Comment on egusphere-2022-145
Anonymous Referee #2

Referee comment on "Development of a broadband cavity-enhanced absorption spectrometer for simultaneous measurements of ambient NO3, NO2, and H2O" by Woohui Nam et al., EGUsphere, https://doi.org/10.5194/egusphere-2022-145-RC2, 2022

General Comments:

This paper details the development of a new BBCEAS system for simultaneous measurements of the trace gases NO3, NO2, and H2O. Unlike previously developed absorption-based sensors for NO3, this study emphasizes the utility of retrieving the water vapor signal, which has strong absorption features in the detected spectral region around 662 nm, instead of correcting for water vapor as an interference in the NO3 signal. The instrument demonstrates superior precision and comparable accuracy as compared to existing BBCEAS NO3 measurements. Overall, this paper presents a thorough characterization and evaluation of the instrument performance and its field operation. It is well within the scope of AMT, and I recommend publication subject to the minor revisions detailed below.

Specific Comments:

- I agree with RC1 that the description of measuring the H2O absorption spectrum in the original text is unclear. I believe the authors have sufficiently addressed this concern in their response, as well as any concerns relating to temperature control of the instrument.
- L207 states a “Fourth-order polynomial was applied to account for the optical drift and/or unaccounted extinctions such as absorption by ambient ozone.” Was there any basis for selecting this functional form? The retrieval demonstrates that the polynomial fit is a quiet a large component of the overall signal. Please elaborate or clarify why this is the case.
How reproducible are the NO3 transmission results to the field environment? It seems this has been clarified in the author’s response to RC1, but I’m curious if this would have to be characterized in each new environment.

The description of the NO3 dilutions in the linearity test are somewhat unclear. Where is the drift in the NO3 concentration evidenced in Figure 7? Or have the data in Fig 7a,b already been corrected for the linear drift? Please be explicit as to what the red and black dots indicate in these figures. It is not stated in the text or in the figure caption.

L321: The wording is unclear. Was the total transmission efficiency reduced by 65% of the lab-based value? Or reduced to a total transmission efficiency of 65%?

Technical Corrections:

It would be helpful to see all the detection limits in Table 1 for the same integration time if possible (for ease of comparison).