

1077-57-1801

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An  $L$ -space is a rational homology sphere  $Y$  whose Heegaard Floer homology is as small as possible:  $\widehat{HF}(Y) \cong \mathbb{Z}^{|H_1(Y; \mathbb{Z})|}$ . Boyer, Gordon, and Watson have conjectured that  $Y$  is an  $L$ -space if and only if the fundamental group of  $Y$  is non-left-orderable, a conjecture that is known to hold for all non-hyperbolic geometric manifolds. We show that if an  $L$ -space  $Y$  admits a Heegaard diagram whose Heegaard Floer complex has exactly  $|H_1(Y; \mathbb{Z})|$  generators and thus has vanishing differential, then  $\pi_1(Y)$  is non-left-orderable. We call such manifolds strong  $L$ -spaces. Examples include double branched covers of alternating links; on the other hand, the Poincaré homology sphere is an  $L$ -space but not a strong  $L$ -space. (Received September 21, 2011)