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# Triple Bonds between Bismuth and Group 13 Elements: Theoretical Designs and Characterization

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## Abstract

The effect of substitution on the potential energy surfaces of  $RE_{13}≡BiR$  ( $E_{13} = B, Al, Ga, In,$  and  $Tl$ ;  $R = F, OH, H, CH_3, SiH_3, Tbt, Ar^*, SiMe(Si^tBu_3)_2,$  and  $Si^iPrDis_2$ ) is investigated using density functional theories (M06-2X/Def2-TZVP, B3PW91/Def2-TZVP, and B3LYP/LANL2DZ+dp). The theoretical results suggest that all of the triply bonded  $RE_{13}≡BiR$  molecules prefer to adopt a bent geometry (i.e.,  $\angle RE_{13}Bi \approx 180^\circ$  and  $\angle E_{13}BiR \approx 90^\circ$ ), which agrees well with the bonding model (model (B)). It is also demonstrated that the smaller groups, such as  $R = F, OH, H, CH_3,$  and  $SiH_3,$  neither kinetically nor thermodynamically stabilize the triply bonded  $RE_{13}≡BiR$  compounds, except for the case of  $H_3SiB≡BiSiH_3$ . Nevertheless, the triply bonded  $R'E_{13}≡BiR'$  molecules that feature bulkier substituents ( $R' = Tbt, Ar^*, SiMe(Si^tBu_3)_2,$  and  $Si^iPrDis_2$ ) are found to have the global minimum on the singlet potential energy surface and are both kinetically and thermodynamically stable. In other words, both the electronic and the steric effects of bulkier substituent groups play an important role in making triply bonded  $RE_{13}≡BiR$  (Group 13–Group 15) species synthetically accessible and isolable in a stable form.

**Keywords:** bismuth, group 13 elements, triple bond, multiple bond, density functional theory

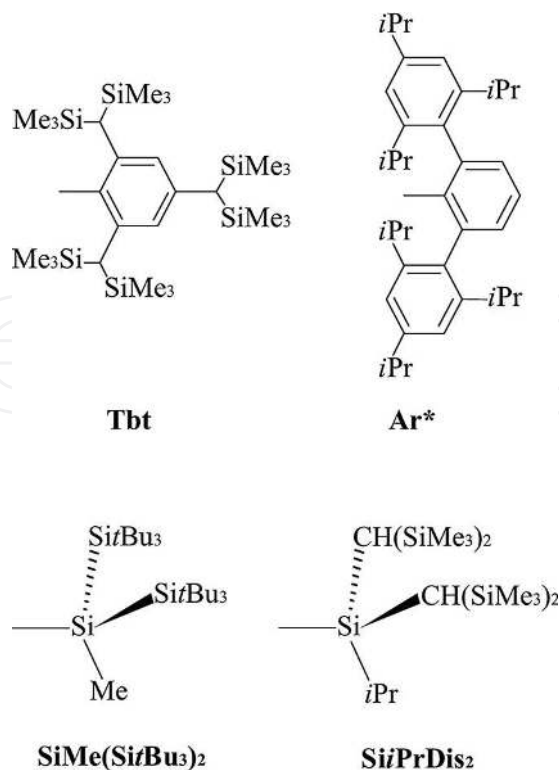
## 1. Introduction

Triply bonded molecules are of great interest in structural and synthetic inorganic chemistry as well as in fundamental science. Molecules that have triple bonds, however, pose a more difficult challenge than analogous doubly bonded molecules from a synthetic viewpoint [1–8]. Acetylene is one of the most commonly triply bonded molecules in traditional organic chemistry. Thanks to Kira, Power, Sekiguchi, Tokitoh, Wiberg and many coworkers, the stable

homonuclear alkyne analogues of all of the heavier group 14 elements have now been isolated and characterized [9–19]. Recently, heteronuclear ethyne-like molecules that possess  $C\equiv Ge$  [20, 21],  $C\equiv Sn$  [22], and  $C\equiv Pb$  [23] triple bonds have also been theoretically predicted and have been published elsewhere.

Nevertheless, to the authors' best knowledge, neither experimental nor theoretical studies have been performed on acetylene-like compounds that feature an  $E_{13}\equiv Bi$  ( $E = B, Al, Ga, In,$  and  $Tl$ ) triple bond. It is surprising how little is known about the stability and molecular properties of  $E_{13}\equiv Bi$ , considering the importance of bismuth compounds [24] that contain group 13 elements in inorganic chemistry [25–35] and material chemistry [36–45].

The aim of this study is to theoretically determine the existence and relative stability of  $RE_{13}\equiv BiR$  triply bonded molecules, which can be synthesized as stable compounds when they are properly substituted. For the first time, the structures of  $RE_{13}\equiv BiR$  with various substituents are reported. That is, theoretical calculations of  $RE_{13}\equiv BiR$  are performed, using both smaller ligands (such as,  $R = F, OH, H, CH_3,$  and  $SiH_3$ ) and larger ligands with bulky aryl and silyl groups (i.e.,  $R' = Tbt, Ar^*, SiMe(Si^tBu_3)_2,$  and  $Si^iPrDis_2$ ;  $Dis = CH(SiMe_3)_2$ ; **Scheme 1**) [46–51]. As a result, the effect of substituents on these bismuth-group-13-element triple bonds is systematically investigated using density functional theory (DFT) calculations. It is expected that the theoretical interpretations of the effect of substituents, presented in this work, will help in the experimental preparation of the many precursors of  $RE_{13}\equiv BiR$ .



## 2. Theoretical methods

Geometries were fully optimized using hybrid density functional theory at M06-2X, B3PW91, and B3LYP levels, using the Gaussian 09 program package [52]. It has been reported that M06-2X is proven to have excellent performance for main group chemistry [53]. In both the B3LYP and B3PW91 calculations, Becke's three-parameter nonlocal exchange functional (B3) [54, 55] is used, together with the exact (Hartree-Fock) exchange functional, in conjunction with the nonlocal correlation functional of Lee, Yang, Parr (LYP) [56] and Perdew and Wang (PW91) [57]. Therefore, the geometries of all of the stationary points were fully optimized at the M06-2X, B3PW91, and B3LYP levels of theory. For comparison, the geometries and energetics of the stationary points on the potential energy surface were calculated using the M06-2X, B3PW91, and B3LYP methods, in conjunction with the Def2-TZVP [58] and LANL2DZ+dp [59–62] basis sets. Consequently, these DFT calculations are denoted as M06-2X/Def2-TZVP, B3PW91/Def2-TZVP, and B3LYP/LANL2DZ+dp, respectively.

The spin-unrestricted (UM06-2X, UB3PW91, and UB3LYP) formalisms are used for the open-shell (triplet) species. The  $\langle S^2 \rangle$  expectation values for the triplet state for the calculated species all have an ideal value (2.00), after spin annihilation, so their geometries and energetics are reliable for this study. Frequency calculations were performed on all structures, in order to confirm that the reactants and products have no imaginary frequencies, and that the transition states possess only one imaginary frequency. Thermodynamic corrections to 298 K, heat capacity corrections, and entropy corrections ( $\Delta S$ ) are applied at the three DFT levels. Therefore, the relative free energy ( $\Delta G$ ) at 298 K is also calculated at the same levels of theory.

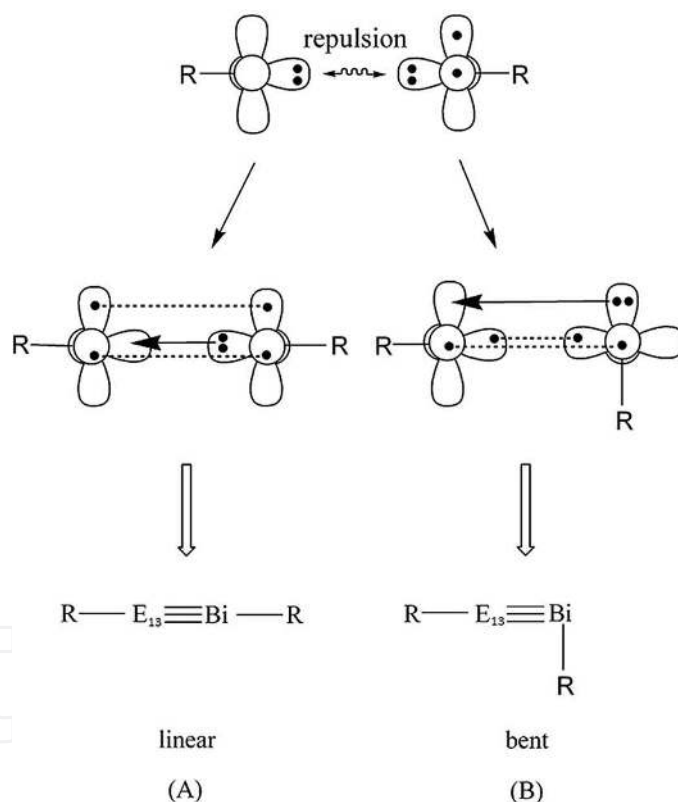
Sequential conformation analyses were performed for each stationary point, for species containing bulky ligands ( $R' = \text{Tbt}, \text{Ar}^*, \text{SiMe}(\text{Si}t\text{Bu}_3)_2$ , and  $\text{Si}i\text{PrDis}_2$ ) using Hartree-Fock calculations (RHF/3-21G\*). The  $\text{TbtE}_{13}=\text{Bi}=\text{Tbt}$ ,  $\text{Ar}^*=\text{E}_{13}=\text{Bi}=\text{Ar}^*$ ,  $\text{SiMe}(\text{Si}t\text{Bu}_3)_2=\text{E}_{13}=\text{Bi}=\text{SiMe}(\text{Si}t\text{Bu}_3)_2$ , and  $\text{Si}i\text{PrDis}_2=\text{E}_{13}=\text{Bi}=\text{Si}i\text{PrDis}_2$  ( $E = \text{B}, \text{Al}, \text{Ga}, \text{In}, \text{and Tl}$ ) are used as model reactants in this work. It is known that the Hartree-Fock level of theory is insufficient for even a qualitative description of the chemical potential energy surface, so these stationary points were then further calculated at the B3LYP/LANL2DZ+dp level, using the OPT=READFC keyword with a tight convergence option (maximum gradient convergence tolerance =  $5.0 \times 10^{-5}$  hartree/bohr). Because of the limitations of the available CPU time and memory size, frequencies were not calculated for the triply bonded  $R'E_{13}=\text{Bi}R'$  systems with bulky ligands ( $R'$ ) at the B3LYP/LANL2DZ+dp level of theory. As a result, the zero-point energies and the Gibbs free energies for B3LYP/LANL2DZ+dp cannot be applied to these systems.

## 3. Results and discussion

### 3.1. Theoretical models for $\text{RE}_{13}=\text{Bi}R$

In order to understand the bonding interactions in the  $\text{R}=\text{E}_{13}=\text{Bi}=\text{R}$  molecule,  $\text{R}=\text{E}_{13}=\text{Bi}=\text{R}$  is divided into one  $\text{E}_{13}=\text{R}$  and one  $\text{Bi}=\text{R}$  fragment. The theoretical calculations for these two

fragments indicate that the ground states of  $E_{13}=R$  and  $Bi=R$  are singlet and triplet states, respectively (vide infra). Therefore, there are two possible interaction modes (A and B) between the  $E_{13}=R$  and  $Bi=R$  moieties in the formation of the triply bonded  $R=E_{13}\equiv Bi=R$  species, as schematically illustrated in **Figure 1**. In model (A), both  $E=R$  and  $Bi=R$  units exist as triplet monomers. In this way, the combination between the group 13 element and bismuth can be considered as a triple bond, since it consists of 2  $\pi$  bonds and 1 donor-acceptor  $\sigma$  bond, for these 2 triplet fragments. As a result, this bonding model allows a linear structure, as shown in **Figure 1(A)**. In model (B), both  $E_{13}=R$  and  $Bi=R$  units still exist as triplets, so this bonding scheme contains one  $\sigma$  bond and one  $p$ - $\pi$  bond (indicated by two dashed lines), plus one donor-acceptor  $\pi$ -bond because of coupling between the lone pair in  $Bi=R$  and the empty  $p$  orbital at the  $E_{13}$  atom (indicated by the arrow). Accordingly, this bonding pattern results in a bent structure, as shown in **Figure 1(B)**. The importance of the  $RE_{13}\leftarrow BiR$  donor-acceptor interaction is emphasized, as it is essential for the stabilization of the nonlinear structure. These analyses are used to explain the geometrical structures of triply bonded  $RE_{13}\equiv BiR$  species in the following sections.



**Figure 1.** Two interaction models, A and B, in forming triply bonded  $RE_{13}\equiv BiR$  species.

### 3.2. Small ligands on substituted $RE_{13}\equiv BiR$

Small ligands, such as  $R = F, OH, H, CH_3,$  and  $SiH_3$ , are firstly chosen to study the geometries of the  $RE_{13}\equiv BiR$  ( $E_{13} = B, Al, Ga, In,$  and  $Tl$ ) species. As mentioned in the Introduction, neither experimental nor theoretical results for the triply bonded  $RE_{13}\equiv BiR$  species are available to allow a definitive comparison. As a result, three DFT methods were used (i.e., M06-2X/Def2-

TZVP, B3PW91/Def2-TZVP, and B3LYP/LANL2DZ+dp) to examine their molecular properties. The selected geometrical parameters, natural charge densities ( $Q_{E13}$  and  $Q_{Bi}$ ), binding energies (BE), and Wiberg bond order (BO) [63, 64] are shown in **Table 1** (RB=BiR), **Table 2** (RAl=BiR), **Table 3** (RGa=BiR), **Table 4** (RIn=BiR), and **Table 5** (RTl=BiR).

Several important conclusions can be found in **Tables 1–5**, which are shown as follows:

R	F	OH	H	CH <sub>3</sub>	SiH <sub>3</sub>
B≡Bi (Å)	2.218	2.202	2.091	2.141	2.075
	-2.210	-2.199	-2.083	-2.137	-2.084
	[2.196]	[2.196]	[2.083]	[2.140]	[2.085]
∠R–B–Bi (°)	177.6	176	163.6	176.9	170.9
	-178.8	-175.9	-163.6	-176.9	-169.4
	[178.1]	[176.1]	[163.9]	[174.7]	[171.9]
∠B–Bi–R (°)	80.89	91.96	34.78	90.62	58.89
	-88.58	-90.21	-34.83	-90.26	-58.47
	[87.52]	[89.53]	[38.88]	[99.39]	[59.00]
∠R–B–Bi–R (°)	179.8	77.43	180	173.3	179.7
	-179.1	-75.70	-180.0	-173.5	-179.5
	[179.5]	[76.80]	[180.0]	[179.9]	[180.0]
$Q_B^{(1)}$	0.1096	-0.0543	-0.3684	-0.3023	-0.5098
	-0.124	(-0.0372)	(-0.2262)	(-0.1390)	(-0.4100)
	[0.2303]	[0.0511]	[-0.1623]	[-0.01010]	[-0.4101]
$Q_{Bi}^{(2)}$	0.4759	0.3569	0.2189	0.1881	0.1784
	-0.4975	-0.3431	-0.1331	-0.1602	-0.103
	[0.4983]	[0.3552]	[0.1870]	[0.1430]	[0.1520]

Notes: (1) The natural charge density on the central boron atom. (2) The natural charge density on the central bismuth atom. (3) BE = E (triplet state of R=B) + E (triplet state of R=Bi) – E(RB=BiR). (4) Wiberg bond orders for the B=Bi bonds, see Ref. [18].

**Table 1.** Selected geometrical parameters, natural charge densities ( $Q_B$  and  $Q_{Bi}$ ), binding energies (BE), and Wiberg bond orders (BO) of RB=BiR at the M06-2X/Def2-TZVP, B3PW91/Def2-TZVP (in round bracket), and B3LYP/LANL2DZ+dp (in square bracket) levels.

R	F	OH	H	CH <sub>3</sub>	SiH <sub>3</sub>
Al≡Bi (Å)	2.604	2.606	2.439	2.529	2.501
	(2.601)	(2.601)	(2.463)	(2.539)	(2.532)
	[2.621]	[2.624]	[2.483]	[2.561]	[2.542]
∠R–Al–Bi (°)	176.8	173.4	170.7	177.7	172.5
	(175.4)	(172.9)	(168.1)	(177.6)	(170.4)
	[177.3]	[174.2]	[166.9]	[177.1]	[174.5]

R	F	OH	H	CH <sub>3</sub>	SiH <sub>3</sub>
$\angle \text{Al}-\text{Bi}-\text{R}$ (°)	83.16	84.20	48.09	92.52	62.57
	(84.59)	(85.35)	(49.85)	(92.93)	(61.82)
	[87.00]	[88.32]	[51.00]	[93.77]	[64.03]
$\angle \text{R}-\text{Al}-\text{Bi}-\text{R}$ (°)	180.0	177.3	180.0	179.9	179.9
	(180.0)	(176.0)	(180.0)	(179.6)	(179.8)
	[180.0]	[178.0]	[180.0]	[179.6]	[180.0]
$Q_{\text{Al}}$ <sup>(1)</sup>	0.5031	0.3942	0.1493	0.2692	0.1841
	(0.4904)	(0.3918)	(0.1417)	(0.2544)	(0.2145)
	[0.6664]	[0.4315]	[0.3786]	[0.2414]	[0.1517]
$Q_{\text{Bi}}$ <sup>(2)</sup>	0.3947	0.2709	-0.05788	0.03761	-0.1384
	(0.3196)	(0.1834)	(-0.04954)	(0.02100)	(-0.07446)
	[0.3044]	[0.1982]	[0.03410]	[-0.05262]	[-0.1074]
BE (kcal mol <sup>-1</sup> ) <sup>(3)</sup>	22.61	20.28	50.55	38.69	53.41
	(30.36)	(31.77)	(85.64)	(63.54)	(57.96)
	[25.47]	[20.51]	[53.65]	[42.77]	[53.47]
Wiberg BO <sup>(4)</sup>	1.393	1.403	1.746	1.634	1.602
	(1.509)	(1.511)	(1.798)	(1.690)	(1.615)
	[1.521]	[1.516]	[1.787]	[1.706]	[1.653]

Notes: (1) The natural charge density on the central aluminum atom. (2) The natural charge density on the central bismuth atom. (3) BE = E (triplet state of R=Al) + E (triplet state of R=Bi) - E(RAl=BiR). (4) Wiberg bond orders for the Al=Bi bonds, see Refs. [63, 64].

**Table 2.** Selected geometrical parameters, natural charge densities ( $Q_{\text{Al}}$  and  $Q_{\text{Bi}}$ ), binding energies (BE), and Wiberg bond orders (BO) of RAl=BiR at the M06-2X/Def2-TZVP, B3PW91/Def2-TZVP (in round bracket), and B3LYP/LANL2DZ +dp (in square bracket) levels.

R	F	OH	H	CH <sub>3</sub>	SiH <sub>3</sub>
Ga≡Bi (Å)	2.639	2.625	2.463	2.543	2.512
	(2.602)	(2.621)	(2.465)	(2.524)	(2.510)
	[2.632]	[2.629]	[2.487]	[2.550]	[2.520]
$\angle \text{R}-\text{Ga}-\text{Bi}$ (°)	179.7	175.0	166.5	178.9	178.7
	(178.3)	(173.3)	(166.2)	(177.8)	(177.6)
	[177.3]	[175.5]	[167.0]	[177.3]	[177.0]
$\angle \text{Ga}-\text{Bi}-\text{R}$ (°)	86.32	86.85	52.56	91.27	65.56
	(88.49)	(88.52)	(56.24)	(92.86)	(66.28)
	[88.18]	[90.75]	[59.49]	[93.37]	[69.82]
$\angle \text{R}-\text{Ga}-\text{Bi}-\text{R}$ (°)	179.5	157.1	180.0	179.2	175.8
	(180.0)	(159.8)	(180.0)	(178.8)	(179.9)



R	F	OH	H	CH <sub>3</sub>	SiH <sub>3</sub>
$Q_{\text{Ga}}^{(1)}$	[180.0]	[158.0]	[180.0]	[179.3]	[180.0]
	0.6246	0.5224	0.2127	0.2266	0.1845
	(0.5012)	(0.3464)	(0.1135)	(0.2356)	(0.1507)
$Q_{\text{Bi}}^{(2)}$	[0.5700]	[0.3813]	[0.3031]	[0.1984]	[0.07925]
	0.3696	0.2435	-0.1367	0.03356	-0.2002
	(0.3574)	(0.2743)	(-0.04212)	(0.05503)	(-0.05512)
BE (kcal mol <sup>-1</sup> ) <sup>(3)</sup>	[0.4000]	[0.2395]	[0.06523]	[-0.01620]	[-0.08931]
	18.03	16.41	45.28	46.24	46.10
	(22.92)	(26.32)	(79.05)	(60.77)	(49.96)
Wiberg BO <sup>(4)</sup>	[20.80]	[16.61]	[49.49]	[40.12]	[48.61]
	1.286	1.335	1.718	1.578	1.653
	(1.382)	(1.393)	(1.787)	(1.633)	(1.646)
	[1.403]	[1.431]	[1.758]	[1.656]	[1.673]

Notes: (1) The natural charge density on the central gallium atom. (2) The natural charge density on the central bismuth atom. (3) BE = E (triplet state of R=Ga) + E (triplet state of R=Bi) - E(RGa=BiR). (4) Wiberg bond orders for the Ga=Bi bonds, see Refs. [63, 64].

**Table 3.** Selected geometrical parameters, natural charge densities ( $Q_{\text{Ga}}$  and  $Q_{\text{Bi}}$ ), binding energies (BE), and Wiberg bond orders (BO) of RGa=BiR at the M06-2X/Def2-TZVP, B3PW91/Def2-TZVP (in round bracket), and B3LYP/LANL2DZ +dp (in square bracket) levels.

R	F	OH	H	CH <sub>3</sub>	SiH <sub>3</sub>
In=Bi (Å)	2.804	2.790	2.659	2.696	2.667
	(2.802)	(2.700)	(2.691)	(2.719)	(2.692)
	[2.790]	[2.795]	[2.673]	[2.712]	[2.683]
$\angle\text{R}-\text{In}-\text{Bi}$ (°)	179.6	173.9	168.3	179.1	173.8
	(178.0)	(172.2)	(175.2)	(177.3)	(174.3)
	[177.0]	[174.5]	[174.1]	[177.6]	[174.7]
$\angle\text{In}-\text{Bi}-\text{R}$ (°)	84.16	85.14	67.00	92.20	70.37
	(87.83)	(89.71)	(77.82)	(94.83)	(75.05)
	[87.43]	[90.79]	[74.35]	[94.16]	[74.37]
$\angle\text{R}-\text{In}-\text{Bi}-\text{R}$ (°)	179.9	176.1	180.0	178.3	178.9
	(180.0)	(177.3)	(180.0)	(179.1)	(177.5)
	[180.0]	[176.5]	[180.0]	[179.4]	[179.8]
$Q_{\text{In}}^{(1)}$	0.7021	0.6352	0.3755	0.3297	0.3650
	(0.5692)	(0.4640)	(0.2561)	(0.3403)	(0.2872)
	[0.7571]	[0.5053]	[0.4055]	[0.3044]	[0.1756]
$Q_{\text{Bi}}^{(2)}$	0.3973	0.2452	-0.2474	-0.01187	-0.2599



R	F	OH	H	CH <sub>3</sub>	SiH <sub>3</sub>
	(0.4000)	(0.2511)	(-0.08703)	(0.04410)	(-0.08023)
	[0.3468]	[0.2141]	[0.02620]	[-0.05735]	[-0.1365]
BE (kcal mol <sup>-1</sup> ) <sup>(3)</sup>	14.66	13.17	39.19	36.87	39.28
	(15.06)	(12.88)	(42.01)	(35.00)	(40.94)
	[18.80]	[13.70]	[44.04]	[35.54]	[41.83]
Wiberg BO <sup>(4)</sup>	1.312	1.403	1.590	1.543	1.553
	(1.308)	(1.334)	(1.601)	(1.539)	(1.546)
	[1.323]	[1.336]	[1.615]	[1.548]	[1.549]

Notes: (1) The natural charge density on the central indium atom. (2) The natural charge density on the central bismuth atom. (3) BE = E (triplet state of R=In) + E (triplet state of R=Bi) - E(RIn=BiR). (4) Wiberg bond orders for the In=Bi bonds, see Refs. [63, 64].

**Table 4.** Selected geometrical parameters, natural charge densities ( $Q_{\text{In}}$  and  $Q_{\text{Bi}}$ ), binding energies (BE), and Wiberg bond orders (BO) of RIn=BiR at the M06-2X/Def2-TZVP, B3PW91/Def2-TZVP (in round bracket), and B3LYP/LANL2DZ+dp (in square bracket) levels.

R	F	OH	H	CH <sub>3</sub>	SiH <sub>3</sub>
Tl=Bi (Å)	2.859	2.843	2.713	2.742	2.707
	(2.812)	(2.803)	(2.698)	(2.725)	(2.705)
	[2.819]	[2.822]	[2.679]	[2.713]	[2.682]
∠R-Tl-Bi (°)	175.9	173.5	175.7	179.6	174.4
	(178.8)	(172.5)	(176.6)	(178.5)	(174.7)
	[177.2]	[174.4]	[176.3]	[178.5]	[175.9]
∠Tl-Bi-R (°)	81.34	86.72	78.87	91.91	76.03
	(87.73)	(89.82)	(79.00)	(93.54)	(76.50)
	[87.92]	[92.34]	[78.86]	[93.25]	[80.00]
∠R-Tl-Bi-R (°)	180.0	143.7	180.0	172.1	178.9
	(179.9)	(132.9)	(179.9)	(178.6)	(179.9)
	[180.0]	[130.6]	[180.0]	[180.0]	[179.2]
$Q_{\text{Tl}}$ <sup>(1)</sup>	0.6481	0.5672	0.3014	0.4162	0.2665
	(0.6614)	(0.5879)	(0.2284)	(0.2746)	(0.3510)
	[0.7100]	[0.4812]	[0.3536]	[0.2734]	[0.1601]
$Q_{\text{Bi}}$ <sup>(2)</sup>	0.4752	0.3214	-0.1836	0.008121	-0.2245
	(0.3615)	(0.2201)	(-0.05213)	(-0.1282)	(-0.09637)
	[0.3854]	[0.2455]	[0.04813]	[-0.03131]	[-0.1282]
BE (kcal mol <sup>-1</sup> ) <sup>(5)</sup>	7.90	6.61	30.74	26.94	30.56
	(2.98)	(8.17)	(48.12)	(35.39)	(29.13)

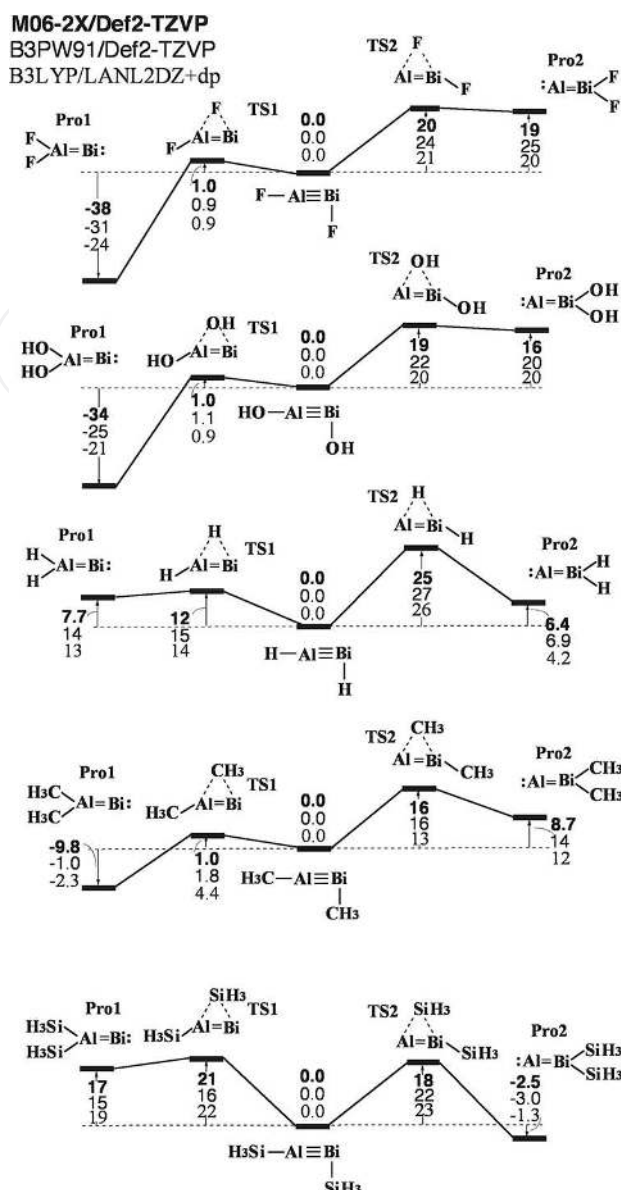
R	F	OH	H	CH <sub>3</sub>	SiH <sub>3</sub>
	[11.34]	[7.38]	[37.14]	[31.09]	[35.03]
Wiberg BO <sup>(6)</sup>	1.000	1.132	1.652	1.448	1.792
	(1.121)	(1.254)	(1.765)	(1.514)	(1.824)
	[1.112]	[1.212]	[1.756]	[1.568]	[1.652]

Notes: (1) The natural charge density on the central thallium atom. (2) The natural charge density on the central bismuth atom. (3) BE = E (triplet state of R=Tl) + E (triplet state of R=Bi) – E(RTl=BiR). (4) Wiberg bond orders for the Tl=Bi bonds, see Refs. [63, 64].

**Table 5.** Selected geometrical parameters, natural charge densities ( $Q_{\text{Tl}}$  and  $Q_{\text{Bi}}$ ), binding energies (BE), and Wiberg bond orders (BO) of RTl=BiR at the M06-2X/Def2-TZVP, B3PW91/Def2-TZVP (in round bracket), and B3LYP/LANL2DZ+dp (in square bracket) levels.

- As can be seen from **Tables 1–5**, the geometrical parameters of the RE<sub>13</sub>=BiR triple bond species are quite analogous at the three levels employed. For instance, the predicted triple bond length for small ligands on RB=BiR is 2.075–2.218 Å (M06-2X/Def2-TZVP), 2.083–2.210 Å (B3PW91/Def2-TZVP), and 2.083–2.196 Å (B3LYP/LANL2DZ+dp). For RAl=BiR, the Al=Bi triple bond length for small ligands is predicted to be 2.439–2.606 Å (M06-2X/Def2-TZVP), 2.463–2.601 Å (B3PW91/Def2-TZVP), and 2.483–2.624 Å (B3LYP/LANL2DZ+dp). For RGa=BiR, the Ga=Bi triple bond length for small ligands is predicted to be 2.463–2.639 Å (M06-2X/Def2-TZVP), 2.465–2.621 Å (B3PW91/Def2-TZVP), and 2.487–2.632 Å (B3LYP/LANL2DZ+dp). For RIn=BiR, the In=Bi triple bond length for small ligands is predicted to be 2.659–2.804 Å (M06-2X/Def2-TZVP), 2.691–2.802 Å (B3PW91/Def2-TZVP), and 2.673–2.795 Å (B3LYP/LANL2DZ+dp). For RTl=BiR, the Tl=Bi triple bond length for small ligands is predicted to be 2.707–2.859 Å (M06-2X/Def2-TZVP), 2.698–2.812 Å (B3PW91/Def2-TZVP), and 2.679–2.822 Å (B3LYP/LANL2DZ+dp).
- It is apparent from **Tables 1–5** that an acute bond angle  $\angle E_{13}=Bi=R$  (close to 90°) in the triply bonded molecule RE<sub>13</sub>=BiR is favored. The reason for this can be attributed to the “orbital nonhybridization effect,” also known as the “inert s-pair effect” [65–68], as discussed previously. Accordingly, these phenomena strongly indicate that mode (B) (**Figure 1**) is preferred in the RE=BiR molecule, for which bent geometry is favored.
- The Wiberg bond orders (WBOs) [63, 64] on the substituted RE<sub>13</sub>=BiR compounds are also given in **Tables 1–5**. For all the triply bonded RE<sub>13</sub>=BiR molecules with small substituents, their WBOs were computed to be less than 2.0, except for the cases of HB=BiH and (SiH<sub>3</sub>)B=Bi(SiH<sub>3</sub>). These WBO values imply that the bonding structure of RE<sub>13</sub>=BiR may be due to the resonance structures, [I] and [II]. That is to say, the E<sub>13</sub>=Bi bond could be either double or triple bonds. From **Tables 1–5**, it seems that the resonance structure [II] prevails for the small ligands on the substituted RE<sub>13</sub>=BiR species studied in this work. Indeed, since it is known that the electronegativities decrease in the order B (2.051) > Bi (2.01) > Tl (1.789) > Ga (1.756) > In (1.656) > Al (1.613) [69], the bonding mode of RE<sub>13</sub>=BiR should prefer to adopt resonance structure [II] (**Scheme 2**).

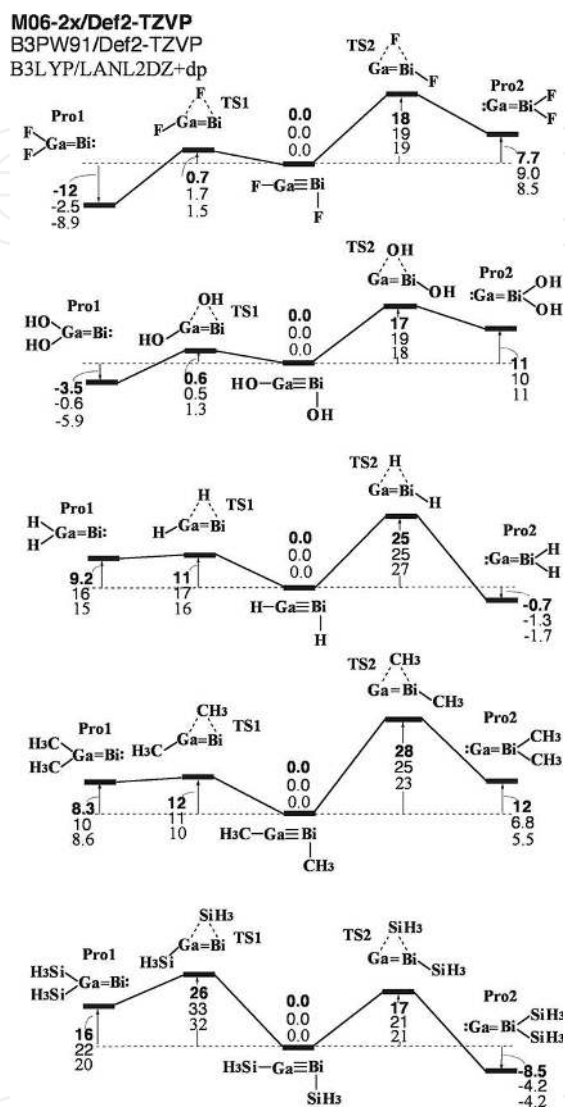




**Figure 3.** Relative Gibbs free energy surfaces for  $RAI=BiR$  ( $R = F, OH, H, CH_3,$  and  $SiH_3$ ). Energies are in kcal/mol, calculated at M06-2X/Def2-TZVP, B3PW91/Def2-TZVP, and B3LYP/LANL2DZ+dp levels of theory. For details see the text and Table 2.

This system exhibits a number of stationary points, including local minima that correspond to  $RE_{13}=BiR$ ,  $R_2E_{13}=Bi$ ,  $:E_{13}=BiR_2$ , and the saddle points connecting them. The transition structures that separate the three stable molecular forms involve a successive unimolecular 1,2-shift TS1 (from  $RE_{13}=BiR$  to  $R_2E_{13}=Bi$ ) and a 1,2-shift TS2 (from  $RE_{13}=BiR$  to  $:E_{13}=BiR_2$ ). As shown in Figures 1–5, these theoretical studies using the M06-2X, B3PW91, and B3LYP levels show that the  $RE_{13}=BiR$  species are local minima on the singlet potential energy surface, but they are neither kinetically nor thermodynamically stable for small substituents, except for the case of  $(SiH_3)B=Bi(SiH_3)$ . As a result, these triply bonded structures  $RE_{13}=BiR$  seem to be unstable on the singlet energy surface and undergo unimolecular rearrangement to the doubly bonded isomer. In brief, these triply bonded molecules ( $RE_{13}=BiR$ ) possessing the small substituents are

predicted to be a kinetically unstable isomer, so these could not be isolated in a matrix or even as transient intermediates.



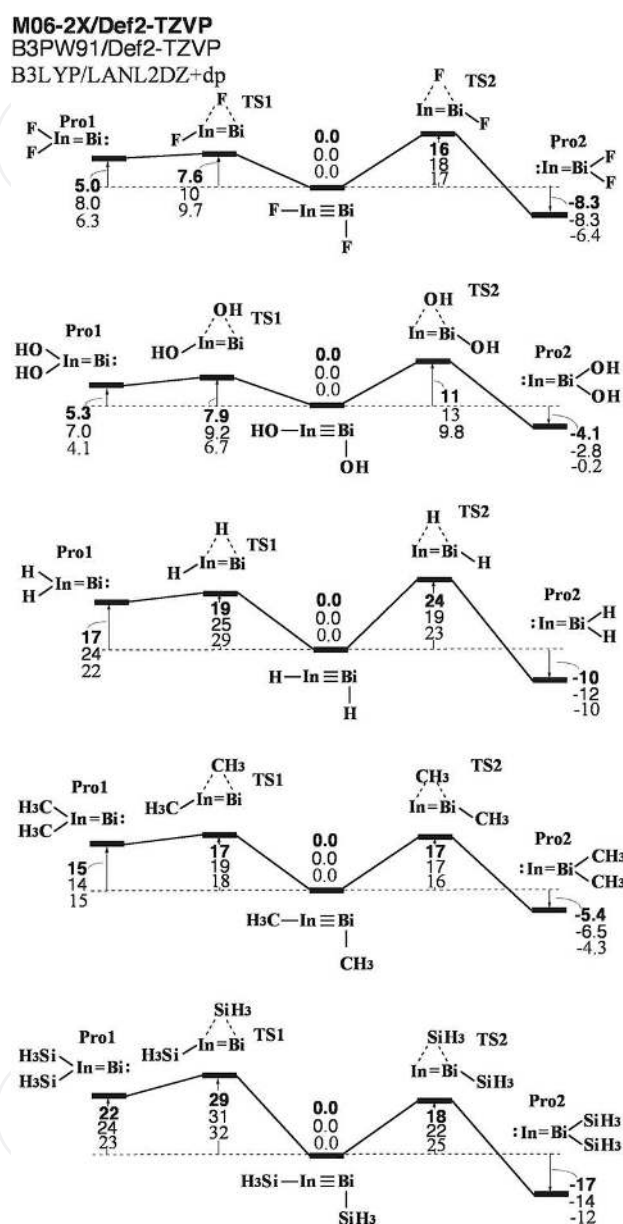
**Figure 4.** Relative Gibbs free energy surfaces for  $R\text{Ga}\equiv\text{Bi}R$  ( $R = \text{F}, \text{OH}, \text{H}, \text{CH}_3,$  and  $\text{SiH}_3$ ). Energies are in kcal/mol, calculated at M06-2X/Def2-TZVP, B3PW91/Def2-TZVP, and B3LYP/LANL2DZ+dp levels of theory. For details see the text and Table 3.

### 3.3. Large ligands on substituted $R'E_{13}\equiv\text{Bi}R'$

According to the above conclusions for the cases of small substituents, it is necessary to determine whether bulky substituents can destabilize  $R_2E_{13}=\text{Bi}$ : and  $:E_{13}=\text{Bi}R_2$  relative to  $RE_{13}\equiv\text{Bi}R$  ( $E_{13} = \text{B}, \text{Al}, \text{Ga}, \text{In},$  and  $\text{Tl}$ ), due to severe steric overcrowding. From **Figure 7**, it is easily anticipated that the presence of extremely bulky substituents at both ends of the  $RE_{13}\equiv\text{Bi}R$  compounds protects its triple bond from intermolecular reactions, such as polymerization. In order to examine the effect of bulky substituents, the structures of  $R'E_{13}\equiv\text{Bi}R'$



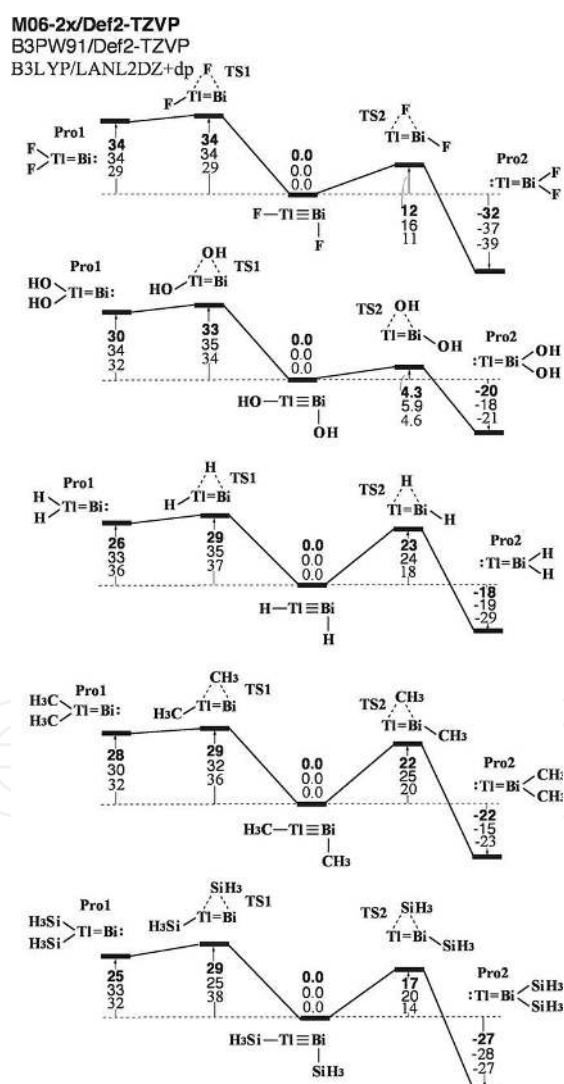
optimized for  $R' = \text{Tbt}$ ,  $\text{Ar}^*$ ,  $\text{SiMe}(\text{Si}t\text{Bu}_3)_2$ , and  $\text{Si}i\text{PrDis}_2$  (Scheme 1) at the B3LYP/LANL2DZ+dp level. Selected geometrical parameters, natural charge densities on the central group 13 elements and bismuth ( $Q_{\text{E13}}$  and  $Q_{\text{Bi}}$ ), binding energies (BE), and Wiberg bond order (BO) [69, 70] are summarized in Tables 6–10.



**Figure 5.** Relative Gibbs free energy surfaces for  $\text{RIn}=\text{BiR}$  ( $R = \text{F}, \text{OH}, \text{H}, \text{CH}_3$ , and  $\text{SiH}_3$ ). Energies are in kcal/mol, calculated at M06-2X/Def2-TZVP, B3PW91/Def2-TZVP, and B3LYP/LANL2DZ+dp levels of theory. For details see the text and Table 4.

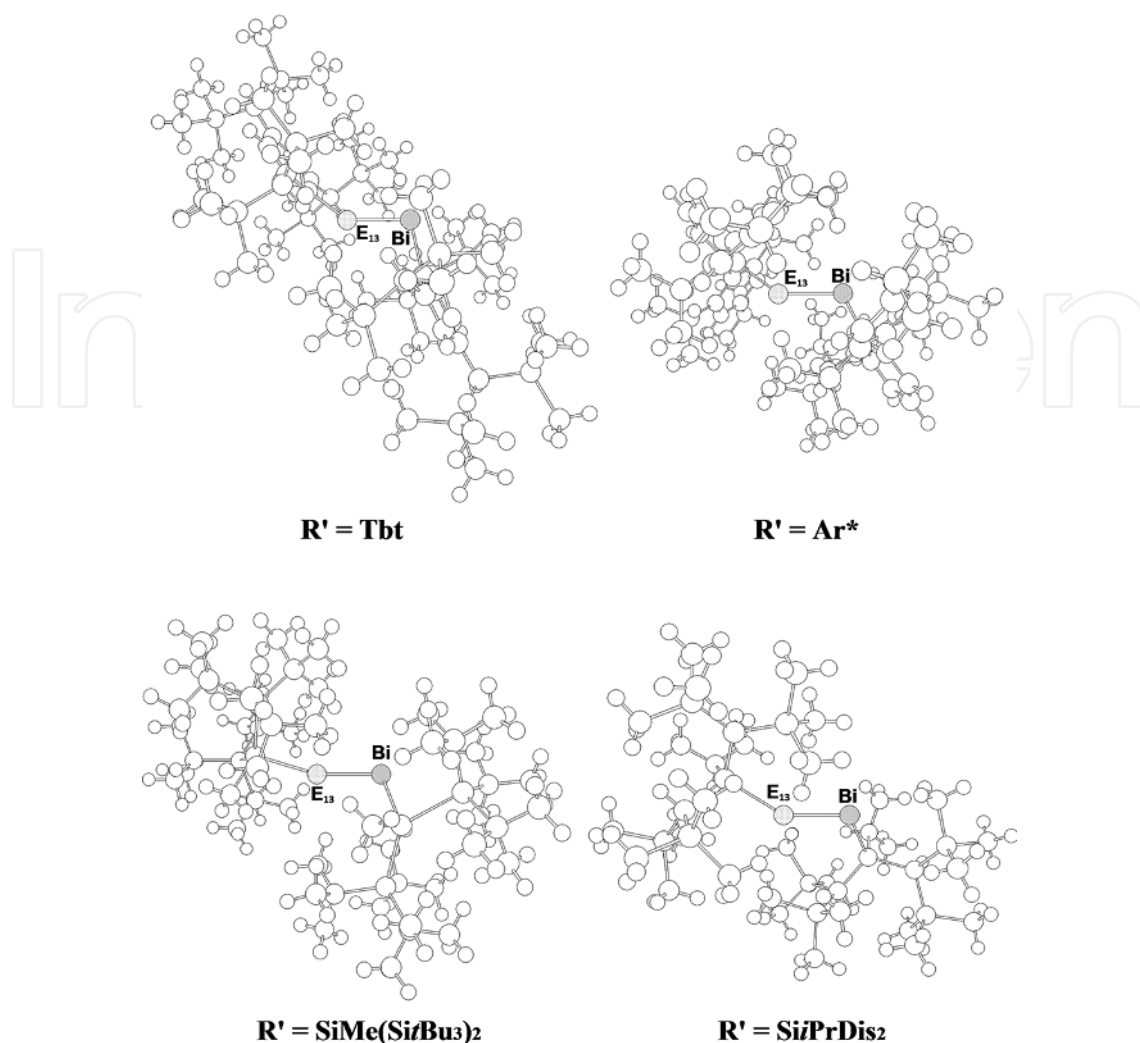
The computational results given in Tables 6–10 estimate that the  $\text{E}_{13}=\text{Bi}$  triple bond distances ( $\text{\AA}$ ) are about 2.117–2.230 ( $\text{E}_{13} = \text{B}$ ), 2.461–2.562 ( $\text{E}_{13} = \text{Al}$ ), 2.576–2.580 ( $\text{E}_{13} = \text{Ga}$ ), 2.615–2.779 ( $\text{E}_{13} = \text{In}$ ), and 2.789–2.833 ( $\text{E}_{13} = \text{Tl}$ ), respectively. Again, these theoretically predicted values are much shorter than the available experimentally determined  $\text{E}_{13}=\text{Bi}$  single bond lengths

[36, 70–72]. This strongly implies that the central group 13 element ( $E_{13}$ ) and bismuth in the  $R'E_{13}≡BiR'$  ( $R' = Tbt, Ar^*, SiMe(SitBu_3)_2,$  and  $SiPrDis_2$ ) species are triply bonded. Indeed, as shown in **Tables 6–10**, the  $R'E_{13}≡BiR'$  molecules accompanied by bulky ligands can effectively produce the triply bonded species. That is, the WBOs in **Tables 6–10** (with larger ligands) are apparently larger than those in **Tables 1–5** (with smaller ligands). Additionally, from **Tables 6–10**, the central  $E_{13}≡Bi$  bond lengths calculated for  $R' = Tbt$  and  $Ar^*$  are an average  $0.095\text{\AA}$  longer than those calculated for  $R' = SiMe(SitBu_3)_2$  and  $SiPrDis_2$ , respectively. The reason for these differences is that the  $Tbt$  and  $Ar^*$  groups are electronegative, but the  $SiMe(SitBu_3)_2$  and  $SiPrDis_2$  ligands are electropositive. Further, the short length of the  $E_{13}≡Bi$  bond in the  $R'E≡BiR'$  species can be understood by noting that both  $SiMe(SitBu_3)_2$  and  $SiPrDis_2$  are more electropositive than the small substituents, as mentioned earlier.



**Figure 6.** Relative Gibbs free energy surfaces for  $RTl=BiR$  ( $R = F, OH, H, CH_3,$  and  $SiH_3$ ). Energies are in kcal/mol, calculated at M06-2X/Def2-TZVP, B3PW91/Def2-TZVP, and B3LYP/LANL2DZ+dp levels of theory. For details see the text and **Table 5**.





**Figure 7.** The optimized structures of  $R'E_{13}=BiR'$  ( $E_{13} = B, Al, Ga, In,$  and  $Tl$ ;  $R' = Tbt, Ar^*, SiMe(SiPrBu_3)_2,$  and  $SiPrDis_2$ ) at the B3LYP/LANL2DZ+dp level of theory. For details see the text and **Tables 6–10**.

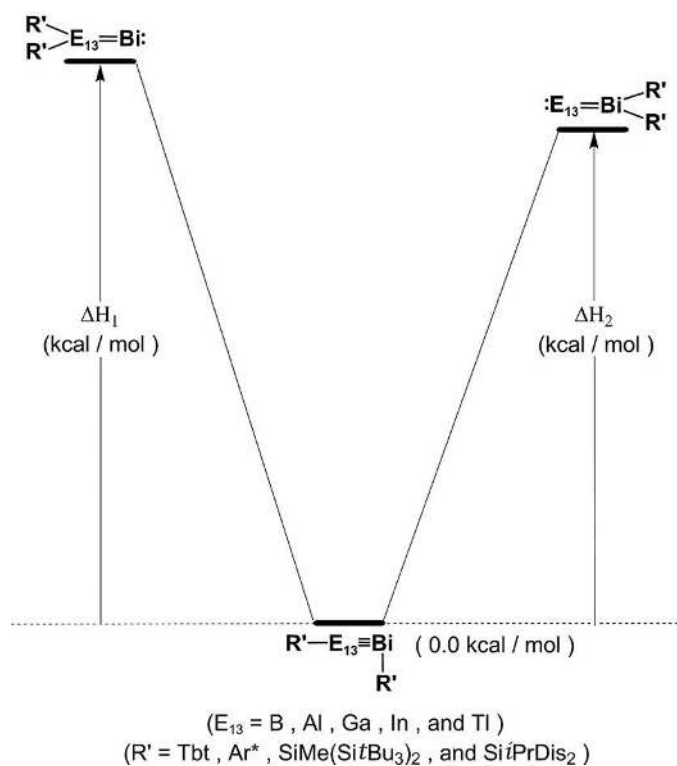
Similar to the small ligands, these DFT results demonstrate that all the  $R'E_{13}BiR'$  molecules that possess bulky substituents ( $R'$ ) adopt a bent geometry, as illustrated in **Figure 7**. Our theoretical computations show that model (B), given in **Figure 1**, still predominates and can be used to interpret the geometries of the  $R'E_{13}=BiR'$  systems that bear bulky substituents.

As shown in **Tables 6–10**, the  $R'E_{13}=BiR'$  molecules can be separated into two fragments in solution, when the substituent  $R'$  becomes bulkier. The BE that is essential to break the central  $E_{13}=Bi$  bond was computed to be at least  $> 32$  kcal/mol for  $R' = Tbt, Ar^*, SiMe(SiPrBu_3)_2,$  and  $SiPrDis_2$ , for the B3LYP/LANL2DZ+dp method, as given in **Tables 6–10**. These BE values show that the central  $E_{13}$  and bismuth elements are strongly bonded and  $R'E_{13}=BiR'$  molecules that contain bulky substituents do not dissociate in solution. Namely, the larger the dissociation energy of the  $E_{13}=Bi$  bond, the shorter and stronger the  $E_{13}=Bi$  triple bond.

As predicted previously, bulky groups destabilize the 1,2- $R'$  migrated isomers because they crowd around one end of the central  $E_{13}=Bi$  bond. As a consequence, the bulky substituents ( $R'$ ) can prevent the isomerization of  $R'E_{13}=BiR'$  compounds, as outlined in **Scheme 3** and

**Tables 6–10.** The B3LYP/LANL2DZ+dp calculations indicate that the  $R'E_{13}\equiv BiR'$  species with Tbt,  $Ar^*$ ,  $SiMe(Si^tBu_3)_2$ , and  $Si^iPrDis_2$  substituents ( $\Delta H_1$  and  $\Delta H_2$ ) are at least 56 kcal/mol more stable than the 1,2- $R'$  shifted isomers, respectively. These theoretical results suggest that both doubly bonded  $R'_2E_{13}=Bi:$  and  $:E_{13}=BiR'_2$  isomers are kinetically and thermodynamically unstable, so they rearrange spontaneously to the global minimum  $R'E_{13}\equiv BiR'$  triply bonded molecules, provided that significantly bulky groups are employed.

Theoretical values from the natural bond orbital (NBO) [63, 64] and natural resonance theory (NRT) [73–75] analyses of the  $R'E_{13}\equiv BiR'$  molecules, computed at the B3LYP/LANL2DZ+dp level of theory, are summarized in **Table 11** ( $E_{13} = B$ ), **Table 12** ( $E_{13} = Al$ ), **Table 13** ( $E_{13} = Ga$ ), **Table 14** ( $E_{13} = In$ ), and **Table 15** ( $E_{13} = Tl$ ).



$R'$	Tbt	$Ar^*$	$SiMe(Si^tBu_3)_2$	$Si^iPrDis_2$
$B\equiv Bi$ (Å)	2.230	2.214	2.117	2.131
$\angle R'-B-Bi$ (°)	177.3	110.3	112.9	113.6
$\angle B-Bi-R'$ (°)	115.6	115.5	112.5	114.3
$\angle R'-B-Bi-R'$ (°)	173.7	172.3	170.4	175.3
$Q_B^{(1)}$	-0.4310	-0.1711	-0.3251	-0.4742
$Q_{Bi}^{(2)}$	0.2915	0.3004	0.1426	0.1071
$BE$ (kcal mol <sup>-1</sup> ) <sup>(3)</sup>	37.58	41.68	36.25	51.07

R'	Tbt	Ar*	SiMe(SitBu <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>2</sub>	SiPrDis <sub>2</sub>
Wiberg BO <sup>(4)</sup>	2.385	2.249	2.640	2.701
$\Delta H_1$ (kcal mol <sup>-1</sup> ) <sup>(5)</sup>	62.6	61.04	76.52	77.24
$\Delta H_2$ (kcal mol <sup>-1</sup> ) <sup>(6)</sup>	98.51	88.38	68.72	78.13

Notes: (1) The natural charge density on the central boron atom. (2) The natural charge density on the central bismuth atom. (3) BE = E (triplet state of B-R') + E (triplet state of Bi-R') - E(R'B=BiR'). (4) Wiberg Bond Orders for the B-Bi bond, see Refs. [63, 64]. (5)  $\Delta H_1 = E(:B=BiR'_2) - E(R'B=BiR')$ ; see Scheme 3. (6)  $\Delta H_2 = E(R'_2B=Bi:) - E(R'B=BiR')$ ; see Scheme 3

**Table 6.** Geometrical parameters, nature charge densities ( $Q_B$  and  $Q_{Bi}$ ), binding energies (BE), and Wiberg bond order (BO) of R'B=BiR' at the B3LYP/LANL2DZ+dp level of theory. Also see Figure 7.

R'	Tbt	Ar*	SiMe(SitBu <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>2</sub>	SiPrDis <sub>2</sub>
Al≡Bi (Å)	2.562	2.561	2.463	2.461
$\angle R'-Al-Bi$ (°)	178.0	113.6	115.4	113.3
$\angle Al-Bi-R'$ (°)	113.4	115.5	112.2	109.0
$\angle R'-Al-Bi-R'$ (°)	167.1	165.8	173.2	174.7
$Q_{Al}$ <sup>(1)</sup>	0.4171	0.4111	0.2173	0.1585
$Q_{Bi}$ <sup>(2)</sup>	0.0773	0.2208	-0.1031	-0.1862
BE (kcal mol <sup>-1</sup> ) <sup>(3)</sup>	38.62	66.78	33.65	31.76
Wiberg BO <sup>(4)</sup>	2.092	2.023	2.204	2.259
$\Delta H_1$ (kcal mol <sup>-1</sup> ) <sup>(5)</sup>	64.52	63.77	77.71	73.68
$\Delta H_2$ (kcal mol <sup>-1</sup> ) <sup>(6)</sup>	57.43	67.81	71.86	76.62

Notes: (1) The natural charge density on the central aluminum atom. (2) The natural charge density on the central bismuth atom. (3) BE = E (triplet state of Al=R') + E (triplet state of Bi=R') - E(R'Al=BiR'). (4) Wiberg Bond Orders for the Al=Bi bond, see Refs. [63, 64]. (5)  $\Delta H_1 = E(:Al=BiR'_2) - E(R'Al=BiR')$ ; see Scheme 3. (6)  $\Delta H_2 = E(R'_2Al=Bi:) - E(R'Al=BiR')$ ; see Scheme 3.

**Table 7.** Geometrical parameters, nature charge densities ( $Q_{Al}$  and  $Q_{Bi}$ ), binding energies (BE), and Wiberg bond order (BO) of R'Al=BiR' at the B3LYP/LANL2DZ+dp level of theory. Also see Figure 7.

All the NBO values listed in Tables 11–15 demonstrate that there exists a weak triple bond, or perhaps a bond between a double and a triple, in the ethyne-like R'E<sub>13</sub>=BiR' molecule. For instance, the B3LYP/LANL2DZ+dp data for the NBO [63, 64] analyses of the B=Bi bonding in SiMe(SitBu<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>=B=Bi=SiMe(SitBu<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>, which shows that NBO(B=Bi) = 0.615(2s2p<sup>52.48</sup>)B + 0.789(6s6p<sup>19.73</sup>)Bi, strongly suggests that the predominant bonding interaction between the B=SiMe(SitBu<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub> and the Bi=SiMe(SitBu<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub> fragments originates from 2p(B) ← 6p(Bi) donation. In other words, boron's electron deficiency and π bond polarity are partially balanced by the donation of the bismuth lone pair into the empty boron p orbital. This, in turn, forms a hybrid π bond. Again, the polarization analyses using the NBO model indicate the presence of the B=Bi π bonding orbital, 38% of which is composed of natural boron orbitals and 62% of natural bismuth orbitals. There is supporting evidence in Table 11 that reveals that the B=Bi triple bond in SiMe(SitBu<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>=B=Bi=SiMe(SitBu<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub> has a shorter single bond character (5.8%) and a

R'	Tbt	Ar*	SiMe(Si <i>t</i> Bu <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>2</sub>	SiPrDis <sub>2</sub>
Ga≡Bi (Å)	2.578	2.576	2.580	2.579
∠R'–Ga–Bi (°)	178.1	113.4	115.2	112.1
∠Ga–Bi–R' (°)	113.4	115.7	112.0	110.1
∠R'–Ga–Bi–R' (°)	167.9	164.1	175.4	178.5
Q <sub>Ga</sub> <sup>(1)</sup>	0.240	0.196	0.069	0.012
Q <sub>Bi</sub> <sup>(2)</sup>	0.120	0.261	-0.055	-0.140
BE (kcal mol <sup>-1</sup> ) <sup>(3)</sup>	43.73	39.28	35.54	32.92
Wiberg BO <sup>(4)</sup>	2.091	2.181	2.262	2.313
ΔH <sub>1</sub> (kcal mol <sup>-1</sup> ) <sup>(5)</sup>	68.10	69.08	61.74	58.83
ΔH <sub>2</sub> (kcal mol <sup>-1</sup> ) <sup>(6)</sup>	78.07	71.28	77.43	64.13

Notes: (1) The natural charge density on the central gallium atom. (2) The natural charge density on the central bismuth atom. (3) BE = E (triplet state of Ga=R') + E (triplet state of Bi=R') – E(R'Ga=BiR'). (4) Wiberg bond orders for the Ga=Bi bond, see Refs. [63, 64]. (5) ΔH<sub>1</sub> = E(:Ga = BiR'<sub>2</sub>) – E(R'Ga=BiR'); see Scheme 3. (6) ΔH<sub>2</sub> = E(R'<sub>2</sub>Ga=Bi:) – E(R'Ga=BiR'); see Scheme 3.

**Table 8.** Geometrical parameters, nature charge densities (Q<sub>Ga</sub> and Q<sub>Bi</sub>), binding energies (BE), and Wiberg bond order (BO) of R'Ga=BiR' at the B3LYP/LANL2DZ+dp level of theory. Also see Figure 7.

R'	Tbt	Ar*	SiMe(Si <i>t</i> Bu <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>2</sub>	SiPrDis <sub>2</sub>
In≡Bi (Å)	2.737	2.779	2.615	2.678
∠R'–In–Bi (°)	178.7	111.7	110.0	110.9
∠In–Bi–R' (°)	112.5	113.0	110.6	111.7
∠R'–In–Bi–R' (°)	170.7	174.6	164.3	162.0
Q <sub>In</sub> <sup>(1)</sup>	0.299	0.345	0.179	0.101
Q <sub>Bi</sub> <sup>(2)</sup>	0.066	0.293	-0.126	-0.132
BE (kcal mol <sup>-1</sup> ) <sup>(3)</sup>	63.45	45.97	36.20	37.05
Wiberg BO <sup>(4)</sup>	2.052	2.153	2.211	2.304
ΔH <sub>1</sub> (kcal mol <sup>-1</sup> ) <sup>(5)</sup>	64.06	60.17	55.72	62.99
ΔH <sub>2</sub> (kcal mol <sup>-1</sup> ) <sup>(6)</sup>	79.38	61.44	56.03	67.61

Notes: (1) The natural charge density on the central indium atom. (2) The natural charge density on the central bismuth atom. (3) BE = E (triplet state of In=R') + E (triplet state of Bi=R') – E(R'In=BiR'). (4) Wiberg Bond Orders for the In=Bi bond, see Refs. [63, 64]. (5) ΔH<sub>1</sub> = E(:In = BiR'<sub>2</sub>) – E(R'In=BiR'); see Scheme 3. (6) ΔH<sub>2</sub> = E(R'<sub>2</sub>In=Bi:) – E(R'In=BiR'); see Scheme 3.

**Table 9.** Geometrical parameters, nature charge densities (Q<sub>In</sub> and Q<sub>Bi</sub>), binding energies (BE), and Wiberg bond order (BO) of R'In=BiR' at the B3LYP/LANL2DZ+dp level of theory. Also see Figure 7.

shorter triple bond character (40.1%) but a larger double bond character (54.1%), because the covalent part of the NRT bond order (1.49) is shorter than its ionic part (0.78). The same can also be said of the other three R'B=BiR' molecules, as shown in Table 11 as well as other

R'E<sub>13</sub>≡BiR' compounds represented in **Tables 12–15**. These theoretical evidences strongly suggest that these R'E<sub>13</sub>≡BiR' species have a weak triple bond.

R'	Tbt	Ar*	SiMe(Si <i>t</i> Bu <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>2</sub>	SiPrDis <sub>2</sub>
Tl≡Bi (Å)	2.816	2.833	2.820	2.789
∠R'–Tl–Bi (°)	148.2	146.7	164.4	152.4
∠Tl–Bi–R' (°)	116.5	121.4	114.1	125.1
∠R'–Tl–Bi–R (°)	169.5	171.4	176.3	175.8
Q <sub>Tl</sub> <sup>(1)</sup>	0.3323	0.4221	0.1504	0.1282
Q <sub>Bi</sub> <sup>(2)</sup>	–0.0921	–0.0652	–0.3925	–0.3491
BE (kcal mol <sup>–1</sup> ) <sup>(3)</sup>	41.66	37.59	36.66	51.07
Wiberg BO <sup>(4)</sup>	2.081	2.052	2.105	2.128
ΔH <sub>1</sub> (kcal mol <sup>–1</sup> ) <sup>(5)</sup>	68.66	64.52	63.67	72.12
ΔH <sub>2</sub> (kcal mol <sup>–1</sup> ) <sup>(6)</sup>	61.54	58.19	68.73	64.61

Notes: (1) The natural charge density on the central thallium atom. (2) The natural charge density on the central bismuth atom. (3) BE = E (triplet state of Tl=R') + E (triplet state of Bi=R') – E(R'Tl≡BiR'). (4) Wiberg bond orders for the Tl=Bi bond, see Refs. [63, 64]. (5) ΔH<sub>1</sub> = E(:Tl = BiR'<sub>2</sub>) – E(R'Tl≡BiR'); see Scheme 3. (6) ΔH<sub>2</sub> = E(R'<sub>2</sub>Tl = Bi:) – E(R'Tl≡BiR'); see **Scheme 3**.

**Table 10.** Geometrical parameters, nature charge densities (Q<sub>Tl</sub> and Q<sub>Bi</sub>), binding energies (BE), and Wiberg bond order (BO) of R'Tl≡BiR' at the B3LYP/LANL2DZ+dp level of theory. Also see **Figure 7**.

R'B≡BiR'	WBI NBO analysis			NRT analysis		
	Occupancy	Hybridization	Polarization	Total/covalent/ionic	Resonance weight	
R'=Tbt	2.39	σ = 1.95	σ: 0.7870 B (sp <sup>0.90</sup> ) + 0.6170 Bi (sp <sup>9.90</sup> )	61.93% (B)	2.01/1.24/0.77	B=Bi: 12.58%
		π = 1.93	π: 0.5938 B (sp <sup>1.00</sup> ) + 0.8046 Bi (sp <sup>1.00</sup> )	38.07% (Bi)		B=Bi: 53.81%
R' = Ar*	2.25	σ = 1.94	σ: 0.8058 B (sp <sup>0.74</sup> ) + 0.5922 Bi (sp <sup>19.46</sup> )	64.93% (B)	1.95/1.30/0.65	B=Bi: 6.78%
		π = 1.90	π: 0.5587 B (sp <sup>99.99</sup> ) + 0.8294 Bi (sp <sup>64.69</sup> )	35.07% (Bi)		B=Bi: 62.97%
R' = SiMe (Si <i>t</i> Bu <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>2</sub>	2.64	σ = 1.96	σ: 0.7812 B (sp <sup>0.96</sup> ) + 0.6242 Bi (sp <sup>10.68</sup> )	61.03% (B)	2.27/1.49/0.78	B=Bi: 5.77%
				38.97% (Bi)		B=Bi: 54.1%

R'B=BiR'	WBI	NBO analysis		NRT analysis		
		Occupancy	Hybridization	Polarization	Total/covalent/ ionic	Resonance weight
R' = Si <i>i</i> PrDis <sub>2</sub>	2.7	$\pi = 1.89$	$\pi: 0.6146 \text{ B (sp}^{62.48}\text{)} + 0.7889 \text{ Bi (sp}^{19.73}\text{)}$	37.77% (B) 62.23% (Bi)	2.31/1.52/0.79	B=Bi: 40.11%
		$\sigma = 1.83$	$\sigma: 0.6502 \text{ B (sp}^{4.29}\text{)} + 0.7598 \text{ Bi (sp}^{1.07}\text{)}$	42.27% (B) 57.73% (Bi)		B=Bi: 6.01% B=Bi: 54.39%
		$\pi = 1.80$	$\pi: 0.5606 \text{ B (sp}^{1.73}\text{)} + 0.8281 \text{ Bi (sp}^{4.99}\text{)}$	31.43% (B) 68.57% (Bi)		B=Bi: 39.96%

(1) The Wiberg bond index (WBI) for the B=Bi bond and occupancy of the corresponding  $\sigma$  and  $\pi$  bonding NBO: see Refs. [63, 64], and (2) the natural resonance theory (NRT): see Refs. [73–75].

**Table 11.** Selected results for the natural bond orbital (NBO) and natural resonance theory (NRT) analyses of R'B=BiR' compounds that have small substituents, at the B3LYP/LANL2DZ+dp level of theory [1–8, 76–80].

R'Al=BiR'	WBI	NBO analysis		NRT analysis		
		Occupancy	Hybridization	Polarization	Total/covalent/ ionic	Resonance weight
R' = Tbt	2.09	$\sigma = 1.98$	$\sigma: 0.7538 \text{ Al (sp}^{0.15}\text{)} + 0.6571 \text{ Bi (sp}^{22.99}\text{)}$	56.83% (Al) 43.17% (Bi)	2.12/1.10/1.02	Al=Bi: 12.76% Al=Bi: 75.36%
		$\pi = 1.93$	$\pi: 0.4709 \text{ Al (sp}^{1.00}\text{)} + 0.8822 \text{ Bi (sp}^{1.00}\text{)}$	22.17% (Al) 77.83% (Bi)		Al=Bi: 11.88%
		$\sigma = 1.84$	$\sigma: 0.7806 \text{ Al (sp}^{0.15}\text{)} + 0.6250 \text{ Bi (sp}^{28.77}\text{)}$	60.93% (Al) 39.07% (Bi)		Al=Bi: 19.33% Al=Bi: 74.20%
R' = Ar*	2.02	$\pi = 1.94$	$\pi: 0.4960 \text{ Al (sp}^{46.09}\text{)} + 0.8673 \text{ Bi (sp}^{15.43}\text{)}$	24.60% (Al) 75.40% (Bi)	2.07/1.01/1.06	Al=Bi: 6.47%
		$\sigma = 1.96$	$\sigma: 0.7169 \text{ Al (sp}^{0.96}\text{)} + 0.6971 \text{ Bi (sp}^{21.26}\text{)}$	24.70% (Al) 75.30% (Bi)		Al=Bi: 11.69% Al=Bi: 84.51%
R' = SiMe (Si <i>t</i> Bu <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>2</sub>	2.2	$\pi = 1.89$	$\pi: 0.8678 \text{ Al (sp}^{19.21}\text{)} + 0.4970 \text{ Bi (sp}^{16.37}\text{)}$	37.77% (Al) 62.23% (Bi)	2.24/1.38/0.86	Al=Bi: 3.80%
		$\sigma = 1.86$	$\sigma: 0.7184 \text{ Al (sp}^{0.93}\text{)} + 0.6956 \text{ Bi (sp}^{29.72}\text{)}$	51.61% (Al) 48.39% (Bi)		Al=Bi: 12.68% Al=Bi: 83.75%

R'Al=BiR'	WBI	NBO analysis		NRT analysis		
		Occupancy	Hybridization	Polarization	Total/covalent/ ionic	Resonance weight
		$\pi = 1.90$	$\pi: 0.4430 \text{ Al (sp}^{59.07}) + 0.8965 \text{ Bi (sp}^{35.38})$	19.63% (Al) 80.37% (Bi)		Al=Bi: 3.57%

(1) The Wiberg bond index (WBI) for the Al=Bi bond and occupancy of the corresponding  $\sigma$  and  $\pi$  bonding NBO: see Refs. [63, 64], and (2) the natural resonance theory (NRT): see Refs. [73–75].

**Table 12.** Selected results for the natural bond orbital (NBO) and natural resonance theory (NRT) analyses of R'Al=BiR' compounds that have small substituents, at the B3LYP/LANL2DZ+dp level of theory [1–8, 76–80].

R'Ga=BiR'	WBI	NBO analysis		NRT analysis		
		Occupancy	Hybridization	Polarization	Total/covalent/ ionic	Resonance weight
R' = Tbt	2.09	$\sigma = 1.78$	$\sigma: 0.7338 \text{ Ga (sp}^{1.04}) + 0.6794 \text{ Bi (sp}^{31.81})$	53.85% (Ga) 46.15% (Bi)	2.09/1.36/0.73	Ga=Bi: 11.42%
		$\pi = 1.94$	$\pi: 0.4586 \text{ Ga (sp}^{1.00}) + 0.8886 \text{ Bi (sp}^{1.00})$	21.04% (Ga) 78.96% (Bi)		Ga=Bi: 87.53%
R' = Ar*	2.18	$\sigma = 1.93$	$\sigma: 0.8142 \text{ Ga (sp}^{0.12}) + 0.5806 \text{ Bi (sp}^{40.52})$	66.29% (Ga) 33.71% (Bi)	2.05/1.30/0.75	Ga=Bi: 10.87%
		$\pi = 1.84$	$\pi: 0.4810 \text{ Ga (sp}^{50.27}) + 0.8767 \text{ Bi (sp}^{14.17})$	23.13% (Ga) 76.87% (Bi)		Ga=Bi: 88.05%
R' = SiMe (Si <i>t</i> Bu <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>2</sub>	2.26	$\sigma = 1.80$	$\sigma: 0.7393 \text{ Ga (sp}^{0.97}) + 0.6733 \text{ Bi (sp}^{27.39})$	54.66% (Ga) 67.33% (Bi)	2.11/1.35/0.76	Ga=Bi: 11.84%
		$\pi = 1.86$	$\pi: 0.4937 \text{ Ga (sp}^{22.70}) + 0.8696 \text{ Bi (sp}^{17.00})$	24.38% (Ga) 75.62% (Bi)		Ga=Bi: 82.11%
R' = Si <i>i</i> PrDis <sub>2</sub>	2.31	$\sigma = 1.90$	$\sigma: 0.7462 \text{ Ga (sp}^{0.92}) + 0.6657 \text{ Bi (sp}^{58.99})$	55.68% (Ga) 44.32% (Bi)	1.93/1.40/0.53	Ga=Bi: 12.93%
		$\pi = 1.84$	$\pi: 0.4201 \text{ Ga (sp}^{99.99}) + 0.9075 \text{ Bi (sp}^{99.99})$	17.65% (Ga) 82.35% (Bi)		Ga=Bi: 80.74%

(1) The Wiberg bond index (WBI) for the Ga=Bi bond and occupancy of the corresponding  $\sigma$  and  $\pi$  bonding NBO: see Refs. [63, 64], and (2) the natural resonance theory (NRT): see Refs. [73–75].

**Table 13.** Selected results for the natural bond orbital (NBO) and natural resonance theory (NRT) analyses of R'Ga=BiR' compounds that have small substituents, at the B3LYP/LANL2DZ+dp level of theory [1–8, 76–80].



R'In=BiR'	WBI	NBO analysis			NRT analysis		
		Occupancy	Hybridization	Polarization	Total/covalent/ ionic	Resonance weight	
R' = Tbt	2.05	$\sigma = 1.78$	$\sigma: 0.7626 \text{ In (sp}^{0.09}) + 0.6469 \text{ Bi (sp}^{50.74})$	58.15% (In) 41.85% (Bi)	2.10/1.15/0.95	In=Bi: 14.33% In=Bi: 76.37%	
		$\pi = 1.94$	$\pi: 0.4230 \text{ In (sp}^{99.99}) + 0.9061 \text{ Bi (sp}^{95.23})$	17.85% (In) 82.11% (Bi)		In=Bi: 0.93%	
R' = Ar*	2.15	$\sigma = 1.97$	$\sigma: 0.7145 \text{ In (sp}^{0.07}) + 0.6996 \text{ Bi (sp}^{21.13})$	51.05% (In) 48.95% (Bi)	2.11/1.04/1.07	In=Bi: 11.10% In=Bi: 85.07%	
		$\pi = 1.94$	$\pi: 0.4774 \text{ In (sp}^{99.99}) + 0.8787 \text{ Bi (sp}^{99.99})$	22.79% (In) 77.21% (Bi)		In=Bi: 3.83%	
R' = SiMe (Si <i>t</i> Bu <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>2</sub>	2.21	$\sigma = 1.74$	$\sigma: 0.7433 \text{ In (sp}^{0.99}) + 0.6690 \text{ Bi (sp}^{35.62})$	55.25% (In) 44.75% (Bi)	2.14/1.22/0.92	In=Bi: 14.20% In=Bi: 81.22%	
		$\pi = 1.88$	$\pi: 0.4468 \text{ In (sp}^{42.13}) + 0.8696 \text{ Bi (sp}^{12.11})$	19.96% (In) 80.04% (Bi)		In=Bi: 4.58%	
R' = Si <i>i</i> PrDis <sub>2</sub>	2.3	$\sigma = 1.92$	$\sigma: 0.7341 \text{ In (sp}^{53.22}) + 0.6790 \text{ Bi (sp}^{0.98})$	46.11% (In) 53.89% (Bi)	1.88/1.27/0.61	In=Bi: 15.31% In=Bi: 81.02%	
		$\pi = 1.78$	$\pi: 0.4357 \text{ In (sp}^{26.46}) + 0.9001 \text{ Bi (sp}^{99.99})$	18.99% (In) 81.01% (Bi)		In=Bi: 3.67%	

Notes: (1) The Wiberg bond index (WBI) for the In=Bi bond and occupancy of the corresponding  $\sigma$  and  $\pi$  bonding NBO: see Refs. [63, 64], and (2) the natural resonance theory (NRT): see Refs. [73–75].

**Table 14.** Selected results for the natural bond orbital (NBO) and natural resonance theory (NRT) analyses of R'In=BiR' compounds that have small substituents, at the B3LYP/LANL2DZ+dp level of theory [1–8, 76–80].

R'Tl=BiR'	WBI	NBO analysis			NRT analysis		
		Occupancy	Hybridization	Polarization	Total/covalent/ ionic	Resonance weight	
R' = Tbt	2.08	$\sigma = 1.96$	$\sigma: 0.8268 \text{ Tl (sp}^{0.07}) + 0.5625 \text{ Bi (sp}^{99.99})$	68.36% (Tl) 31.64% (Bi)	2.15/1.81/0.34	Tl=Bi: 18.71% Tl = Bi: 71.54%	
		$\pi = 1.94$	$\pi: 0.4315 \text{ In (sp}^{99.99}) + 0.9021 \text{ Bi (sp}^{99.99})$	18.61% (In) 81.37% (Bi)		Tl=Bi: 9.75%	
R' = Ar*	2.05	$\sigma = 1.97$	$\sigma: 0.8159 \text{ Tl (sp}^{0.05}) + 0.5782 \text{ Bi (sp}^{99.99})$	66.57% (Tl) 33.43% (Bi)	2.11/1.70/0.41	Tl=Bi: 21.11% Tl = Bi: 70.15%	
		$\pi = 1.95$	$\pi: 0.4788 \text{ In (sp}^{99.99}) + 0.8779 \text{ Bi (sp}^{99.99})$	22.92% (In) 77.08% (Bi)		Tl=Bi: 8.74%	

R'Tl≡BiR'	WBI	NBO analysis		NRT analysis		
		Occupancy	Hybridization	Polarization	Total/covalent/ionic	Resonance weight
R' = SiMe (Si <i>t</i> Bu <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>2</sub>	2.1	σ = 1.98	σ: 0.7986 Tl (sp <sup>0.02</sup> ) + 0.6019 Bi (sp <sup>31.50</sup> )	63.77% (Tl)	2.21/1.40/0.81	Tl=Bi: 16.13%
		π = 1.92	π: 0.3890 Tl (sp <sup>99.99</sup> ) + 0.9212 Bi (sp <sup>1.00</sup> )	36.23% (Bi)		Tl = Bi: 76.20%
R' = Si <i>i</i> PrDis <sub>2</sub>	2.13	σ = 1.98	σ: 0.7757 Tl (sp <sup>0.03</sup> ) + 0.6311 Bi (sp <sup>23.28</sup> )	15.13% (Tl)	1.85/1.23/0.62	Tl=Bi: 7.67%
				84.87% (Bi)		Tl=Bi: 20.21%
		π = 1.91	π: 0.4149 Tl (sp <sup>99.99</sup> ) + 0.9099 Bi (sp <sup>99.99</sup> )	17.22% (Tl)		Tl=Bi: 74.69%
				82.78% (Bi)		Tl≡Bi: 5.10%

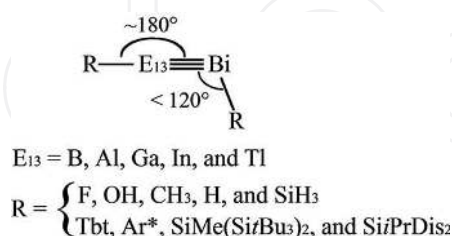
Notes: (1) The Wiberg bond index (WBI) for the Tl=Bi bond and occupancy of the corresponding σ and π bonding NBO: see Refs. [63, 64], and (2) the natural resonance theory (NRT): see Refs. [73–75].

**Table 15.** Selected results for the natural bond orbital (NBO) and natural resonance theory (NRT) analyses of R'Tl≡BiR' compounds that have small substituents, at the B3LYP/LANL2DZ+dp level of theory [1–8, 76–80].

#### 4. Overview of RE<sub>13</sub>≡BiR (E = B, Al, Ga, In, and Tl) systems

This study of the effect of substituents on the possibilities of the existence of triply bonded RE<sub>13</sub>≡BiR allows the following conclusions to be drawn (**Scheme 4**):

1. The theoretical observations strongly demonstrate that bonding mode (B) is dominant in the triply bonded RE<sub>13</sub>≡BiR species, since their structures are bent to increase stability, due to electron transfer (denoted by arrows in **Figure 1**) as well as the relativistic effect [65–68].



2. The theoretical evidence shows that both the electronic and the steric effects of substituents are crucial to making the E<sub>13</sub>≡Bi triple bond synthetically accessible. Based on the present theoretical study, however, these E<sub>13</sub>≡Bi triple bonds should be weak, not as strong as the traditional C≡C triple bond. From our theoretical study, both bulky and electropositive substituents, such as the silyl groups demonstrated in Scheme 1, have a significant effect on the stability of E<sub>13</sub>≡Bi triply bonded compounds.

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