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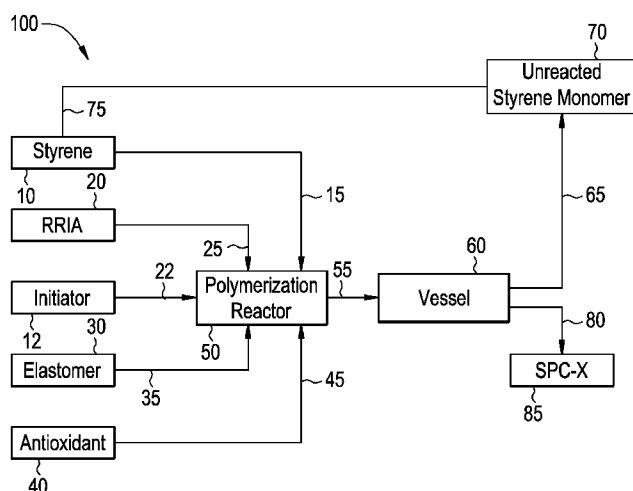
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- (54) **Title:** IMPROVED METHODS OF MAKING STYRENIC POLYMERIC COMPOSITIONS AND METHODS OF USING SAME

FIG. 1

(57) **Abstract:** A method comprising preparing a reaction mixture comprising a styrene monomer, an antioxidant, and a reaction rate improving additive, contacting the reaction mixture with an antioxidant reactive compound, and placing the reaction mixture under conditions suitable for polymerization of the styrene monomer to a styrenic polymer wherein the polymerization occurs at an overall reaction rate that is increased by equal to or less than 20% when compared to an otherwise similar polymerization process carried out in the absence of the reaction rate improving additive. A method comprising preparing a reaction mixture comprising a styrene monomer, an elastomer, an antioxidant, a sodium or calcium salt of an organic acid, and an initiator; and placing the reaction mixture under conditions suitable for polymerization of the styrene monomer to a styrenic polymer, wherein the sodium or calcium salt of an organic acid protects the initiator such that the polymerization is carried out at a reaction rate greater than would otherwise be the rate in the absence of the sodium or calcium salt of an organic acid.