

(12) INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

(19) World Intellectual Property
Organization
International Bureau

(43) International Publication Date
12 December 2024 (12.12.2024)



(10) International Publication Number
WO 2024/254574 A2

- (51) International Patent Classification:
H01L 33/06 (2010.01) *H01L 33/00* (2010.01)
- (21) International Application Number:
PCT/US2024/033170
- (22) International Filing Date:
08 June 2024 (08.06.2024)
- (25) Filing Language: English
- (26) Publication Language: English
- (30) Priority Data:
18/331,908 08 June 2023 (08.06.2023) US
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- (81) Designated States (*unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of national protection available*): AE, AG, AL, AM, AO, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BH, BN, BR, BW, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CL, CN, CO, CR, CU, CV, CZ, DE, DJ, DK, DM, DO, DZ, EC, EE, EG, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, GT, HN, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IQ, IR, IS, IT, JM, JO, JP, KE, KG, KH, KN, KP, KR, KW, KZ, LA, LC, LK, LR, LS, LU, LY, MA, MD, MG, MK, MN, MU, MW, MX, MY, MZ, NA, NG, NI, NO, NZ, OM, PA, PE, PG, PH, PL, PT, QA, RO, RS, RU, RW, SA, SC, SD, SE, SG, SK, SL, ST, SV, SY, TH,

(54) Title: ENERGY BAND STRUCTURES FOR LIGHT EMITTING DEVICES

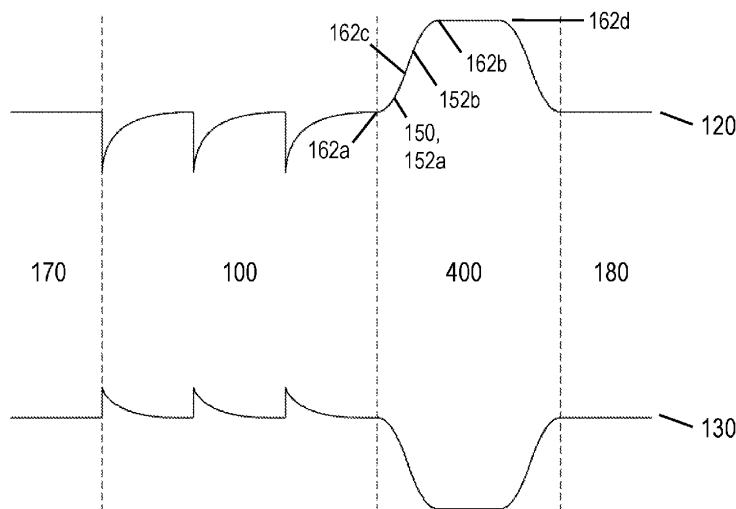


FIG. 17A

(57) Abstract: An apparatus and method for reducing the quantum confined Stark effect and electron leakage in polarized compound semiconductors optical gain regions is disclosed. The apparatus comprises a continuously graded multi-quantum well (MQW) band structure wherein the quantum wells (QWs) are concatenated with no quantum barriers (QBs) in between and no more than one heterojunction interface per well. An alternative, equivalent MQW band structure comprises continuously graded QWs separated by continuously graded QBs with no more than one heterojunction interface per well. In both embodiments the band structures are devoid of constant bandgap layers. Non-uniform period and non-uniform bandgap range MQW structures are contemplated. Non-uniform QW/QB thickness ratio MQW structures are also considered. Smoothly graded electron barrier layers (EBLs) with tangent energy bands on the MQW side and no more than one heterojunction interface on the p-injection side may be used to improve electron confinement

[Continued on next page]

TJ, TM, TN, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ, VC, VN, WS,
ZA, ZM, ZW.

(84) Designated States (*unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of regional protection available*): ARIPO (BW, CV, GH, GM, KE, LR, LS, MW, MZ, NA, RW, SC, SD, SL, ST, SZ, TZ, UG, ZM, ZW), Eurasian (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, RU, TJ, TM), European (AL, AT, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, HR, HU, IE, IS, IT, LT, LU, LV, MC, ME, MK, MT, NL, NO, PL, PT, RO, RS, SE, SI, SK, SM, TR), OAPI (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GQ, GW, KM, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

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- *of inventorship (Rule 4.17(iv))*

Published:

- *without international search report and to be republished upon receipt of that report (Rule 48.2(g))*

and hole injection.