

Boryl-Metal Bonds Facilitate Cobalt/Nickel-Catalyzed Olefin Hydrogenation

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SUPPORTING INFORMATION

This PDF file includes:

Experimental procedures

Figure S1. ^1H NMR spectrum of $[(^{\text{Cy}}\text{PBP})\text{CoH}]_2$ (**1**) in C_6D_6 under 1 atm N_2 at 298 K.

Figure S2. Top: ^1H NMR spectrum of $[(^{\text{Cy}}\text{PBHP})\text{CoH}]_2$ (**1-H₂**) in C_6D_6 under 1 atm H_2 at 298 K. Bottom: ^1H NMR spectrum of $[(^{\text{Cy}}\text{PBDP})\text{CoD}]_2$ (**1-D₂**) in C_6D_6 under 1 atm D_2 at 298 K.

Figure S3. ^1H NMR spectrum of $[(^{\text{Cy}}\text{PBP})\text{CoH}]_2[\text{PF}_6]$ (**[2]**) in C_6D_6 under 1 atm N_2 at 298 K.

Figure S4. ^1H , ^{31}P , ^{11}B , and ^{13}C NMR spectra of $[(^{\text{Ph}}\text{PBP})\text{Ni}]_2$ (**3**) in $\text{THF-}d_8$ under 1 atm N_2 at 298 K.

Figure S5. ^1H , ^{31}P , ^{11}B , and ^{13}C NMR spectra of $[(^{\text{Ph}}\text{PBHP})\text{NiH}]_2$ (**4**) in $\text{THF-}d_8$ under 1 atm H_2 at 298 K.

Figure S6. Top: ^1H (green) and $^1\text{H}\{^{31}\text{P}\}$ (maroon) NMR spectra of $[(^{\text{Ph}}\text{PBHP})\text{NiH}]_2$ (**4**) in $\text{THF-}d_8$ under 1 atm H_2 at 298 K. Bottom: ^1H (green) and $^1\text{H}\{^{11}\text{B}\}$ (maroon) NMR spectra of $[(^{\text{Ph}}\text{PBHP})\text{NiH}]_2$ (**4**) in $\text{THF-}d_8$ under 1 atm H_2 at 298 K.

Figure S7. Determination of $T_1(\text{min})$ for the B-H and Ni-H resonances in $[(^{\text{Ph}}\text{PBHP})\text{NiH}]_2$ (**4**).

Figure S8. ^1H , ^{31}P , ^{11}B , and ^{13}C NMR spectra of $(^{\text{tBu}}\text{PBP})\text{NiCl}$ (**5**) in C_6D_6 under 1 atm N_2 at 298 K.

Figure S9. ^1H , ^{31}P , ^{11}B , ^{19}F , and ^{13}C NMR spectra of $(^{\text{tBu}}\text{PBP})\text{NiOTf}$ (**6**) in C_6D_6 under 1 atm N_2 at 298 K.

Figure S10. ^1H , ^{31}P , ^{11}B , and ^{13}C NMR spectra of $(^{\text{tBu}}\text{PBP})\text{NiH}$ (**7**) in C_6D_6 under 1 atm N_2 at 298 K.

Figure S11. ^1H , ^{31}P , ^{11}B , and ^{13}C NMR spectra of $(^{\text{tBu}}\text{PBP})\text{NiOC(H)O}$ (**8**) in C_6D_6 under 1 atm N_2 at 298 K.

Figure S12. ^1H DOSY NMR spectra of $[(^{\text{Cy}}\text{PBP})\text{CoH}]_2$ (**1**, top), $[(^{\text{Cy}}\text{PBHP})\text{CoH}]_2$ (**1-H₂**, middle), and $(^{\text{tBu}}\text{PBP})\text{NiCl}$ (**5**, bottom) in C_6D_6 at 298 K. (The calculated diffusion coefficients are based on the following report: Evans, R.; Deng, Z.; Rogerson, A. K.; McLachlan, A. S.; Richards, J. J.; Nilsson, M.; Morris, G. A. *Angew. Chem. Int. Ed.* 2013, 52, 3199-3202.)

Figure S13. Top: Thin film ATR-IR spectra of ligand ^{Cy}PB(H)P and [(^{Cy}PBP)CoH]₂ (**1**). Bottom: Solution IR (KBr) spectrum of [(^{Cy}PBP)CoH]₂ (**1**) in C₆H₆.

Figure S14. Thin film ATR-IR spectrum (blue) of [(^{Cy}PBHP)CoH]₂ (**1-H₂**) under 1 atm H₂. The conversion of [(^{Cy}PBHP)CoH]₂ (**1-H₂**) to [(^{Cy}PBP)CoH]₂ (**1**) was observed by repeatedly dissolving/reforming the thin film using C₆H₆ under 1 atm N₂.

Figure S15. Thin film ATR-IR spectra of [(^{Cy}PBP)CoH]₂ (**1**, black) and [(^{Cy}PBP)CoD]₂ (**1-d₂**, red).

Figure S16. Thin film ATR-IR spectra of [(^{Cy}PBP)CoH]₂ (**1**, dash trace) and [(^{Cy}PBP)CoH]₂[PF₆]₂ (**[2][PF₆]**, solid trace).

Figure S17. Thin film ATR-IR spectra of ligand ^{Ph}PB(H)P (dash trace) and [(^{Ph}PBP)Ni]₂ (**3**, solid trace).

Figure S18. Thin film ATR-IR spectra of (^{tBu}PBP)NiH (**7**, dash trace) and (^{tBu}PBP)NiD (**7-D**, solid trace).

Figure S19. Thin film ATR-IR spectra of (^{tBu}PBP)NiH (**7**, dash trace) and (^{tBu}PBP)NiOC(H)O (**8**, solid trace).

Figure S20. Left: UV-vis spectra of [(^{Cy}PBP)CoH]₂ (**1**, blue, 3.77 × 10⁻⁵ M, 1 atm N₂) and [(^{Cy}PBHP)CoH]₂ (**1-H₂**, red, 3.77 × 10⁻⁵ M, 1 atm H₂) in toluene at 293 K. Right: UV-vis spectra of [(^{Ph}PBP)Ni]₂ (**3**, blue, 3.06 × 10⁻⁵ M, 1 atm N₂) and [(^{Ph}PBHP)NiH]₂ (**4**, red, 3.06 × 10⁻⁵ M, 1 atm H₂) in toluene at 293 K.

Figure S21. The cyclic voltammogram trace acquired for [(^{Cy}PBP)CoH]₂ (**1**).

Figure S22. Reaction order determination by the method of initial rates for the hydrogenation of *cis*-cyclooctene catalyzed by [(^{Cy}PBP)CoH]₂ (**1**). (a) Plot of ln(rate) against ln[olefin] ([olefin]: 11.4 – 43.7 mM). (b) Plot of ln(rate) against ln[Co₂] ([Co₂]: 0.84 – 8.43 mM). (c) Plot of ln(rate) against ln[H₂] (pressure of H₂: 0.5 – 3.9 atm).

Figure S23. Plots of initial rates against the concentrations of olefin, catalyst (^{tBu}PBP)NiH (**7**), and H₂ for the hydrogenation of *cis*-cyclooctene catalyzed by complex **7**. (a) Initial rates vs [olefin] (4.36 – 43.6 mM). (b) Initial rates vs [**7**] (1.14 – 11.4 mM). (c) Initial rates vs [H₂] (pressure of H₂: 0.3 – 3.9 atm).

Figure S28. The two singly occupied molecular orbitals (isovalue = 0.05) of complex [(^{Cy}PBP)CoH]₂ (**1**). Hydrogenation atoms are omitted for clarity.

Figure S29. Five natural orbitals (NOs, isovalue = 0.05) illustrating the electronic structure and the predicted *S* = 1 spin state of model complex [(^{Me}PBP)CoH]₂ (**[1']**). The rest of the NOs (not shown) have occupancy of > 1.99 or < 0.01. Three NOs that are associated with the Co-H-Co core are NO 1-3. These orbitals are in-phase (NO 1, occupancy: 1.99), non-bonding (NO 2, occupancy: 1.00), and out-of-phase (NO 3, occupancy: 0.01) combinations of two d(Co) and one s(H) orbitals. In addition, we found a π(Co-Co) (NO 4, occupancy: 1.99) and a π*(Co-Co) (NO 5, occupancy: 1.00) orbitals. Taken collectively, the orbital occupancies of NO 2, NO 4, and NO 5 indicate the absence of a net Co-Co bond. In turn, the two Co atoms are involved in a 3c-2e interaction (NO 1) through the bridging hydride. The NO analysis also reveals that the two unpaired electrons are aligned ferromagnetically in two orthogonal π*(Co-Co) orbitals (NO 2, NO 5), leading to an *S* = 1 configuration which is in agreement with the spin-density plot shown in Figure 1.

Figure S30. Top: Three natural orbitals (NOs, isovalue = 0.05) illustrating the electronic structure and the predicted *S* = ½ spin state of model complex [(^{Me}PBP)CoH]₂⁺ (**[2']⁺**). The rest of the NOs (not shown) have occupancy of > 1.99 or < 0.01. Examinations of NO 1 and NO 3 reveal that they are, respectively, symmetry related Co-Co bonding and antibonding orbitals. These results are in line with two Co being antiferromagnetically coupled (a strongly antiferromagnetically coupled system would have occupancies of 1.00/1.00 whereas a fully electronically paired system would have occupancies of 2/0). Taking linear combinations of NO 1 and NO 3 recovers two localized Co d-orbitals (Bottom). These orbitals are magnetic natural orbitals (MNOs) which could be employed to visualize magnetic interactions (also see ref 22). According to these calculations, the two Co in complex **[2']⁺** could be described as antiferromagnetically coupled. The unpaired electron is localized in NO 2

which has a large contribution from Co2, consistent with the experimentally obtained EPR spectrum showing hyperfine coupling to only one Co atom.

Figure S31. Top: Molecular orbitals (isovalue = 0.05) of complex $[(^{\text{Me}}\text{PBP})\text{Ni}]_2$ (**3'**) showing the Ni-(μ_2 -B)₂-Ni 4c-4e interaction (MO 155, MO 156) as well as the σ (Ni-Ni) orbital (MO 160). Hydrogen atoms are omitted for clarity. Bottom: Calculated electron density plot for **3'** with bond paths (pink), (3,-1) bond critical points (BCPs, red), and electron density (e bohr^{-3} , blue).

Figure S32. Top: Molecular orbitals (isovalue = 0.05) of complex $[(^{\text{Me}}\text{PBHP})\text{NiH}]_2$ (**4'**) showing the agostic σ -borane coordination mode (MO 134, MO 137). Hydrogen atoms are omitted for clarity. Bottom: Calculated electron density plot for **4'** with bond paths (pink), (3,-1) bond critical points (BCPs, red), and electron density (e bohr^{-3} , blue). The absence of a bond path/BCP between B1-Ni1 and B2-Ni2 suggests that the coordination mode of the borane ligand is closer to *pseudo* agostic.

Figure S33. Geometry of $(\text{PH}_3)_2\text{Ni}-(\mu_2\text{-H})_2\text{-Ni}(\text{PH}_3)_2$ optimized at BP86/6-31g(d) level of theory by DFT. The MOs (isovalue = 0.05) illustrate the three-center-two-electron bonds as well as the presence of a π^* (Ni-Ni) bond. Hydrogen atoms are omitted for clarity.

Table S1. Calculated EPR parameters for complex $[(^{\text{Me}}\text{PBP})\text{CoH}]_2^+$ (**[2']⁺**) at BP86/6-31+g(d,p) level of theory.

DFT structural coordinates

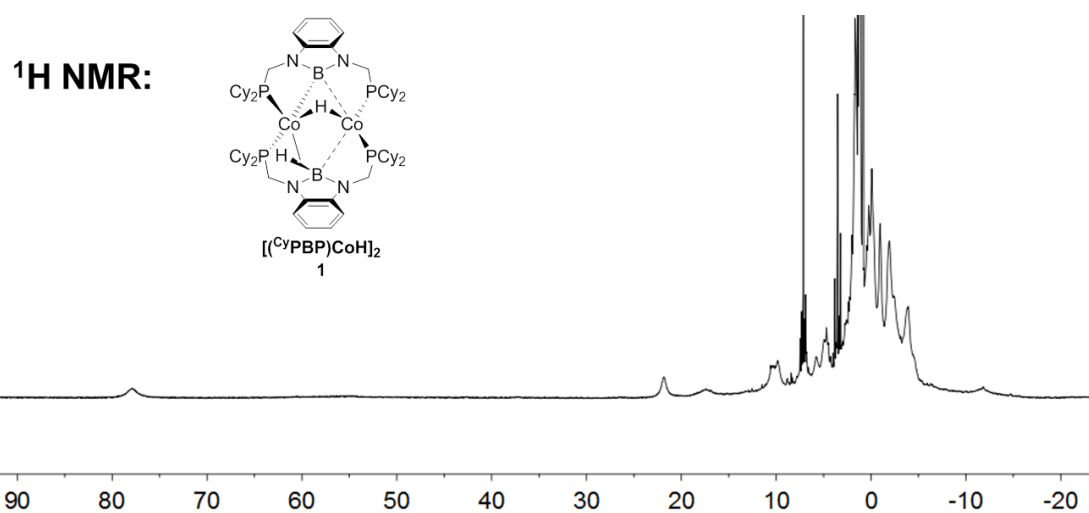
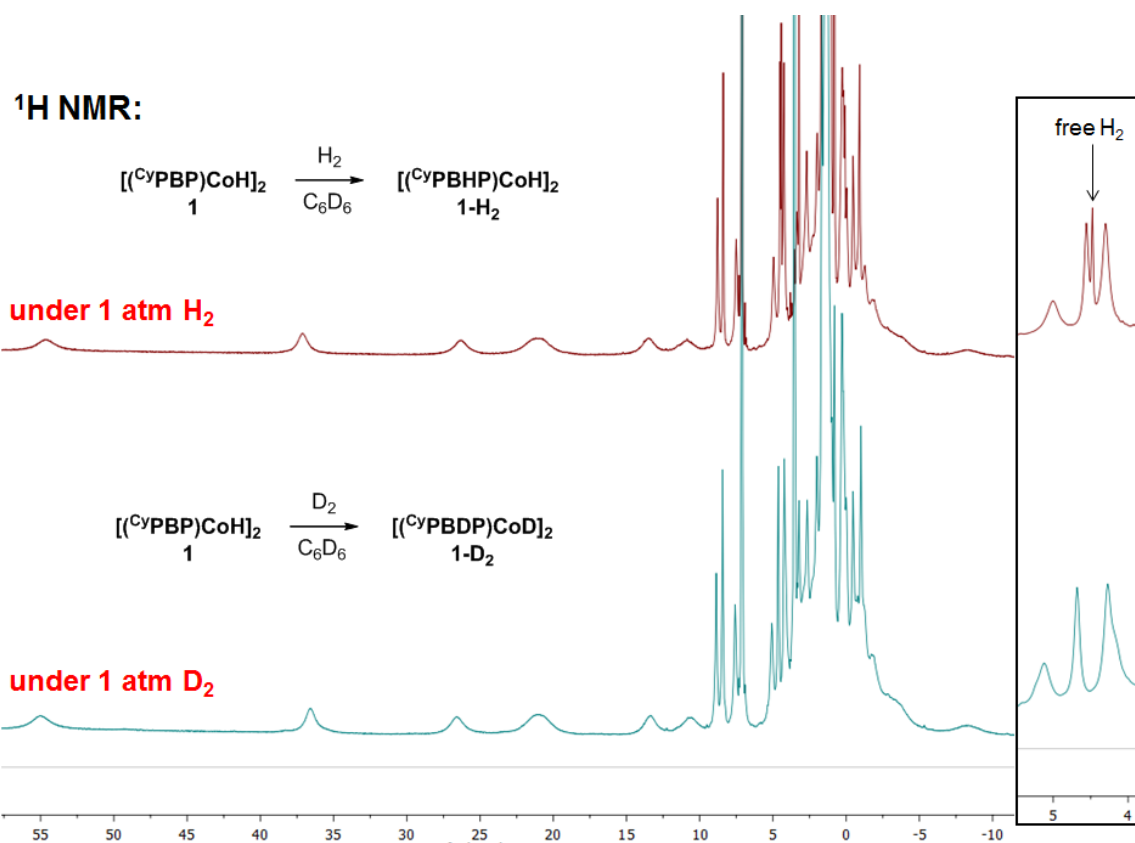


Figure S1. ^1H NMR spectrum of $[(\text{CyPBP})\text{CoH}]_2$ (**1**) in C_6D_6 under 1 atm N_2 at 298 K.



Several plausible identities for $\mathbf{1-H_2}$:

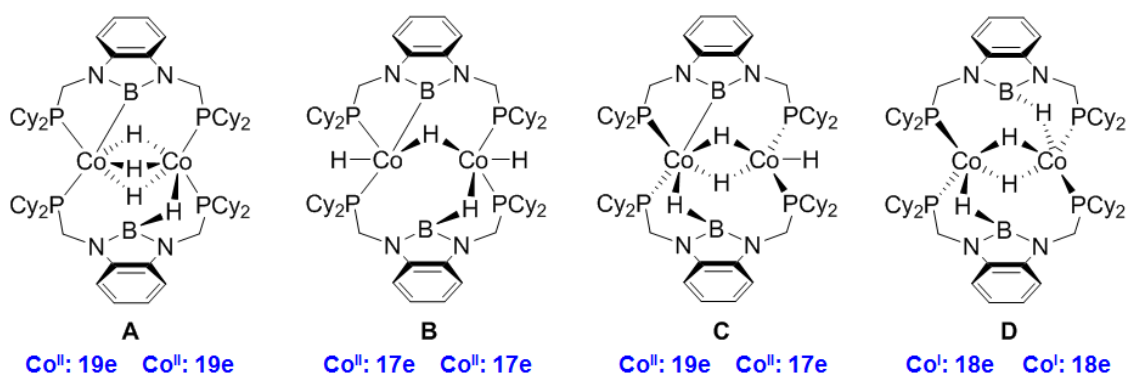


Figure S2. Top: ^1H NMR spectrum of $[(^{\text{Cy}}\text{PBHP})\text{CoH}]_2$ ($\mathbf{1-H_2}$) in C_6D_6 under 1 atm H_2 at 298 K. Bottom: ^1H NMR spectrum of $[(^{\text{Cy}}\text{PBDP})\text{CoD}]_2$ ($\mathbf{1-D_2}$) in C_6D_6 under 1 atm D_2 at 298 K.

^1H NMR:

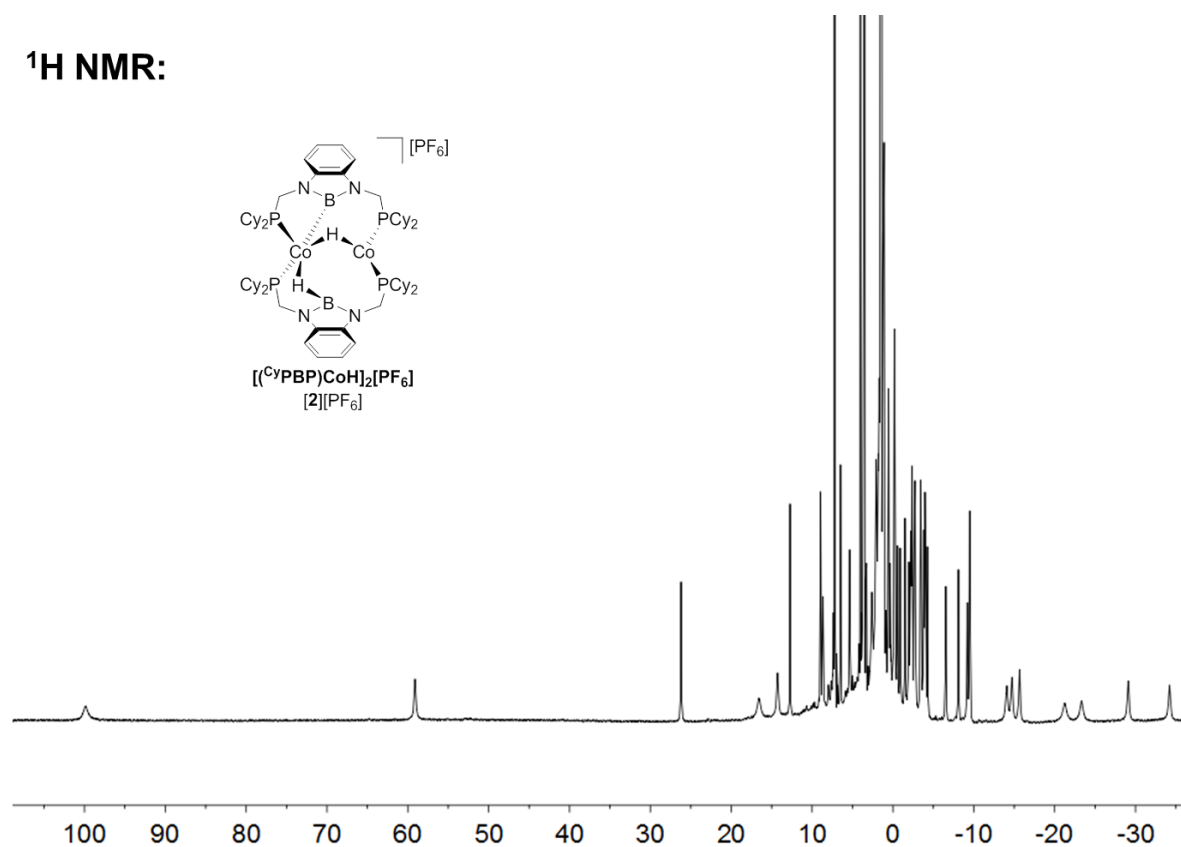


Figure S3. ^1H NMR spectrum of $[(^{\text{Cy}}\text{PBP})\text{CoH}]_2[\text{PF}_6]$ (**[2]** $[\text{PF}_6]$) in C_6D_6 under 1 atm N_2 at 298 K.

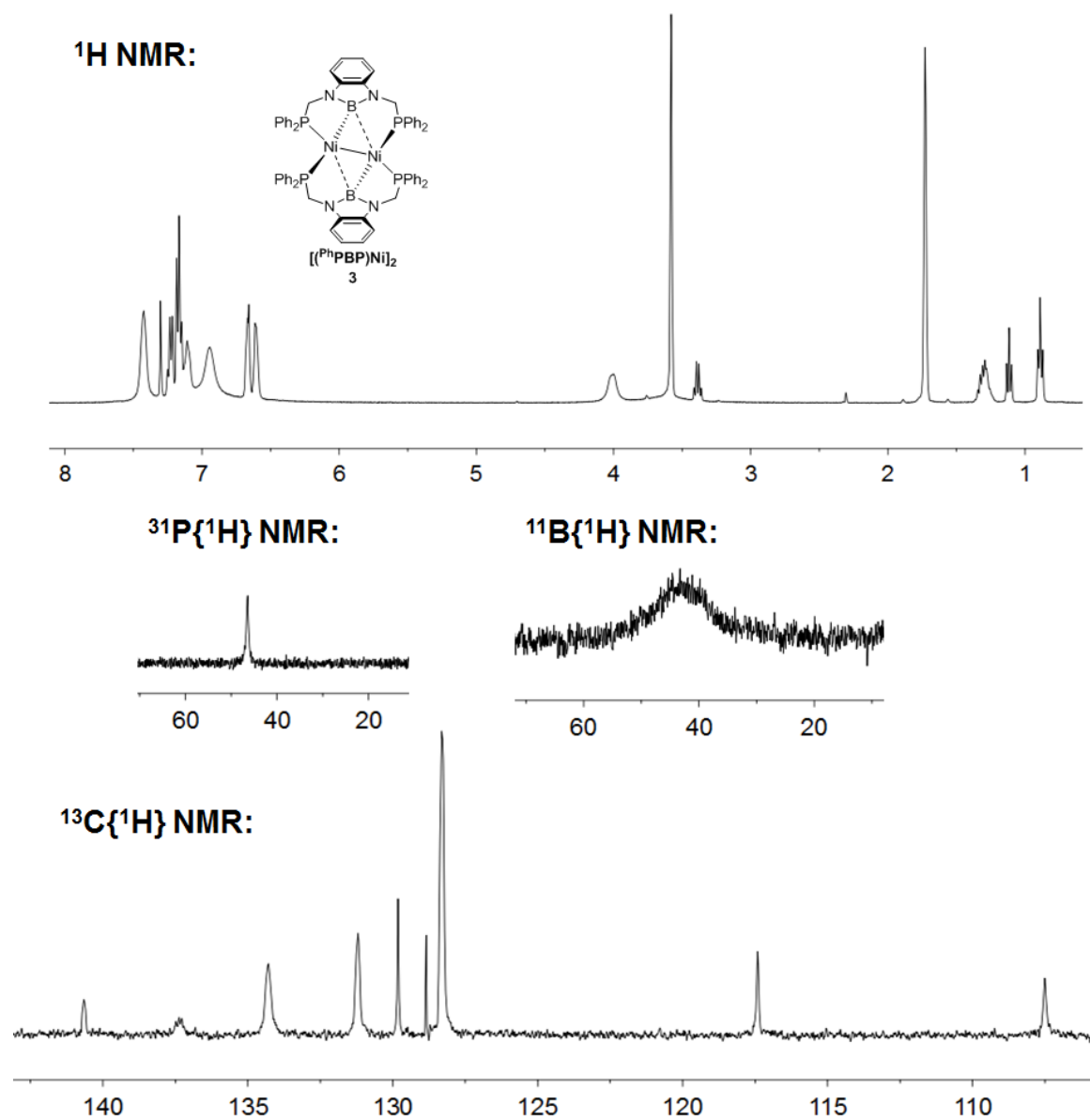


Figure S4. ^1H , ^{31}P , ^{11}B , and ^{13}C NMR spectra of $[(^{\text{Ph}}\text{PBP})\text{Ni}]_2$ (**3**) in $\text{THF-}d_8$ under 1 atm N_2 at 298 K.

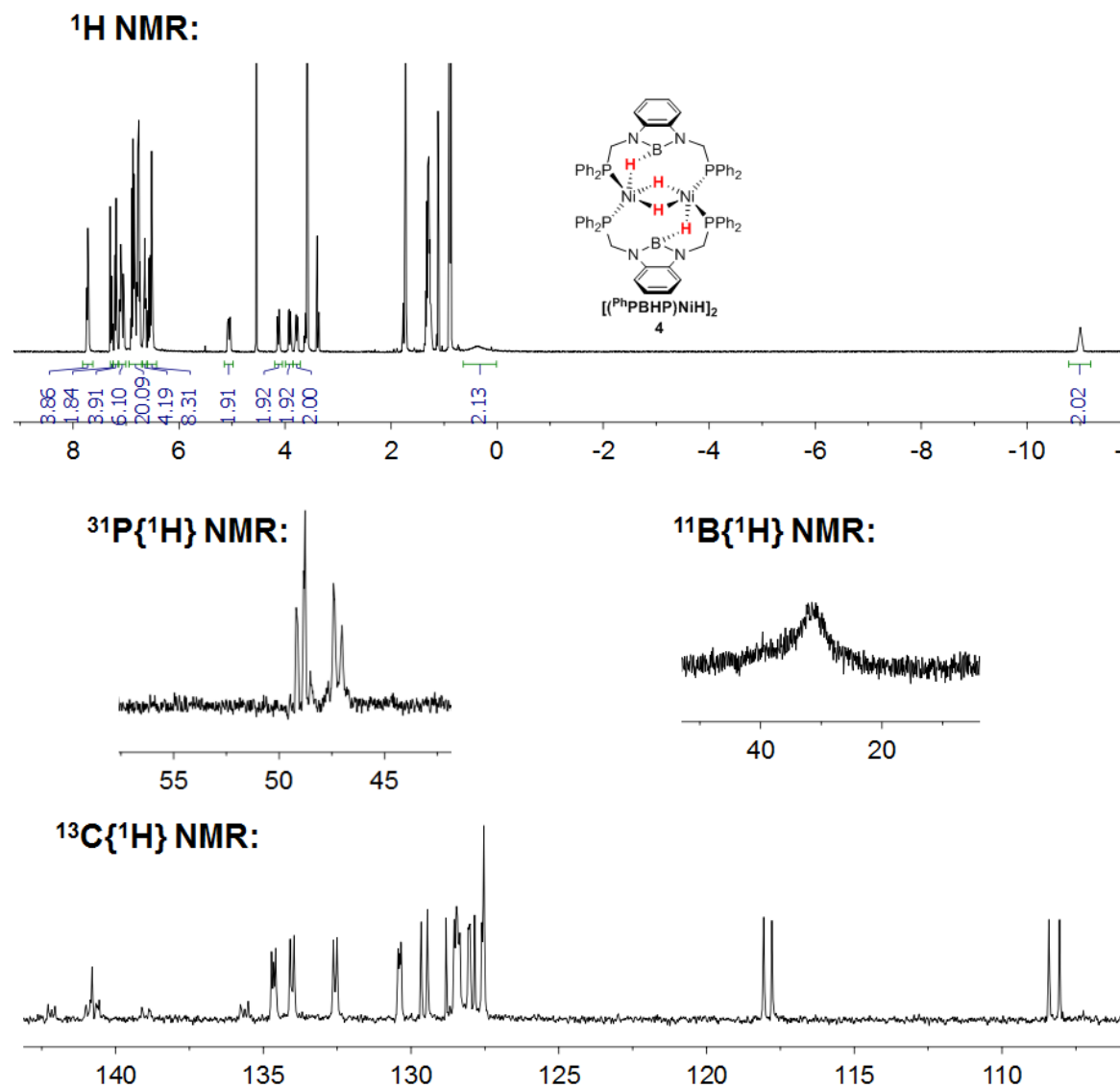


Figure S5. ^1H , ^{31}P , ^{11}B , and ^{13}C NMR spectra of $[(^{\text{Ph}}\text{PBHP})\text{NiH}]_2$ (**4**) in $\text{THF-}d_8$ under 1 atm H_2 at 298 K.

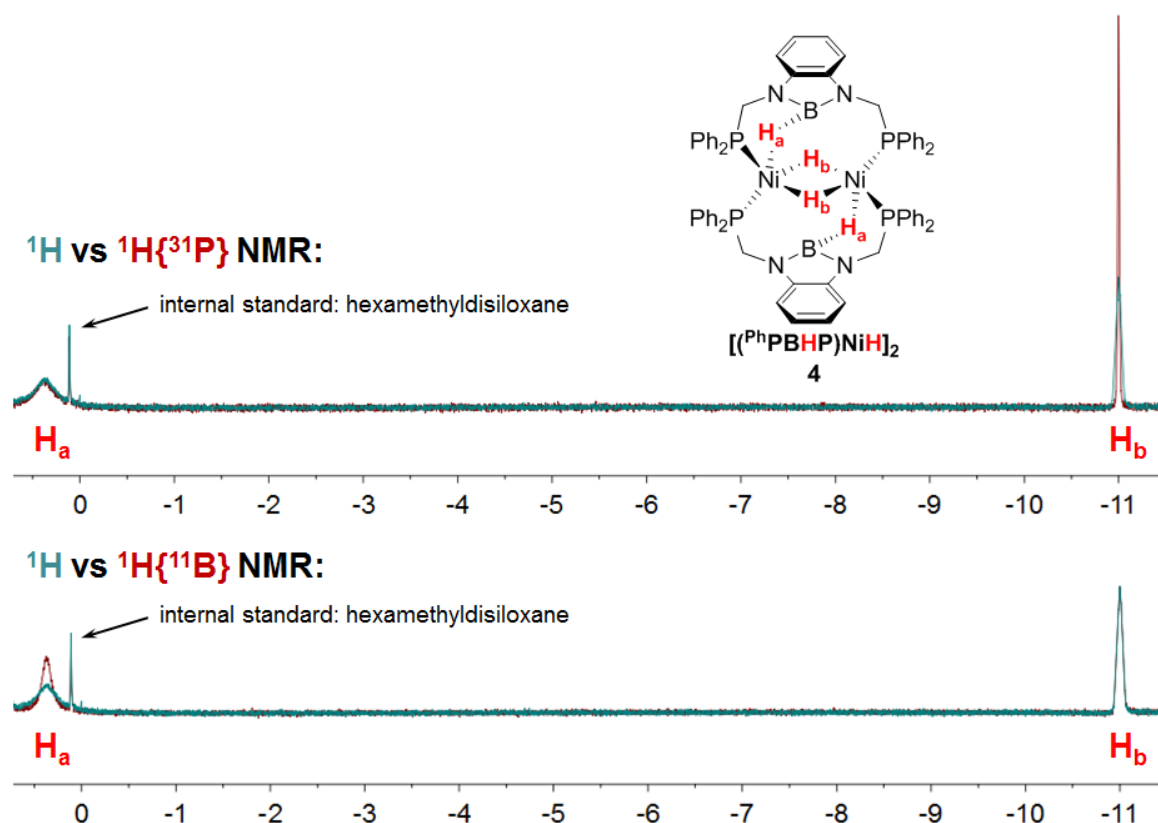


Figure S6. Top: ^1H (green) and $^1\text{H}\{^{31}\text{P}\}$ (maroon) NMR spectra of $[(^{\text{Ph}}\text{PBHP})\text{NiH}]_2$ (**4**) in $\text{THF-}d_8$ under 1 atm H_2 at 298 K. Bottom: ^1H (green) and $^1\text{H}\{^{11}\text{B}\}$ (maroon) NMR spectra of $[(^{\text{Ph}}\text{PBHP})\text{NiH}]_2$ (**4**) in $\text{THF-}d_8$ under 1 atm H_2 at 298 K.

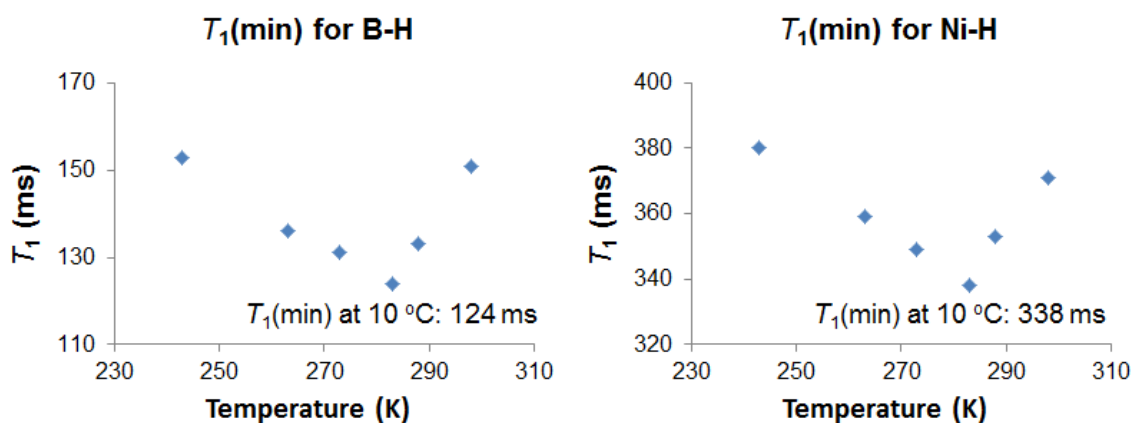


Figure S7. Determination of $T_1(\text{min})$ for the B-H and Ni-H resonances in $[(^{\text{Ph}}\text{PBHP})\text{NiH}]_2$ (**4**).

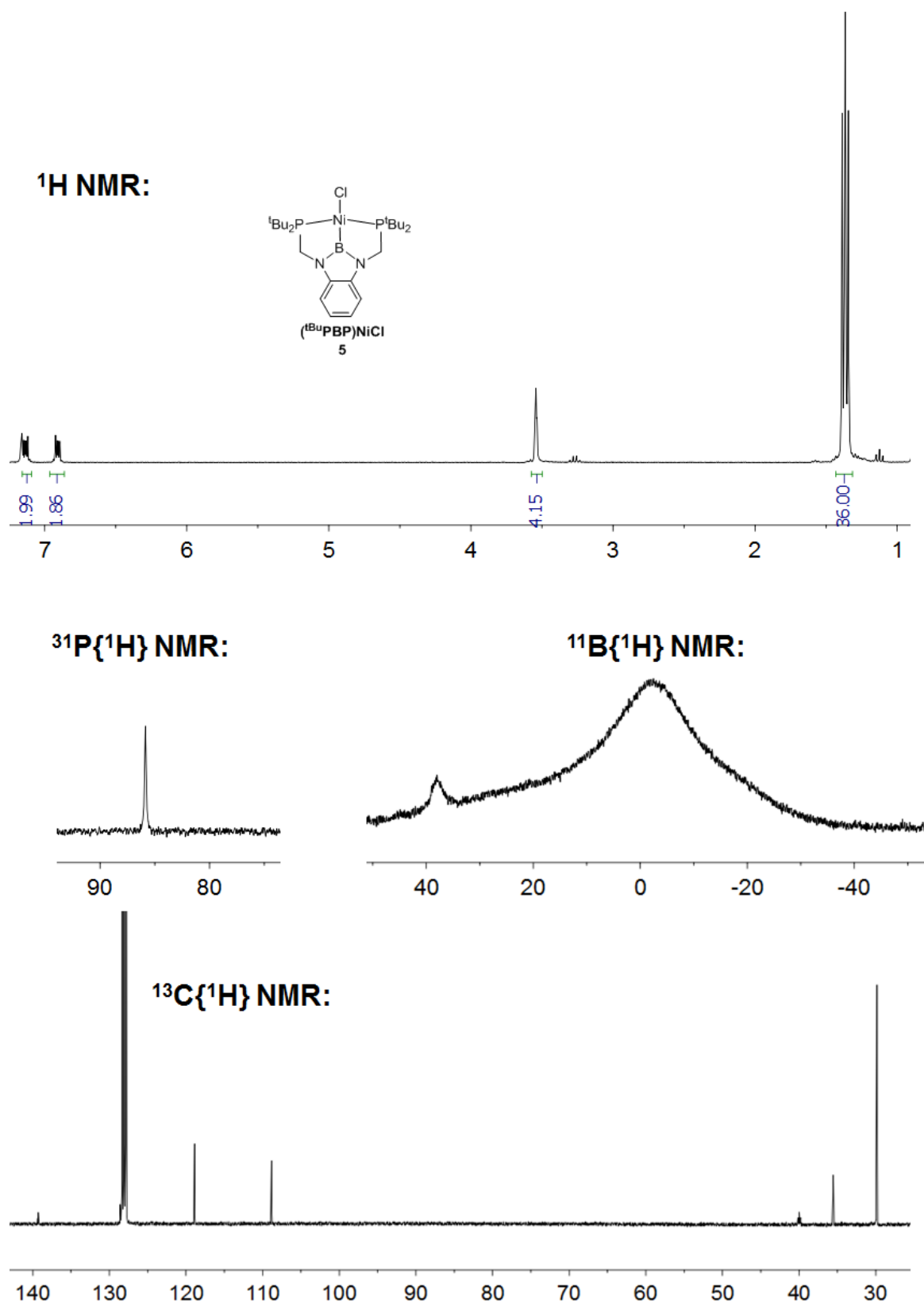


Figure S8. ^1H , ^{31}P , ^{11}B , and ^{13}C NMR spectra of $(^t\text{BuPBP})\text{NiCl}$ (**5**) in C_6D_6 under 1 atm N_2 at 298 K.

^1H NMR:

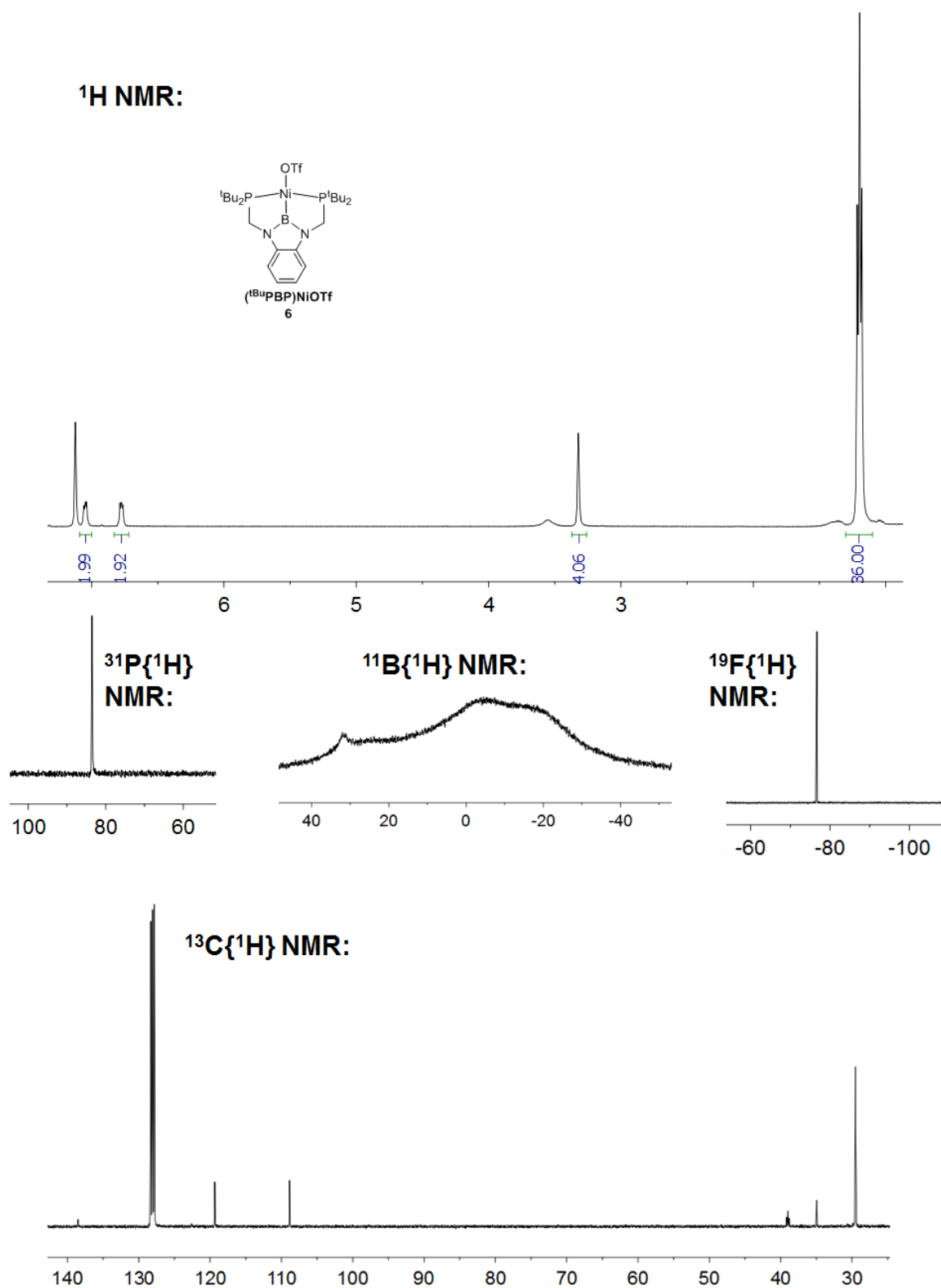
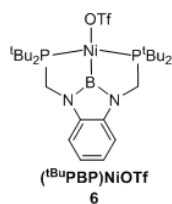


Figure S9. ^1H , ^{31}P , ^{11}B , ^{19}F , and ^{13}C NMR spectra of ($t\text{BuPBP}$)NiOTf (**6**) in C_6D_6 under 1 atm N_2 at 298 K.

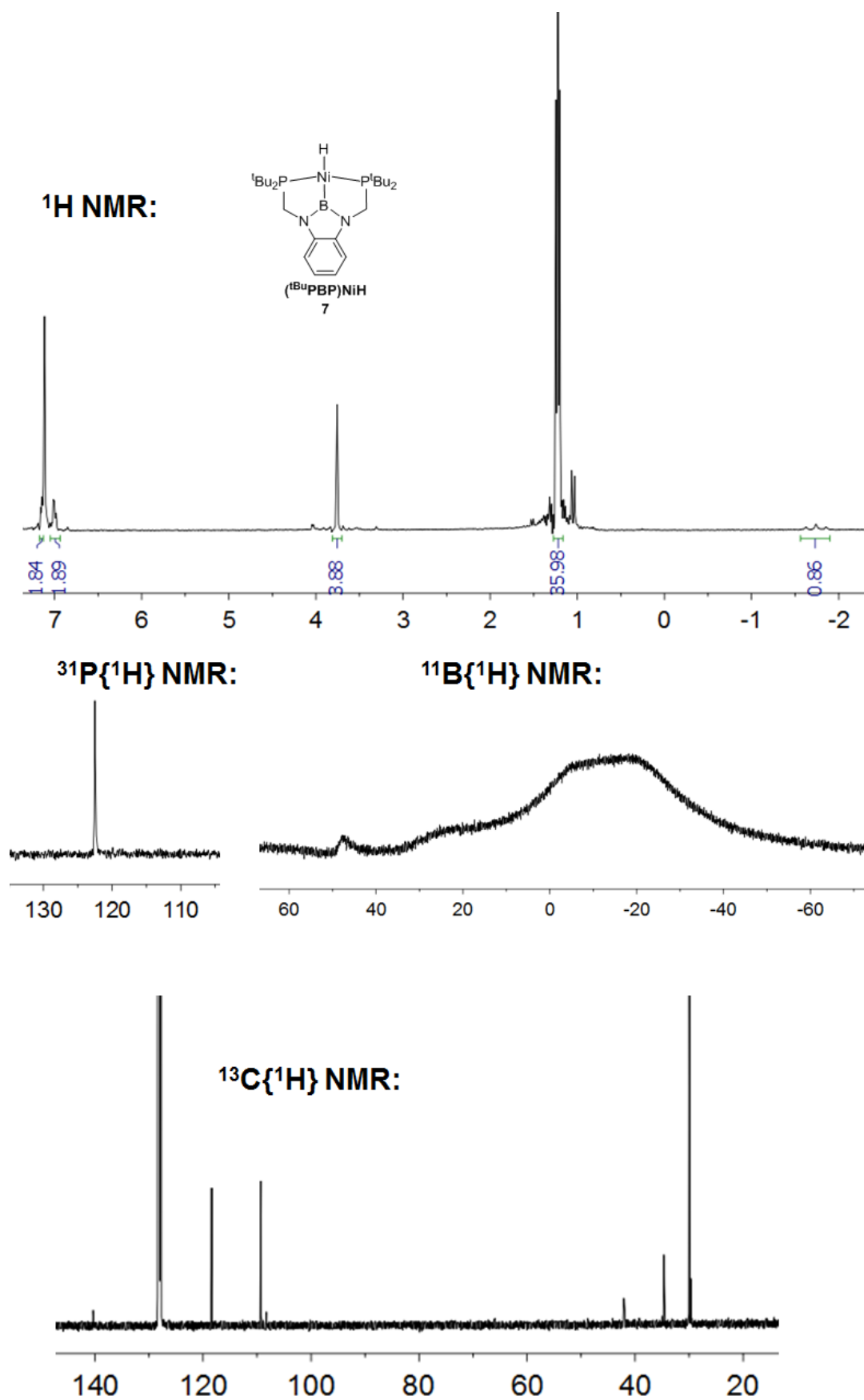


Figure S10. ^1H , ^{31}P , ^{11}B , and ^{13}C NMR spectra of $(^t\text{BuPBP})\text{NiH}$ (**7**) in C_6D_6 under 1 atm N_2 at 298 K.

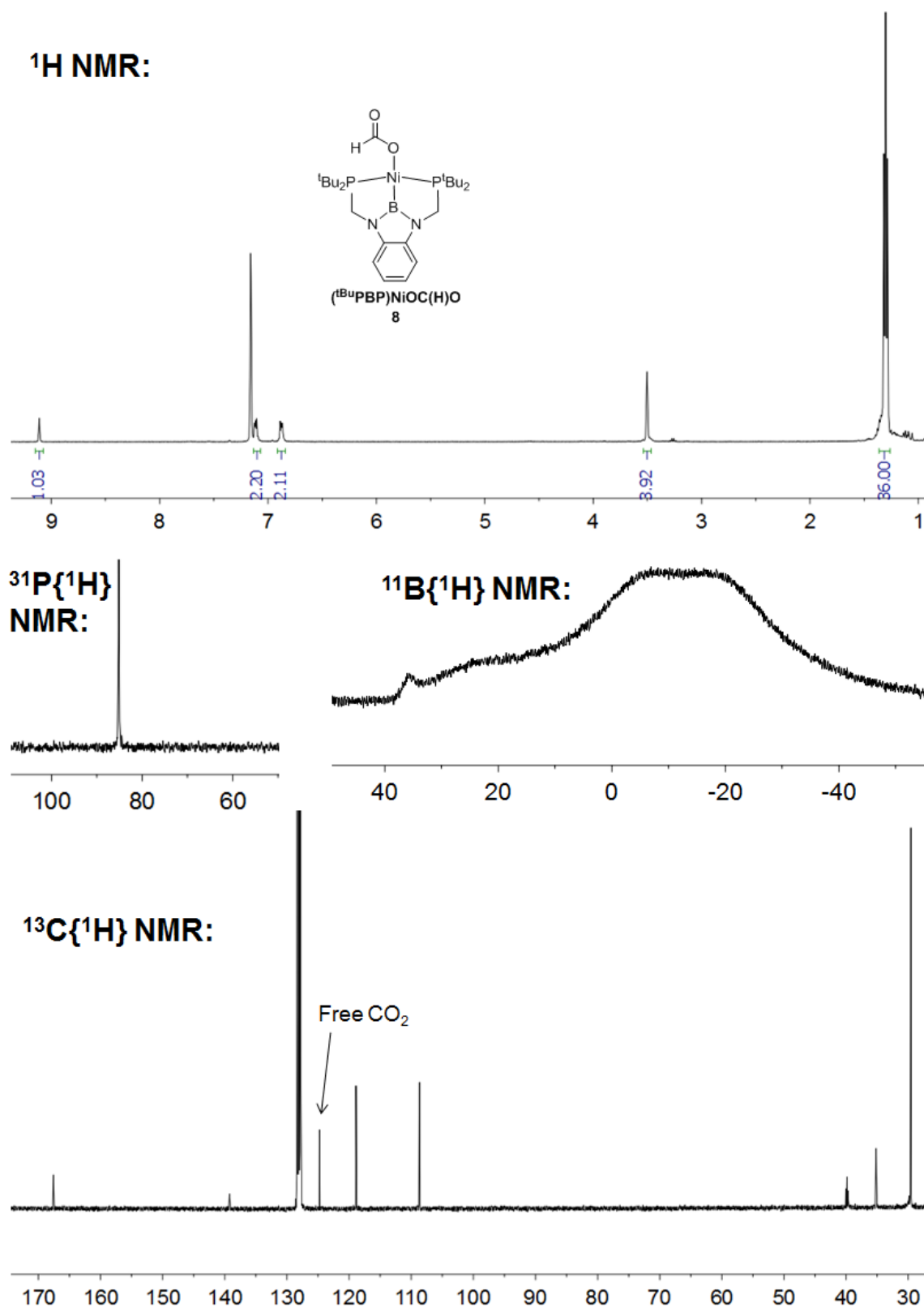


Figure S11. ^1H , ^{31}P , ^{11}B , and ^{13}C NMR spectra of $(^t\text{BuPBP})\text{NiOC}(\text{H})\text{O}$ (**8**) in C_6D_6 under 1 atm N_2 at 298 K.

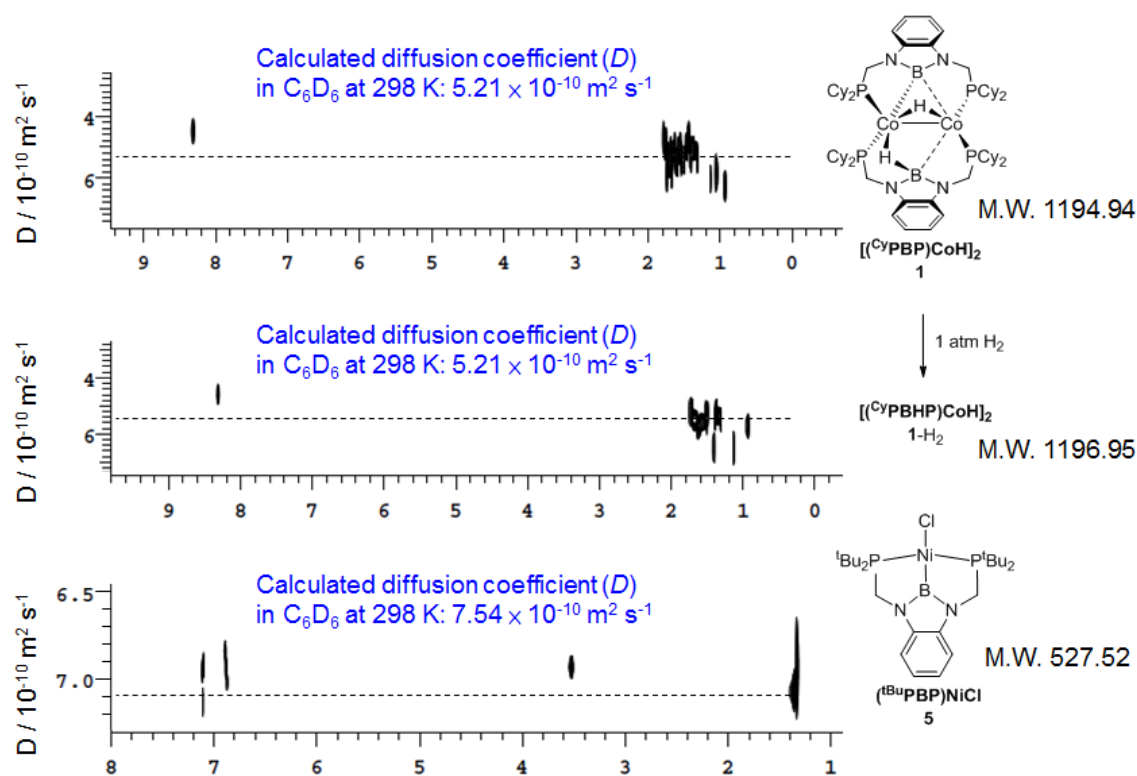


Figure S12. ^1H DOSY NMR spectra of $[(\text{CyPBP})\text{CoH}]_2$ (**1**, top), $[(\text{CyPBHP})\text{CoH}]_2$ (**1-H₂**, middle), and $(\text{tBuPBP})\text{NiCl}$ (**5**, bottom) in C_6D_6 at 298 K. (The calculated diffusion coefficients are based on the following report: Evans, R.; Deng, Z.; Rogerson, A. K.; McLachlan, A. S.; Richards, J. J.; Nilsson, M.; Morris, G. A. *Angew. Chem. Int. Ed.* 2013, 52, 3199-3202.)

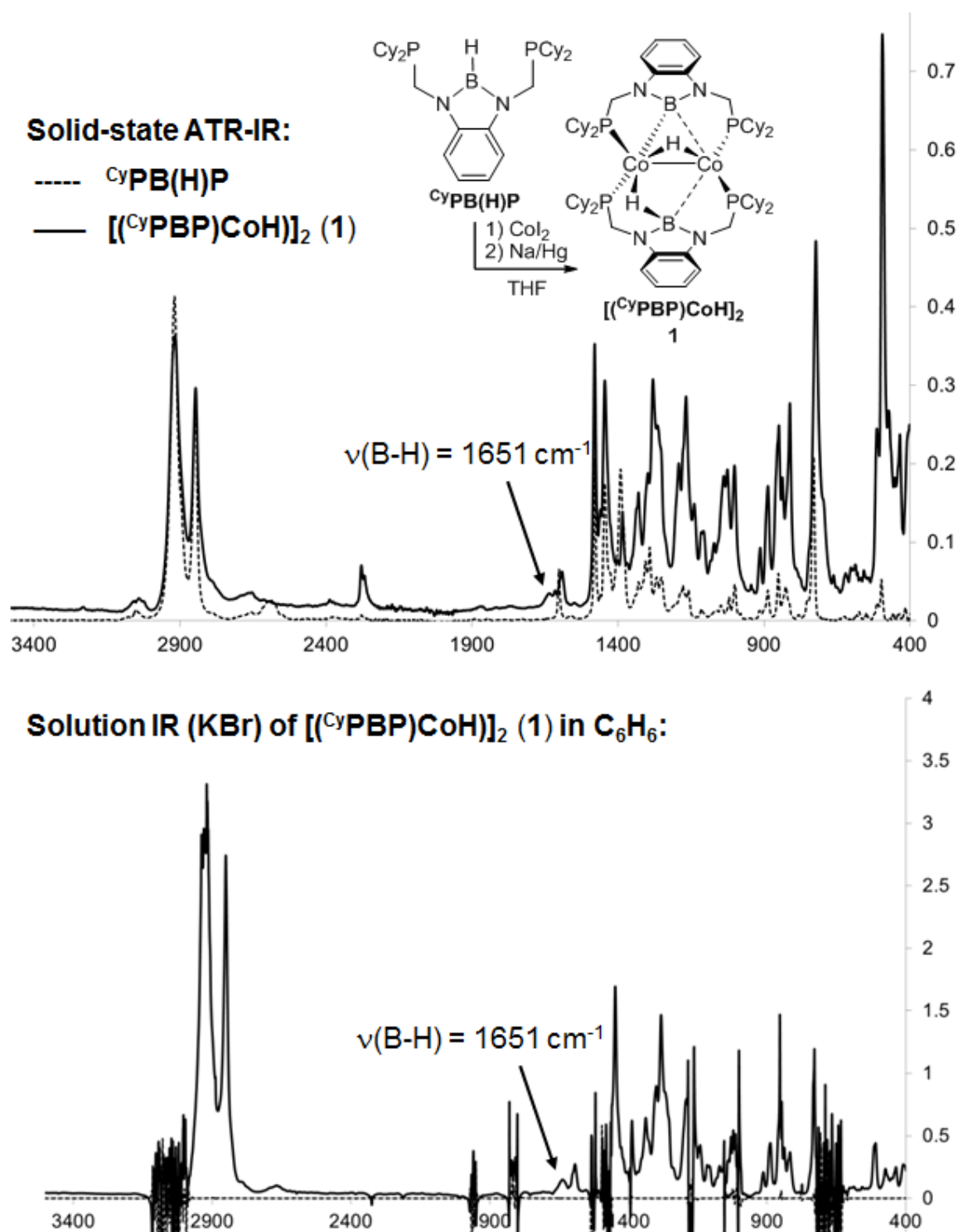


Figure S13. Top: Thin film ATR-IR spectra of ligand CyPB(H)P and $[(\text{CyPBP})\text{CoH}]_2$ (**1**). Bottom: Solution IR (KBr) spectrum of $[(\text{CyPBP})\text{CoH}]_2$ (**1**) in C_6H_6 .

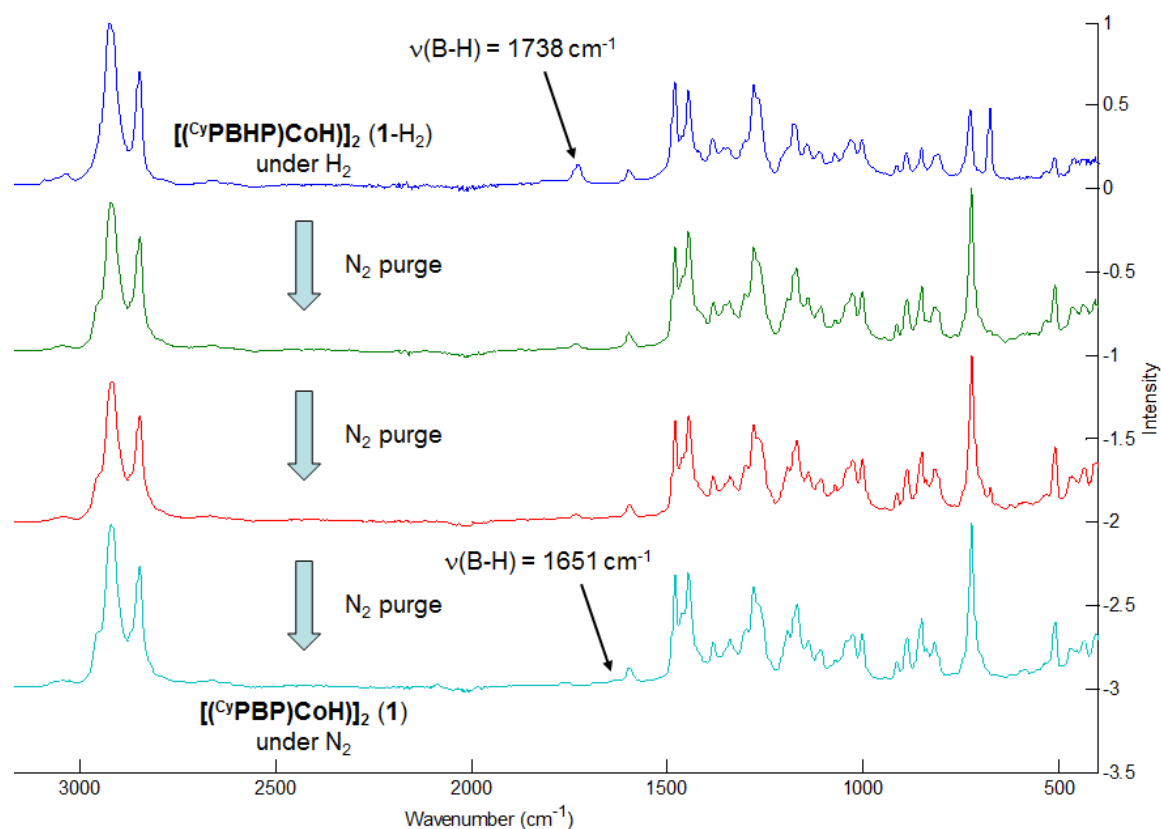


Figure S14. Thin film ATR-IR spectrum (blue) of $[(\text{CyPBHP})\text{CoH}]_2 (1-\text{H}_2)$ under 1 atm H_2 . The conversion of $[(\text{CyPBHP})\text{CoH}]_2 (1-\text{H}_2)$ to $[(\text{CyPBP})\text{CoH}]_2 (1)$ was observed by repeatedly dissolving/reforming the thin film using C_6H_6 under 1 atm N_2 .

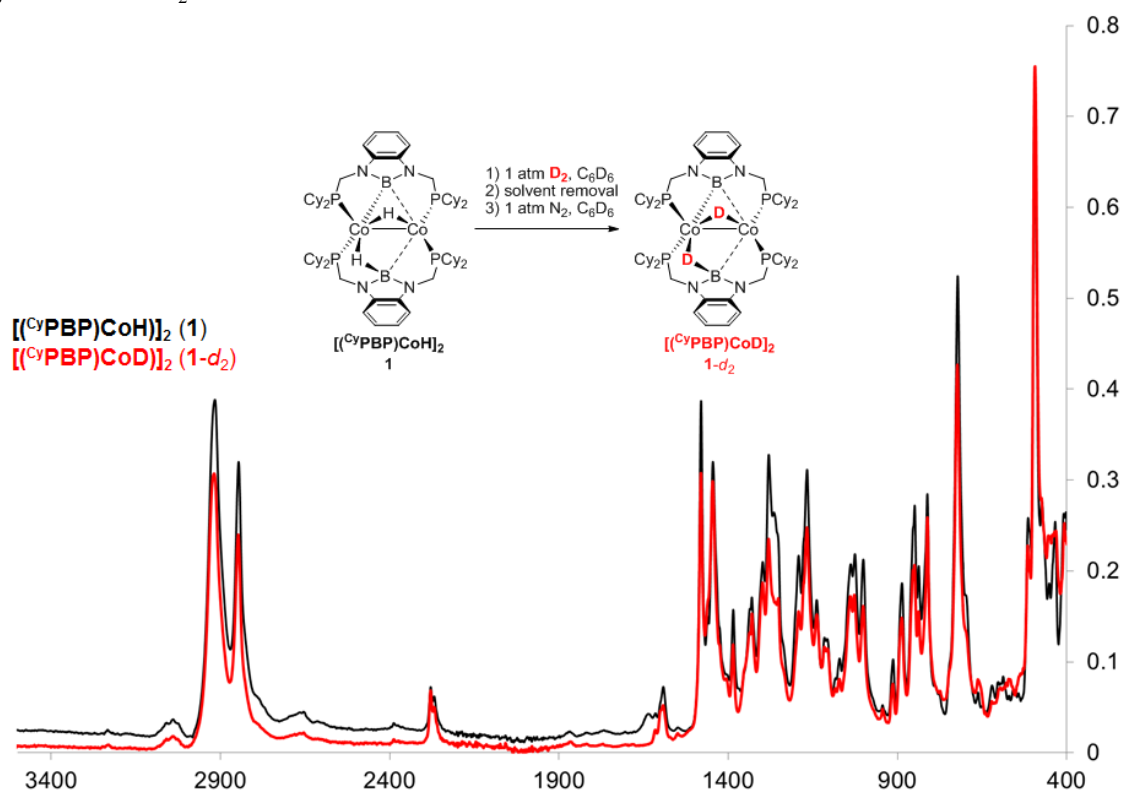


Figure S15. Thin film ATR-IR spectra of $[(\text{CyPBP})\text{CoH}]_2 (1)$ (black) and $[(\text{CyPBP})\text{CoD}]_2 (1-d_2)$ (red).

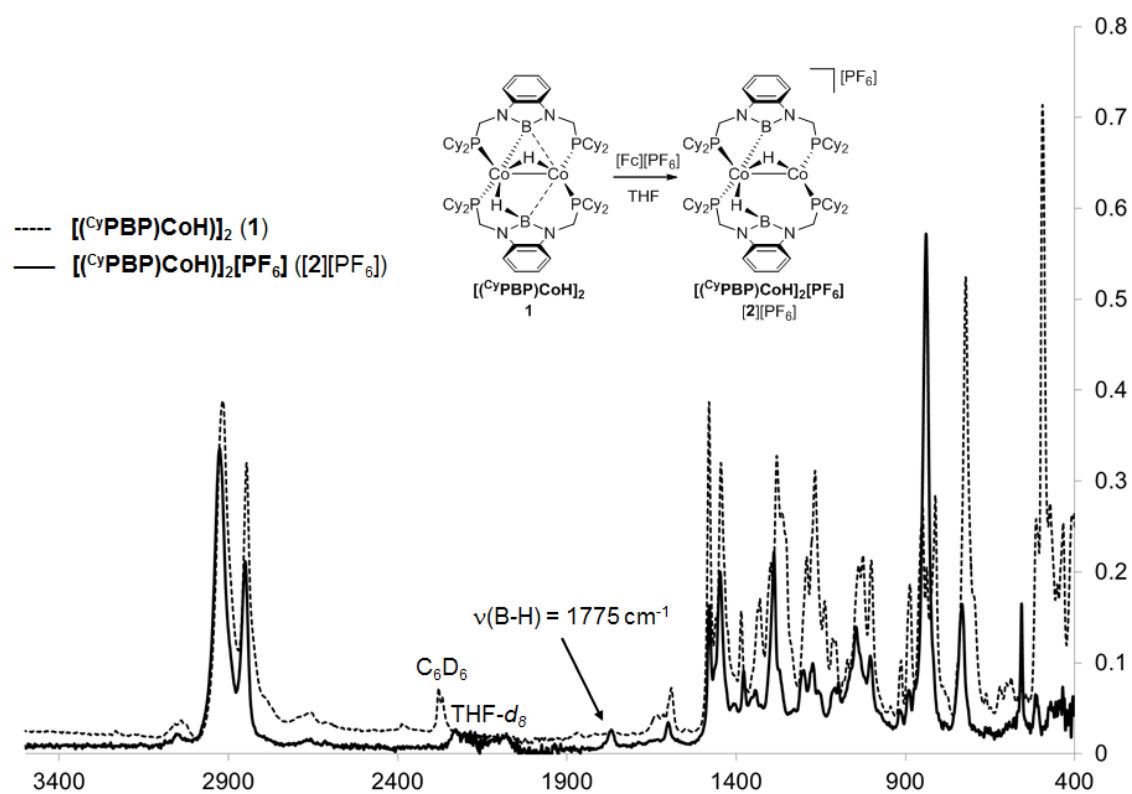


Figure S16. Thin film ATR-IR spectra of $[(^{\text{Cy}}\text{PBP})\text{CoH}]_2$ (1, dash trace) and $[(^{\text{Cy}}\text{PBP})\text{CoH}]_2[\text{PF}_6]$ ($[2][\text{PF}_6]$, solid trace).

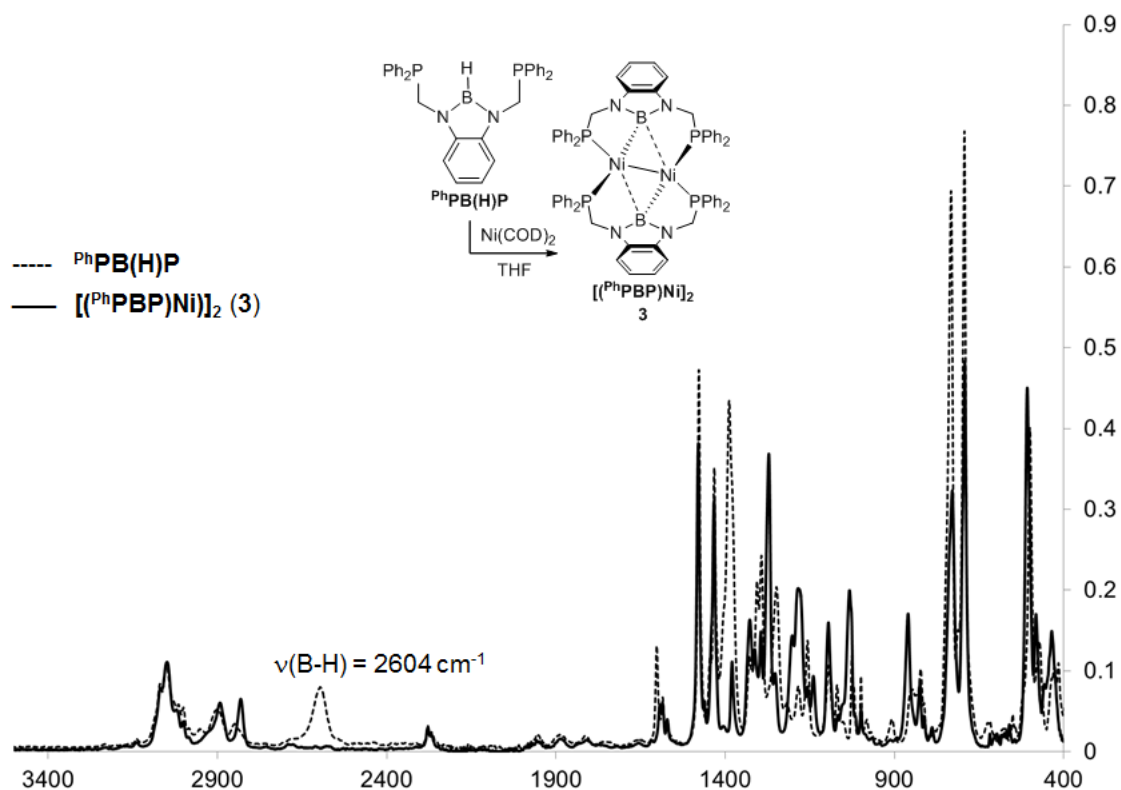


Figure S17. Thin film ATR-IR spectra of ligand PhPB(H)P (dash trace) and $[(^{\text{Ph}}\text{PBP})\text{Ni}]_2$ (3, solid trace).

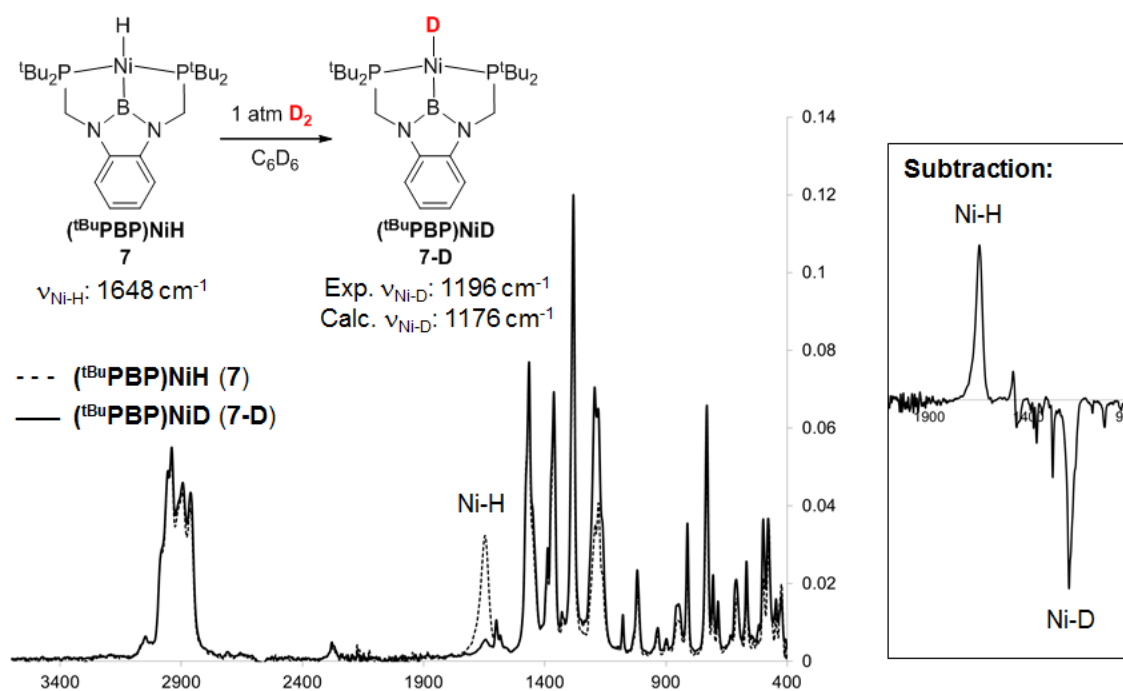


Figure S18. Thin film ATR-IR spectra of $(t\text{BuPBP})\text{NiH}$ (7, dash trace) and $(t\text{BuPBP})\text{NiD}$ (7-D, solid trace).

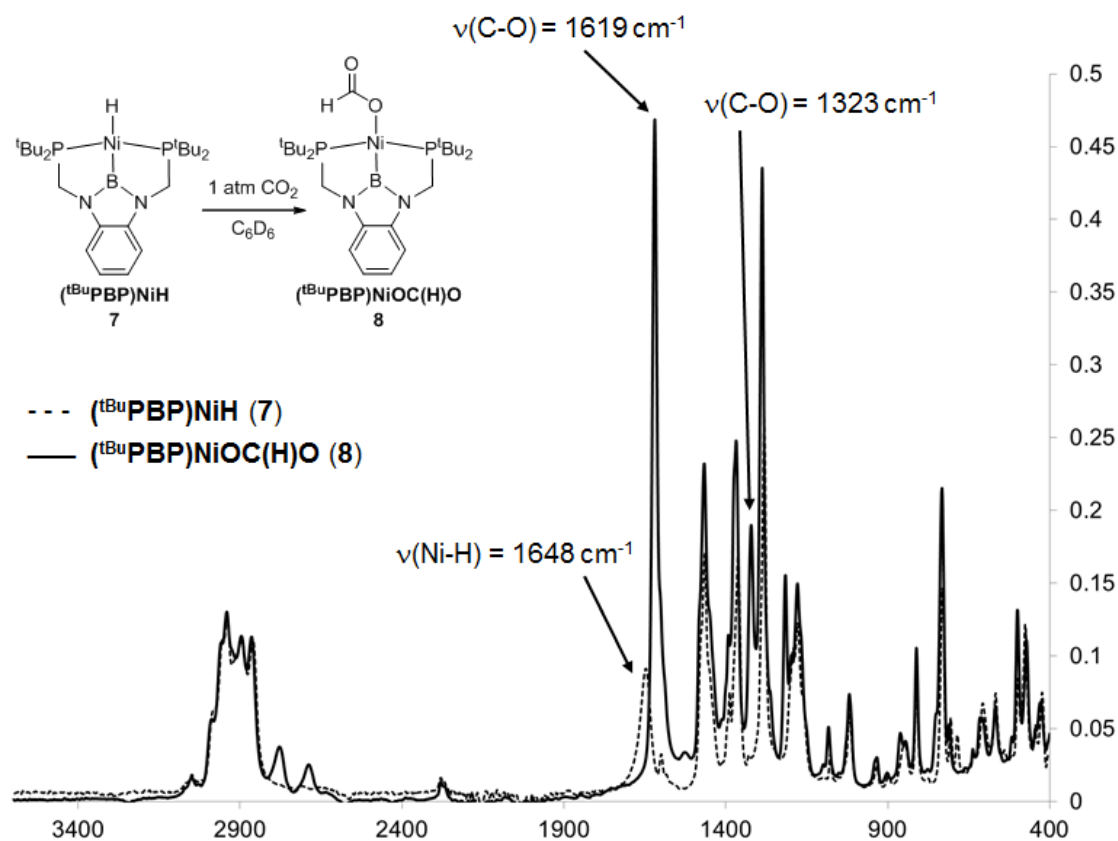


Figure S19. Thin film ATR-IR spectra of $(t\text{BuPBP})\text{NiH}$ (7, dash trace) and $(t\text{BuPBP})\text{NiOC(H)O}$ (8, solid trace).

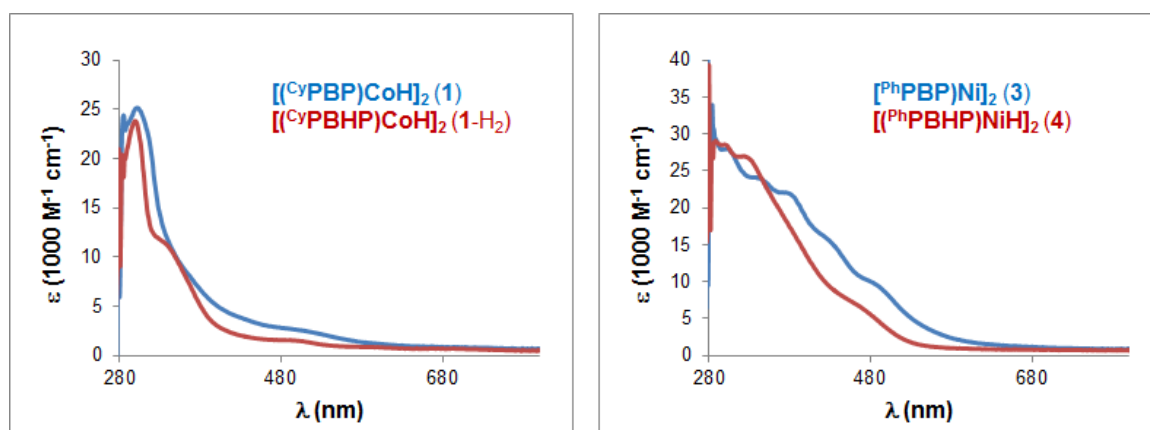


Figure S20. Left: UV-vis spectra of $[(^{\text{Cy}}\text{PBP})\text{CoH}]_2$ (**1**, blue, 3.77×10^{-5} M, 1 atm N_2) and $[(^{\text{Cy}}\text{PBHP})\text{CoH}]_2$ (**1-H₂**, red, 3.77×10^{-5} M, 1 atm H_2) in toluene at 293 K. Right: UV-vis spectra of $[(^{\text{Ph}}\text{PBP})\text{Ni}]_2$ (**3**, blue, 3.06×10^{-5} M, 1 atm N_2) and $[(^{\text{Ph}}\text{PBHP})\text{NiH}]_2$ (**4**, red, 3.06×10^{-5} M, 1 atm H_2) in toluene at 293 K.

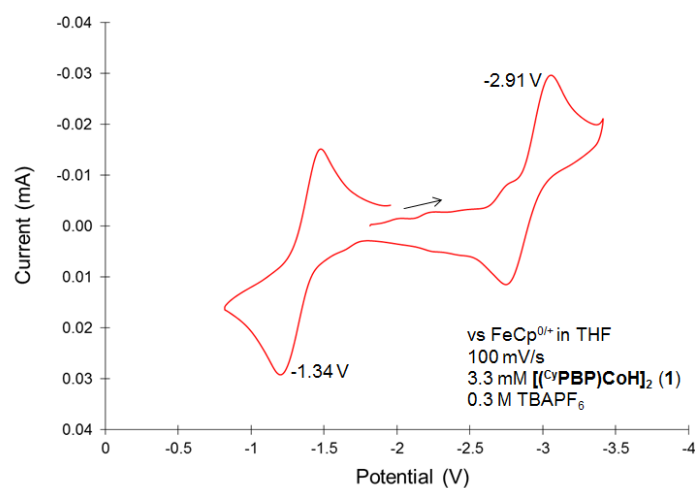


Figure S21. The cyclic voltammogram trace acquired for $[(^{\text{Cy}}\text{PBP})\text{CoH}]_2$ (**1**).

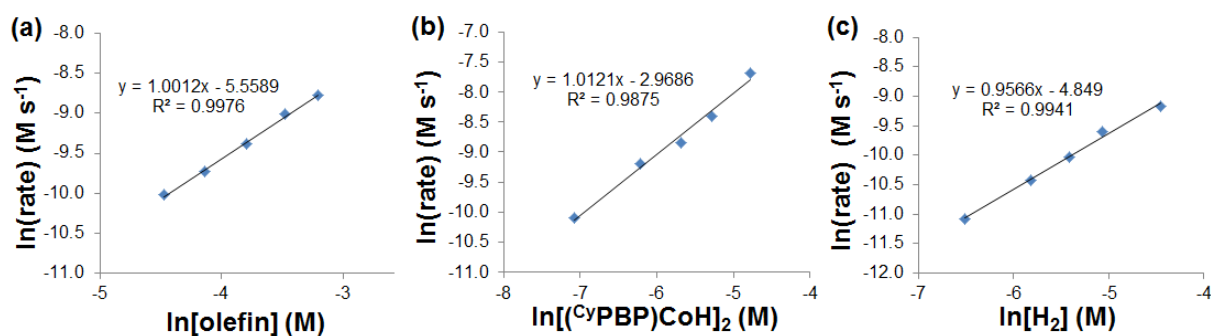


Figure S22. Reaction order determination by the method of initial rates for the hydrogenation of *cis*-cyclooctene catalyzed by $[(\text{CyPBP})\text{CoH}]_2$ (1). (a) Plot of $\ln(\text{rate})$ against $\ln[\text{olefin}]$ ([olefin]: 11.4 – 43.7 mM). (b) Plot of $\ln(\text{rate})$ against $\ln[\text{Co}_2]$ ($[\text{Co}_2]$: 0.84 – 8.43 mM). (c) Plot of $\ln(\text{rate})$ against $\ln[\text{H}_2]$ (pressure of H_2 : 0.5 – 3.9 atm).

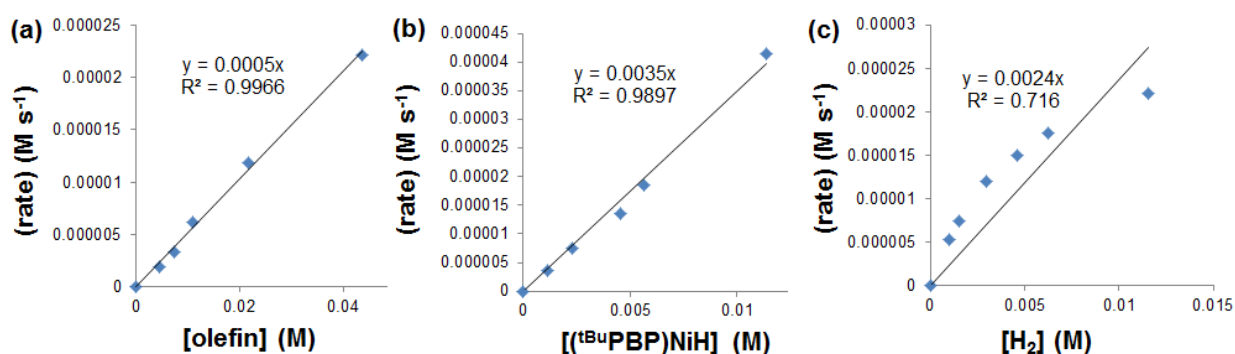
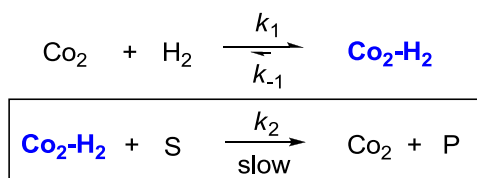


Figure S23. Plots of initial rates against the concentrations of olefin, catalyst $[(\text{tBuPBP})\text{NiH}]$ (7), and H_2 for the hydrogenation of *cis*-cyclooctene catalyzed by complex 7. (a) Initial rates vs [olefin] (4.36 – 43.6 mM). (b) Initial rates vs [7] (1.14 – 11.4 mM). (c) Initial rates vs $[\text{H}_2]$ (pressure of H_2 : 0.3 – 3.9 atm).

Mechanism A



The solution obtained from the prior equilibrium approximation:

$$K_{eq1} = \frac{k_1}{k_{-1}} = \frac{[\text{Co}_2\text{H}_2]}{[\text{Co}_2][\text{H}_2]}$$

Assuming Co_2 and $\text{Co}_2\text{-H}_2$ are rapidly equilibrating:

$$\because [\text{Co}_2] = [\text{Co}_2]_0 - [\text{Co}_2\text{H}_2] \therefore K_{eq1} = \frac{[\text{Co}_2\text{H}_2]}{([\text{Co}_2]_0 - [\text{Co}_2\text{H}_2])[\text{H}_2]} \Rightarrow [\text{Co}_2\text{H}_2] = \frac{K_{eq1}[\text{Co}_2]_0[\text{H}_2]}{1 + K_{eq1}[\text{H}_2]}$$

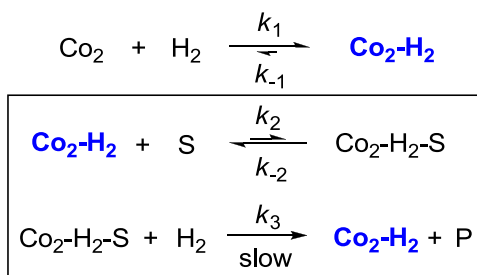
$$v = k_2[\text{Co}_2\text{H}_2][\text{S}] = \frac{K_{eq1}k_2[\text{Co}_2]_0[\text{H}_2][\text{S}]}{1 + K_{eq1}[\text{H}_2]}$$

Since $\text{Co}_2\text{-H}_2$ is the resting-state of the catalyst,

$$\frac{[\text{Co}_2\text{H}_2]}{[\text{Co}_2]} = K_{eq1}[\text{H}_2] \gg 1, \quad v = \frac{K_{eq1}k_2[\text{Co}_2]_0[\text{H}_2][\text{S}]}{1 + K_{eq1}[\text{H}_2]} \approx k_2[\text{Co}_2]_0[\text{S}]$$

Figure S24. Rate law derivation for Mechanism A (shown in Scheme 2).

Mechanism B



The solution obtained from the steady-state approximation:

$$\frac{d[\text{Co}_2\text{H}_2\text{S}]}{dt} = k_2[\text{Co}_2\text{H}_2][\text{S}] - k_{-2}[\text{Co}_2\text{H}_2\text{S}] - k_3[\text{Co}_2\text{H}_2\text{S}][\text{H}_2] \approx 0$$

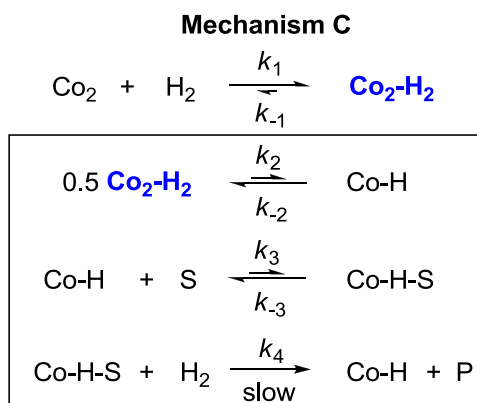
$$[\text{Co}_2\text{H}_2\text{S}] = \frac{k_2[\text{Co}_2\text{H}_2][\text{S}]}{k_{-2} + k_3[\text{H}_2]}$$

$$v = k_3[\text{Co}_2\text{H}_2\text{S}][\text{H}_2] = \frac{k_2k_3[\text{Co}_2\text{H}_2][\text{H}_2][\text{S}]}{k_{-2} + k_3[\text{H}_2]}$$

When k_3 is rate-limiting, $v \approx \frac{k_2k_3}{k_{-2}}[\text{Co}_2\text{H}_2][\text{H}_2][\text{S}]$

Since $\text{Co}_2\text{-H}_2$ is the resting-state of the catalyst, $[\text{Co}_2]_0 = [\text{Co}_2\text{H}_2]$, $v = \frac{k_2k_3}{k_{-2}}[\text{Co}_2]_0[\text{H}_2][\text{S}]$

Figure S25. Rate law derivation for Mechanism B (shown in Scheme 2).



The solution obtained from the steady-state approximation:

$$\frac{d[\text{CoHS}]}{dt} = k_3[\text{CoH}][\text{S}] - k_{-3}[\text{CoHS}] - k_4[\text{CoHS}][\text{H}_2] \approx 0$$

$$[\text{CoHS}] = \frac{k_3[\text{CoH}][\text{S}]}{k_{-3} + k_4[\text{H}_2]}$$

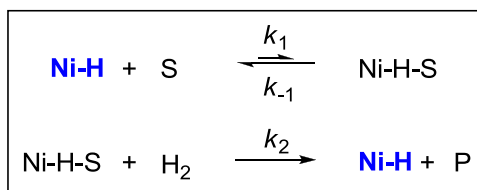
$$v = k_4[\text{CoHS}][\text{H}_2] = \frac{k_3k_4[\text{CoH}][\text{H}_2][\text{S}]}{k_{-3} + k_4[\text{H}_2]}$$

When k_4 is rate-limiting, $v \approx \frac{k_3k_4}{k_{-3}}[\text{CoH}][\text{H}_2][\text{S}]$

Using prior equilibrium approximation, $\frac{[\text{CoH}]}{\sqrt{[\text{Co}_2\text{H}_2]}} = \frac{k_2}{k_{-2}}$, $v = \frac{k_2k_3k_4}{k_{-2}k_{-3}}[\text{Co}_2\text{H}_2]^{\frac{1}{2}}[\text{H}_2][\text{S}]$

Since $\text{Co}_2\text{-H}_2$ is the resting-state of the catalyst, $[\text{Co}_2]_0 = [\text{Co}_2\text{H}_2]$, $v = \frac{k_2k_3k_4}{k_{-2}k_{-3}}[\text{Co}_2]_0^{\frac{1}{2}}[\text{H}_2][\text{S}]$

Figure S26. Rate law derivation for Mechanism C (shown in Scheme 2).

Mechanism A

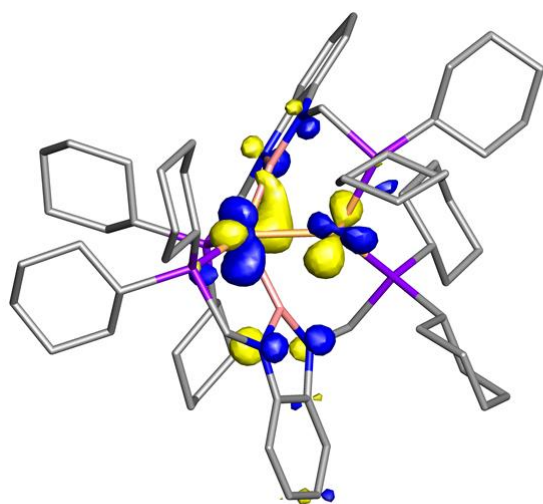
The solution obtained from the steady-state approximation:

$$\frac{d[\text{NiHS}]}{dt} = k_1[\text{NiH}][\text{S}] - k_{-1}[\text{NiHS}] - k_2[\text{NiHS}][\text{H}_2] \approx 0$$

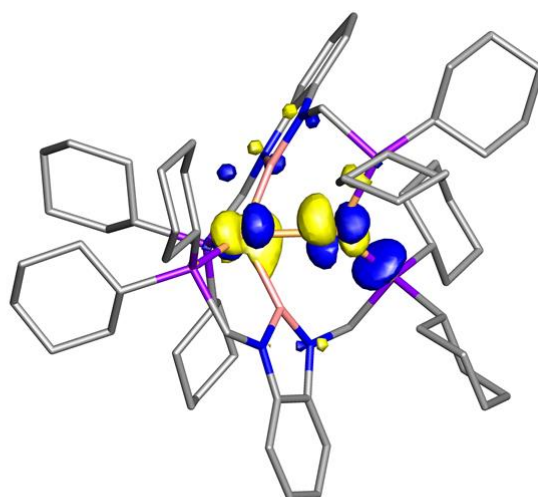
$$[\text{NiHS}] = \frac{k_1[\text{NiH}][\text{S}]}{k_{-1} + k_2[\text{H}_2]}$$

$$v = k_2[\text{NiHS}][\text{H}_2] = \frac{k_1 k_2 [\text{NiH}][\text{H}_2][\text{S}]}{k_{-1} + k_2[\text{H}_2]}$$

Figure S27. Rate law derivation for Mechanism A (shown in Scheme 5).



HOMO: -0.11397 eV



HOMO-1: -0.12837 eV

Figure S28. The two singly occupied molecular orbitals (isovalue = 0.05) of complex $[(^{\text{Cy}}\text{PBP})\text{CoH}]_2$ (**1**). Hydrogenation atoms are omitted for clarity.

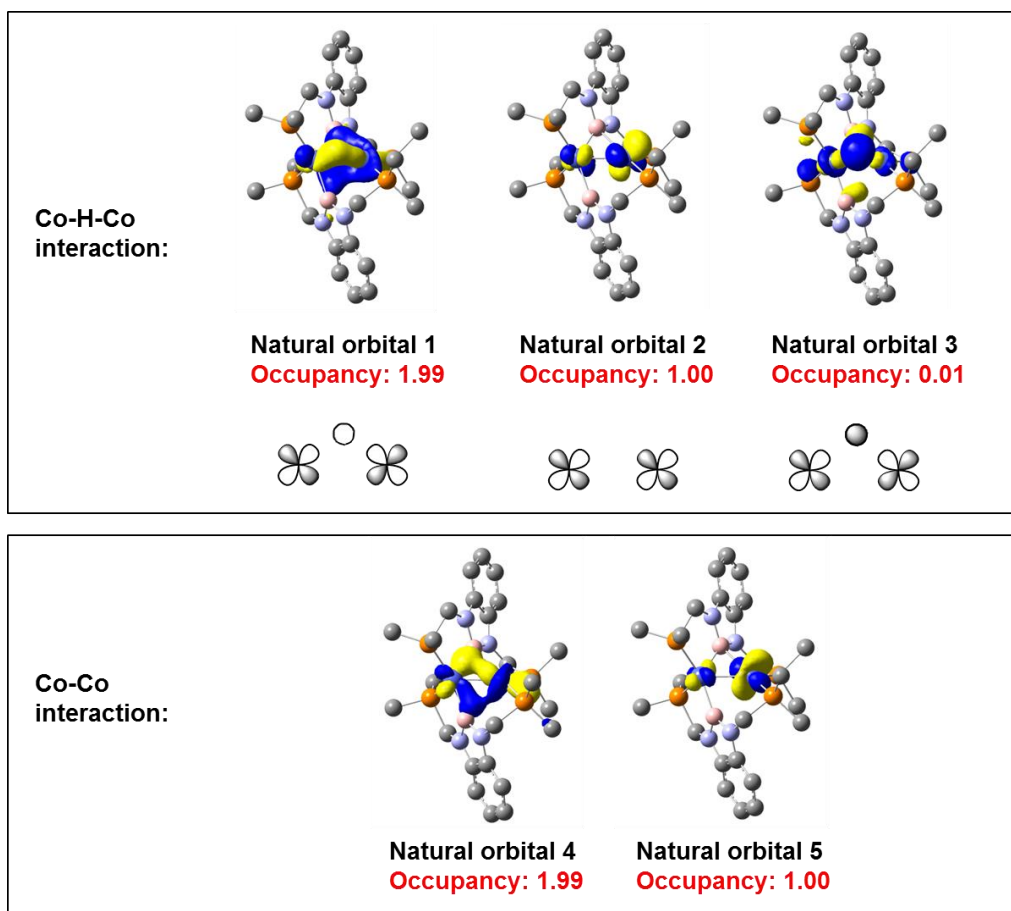


Figure S29. Five natural orbitals (NOs, isovalue = 0.05) illustrating the electronic structure and the predicted $S = 1$ spin state of model complex $[(^{\text{Me}}\text{PBP})\text{CoH}]_2$ ($[1']$). The rest of the NOs (not shown) have occupancy of > 1.99 or < 0.01 . Three NOs that are associated with the Co-H-Co core are NO 1-3. These orbitals are in-phase (NO 1, occupancy: 1.99), non-bonding (NO 2, occupancy: 1.00), and out-of-phase (NO 3, occupancy: 0.01) combinations of two d(Co) and one s(H) orbitals. In addition, we found a $\pi(\text{Co-Co})$ (NO 4, occupancy: 1.99) and a $\pi^*(\text{Co-Co})$ (NO 5, occupancy: 1.00) orbitals. Taken collectively, the orbital occupancies of NO 2, NO 4, and NO 5 indicate the absence of a net Co-Co bond. In turn, the two Co atoms are involved in a 3c-2e interaction (NO 1) through the bridging hydride. The NO analysis also reveals that the two unpaired electrons are aligned ferromagnetically in two orthogonal $\pi^*(\text{Co-Co})$ orbitals (NO 2, NO 5), leading to an $S = 1$ configuration which is in agreement with the spin-density plot shown in Figure 1.

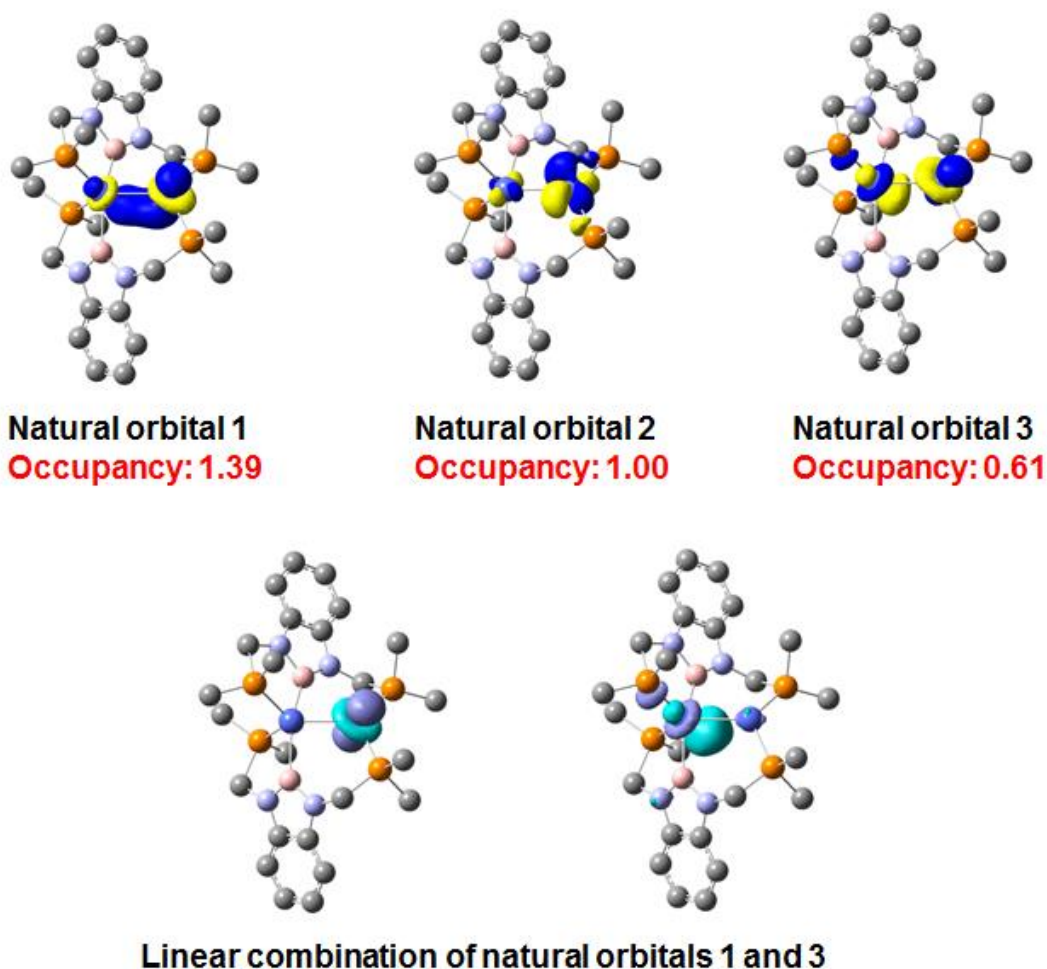


Figure S30. Top: Three natural orbitals (NOs, isovalue = 0.05) illustrating the electronic structure and the predicted $S = \frac{1}{2}$ spin state of model complex $[(^{\text{Me}}\text{PBP})\text{CoH}]_2^+$ ($[2]^+$). The rest of the NOs (not shown) have occupancy of > 1.99 or < 0.01 . Examinations of NO 1 and NO 3 reveal that they are, respectively, symmetry related Co-Co bonding and antibonding orbitals. These results are in line with two Co being antiferromagnetically coupled (a strongly antiferromagnetically coupled system would have occupancies of 1.00/1.00 whereas a fully electronically paired system would have occupancies of 2/0). Taking linear combinations of NO 1 and NO 3 recovers two localized Co d-orbitals (Bottom). These orbitals are magnetic natural orbitals (MNOs) which could be employed to visualize magnetic interactions (also see ref 22). According to these calculations, the two Co in complex $[2]^+$ could be described as antiferromagnetically coupled. The unpaired electron is localized in NO 2 which has a large contribution from Co2, consistent with the experimentally obtained EPR spectrum showing hyperfine coupling to only one Co atom.

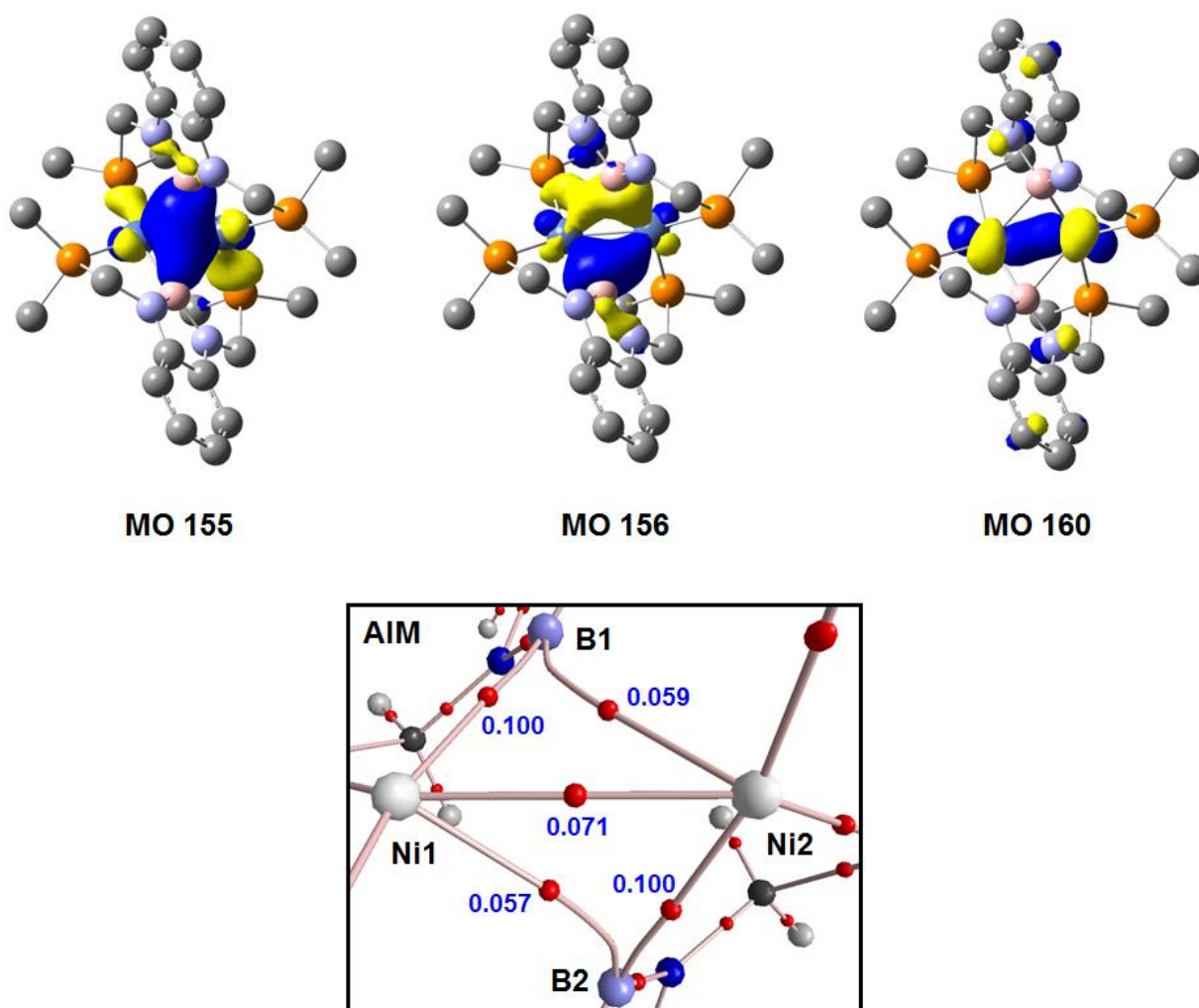


Figure S31. Top: Molecular orbitals (isovalue = 0.05) of complex $[(^{\text{Me}}\text{PBP})\text{Ni}]_2$ (**3'**) showing the Ni-(μ_2 -B)₂-Ni 4c-4e interaction (MO 155, MO 156) as well as the $\sigma(\text{Ni-Ni})$ orbital (MO 160). Hydrogen atoms are omitted for clarity. Bottom: Calculated electron density plot for **3'** with bond paths (pink), (3,-1) bond critical points (BCPs, red), and electron density (e bohr⁻³, blue).

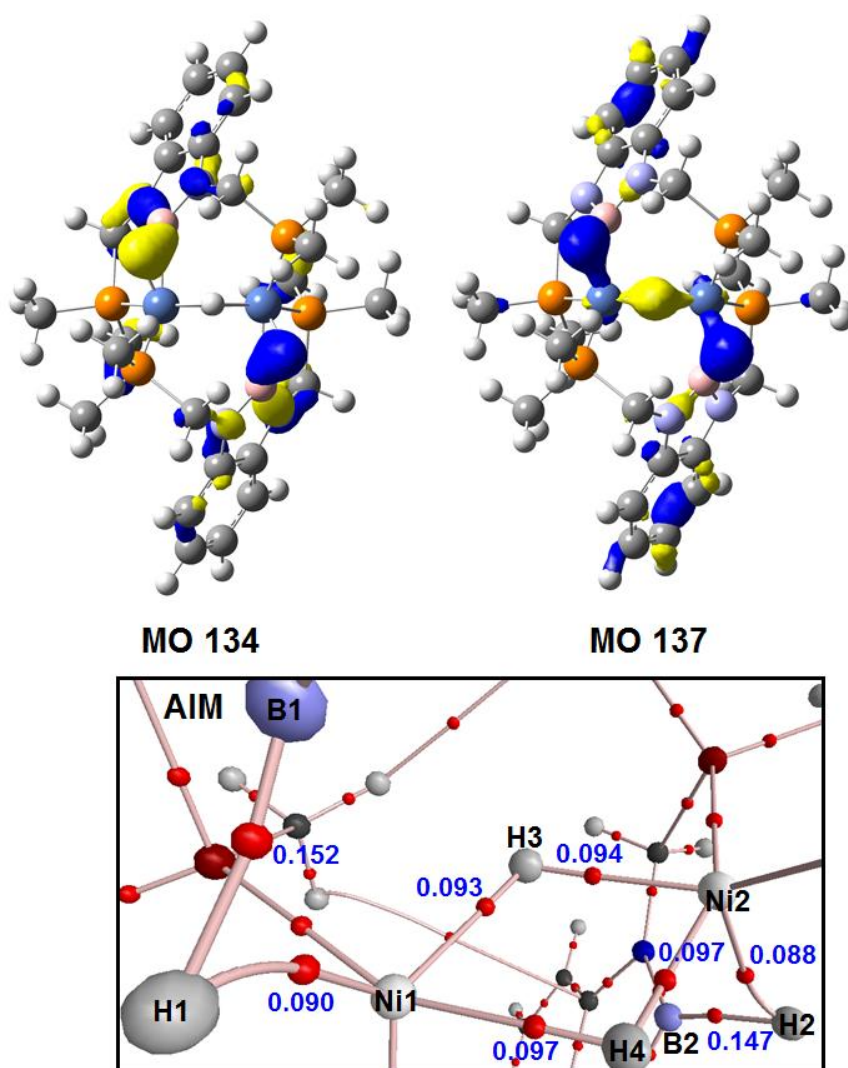


Figure S32. Top: Molecular orbitals (isovalue = 0.05) of complex $[(^{\text{Me}}\text{PBHP})\text{NiH}]_2$ (**4'**) showing the agostic σ -borane coordination mode (MO 134, MO 137). Hydrogen atoms are omitted for clarity. Bottom: Calculated electron density plot for **4'** with bond paths (pink), (3,-1) bond critical points (BCPs, red), and electron density (e bohr^{-3} , blue). The absence of a bond path/BCP between B1-Ni1 and B2-Ni2 suggests that the coordination mode of the borane ligand is closer to *pseudo* agostic.

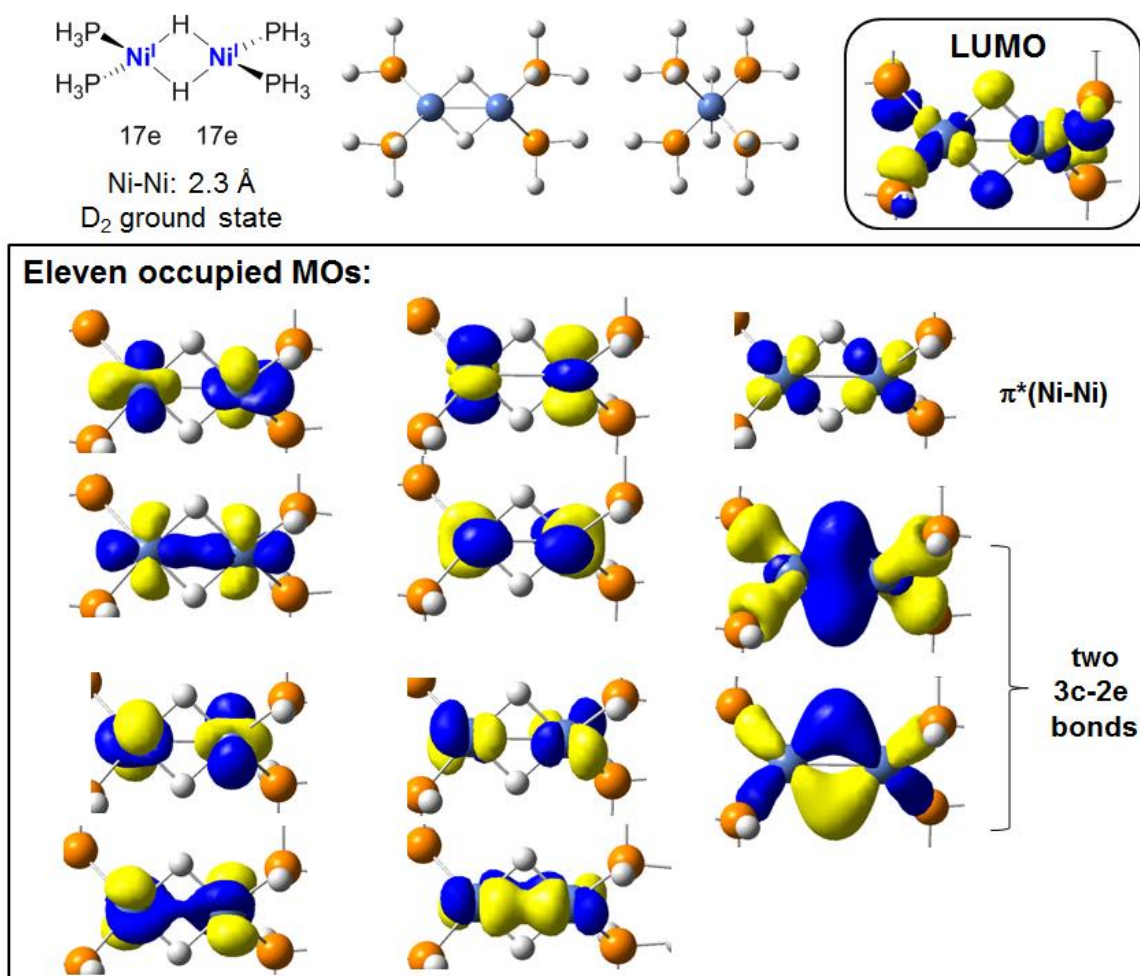


Figure S33. Geometry of $(\text{PH}_3)_2\text{Ni}-(\mu_2\text{-H})_2\text{-Ni}(\text{PH}_3)_2$ optimized at BP86/6-31g(d) level of theory by DFT. The MOs (isovalue = 0.05) illustrate the three-center-two-electron bonds as well as the presence of a $\pi^*(\text{Ni-Ni})$ bond. Hydrogen atoms are omitted for clarity.

Table S1. Calculated EPR parameters for complex $[(^{\text{Me}}\text{PBP})\text{CoH}]_2^+$ ($[\text{2}']^+$) at BP86/6-31+g(d,p) level of theory.

Atom	Calculated coupling constant (MHz)
Co	[28, 5, 23]
Co	[233, 97, 136]
P	[43, 20, 22]
P	[20, 6, 26]
P	[4, 1, 5]
P	[13, 9, 22]

DFT structural coordinates

[(^{Me}PBHP)Co] (1')

Co	0.227000	1.283000	0.373000	C	-5.775000	0.289000	-2.172000
Co	-0.270000	-0.991000	0.724000	H	-6.390000	0.240000	-2.895000
P	-1.943000	-1.584000	2.164000	C	1.314000	-1.731000	-1.993000
P	1.694000	2.272000	1.724000	H	1.838000	-2.416000	-2.480000
P	0.120000	-2.535000	-0.831000	H	0.831000	-1.174000	-2.654000
P	0.144000	2.177000	-1.668000	H	0.084000	0.381000	1.567000
N	2.995000	0.194000	0.652000	H	-1.098000	2.028000	0.719000
N	-2.915000	0.523000	0.820000	C	1.287000	1.691000	-2.998000
N	-2.301000	1.261000	-1.246000	H	2.292000	1.718000	-2.632000
N	2.192000	-0.904000	-1.178000	H	1.053000	0.700000	-3.325000
C	-3.612000	0.842000	-1.320000	H	1.189000	2.371000	-3.819000
C	5.401000	-0.531000	0.388000	C	-0.050000	3.983000	-1.773000
H	5.730000	-0.094000	1.165000	H	0.909000	4.451000	-1.687000
C	-1.480000	1.597000	-2.373000	H	-0.490000	4.241000	-2.714000
H	-1.903000	2.315000	-2.908000	H	-0.683000	4.321000	-0.979000
H	-1.344000	0.806000	-2.954000	C	2.592000	3.842000	1.516000
B	1.744000	-0.019000	-0.077000	H	1.899000	4.656000	1.549000
C	-4.005000	0.389000	-0.036000	H	3.308000	3.950000	2.304000
C	4.058000	-0.460000	0.052000	H	3.096000	3.841000	0.573000
C	-4.488000	0.786000	-2.395000	C	1.262000	2.305000	3.492000
H	-4.221000	1.076000	-3.260000	H	1.996000	2.870000	4.028000
C	6.262000	-1.263000	-0.444000	H	0.302000	2.759000	3.616000
H	7.185000	-1.325000	-0.226000	H	1.236000	1.305000	3.872000
C	3.563000	-1.133000	-1.091000	C	1.026000	-3.954000	-0.140000
C	3.133000	1.076000	1.789000	H	0.330000	-4.683000	0.217000
H	3.992000	1.566000	1.743000	H	1.641000	-4.389000	-0.900000
H	3.111000	0.557000	2.633000	H	1.642000	-3.623000	0.670000
C	4.425000	-1.842000	-1.916000	C	-1.137000	-3.259000	-1.931000
H	4.101000	-2.281000	-2.693000	H	-0.704000	-4.063000	-2.488000
C	-6.167000	-0.130000	-0.918000	H	-1.953000	-3.629000	-1.346000
H	-7.050000	-0.453000	-0.791000	H	-1.494000	-2.510000	-2.607000
C	5.781000	-1.895000	-1.578000	C	-1.643000	-1.854000	3.939000
H	6.383000	-2.373000	-2.137000	H	-2.498000	-2.322000	4.378000
B	-1.739000	1.009000	0.082000	H	-0.787000	-2.484000	4.064000
C	-5.290000	-0.090000	0.170000	H	-1.466000	-0.913000	4.418000
H	-5.568000	-0.383000	1.030000	C	-3.308000	-2.702000	1.718000
C	-2.884000	0.023000	2.176000	H	-3.047000	-3.706000	1.979000
H	-3.805000	-0.123000	2.507000	H	-4.192000	-2.414000	2.248000
H	-2.437000	0.676000	2.770000	H	-3.488000	-2.642000	0.665000



Co	0.160000	1.707000	0.538000	H	-3.507000	-2.066000	2.182000
Co	-0.031000	-0.765000	0.546000	B	2.217000	-0.903000	0.510000
P	0.164000	-2.227000	-1.132000	C	-6.476000	-0.662000	-0.699000
P	2.195000	2.563000	0.987000	H	-7.372000	-0.960000	-0.585000
P	-1.320000	2.888000	-0.683000	B	-1.868000	-0.364000	-0.092000
P	-1.122000	-1.854000	2.141000	H	-0.120000	0.323000	1.432000
N	2.672000	-1.901000	-0.410000	H	1.377000	-1.066000	1.328000
N	3.297000	0.017000	0.675000	C	3.093000	3.426000	-0.341000
N	-2.510000	0.478000	-1.094000	H	2.674000	4.401000	-0.479000
N	-2.970000	-1.115000	0.474000	H	4.125000	3.516000	-0.074000
C	1.858000	-2.971000	-0.968000	H	3.007000	2.869000	-1.250000
H	1.842000	-3.756000	-0.362000	C	2.313000	3.673000	2.424000
H	2.205000	-3.253000	-1.850000	H	3.333000	3.957000	2.574000
C	4.356000	-0.403000	-0.138000	H	1.721000	4.547000	2.249000
C	3.347000	1.201000	1.525000	H	1.952000	3.167000	3.296000
H	4.274000	1.550000	1.531000	C	-1.071000	4.303000	-1.800000
H	3.118000	0.939000	2.452000	H	-2.008000	4.583000	-2.235000
C	3.960000	-1.576000	-0.824000	H	-0.674000	5.129000	-1.248000
C	-3.891000	0.234000	-1.086000	H	-0.386000	4.030000	-2.575000
C	-4.169000	-0.768000	-0.141000	C	-2.803000	3.275000	0.298000
C	5.614000	0.139000	-0.360000	H	-2.656000	4.199000	0.819000
H	5.904000	0.907000	0.115000	H	-3.648000	3.364000	-0.352000
C	-1.964000	1.595000	-1.851000	H	-2.978000	2.491000	1.005000
H	-2.668000	1.984000	-2.426000	C	0.214000	-1.529000	-2.812000
H	-1.229000	1.275000	-2.433000	H	0.729000	-2.204000	-3.463000
C	6.040000	-1.620000	-1.985000	H	-0.785000	-1.383000	-3.167000
H	6.623000	-2.011000	-2.624000	H	0.727000	-0.591000	-2.794000
C	6.439000	-0.477000	-1.297000	C	-1.001000	-3.621000	-1.229000
H	7.296000	-0.108000	-1.473000	H	-1.080000	-4.088000	-0.269000
C	4.792000	-2.192000	-1.744000	H	-1.963000	-3.262000	-1.531000
H	4.520000	-2.982000	-2.198000	H	-0.646000	-4.334000	-1.944000
C	-5.455000	-1.245000	0.058000	C	-0.590000	-3.419000	2.904000
H	-5.635000	-1.938000	0.683000	H	0.383000	-3.295000	3.331000
C	-4.913000	0.810000	-1.830000	H	-1.284000	-3.695000	3.671000
H	-4.736000	1.496000	-2.463000	H	-0.558000	-4.186000	2.159000
C	-6.199000	0.344000	-1.610000	C	-1.478000	-0.887000	3.641000
H	-6.916000	0.729000	-2.102000	H	-2.075000	-1.472000	4.309000
C	-2.822000	-2.154000	1.471000	H	-0.559000	-0.624000	4.122000
H	-2.892000	-3.053000	1.063000	H	-2.009000	0.003000	3.374000

[(^{Me}PBP)Ni] (3')

Ni	0.176000	-1.280000	0.706000	C	1.522000	-3.675000	-1.561000
Ni	-0.176000	0.928000	1.116000	H	1.895000	-4.437000	-0.857000
P	1.881000	-1.592000	2.029000	H	1.258000	-4.174000	-2.511000
P	-1.866000	0.724000	2.479000	H	2.327000	-2.946000	-1.749000
P	0.048000	-2.797000	-0.822000	C	-1.203000	-4.185000	-0.804000
P	-0.065000	2.903000	0.257000	H	-1.219000	-4.733000	-1.764000
C	-3.308000	0.592000	1.288000	H	-0.963000	-4.888000	0.011000
H	-4.146000	-0.010000	1.700000	H	-2.202000	-3.762000	-0.611000
H	-3.689000	1.621000	1.124000	B	1.433000	0.541000	-0.045000
C	-3.600000	-0.058000	-1.091000	N	-2.797000	0.026000	0.050000
N	-1.544000	-0.873000	-1.665000	C	-3.400000	-0.837000	-3.416000
C	3.605000	0.466000	-1.001000	H	-2.813000	-1.263000	-4.236000
N	2.801000	-0.037000	0.026000	C	-4.939000	0.309000	-1.296000
C	3.316000	-1.015000	0.971000	H	-5.535000	0.742000	-0.485000
H	4.149000	-0.598000	1.577000	C	-2.826000	-0.625000	-2.152000
H	3.711000	-1.907000	0.442000	C	5.514000	0.879000	-2.426000
N	1.553000	1.441000	-1.226000	H	6.558000	0.687000	-2.693000
C	-0.584000	-1.774000	-2.285000	B	-1.428000	-0.482000	-0.233000
H	0.265000	-1.238000	-2.751000	C	3.406000	2.057000	-2.867000
H	-1.068000	-2.406000	-3.053000	H	2.819000	2.757000	-3.471000
C	4.757000	1.795000	-3.182000	C	-4.750000	-0.477000	-3.611000
H	5.218000	2.308000	-4.032000	H	-5.211000	-0.636000	-4.592000
C	2.833000	1.390000	-1.773000	C	4.944000	0.202000	-1.326000
H	-3.469000	1.792000	4.080000	H	5.540000	-0.502000	-0.736000
H	-1.759000	2.172000	4.466000	C	-5.508000	0.091000	-2.569000
H	-2.562000	3.006000	3.109000	H	-6.552000	0.370000	-2.746000
C	-2.077000	-0.777000	3.565000	C	0.592000	2.505000	-1.473000
H	-1.296000	-0.776000	4.343000	H	-0.251000	2.177000	-2.112000
H	-3.069000	-0.805000	4.051000	H	1.077000	3.379000	-1.947000
H	-1.935000	-1.673000	2.938000	C	1.146000	4.209000	0.818000
C	2.107000	-0.626000	3.608000	H	1.163000	5.077000	0.136000
H	1.333000	-0.926000	4.334000	H	0.874000	4.549000	1.831000
H	3.103000	-0.794000	4.056000	H	2.151000	3.760000	0.863000
H	1.970000	0.444000	3.383000	C	-1.565000	3.948000	-0.121000
C	2.509000	-3.258000	2.598000	H	-1.974000	4.365000	0.815000
H	3.490000	-3.183000	3.100000	H	-1.320000	4.783000	-0.801000
H	1.783000	-3.696000	3.303000	H	-2.338000	3.317000	-0.589000
H	2.594000	-3.936000	1.733000	C	-2.485000	2.047000	3.646000

[(^{Me}PBHP)NiH] (4')

Ni	0.134000	-1.310000	0.555000	H	-7.172000	0.463000	-0.892000
Ni	-0.137000	1.307000	0.550000	C	1.706000	2.609000	-1.827000
P	1.869000	-1.770000	1.837000	H	1.815000	2.054000	-2.781000
P	-1.868000	1.774000	1.831000	H	2.012000	3.657000	-2.014000
P	0.116000	-2.534000	-1.275000	C	0.535000	-4.353000	-1.224000
P	-0.115000	2.534000	-1.276000	H	0.268000	-4.865000	-2.165000
C	-2.906000	0.214000	2.193000	H	1.616000	-4.477000	-1.048000
H	-2.353000	-0.330000	2.981000	H	-0.009000	-4.823000	-0.389000
H	-3.896000	0.487000	2.601000	C	0.986000	-2.047000	-2.849000
C	-4.090000	-0.591000	0.121000	H	2.075000	-2.078000	-2.683000
N	-2.494000	-1.964000	-0.794000	H	0.728000	-2.712000	-3.693000
C	4.089000	0.589000	0.120000	H	0.715000	-1.010000	-3.103000
N	3.034000	0.650000	1.041000	C	3.197000	-2.990000	1.340000
C	2.908000	-0.209000	2.196000	H	4.014000	-3.027000	2.082000
H	2.357000	0.335000	2.984000	H	2.754000	-3.996000	1.255000
H	3.898000	-0.483000	2.604000	H	3.616000	-2.706000	0.361000
N	2.499000	1.976000	-0.787000	C	1.585000	-2.333000	3.595000
C	-1.704000	-2.603000	-1.831000	H	1.131000	-3.338000	3.584000
H	-1.808000	-2.051000	-2.787000	H	2.523000	-2.370000	4.179000
H	-2.014000	-3.651000	-2.015000	H	0.877000	-1.646000	4.087000
C	5.869000	0.843000	-2.037000	C	-0.538000	4.352000	-1.224000
H	6.572000	0.934000	-2.871000	H	-0.268000	4.865000	-2.165000
C	3.758000	1.413000	-1.004000	H	-1.619000	4.475000	-1.053000
B	1.957000	1.462000	0.477000	H	0.003000	4.823000	-0.387000
N	-3.031000	-0.644000	1.037000	C	-0.979000	2.048000	-2.854000
C	-4.647000	-1.546000	-2.081000	H	-2.068000	2.081000	-2.692000
H	-4.397000	-2.177000	-2.940000	H	-0.717000	2.712000	-3.697000
C	-5.318000	0.085000	0.167000	H	-0.709000	1.011000	-3.107000
H	-5.586000	0.713000	1.023000	C	-3.194000	2.991000	1.327000
C	-3.758000	-1.413000	-1.004000	H	-3.613000	2.702000	0.350000
C	6.199000	0.041000	-0.929000	H	-4.012000	3.031000	2.070000
H	7.158000	-0.488000	-0.907000	H	-2.752000	3.998000	1.238000
B	-1.948000	-1.448000	0.467000	C	-1.582000	2.344000	3.587000
C	4.642000	1.540000	-2.086000	H	-1.125000	3.348000	3.571000
H	4.393000	2.173000	-2.943000	H	-2.521000	2.387000	4.169000
C	-5.878000	-0.858000	-2.027000	H	-0.877000	1.657000	4.082000
H	-6.585000	-0.955000	-2.858000	H	-1.150000	-2.080000	1.270000
C	5.312000	-0.096000	0.160000	H	1.151000	2.081000	1.273000
H	5.580000	-0.726000	1.015000	H	-0.016000	-0.002000	1.496000
C	-6.210000	-0.058000	-0.918000	H	0.071000	0.006000	-0.405000

(PH₃)₂Ni-(μ₂-H)₂-Ni(PH₃)₂

Ni	-1.148000	-0.000000	-0.000000	P	2.384000	-1.211000	-1.189000
Ni	1.148000	-0.000000	0.000000	H	3.816000	-1.094000	-1.209000
P	-2.383000	-1.204000	1.195000	H	2.371000	-2.643000	-1.098000
H	-2.364000	-2.637000	1.121000	H	2.232000	-1.165000	-2.615000
H	-2.239000	-1.142000	2.622000	P	2.383000	1.211000	1.189000
H	-3.816000	-1.094000	1.208000	H	3.816000	1.103000	1.202000
P	-2.383000	1.205000	-1.195000	H	2.361000	2.644000	1.107000
H	-2.359000	2.638000	-1.125000	H	2.239000	1.156000	2.616000
H	-2.243000	1.138000	-2.622000	H	0.000000	-1.087000	0.002000
H	-3.816000	1.099000	-1.203000	H	-0.000000	1.087000	-0.003000