

Response to editor comment

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We added the following statement in the manuscript:

Section 2.1 Methodology: line 115-116

“The particle number concentrations were then smoothed with a moving average filter for minimizing the effect of noises and fluctuations.”

Section 4 Conclusion: line 613-618

“However, it should be noted that the existence of local maxima *GR* in sub 3 nm is highly sensitive to the uncertainty of size distribution derivation, i.e. the moving average filter was used to smooth original noisy raw data of $N_{1.5}$, $N_{1.8}$, $N_{2.0}$, $N_{2.3}$, $N_{2.6}$ and $N_{2.8}$. The noise is due to the nature of sub-3 nm cluster dynamics, environmental conditions and instrumental uncertainties. On the other hand, the *GR* observation is potentially real and might give new insight into cluster dynamics in polluted environments.”

Abstract line 28-29

“The existence of local maxima *GR* in sub-3 nm size range, though highly sensitive to measurement uncertainties, is potentially real and might give new insight into cluster dynamics in polluted environments.”