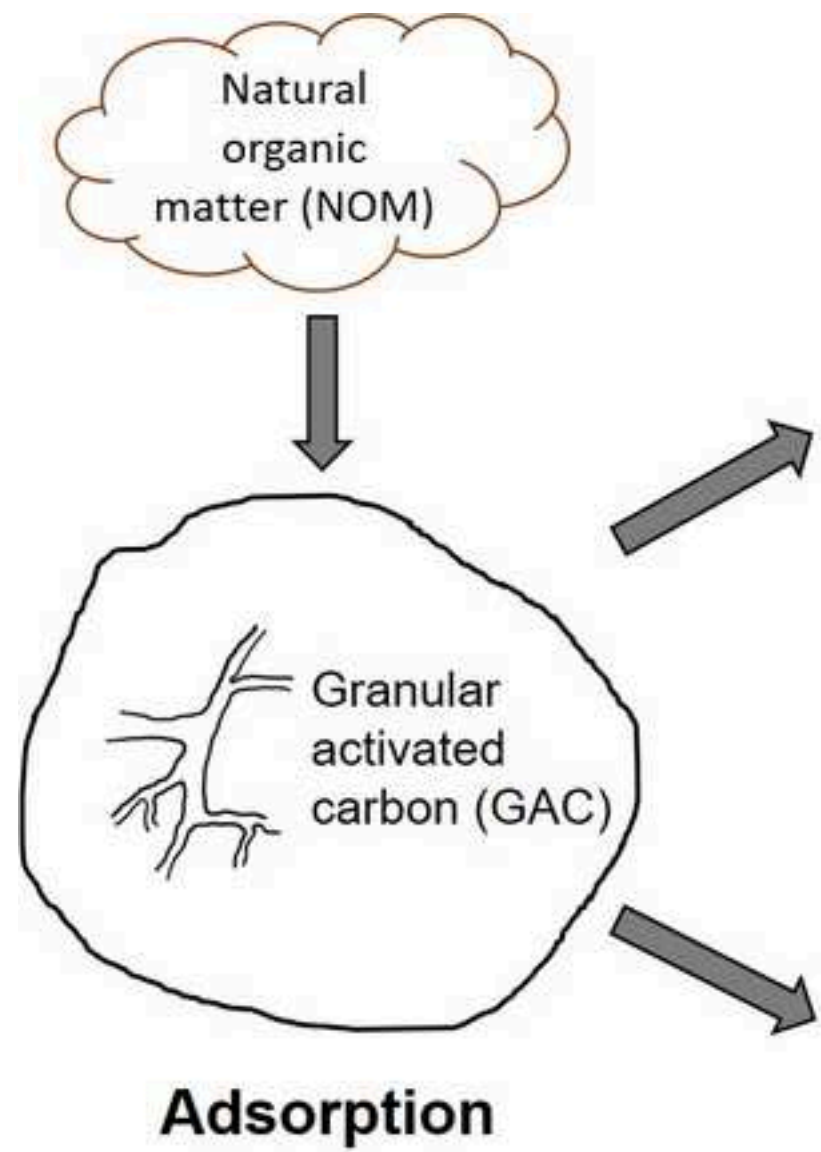
<sup>1</sup>According to DFT (density functional theory), determined to <30nm; <sup>2</sup>1-2 nm pore size range; <sup>3</sup>>2 nm pore size; <sup>4</sup>with reference to pore size range indicated; <sup>5</sup>Data sourced from supplier technical sheets; <sup>6</sup>Iodine number.

**Table 3**[Click here to download Table: Table 3.docx](#)**Table 3:** Volumetric pore size distribution, determined from DFT for pores sizes <30 nm.

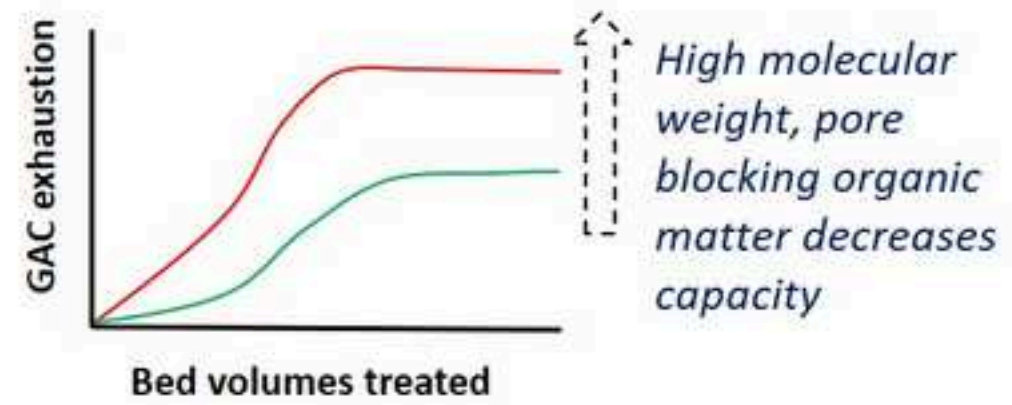
<i>Media/pore size:</i>	<i>&lt;0.7nm</i>	<i>0.7-5nm</i>	<i>5-10nm</i>	<i>10-15nm</i>	<i>15-20nm</i>	<i>20-25nm</i>	<i>25-30nm</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Col-L900</i>	0.001	0.440	0.011	0.006	0.002	0.001	0	0.460
<i>F400</i>	0.055	0.375	0.010	0.002	0	0	0	0.442
<i>208EA</i>	0.096	0.386	0.027	0.008	0.001	0	0	0.517
<i>XC30</i>	0.115	0.314	0.042	0.018	0.012	0.009	0.001	0.511
<i>DEO</i>	0.144	0.183	0.001	0.002	0.000	0	0	0.331
<i>HT5</i>	0.151	0.417	0.005	0.004	0.003	0.002	0	0.581
<i>FY5</i>	0.108	0.291	0	0.001	0	0	0	0.400
<i>Brimac</i>	0.053	0.316	0.029	0.016	0.010	0.007	0	0.430

**Table 4**[Click here to download Table: Table 4.docx](#)**Table 4:** Throughput to a filtrate DOC of 30%, 50% and 80% of the feed concentration (BV<sub>30</sub>, BV<sub>50</sub> and BV<sub>80</sub> respectively) for the GAC media studied by RSSCT, waters A and B, EBCT<sub>LC</sub> = 20 minutes.

<b>GAC media</b>	<b>WTW A</b>			<b>WTW B</b>		
	<b>BV<sub>30</sub></b>	<b>BV<sub>50</sub></b>	<b>BV<sub>80</sub></b>	<b>BV<sub>30</sub></b>	<b>BV<sub>50</sub></b>	<b>BV<sub>80</sub></b>
<b><i>COL-L900</i></b>	355	946	10,710	4,467	8,284	>>23,980
<b><i>F400</i></b>	858	1,775	10,030	8,402	12,308	>>23,980
<b><i>208EA</i></b>	1,301	4,704	>>22,194	7,455	13,728	>>23,980
<b><i>XC30</i></b>	2,514	5,059	>>22,194	14,911	23,964	>>23,980
<b><i>DEO</i></b>	<<267	<<267	503	<<1,302	<<1,302	1,302
<b><i>HT5</i></b>	355	946	8,047	3,875	7,633	>>23,980
<b><i>FY5</i></b>	<<267	<<267	1,242	<<1,302	2,041	8,284
<b><i>Brimac</i></b>	858	1,775	17,101	5,798	11,657	>>23,980



### *NOM character*



### *GAC pore structure*

