

Observations of Waves Generated by a 20keV Electron Beam in a Laboratory Plasma

UCLA College | Physical Sciences
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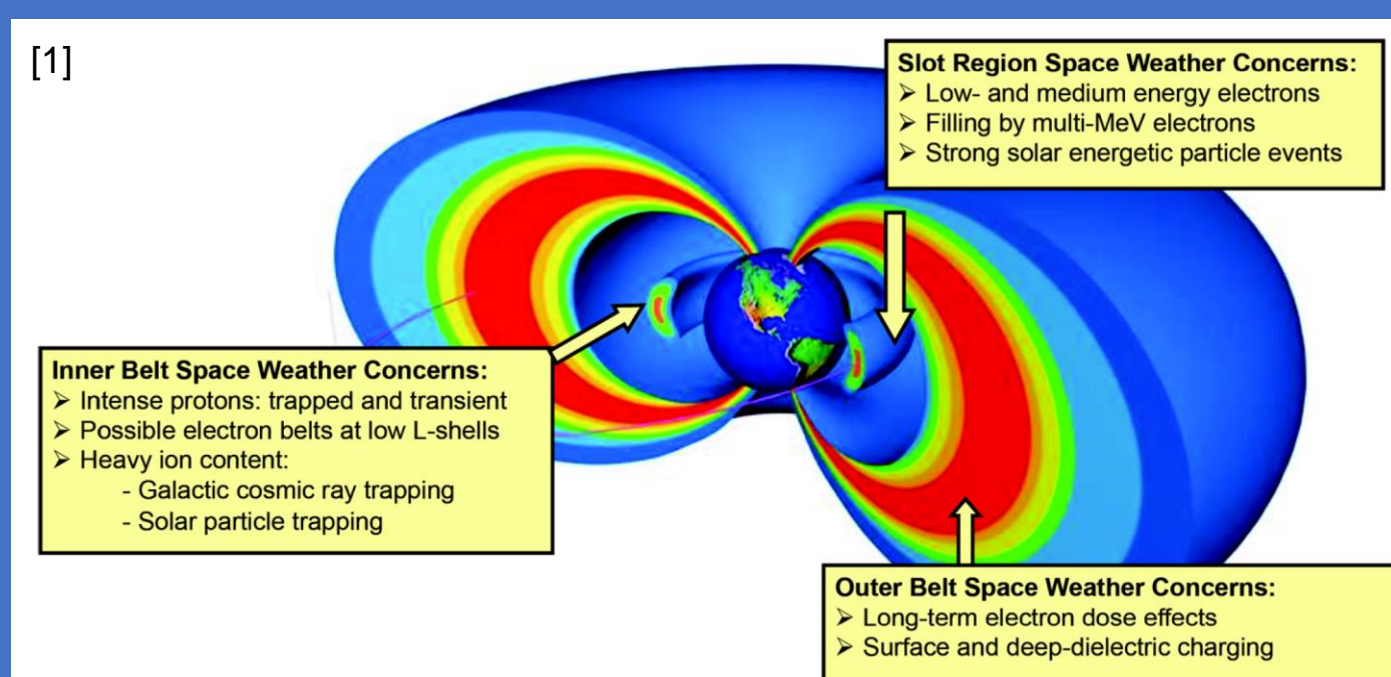
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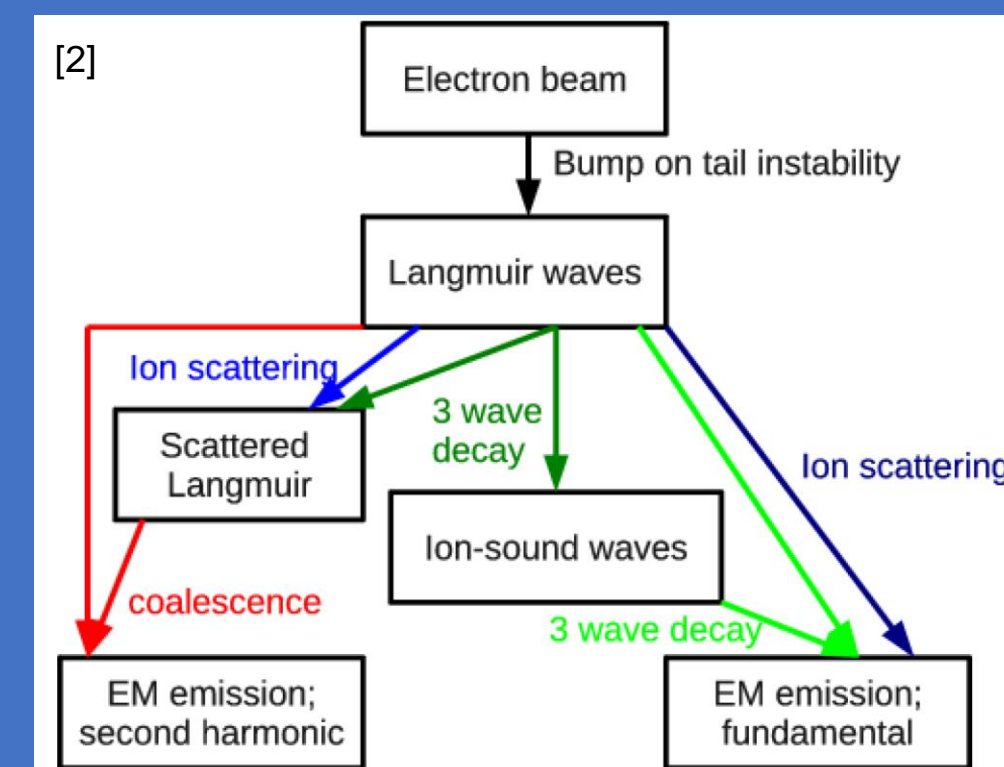
Key Points

- Understanding fundamental plasma processes such as wave-particle interactions is of great importance to many of the subfields in plasma physics.
- Laboratory plasma experiments are a great way to gain insight on astrophysical phenomena.
- The proposed study aims to determine the efficacy of generating whistler waves in UCLA's Large Plasma Device (LAPD) in order to further our understanding of the wave-particle interactions present in our solar system.

Motivation

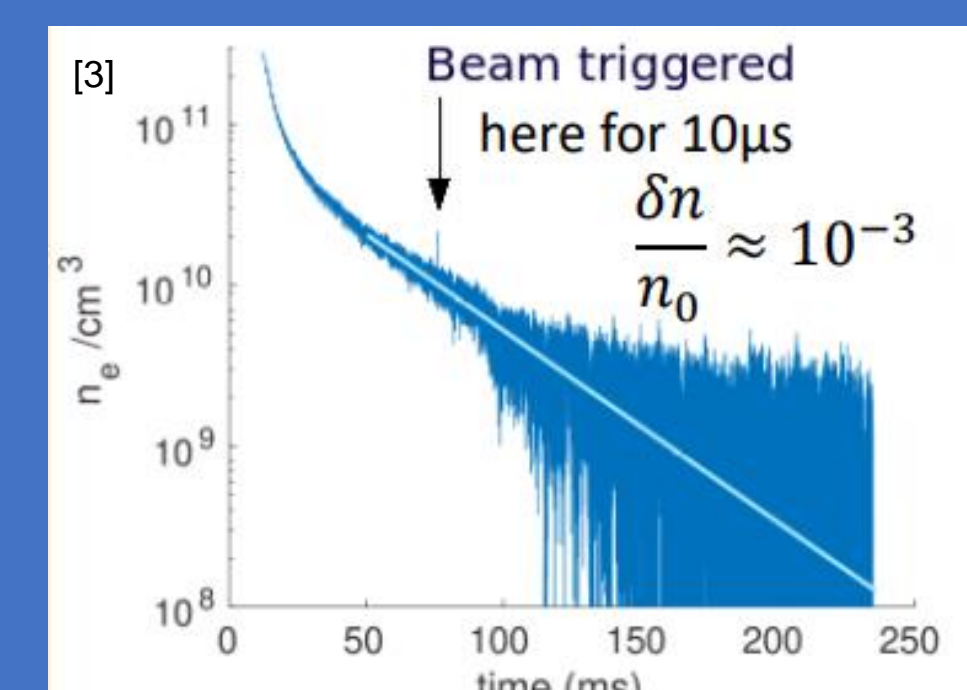
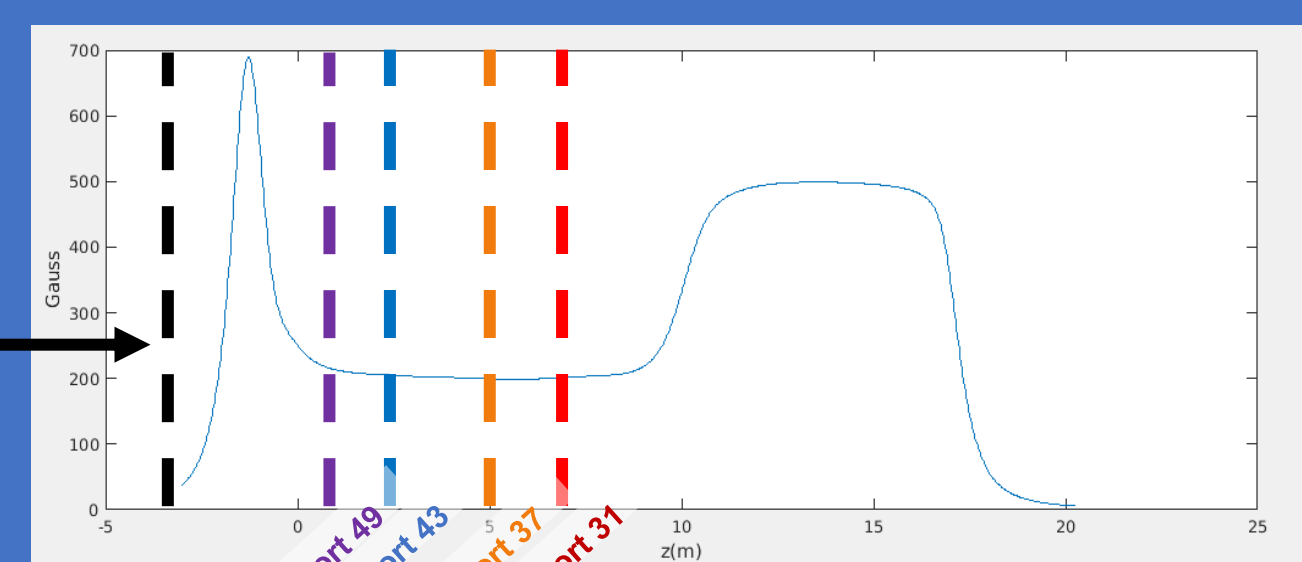
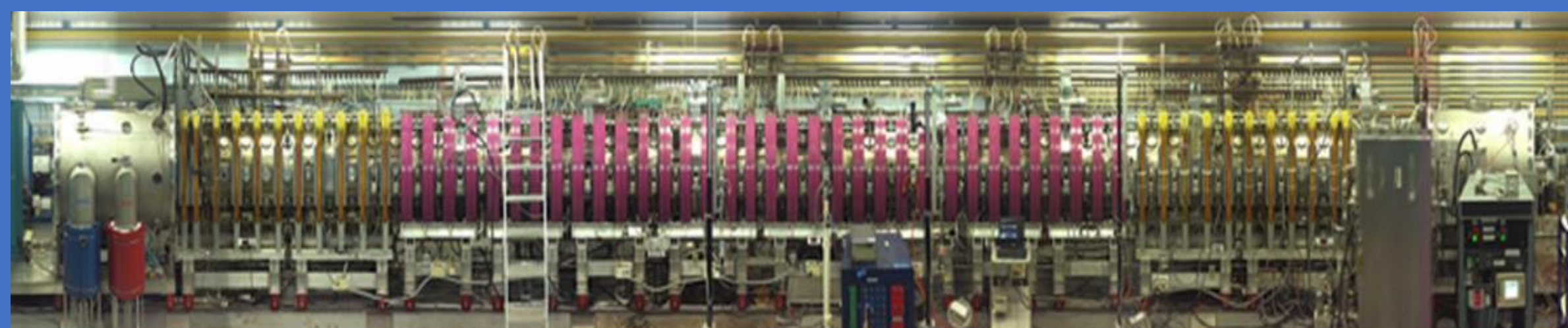


Type II and Type III radio burst are an important type of solar outputs as they are generated by beams of electrons and can be used to study electron acceleration, energy transport and the plasmas in which they travel through. However, the generation mechanism of these burst requires further understanding



High energy electrons from either solar wind or from human caused high altitude nuclear explosions may become trapped inside the Van Allen radiation belts and persist there for long periods of time. Spacecrafts in the regions may be susceptible to damage from these trapped electrons. A proposed solution is using spacecraft to carry compact electron beams or antennas to remediate the trapped electrons.

Experimental Set up



- EB probes are placed in various locations of the testing area.
- EB probes are 3D.
- Operating in the plasma afterglow, operating regions range from $2.75 \frac{f_{pe}}{f_{ce}} - .55 \frac{f_{pe}}{f_{ce}}$

Electron beam is triggered at varying times after the plasma discharges as a way of varying the density of the plasma.

Results & Discussion

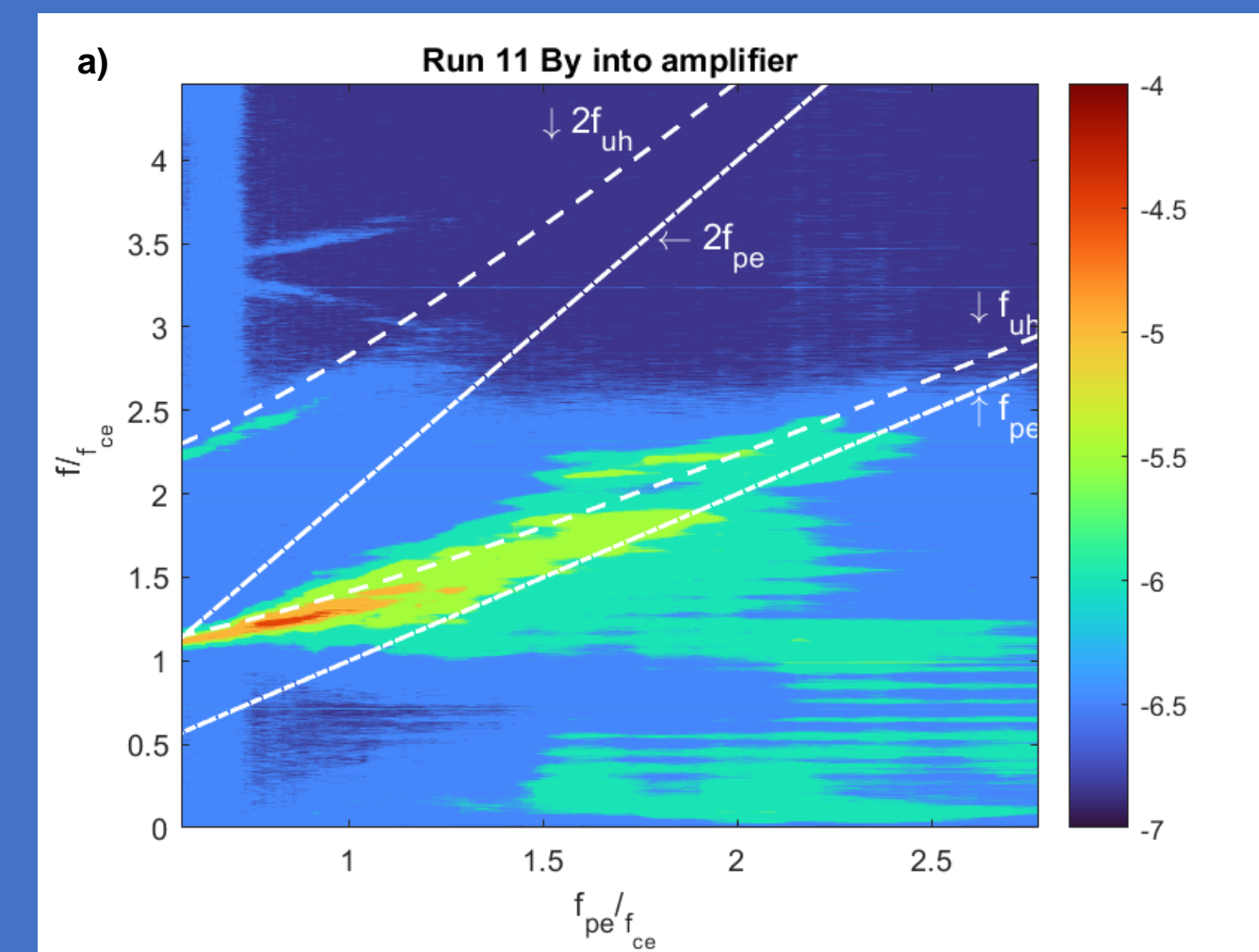


Figure a) The spectrum for By at run 11 illuminates the activity between the whistler and X-mode frequency range. This activity suggest potential non-linear 3 wave coupling. There also appears to be emission of a 2nd harmonics for the main mode just under the upper hybrid frequency in regions where $f_{pe}/f_{ce} < 1$.

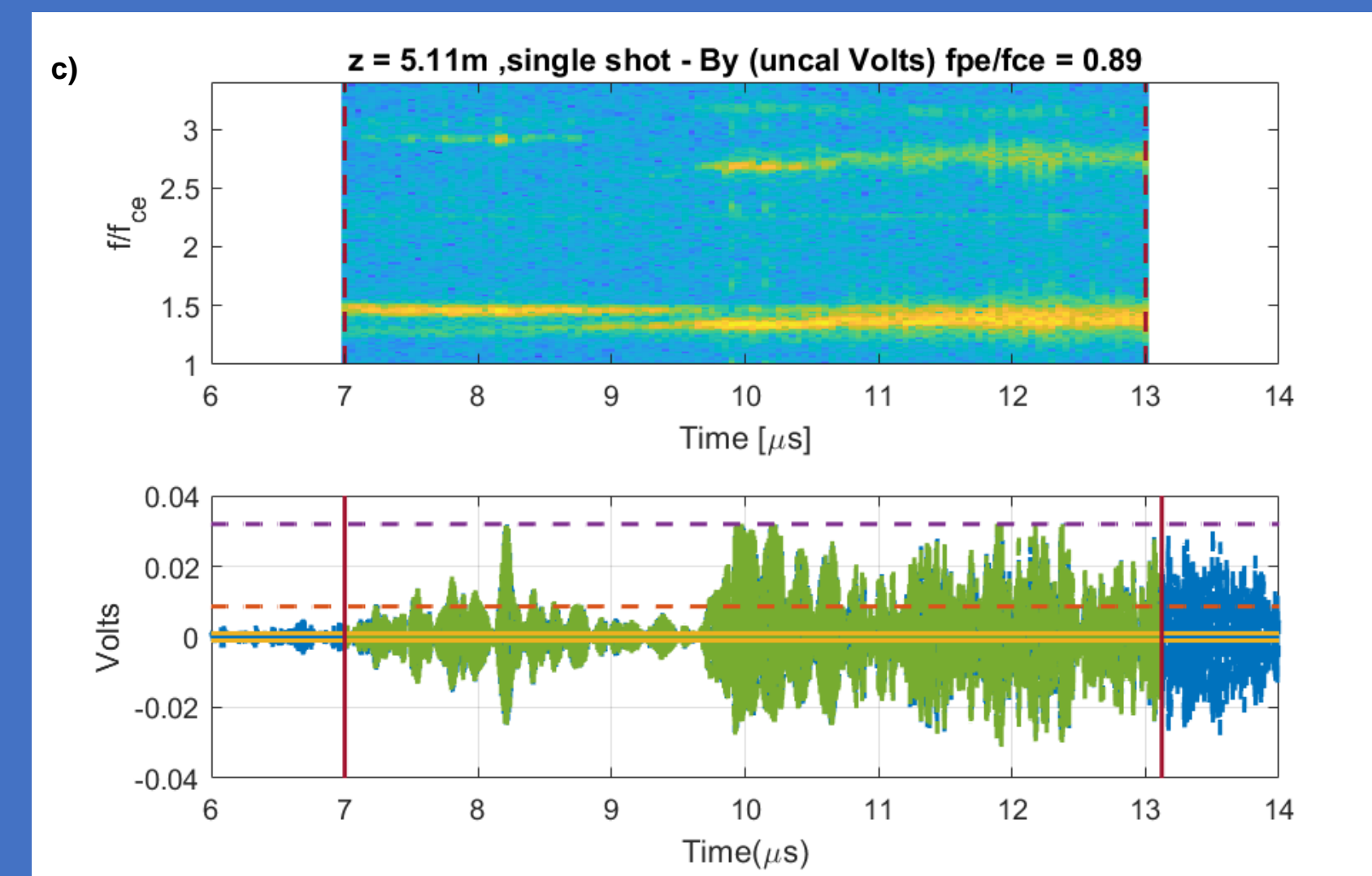


Figure c) A time dependent analysis of the spectrum indicates a potential amplitude threshold of the fundamental mode for 2nd harmonic emission. The green horizontal line in the bottom panel is the average peak voltage for the signals at 151ms. The yellow horizontal line is the average rms voltage for the same background density

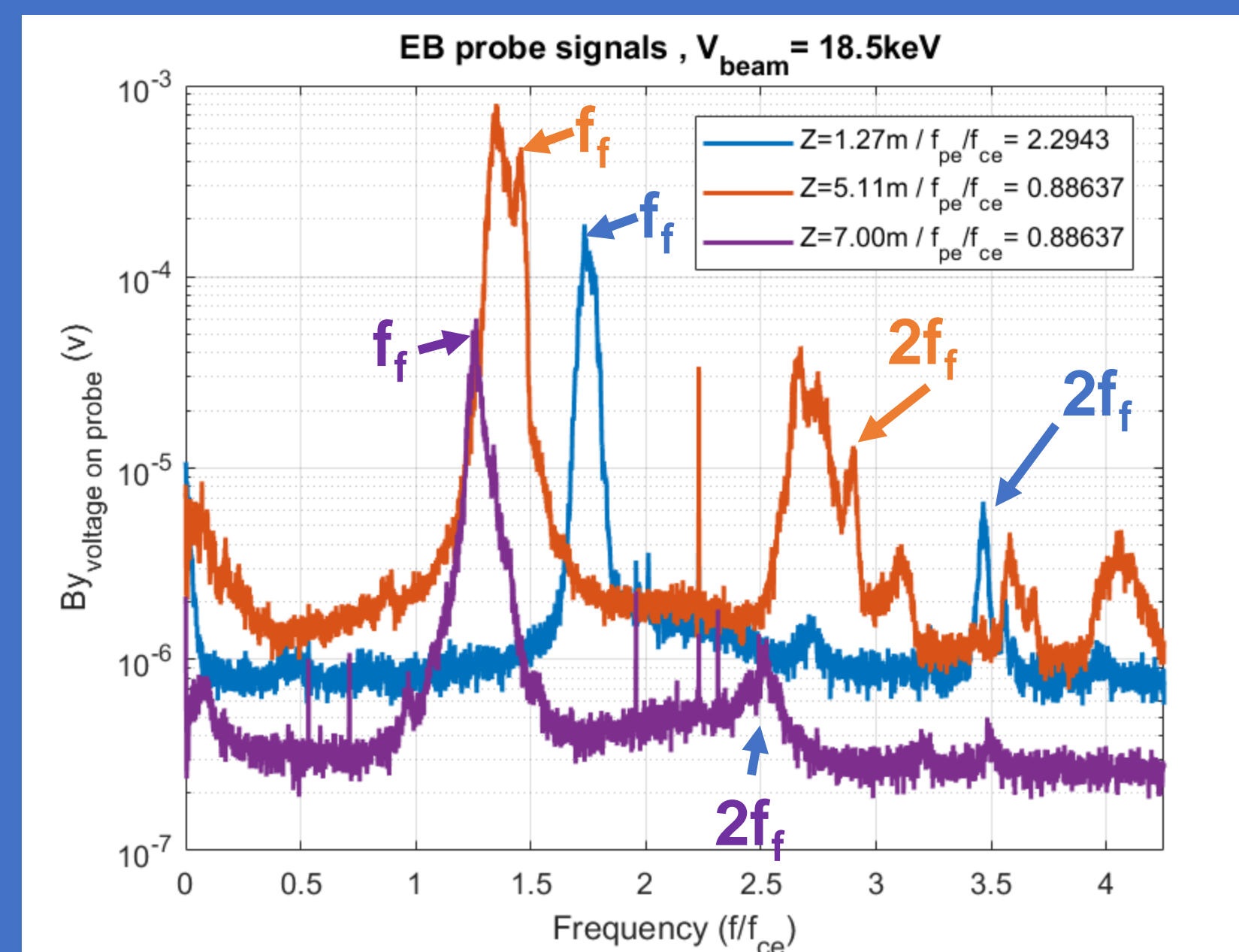


Figure b) Slices of the frequency spectrum at 3 different z locations show the emissions of the second harmonics for the main mode. The probe at $z = 5.11m$ also appears to capture some potential whistler activity below f_{ce} . A location dependent analysis has not been investigated.

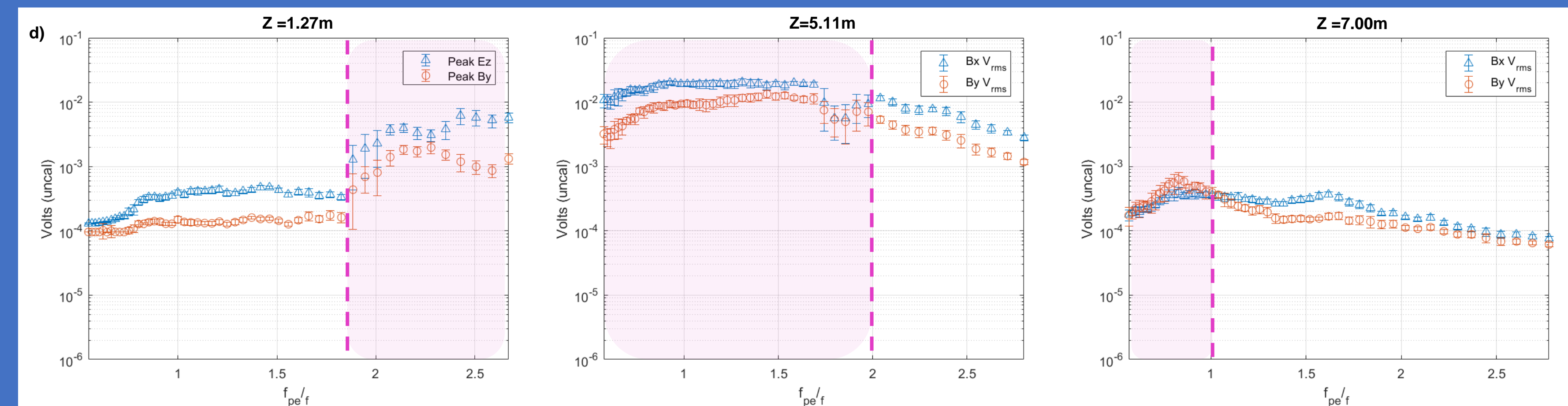


Figure d) Across various probes along the machine and spanning all operating background densities, more evidence of an amplitude threshold is seen in which once the fundamental mode reaches said critical amplitude, emission of its 2nd harmonics is observed. The regions highlighted in pink above are regions of where the 2nd harmonic is observed. The spectrum corresponding to these amplitude thresholds and the 2nd harmonic emission are plotted in figure b.

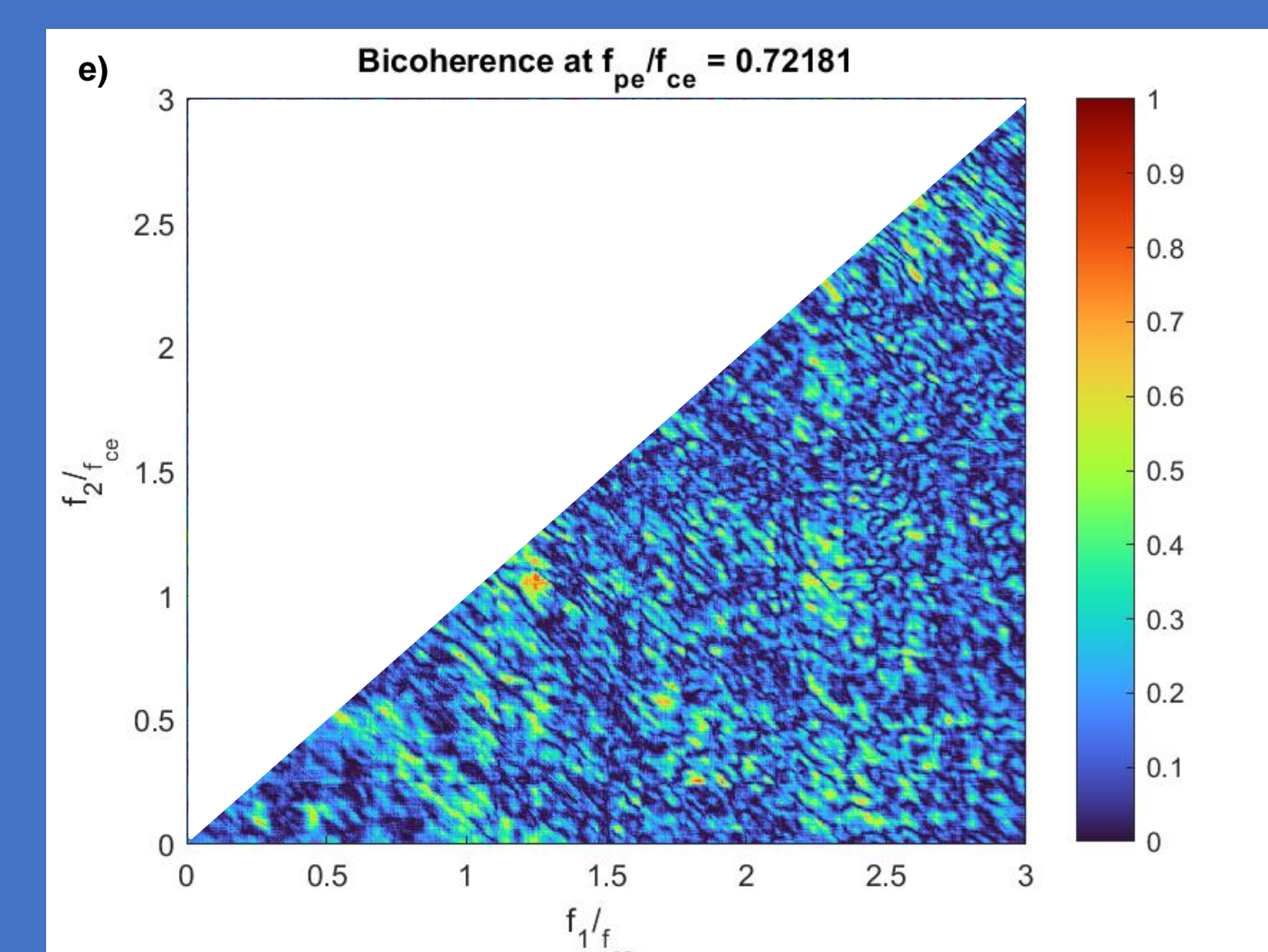


Figure e) A bicoherence analysis indicates potential 3 wave interaction between the main peak and the fundamental (seen in the figure b)

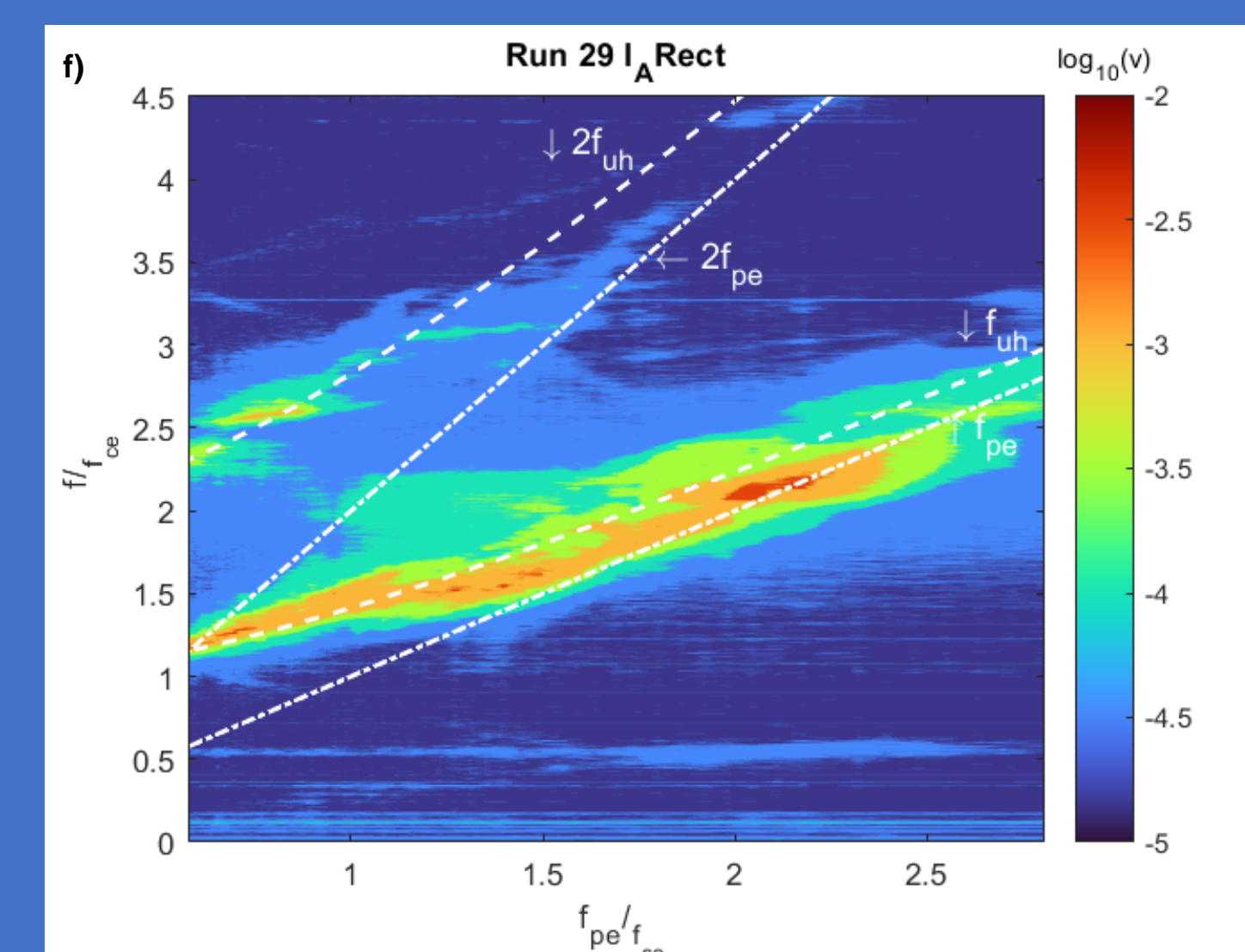


Figure f) Antenna place on the outside of the chamber also captures robust x-band emissions and emissions near $2f_{uh}$ in regions where $f_{pe}/f_{ce} < 1$, further indicating some sort of non-linear interactions.

Conclusions

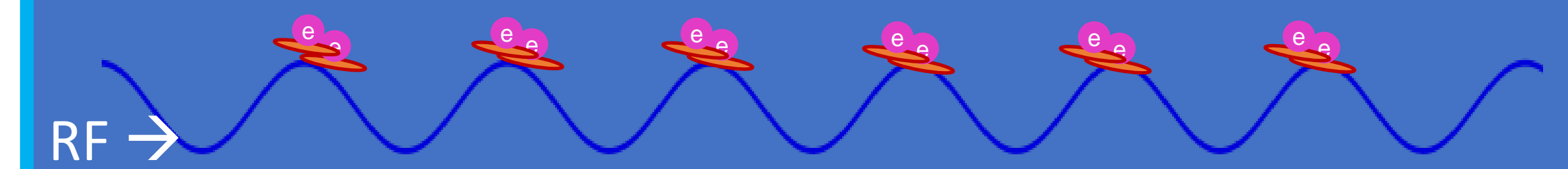
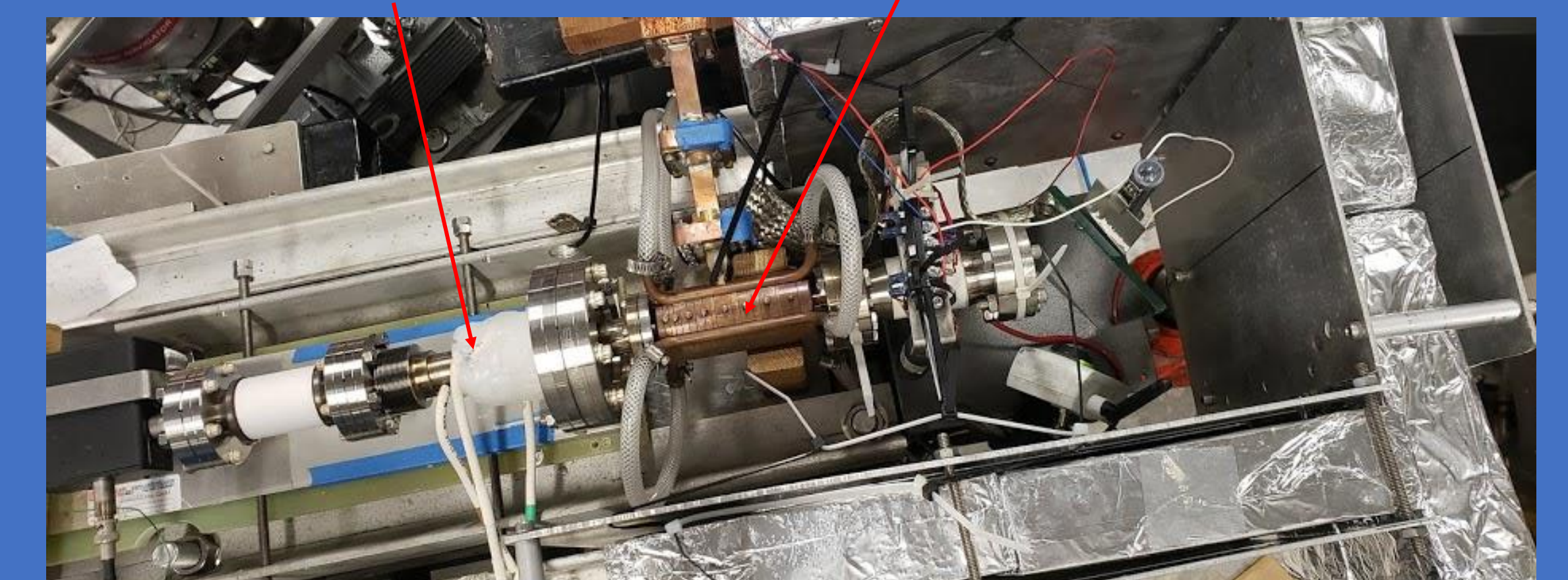
- Robust wave emissions in the X-band mode.
- Activity in the low frequency region suggestive of Whistler wave presence.
- Results indicate that 3 wave coupling between the X-mode and harmonics could be happening.
- Bicoherence analysis does suggest some interactions between waves at the upper hybrid frequency may lead to emissions at the second harmonic.

Future Work

- Further bicoherence analysis is needed. Observations of the Bx and electric field are underway.
- Quantify amplitude threshold in terms of the plasma and beam parameters.
- For practical application in radiation belt remediation, a 1MeV electron beam is required. Thus, early stages of this beam in LAPD is currently under way.

Electron gun

Linear Accelerator



Acknowledgments

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References

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