

# Photoproduction of the $\pi^0$ meson from 3.6 - 5.5 GeV

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(Dated: February 2, 2016)

Exclusive neutral pion photoproduction ( $\gamma p \rightarrow p\pi^0$ ) was measured in the CLAS detector at the Thomas Jefferson National Facility. The experiment employed a 1.1-5.5 GeV bremsstrahlung photon beam from 5.6 GeV electron beam created in the Continuous Electron Beam Accelerator Facility (CEBAF). The photon beam energy was impinged on a liquid hydrogen target. The neutral pions were detected via external conversion,  $\pi^0 \rightarrow \gamma\gamma \rightarrow e^+e^-\gamma$ , and subsequent Dalitz decay,  $\pi^0 \rightarrow \gamma^*\gamma \rightarrow e^+e^-\gamma$ . Measured differential cross-sections,  $\frac{d\sigma}{dt}$  and  $\frac{d\sigma}{d\cos\theta}$  are compared with the Regge model. The Regge theoretical calculations underestimate the differential cross sections between 3.9 and 4.6 GeV, but agree with data at photon energies 4.6-5.4 GeV.