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(54) Title: PROCESSES FOR PRODUCING MESOPHASE PITCH

(57) Abstract: Processes are described for producing mesophase pitch. The processes generally comprise providing a feedstock having a $T_5 \geq 400^\circ\text{F}$ (204°C) and a $T_{95} \leq 1,400^\circ\text{F}$ (760°C) and heating the feedstock at a temperature ranging from about 420°C to about 520°C to produce a heat treated product including isotropic pitch. Generally, the heating is conducted under conditions sufficient to satisfy the relationship $[X*Y] \geq 20,000$ seconds, wherein X is the equivalent reaction time of the heating, and wherein Y is the bromine number of the feedstock as measured in accordance with ASTM D1159. The processes generally further comprise contacting the isotropic pitch with a solvent having a Solubility Blending number (S_{BN}) of at least about 10 SU under conditions sufficient to produce a solvent fraction comprising the solvent and an insoluble fraction comprising mesophase pitch, and recovering the mesophase pitch.



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