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X-ray absorption spectroscopy of warm dense matter with betatron x-ray radiation

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Betatron x-ray radiation, driven by electrons from laser-wakefield acceleration, has unique properties to probe high energy density (HED) plasmas and warm dense matter. This source is produced when relativistic electrons oscillate in the plasma wake of a laser pulse. Its properties are similar to that of a synchrotron, with a 1000-fold shorter pulse. This presentation will focus on the experimental challenges and results related to the development of betatron radiation for applications at large scale HED science laser facilities. We will present recent experiments performed at the Linac Coherent Light Source (LCLS) at SLAC, where we have recently commissioned the betatron x-ray source, driven by the Matter under Extreme Conditions (MEC) short pulse laser (1 J, 40 fs). The source is used as a probe by investigating the X-ray absorption near edge structure (XANES) spectrum at the K- or L-edge of several materials (iron, silicon oxide) driven to a warm dense matter state (temperature of a few eV, solid densities). The driver is either LCLS itself or optical lasers. With these experiments we are able to study, with sub-picosecond resolution, the electron-ion equilibration mechanisms in warm dense matter.

Primary author: Dr ALBERT, Felicie (Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory)

Presenter: Dr ALBERT, Felicie (Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory)

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