

METHODS AND APPARATUS FOR CONTROLLING RF PARAMETERS AT MULTIPLE FREQUENCIES

TECHNICAL FIELD

5 **[0001]** Embodiments of the present disclosure generally relate to radio-frequency (RF) plasma-processing systems and, more particularly, to a voltage-current (V/I) probe for measuring RF electrical power in a high-temperature environments. Some embodiments of the disclosure relate to methods of calibrating the disclosed probes. Some embodiments of the disclosure utilize RF sensors positioned within the processing chamber.

10 BACKGROUND

[0002] In semiconductor manufacturing, direct information during substrate processing can be vital to the performance of certain processes. Unfortunately, most vendor supplied systems include RF sensors outside of the chamber. Further, these sensors may or may not be properly calibrated against known reactive loads or the
15 phase between the voltage and current may not be characterized correctly. Accordingly, there is a lack of direct RF voltage, current, and phase information during deposition process. Similarly, there is lack of ability to control these factors.

[0003] Further, there are no two sets of sensors that are placed upstream and downstream of the wafer where they are cross triggered so that the propagation delay
20 between the two can be used to derive wafer coupled power.

[0004] Accordingly, there is a need for methods and apparatus to provide direct information regarding RF voltage, current, and phase. Similarly, there is a need for methods and apparatus to control RF voltage, current, and phase during processing.

SUMMARY

25 **[0005]** One or more embodiments of the disclosure are directed to a method of controlling a plasma processing chamber. The method comprises measuring a first voltage, a first current and a phase difference between the first voltage and the first

current with a first RF voltage-current (V/I) sensor positioned within the plasma processing chamber. An RF generator connected to the plasma processing chamber is controlled based on the measurements provided by the first RF voltage-current sensor.

- 5 **[0006]** Additional embodiments of the disclosure are directed to a plasma processing chamber comprising a susceptor positioned within a processing volume and configured to support one or more substrate during processing. An RF plasma generator is configured to output a variable voltage, variable current and variable phase between the voltage and the current. At least one RF voltage-current (V/I)
- 10 sensor is positioned within the processing volume and configured to measure a first voltage, a first current and a phase difference between the first RF voltage and the first RF current. A controller is connected to the RF plasma generator and the at least one RF voltage-current sensor; the controller is configured to control the RF generator based on inputs from the at least one RF voltage-current sensor.
- 15 **[0007]** Further embodiments of the disclosure are directed to a non-transitory computer readable medium including instructions, that, when executed by a controller of a plasma processing system, cause the plasma processing system to perform the operations of: activating an RF generator; measuring an RF voltage, an RF current and a phase difference between the RF voltage and the RF current with an RF
- 20 voltage-current sensor; determining a measurement of the coupled plasma power at the voltage current sensor; and modifying an output of the RF generator.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

- [0008]** So that the manner in which the above recited features of the present disclosure can be understood in detail, a more particular description of the disclosure,
- 25 briefly summarized above, may be had by reference to embodiments, some of which are illustrated in the appended drawings. It is to be noted, however, that the appended drawings illustrate only typical embodiments of this disclosure and are therefore not to be considered limiting of its scope, for the disclosure may admit to other equally effective embodiments.

[0009] FIG. 1 is a block diagram illustrating a radio-frequency (RF) plasma processing system, according to one or more embodiment of the disclosure;

[0010] FIG. 2 is a schematic cross sectional view of a plasma processing chamber of the RF plasma processing system in FIG. 1, configured according to one or more
5 embodiment of the disclosure.

[0011] FIG. 3A is a schematic plan view of a V/I sensor in the RF plasma processing system in FIG. 1, according to one or more embodiment of the disclosure;

[0012] FIG. 3B is a schematic cross-sectional view of the V/I sensor in the RF plasma processing system in FIG. 1, taken at section A-A of FIG. 3A;

10 **[0013]** FIGS. 4A and 4B are functional schematic diagrams of a V/I probe of the V/I sensor in FIGS. 3A and 3B, according to one or more embodiment of the disclosure;

[0014] FIG. 5 sets forth a flow chart of process steps for calibrating a V/I sensor, according to one or more embodiment of the disclosure;

15 **[0015]** FIG. 6 sets forth a flow chart of process steps for controlling RF power, according to one or more embodiment of the disclosure;

[0016] FIGS. 7A-7C illustrates thin film deposition systems schematics and their equivalent circuits including the location of RF sensors with respect to the RF delivery circuit;

20 **[0017]** FIGS. 8A-8E illustrate various test jigs for calibrating the sensors according to one or more embodiment of the disclosure; and

[0018] FIG. 9 illustrates a data acquisition architecture for real time sampling and control.

25 **[0019]** To facilitate understanding, identical reference numerals have been used, where possible, to designate identical elements that are common to the figures. It is contemplated that elements and features of one embodiment may be beneficially incorporated in other embodiments without further recitation.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0020] In the following description, numerous specific details are set forth to provide a more thorough understanding of the embodiments of the present disclosure. However, it will be apparent to one of skill in the art that one or more of the
5 embodiments of the present disclosure may be practiced without one or more of these specific details. In other instances, well-known features have not been described in order to avoid obscuring one or more of the embodiments of the present disclosure.

[0021] FIG. 1 is a block diagram illustrating a radio-frequency (RF) plasma system 100, according to one or more aspects of the invention. RF plasma system 100
10 includes a plasma processing chamber 120, a first RF generator 130 coupled to plasma processing chamber 120 via a first RF match 131 and a transmission line 132. In some embodiments, the RF plasma system 100 also includes a second RF generator 140 coupled to plasma processing chamber 120 via a second RF match 141 and a transmission line 142. RF plasma system 100 further includes a control
15 circuitry 150 (also referred to herein as “a controller”) and voltage-current (V/I) sensors 151 and 152.

[0022] Plasma processing chamber 120 may be any technically feasible plasma deposition or etch chamber that includes a capacitively coupled plasma system or an inductively coupled plasma system for generating plasma therein, including a plasma-
20 enhanced chemical vapor deposition (PECVD) system, a physical vapor deposition system, an epitaxial layer deposition system, a plasma etch system, and the like. First RF generator 130 may be any technically feasible RF power generator configured to provide RF power to one or more discharge electrodes of plasma processing chamber 120 and thereby drive plasma generation in plasma processing chamber 120. First RF
25 generator 130 may provide the RF power at one RF frequency, or at multiple RF frequencies. For example, in some embodiments, first RF generator 130 may be configured to supply power at an RF frequency of 13.56 MHz to a distribution manifold (also referred to as a showerhead) or other component suitable for use as a discharge electrode in plasma processing chamber 120. Similarly, second RF generator 140,
30 when present, may be any technically feasible RF power generator configured to drive

plasma generation in plasma processing chamber 120 at one RF frequency, or at multiple RF frequencies. For example, in some embodiments, second RF generator 140 may be configured to supply power at a lower RF frequency of 360 kHz, or the like, to a substrate support (also referred to as a susceptor) or other component suitable for use as a discharge electrode in plasma processing chamber 120.

[0023] As shown, first RF generator 130 transmits RF power, i.e., power through first RF match 131 and transmission line 132, to an RF load in plasma processing chamber 120. V/I sensor 151 is positioned within plasma processing chamber 120 and enables measurement of the current, voltage, and phase of the RF power, by transmitting to control circuitry 150, via signal leads 153, a voltage induced by a voltage associated with the RF power and a voltage induced by a current associated with the RF power. Because V/I sensor 151 is disposed at the transmission line 132 connection point 221, 222 and positioned within plasma processing chamber 120, correction for the effects of standing wave components in the transmission line 132 by control circuitry 150 is generally not necessary. Similarly, second RF generator 140 transmits RF power, through second RF match 141 and transmission line 142, to an RF load in plasma processing chamber 120. V/I sensor 152 enables measurement of the current, voltage, and phase of RF power coupled to plasma processing chamber 120 via transmission line 142. Specifically, V/I sensor 152 transmits to control circuitry 150, via signal leads 154, a voltage induced by a voltage associated with the RF power and a voltage induced by a current associated with the RF power.

[0024] In embodiments in which plasma processing chamber 120 is configured with a pedestal or substrate support heater, RF plasma system 100 further includes a heater power supply 160 coupled to heating elements (not shown in FIG. 1) in plasma processing chamber 120 via conductive leads 161 and 162. In such embodiments, RF plasma system 100 also includes an RF filter 170 that is electrically disposed between the heating elements in plasma processing chamber 120 and heater power supply 160. While heating elements disposed within a pedestal or substrate support are not nominally part of the RF system of plasma processing chamber 120, such heater elements typically include coiled conductive components that have many windings, and consequently can couple to the RF energy provided within the processing region

(not shown in FIG. 1) of the plasma processing chamber 120. Thus, RF filter 170 is an electronic system or apparatus that is configured to provide a portion of a conductive path formed between the heater coils and the heater power supply 160, while protecting heater power supply 160 from the RF energy provided within the plasma processing chamber 120. RF filter 170 is typically disposed proximate to or in contact with an external, i.e., atmospheric, surface of plasma processing chamber 120. As a result, RF filter 170 can reach temperatures of 100 °C to 200 °C during operation of plasma processing chamber 120.

[0025] Control circuitry 150 includes logic configured to receive signals from V/I sensor 151 and determine a current, a voltage, a phase, and a magnitude of the coupled RF power entering plasma processing chamber 120 via transmission lines 132. In some embodiments, such logic is implemented as magnitude and phase detection circuitry. In embodiments in which first RF generator 130 transmits RF power via transmission lines 132 to multiple connection points 221, 222 within plasma processing chamber 120, control circuitry 150 includes logic configured to receive multiple signals from V/I sensor 151, and thereby determine a current, a voltage, a phase, and a magnitude of the coupled RF power entering plasma processing chamber 120 via each such transmission lines 132. Similarly, control circuitry 150 includes logic configured to receive signals from V/I sensor 152 and determine a current, a voltage, a phase, and a magnitude of the coupled RF power entering plasma processing chamber 120 via transmission lines 142.

[0026] In embodiments in which plasma processing chamber 120 is configured with a pedestal or substrate support heater, V/I sensor 152 is configured to transmit to control circuitry 150 via signal leads 154 a signal voltage induced by RF power passing through conductive leads 161 and 162 from heater elements within the pedestal or substrate support heater. V/I sensor 152 is further configured to transmit to control circuitry 150, via signal leads 154, a voltage signal induced from a flow of current associated with a portion of the RF power provided to the pedestal, which passes through the conductive leads 161 and 162 to an external ground (not shown). In such embodiments, control circuitry 150 is further configured to determine a current, a voltage, a phase, and a magnitude of the RF power passing through conductive

leads 161 and 162 based on the voltages transmitted via signal leads 154. Thus, RF power lost via conductive leads 161 and 162 and heater power supply 160 can be quantified based on the current and voltage measurements provided by the V/I sensor 152. Consequently, instance-to-instance variation in the electrical behavior of the electrical circuit containing the RF filter 170 (i.e., from one chamber to the next) can be quantified and compensated for, thereby preventing chamber-to-chamber variation in processes performed in various instances of plasma processing chamber 120.

[0027] For example, in such embodiments, a process performed in plasma processing chamber 120 may be based on the actual or close to actual RF power delivered via transmission lines 142 to the processing region 246 of the process chamber 120, due to the correction for the RF power lost via conductive leads 161 and 162, rather than just the measurement of the RF power provided by second RF generator 140.

[0028] In some embodiments, the V/I sensor 152 is positioned within a region of the processing chamber that is at least partially surrounded by grounded or shielded process chamber elements to isolate the V/I sensor 152 components from various external noise sources. In some configurations, a minimum fixed gap (e.g., 1-10 mm) is maintained between all of the V/I sensor 152 components and other process chamber elements in the region of the processing chamber in which the V/I sensor is placed. Consequently, instance-to-instance variation in the electrical measurements provided by the V/I sensor 152 will be reduced, thereby preventing chamber-to-chamber variation in processes performed in various instances of plasma processing chamber 120. In one example, a V/I sensor 152 is positioned within the plasma processing chamber 120.

[0029] In the embodiment illustrated in FIG. 1, a single controller 150 is depicted in RF plasma system 100. In other embodiments, a different controller 150 may be incorporated into each RF generator included in RF plasma system 100. In other embodiments, the functionality of control circuitry 150 may be incorporated into a central system controller for the RF plasma system 100. In either case, the

functionality of control circuitry 150 may include any technically feasible implementation, including via software, hardware, and/or firmware.

[0030] FIG. 2 is a schematic cross sectional view of plasma processing chamber 120 configured according to various embodiments of the disclosure. By way of example, the embodiment of plasma processing chamber 120 in FIG. 2 is described in terms of a PECVD system, but any other plasma processing chamber may fall within the scope of the embodiments, including other plasma deposition chambers or plasma etch chambers. Plasma processing chamber 120 includes walls 202, a bottom 204, and a chamber lid 224 that together enclose a susceptor 208 and a processing region 246. Plasma processing chamber 120 further includes a vacuum pump 214, a gas source 218, first RF generator 130 and first RF match 131, second RF generator 140 and second RF match 141, and RF filter 170, each coupled externally to the plasma processing chamber 120.

[0031] In addition, plasma processing chamber 120 includes one or more V/I sensors 151 and 152 directly coupled to or otherwise mounted within plasma processing chamber 120. In the embodiment illustrated in FIG. 2, plasma processing chamber 120 includes V/I sensor 151 so that voltage and current passing through transmission line(s) 132 can be accurately measured proximate processing region 246 and a substrate 210. In addition, plasma processing chamber 120 includes V/I sensor 152 so that voltage and current passing through transmission lines 142 can be accurately measured proximate processing region 246 and substrate 210. In some embodiments, V/I sensor 152 is mounted on or near bottom 204 of plasma processing chamber 120, or is coupled directly to bottom 204 of plasma processing chamber 120. Alternatively, V/I sensor 152 may be mounted on or near the susceptor 208. In some embodiments, V/I sensor 152 may be coupled directly to a surface of the susceptor 208. Alternatively, V/I sensor 152 may be mounted to susceptor 208 via a bracket or other support structure. In either case, V/I sensor 152 is disposed within a few centimeters of substrate 210 and processing region 246.

[0032] It is noted that V/I sensors 151 and 152 are specifically disposed within plasma processing chamber 120. The sensors 151 and 152 may be coupled directly

to an interior surface thereof or may be mounted to a bracket or other support structure that is coupled directly to the interior surface of the plasma processing chamber 120. In some embodiments, the sensors 151 and 152 are exposed to elevated temperatures during processing of substrate 210.

5 **[0033]** Walls 202 and bottom 204 may comprise an electrically conductive material, such as aluminum or stainless steel. Disposed in plasma processing chamber 120 is a shadow frame 238 that is configured to prevent or reduce unwanted deposition from occurring on surfaces of susceptor 208 that are not covered by substrate 210 during processing. Shadow frame 238 rests on a ledge 240 when plasma processing
10 chamber 120 is idle, and may be coupled by one or more straps 243 to an inside surface of walls 202. Through one or more of walls 202, a slit valve opening 206 may be present that is configured to facilitate insertion of substrate 210 into and removal of substrate 210 from plasma processing chamber 120. A slit valve configured to seal slit valve opening 206 may be disposed either inside or outside of plasma processing
15 chamber 120.

[0034] Vacuum pump 214 is coupled to plasma processing chamber 120 and is configured to adjust the vacuum level therein. As shown, a valve 216 may be coupled between plasma processing chamber 120 and vacuum pump 214. Vacuum pump 214 evacuates plasma processing chamber 120 prior to substrate processing and
20 removes process gas therefrom during processing through valve 216. Valve 216 may be adjustable to facilitate regulation of the evacuation rate of plasma processing chamber 120. The evacuation rate through valve 216 and the incoming gas flow rate from gas source 218 determine chamber pressure and process gas residency time in plasma processing chamber 120.

25 **[0035]** Susceptor 208 may include any technically feasible apparatus for supporting a substrate 210 during processing by plasma processing chamber 120, such as substrate 210 in FIG. 2. In some embodiments, susceptor 208 is configured to be raised and lowered. In one embodiment, susceptor 208 may be formed at least in part from or contain an electrically conductive material, such as tungsten, copper,
30 molybdenum, aluminum or stainless steel. In embodiments in which plasma

processing chamber 120 is a capacitively coupled plasma chamber, susceptor 208 may be configured to contain an electrode (not shown). In such embodiments, a metal rod 242 is electrically coupled to an embedded electrode disposed within the susceptor 208 and is configured to provide RF power to the embedded electrode through the connection point 247. As such, the embedded electrode and metal rod 242 are electrically coupled to the second RF generator 140 via transmission lines 142.

[0036] In some embodiments, susceptor 208 includes one or more heating elements 209 for heating substrate 210 during processing. In such embodiments, heating elements 209 are coupled to heater power supply 160 via conductive leads 161 and 162. Conductive leads 161 and 162 each pass through a respective measurement opening (not shown in FIG. 1) of V/I sensor 151, so that RF current and voltage can be measured thereby.

[0037] Gas source 218 is coupled to plasma processing chamber 120 via a tube 223 that passes through chamber lid 224. Tube 223 is coupled to a backing plate 226 to permit processing gas to pass through the backing plate 226 and enter a plenum 248 between backing plate 226 and a gas distribution showerhead 228. Gas distribution showerhead 228 may be held in place adjacent to backing plate 226 by a suspension 234, so that gas distribution showerhead 228, backing plate 226, and suspension 234 together form an assembly sometimes referred to as a gas box. Thus, during operation, processing gas introduced into plasma processing chamber 120 from gas source 218 fills plenum 248 and then passes through gas passages 230 formed in gas distribution showerhead 228 to uniformly enter processing region 246. In alternative embodiments, process gas may be introduced into processing region 246 via inlets and/or nozzles (not shown) that are attached to walls 202 in addition to or in lieu of gas distribution showerhead 228.

[0038] First RF generator 130 is coupled to backing plate 226 at coupling point 221 and/or 222 via one or more transmission lines 132. Thus, coupling points 221 and 222 act as RF power feed points to backing plate 226. Alternatively, first RF generator 130 may be coupled to backing plate 226 at a single coupling point. Transmission lines

132 may include coaxial cables and, in some embodiments, are configured with additional shielding external to these coaxial cables to prevent excessive leakage of RF power to ground. In one embodiment, first RF generator 130 includes an RF generator capable of generating RF currents at a frequency of about 13.56 MHz. In another embodiment, first RF generator 130 includes a VHF generator capable of generating VHF power, such as VHF power at frequencies between about 40 MHz to 200 MHz or more. As shown, transmission lines 132 each pass through a respective measurement opening of V/I sensor 151.

[0039] In some embodiments, first RF generator 130 provides high frequency power through first RF match 131 to a discharge electrode disposed adjacent processing region 246. Such a discharge electrode may include a process gas distribution element, such as gas distribution showerhead 228 (as shown in FIG. 2), or an array of gas injection nozzles, through which process gases are introduced into processing region 246. The discharge electrode, e.g., gas distribution showerhead 228, may be oriented substantially parallel to the surface of substrate 210, and capacitively couples plasma source power into processing region 246, which is disposed between substrate 210 and gas distribution showerhead 228. During processing, susceptor 208, shadow frame 238 and substrate 210 are raised and positioned near the lower surface of showerhead 228 (e.g., within 1-30 mm) to form the at least partially enclosed processing region 246.

[0040] In some embodiments, plasma processing chamber 120 may also include a machine-compatible controller (e.g., control circuitry 150) configured to control the operation of plasma processing chamber 120, including output power level of first RF generator 130, flow rate of the various process gases directed to processing region 246 via gas source 218, adjustment of valve 216, etc. Generally such a controller includes one or more processors, memory, and instructions suitable for controlling the operation of plasma processing chamber 120. Alternatively, in some embodiments, a system controller configured to control operation of a multi-chamber processing system may instead be configured to control the operation of plasma processing chamber 120, as well as one or more other processing chambers.

[0041] Plasma processing, such as a PECVD process, is generally performed in the plasma processing chamber 120 by placing substrate 210 on susceptor 208 and introducing one or more precursor gases from gas source 218 into processing region 246. The precursor gas or gases in processing region 246 are energized (e.g.,
5 excited) into a plasma state by applying RF power from RF generator 130 to gas distribution showerhead 228 at coupling points 221 and 222, and/or applying RF power from RF generator 140 to susceptor 208. This type of plasma is typically referred to as capacitively coupled plasma (CCP) since the electron heating mechanism is predominately through the capacitive plasma sheaths near gas
10 distribution showerhead 228 and a grounded electrode, such as, for example, the susceptor 208 or walls 202. The excited gas reacts to form a layer of material on a surface of substrate 210.

[0042] Generally, RF current seeks the shortest path to return to the source driving it. Therefore, during plasma processing a driven RF current travels from first RF
15 generator 130, through the plasma generated in the processing region 246, and then to an RF return path, such as walls 202. In embodiments in which susceptor 208 is coupled to second RF generator 140, RF current travels from second RF generator 140 through the rod 242, embedded electrode, and plasma disposed in the processing region 246, and then to an RF return path, such as walls 202 and bottom 204.
20 However, in embodiments in which susceptor 208 includes heating elements 209, heating elements 209 may couple to the RF energy delivered to the plasma processing chamber 120, and some fraction of RF energy provided to susceptor 208 may not return to second RF generator 140. Instead, a portion of the RF energy provided by second RF generator 140 may flow to heater power supply 160 via
25 conductive leads 161 and 162. While filter 170 is configured to reduce the flow of RF energy along conductive leads 161 and 162, the efficiency of filter 170 is rarely perfect. As a result, a significant portion of RF energy may flow to heater power supply 160 despite the presence of filter 170. Thus, in addition to power loss due to reflection, RF power loss through conductive leads 161 and 162 can also impact the magnitude
30 of RF energy that is actually delivered to processing region 246. Moreover, because filter 170 performance typically varies from instance to instance, the impact of RF

power loss through conductive leads 161 and 162 can vary in each instance of plasma processing chamber 120. Thus, when nominally identical processes are performed in two different instances of plasma processing chamber 120, process results, such as film thickness, uniformity, and the like, can suffer unpredictable variation, unless the
5 RF power actually delivered to processing region 246 can be measured accurately.

[0043] Conventional V/I sensors for RF applications generally include organic substrates that can be thermally damaged at 70° C. or more, such as FR-4. As a result, for high-temperature applications, such as PECVD chambers, conventional V/I sensors are typically located some distance from the processing chamber.
10 Consequently, measurements made by such sensors and used by the RF matching components in the electrical circuit rely on extrapolation techniques to compensate for the location dependence of RF measurements made a distance from the processing chamber along an imperfectly matched transmission lines due to this induced error in the sensed electrical measurements. Such extrapolations are highly dependent on the
15 structural details of plasma processing chamber 120, and are very difficult to verify experimentally, and even when verified for one process, typically change for other processes according to process chemistry and chamber operating conditions. Further, due to the non-linear nature of the standing wave present in transmission lines 132 and 142, conventional extrapolation techniques based on an idealized transmission
20 lines model cannot accurately account for the RF power loss sustained between substrate 210 and a remote measurement point, and therefore can greatly underestimate or overestimate such power loss.

[0044] Accordingly, in embodiments of this disclosure, V/I sensors 151 and/or 152 enable more accurate measurement of the voltage, current, and phase of RF power
25 that is delivered to processing region 246. Specifically, V/I sensors 151 and/or 152 are configured for a high-temperature environment, and therefore are compatible for placement within the plasma processing chamber 120, even when a high-temperature process is performed therewith. One such embodiment is illustrated in FIGS. 3A and 3B.

- [0045]** FIG. 3A is a schematic plan view of V/I sensor 152, according to various embodiments of the disclosure. FIG. 3B is a schematic cross-sectional view of V/I sensor 152 taken at section A-A in FIG. 3A. V/I sensor 152 is configured to accurately measure RF current and voltage in a high-temperature environment, such as a location within plasma processing chamber 120 during a high-temperature PECVD process. In the embodiment illustrated in FIGS. 3A and 3B, V/I sensor 152 is configured to measure RF current and voltage in metal rod 242 and conductive leads 161 and 162. In one embodiment, V/I sensor 152 is configured to measure RF voltage and current provided at a distal end of the metal rod 242 and distal ends of the conductive leads 161 and 162 relative to susceptor 208. In some embodiments, the V/I sensor 152 includes a planar body 301 with a first V/I probe 310, a second V/I probe 320, a third V/I probe 330 and a ground plane 302 that surrounds and electrically isolates the first V/I probe 310, the second V/I probe 320, and the third V/I probe 330 from each other.
- [0046]** Planar body 301 is comprised of a non-organic containing, electrically insulative material, such as a ceramic, a mica, ferrite, or similar material. For example, suitable ceramic materials include aluminum oxide and aluminum nitride. The aforementioned non-organic, electrically insulative materials are highly temperature resistant compared to organic substrates that are commonly employed in conventional V/I sensors, such as FR-4. Consequently, planar body 301 and V/I sensor 152 are compatible with being disposed within plasma processing chamber 120. As a result, V/I sensor 152 can be located proximate processing region 246 of plasma processing chamber 120. However, in some moderate temperature applications, the planar body 301 may be formed from a polyimide, such as Kapton®.
- [0047]** First V/I probe 310 includes a voltage pickup 311 and a current pickup 312, each of which is disposed around a measurement opening 315. Measurement opening 315 is configured to accommodate a conductive structure suitable for transmitting RF power, such as a conductor of transmission lines 142 or metal rod 242, which provide RF power to the embedded electrode within the susceptor 208. Thus, V/I probe 310 is configured to provide accurate voltage and current

measurements of RF power being transmitted to plasma processing chamber 120 at a location proximate processing region 246.

[0048] Voltage pickup 311 illustrated in FIG. 4B is configured to generate a voltage signal induced by RF power passing through measurement opening 315 formed in the planar body 301, for example via transmission lines 142 or metal rod 242. The voltage signal generated by voltage pickup 311 is substantially proportional to the voltage of the RF power passing through a portion of a conductive element that is positioned within the measurement opening 315. In some embodiments, voltage pickup 311 is configured as a conductive ring 311A, which is disposed around or formed on a surface of the measurement opening 315. The conductive ring 311A is typically surrounded by a grounded element 320. The conductive ring 311A and the grounded element 320 are both connected within an electrical circuit, such as RF voltage measurement circuit 455 illustrated in FIG. 4B, and are used together to measure the voltage of the RF power passing through a portion of the RF conductive element positioned within the measurement opening 315. The grounded element 320 generally includes one or more grounded layers 302A and 302B which are disposed on or within a surface of the V/I sensor 152 and are electrically coupled together by a plurality of interconnecting vias 302C. The one or more grounded layers 302A and 302B and plurality of interconnecting vias 302C may be formed from a conductive material (e.g., metals containing Al, Ag, Au, Mo, Sn, or Cu) and are used to electrically shield the first V/I probe 310, the second V/I probe 320, and the third V/I probe 330 from each other and from other external components. In some configurations, a plurality of interconnecting vias 302C are positioned around each of the V/I probes 310, 320 and 330 to form a shield that will minimize cross-talk between the components within each of the V/I probes. In some embodiments, the grounded element 320 can be connected to an outer shield conductor 402 of a coaxial transmission lines (not shown), such as a signal leads 154.

[0049] Current pickup 312 illustrated in FIG. 4A is configured to generate a voltage signal induced by RF power passing through a portion of a conductive element that is positioned within the measurement opening 315 by use of an electrical circuit, such as RF current measurement circuit 454 illustrated in FIG. 4A. The voltage signal induced

by the magnetic field flux is induced in the current pickup 312, and is substantially proportional to the RF current passing through the portion of a conductive element that is positioned within the measurement opening 315. In some embodiments, current pickup 312 is configured as a toroidal-shaped coil, or a close approximation thereto. For example, in the embodiment illustrated in FIGS. 3A and 3B, current pickup 312 includes substantially planar circuit traces 313 on a top surface 301A of planar body 301, substantially planar circuit traces 314 on a bottom surface 301B of planar body 301, and conductive vias 316 formed through planar body 301. Each conductive via 316 connects a circuit trace 313 with a corresponding circuit trace 314, so that together, circuit traces 313, circuit traces 314, and conductive vias 316 that are serially interconnected to form a continuous conductive loop structure.

[0050] It is noted that the configuration of V/I sensor 152 illustrated in FIGS. 3A and 3B minimizes or otherwise reduces cross-talk between voltage pickup 311 and current pickup 312. Specifically, because voltage pickup 311 and current pickup 312 are positioned in a single plane, i.e., a plane defined by planar body 301 (e.g., X-Y plane), and because this plane is orthogonal to the direction of RF power transmission passing through measurement opening 315, RF voltage in the transmission lines disposed in measurement opening 315 induces little or no voltage in current pickup 312, and RF current flowing in the transmission lines disposed in measurement opening 315 induces little or no voltage in voltage pickup 311. Consequently, it is believed that the transmission lines voltage measurement and current measurement can be considered to be mutually exclusive of each other, and thus there is very little cross-talk between these sensing elements. That is, there are no significant measurement errors caused by the voltage signal from voltage pickup 311 including a contribution from RF current passing through measurement opening 315, and there are no significant measurement errors caused by the voltage signal from current pickup 312 including a contribution from RF voltage passing through measurement opening 315. Thus, the product of the measured voltage, the measured current, and the cosine of the phase difference between voltage pickup 311 and current pickup 312 is substantially proportional to the instantaneous transmission line power at the point of the measurements. In some embodiments, the size of the voltage pickup 311 and

current pickup 312 in the V/I probe 310 is sized proportionally to the size or cross-sectional area of the portion of the conductive element passing through the opening 315 formed therein or the generated fields passing the opening 315 formed therein.

[0051] Second V/I probe 320 and third V/I probe 330 may be substantially similar in configuration and operation to first V/I probe 310, and are included in V/I sensor 152 to provide voltage and current measurements for additional RF transmission lines associated with plasma processing chamber 120, such as conductive leads 161 and 162. It is noted that conductive leads 161 and 162 are not intended as RF transmission lines, but nonetheless may act as such in some embodiments of plasma processing chamber 120.

[0052] Second V/I probe 320 includes a voltage pickup 321 and a current pickup 322, each of which is disposed around a measurement opening 325. Measurement opening 325 is configured to accommodate a particular RF conductive lead associated with plasma processing chamber 120 that is not coupled between an RF generating source and a ground that is coupled to the plasma processing chamber 120, such as conductive lead 161. In some embodiments, the size of the voltage pickup 321 and current pickup 322 in the V/I probe 320 is sized proportionally to the size or cross-sectional area of the portion of the conductive element passing through the measurement opening 325 formed therein or the generated fields passing the measurement opening 325 formed therein.

[0053] Similarly, third V/I probe 330 includes a voltage pickup 331 and a current pickup 332, each of which is disposed around a measurement opening 335. Measurement opening 335 is configured to accommodate another RF conductive lead associated with plasma processing chamber 120 that is not coupled between an RF generating source and a ground that is coupled to the plasma processing chamber, such as conductive lead 162. In some embodiments, the size of the voltage pickup 331 and current pickup 332 in the V/I probe 330 is sized proportionally to the size or cross-sectional area of the portion of the conductive element passing through the measurement opening 335 formed therein or the generated fields passing the measurement opening 335 formed therein. Because second V/I probe 320 and third

V/I probe 330 enable measurement of RF power loss through conductive leads 161 and 162, the actual RF power coupled to processing region 246 can be more accurately determined than by merely measuring RF power delivered to the plasma processing chamber 120 via an upstream portion of the metal rod 242 or transmission
5 lines 142. Therefore, chamber-to-chamber variation in the efficiency of filter 170 can be detected, quantified, and compensated for by use of the various V/I probes and chamber RF matching elements.

[0054] FIGS. 4A and 4B are functional schematic diagrams of first V/I probe 310 of V/I sensor 152, according to one or more embodiment of the disclosure. As shown, a
10 signal lead 154B of the signal leads 154 (FIG. 1) is coupled to voltage pickup 311 and another signal lead 154A of the signal lead 154 is coupled to current pickup 312. In some embodiments, each of these signal leads 154A and 154B are configured as part of one or more coaxial cables that have a 50 ohm resistance between a center conductor 401 and an outer shield conductor 402.

[0055] In some embodiments, for optimal or otherwise improved operation of plasma processing chamber 120, each V/I sensor associated therewith can be calibrated. In such embodiments, a particular signal voltage generated by the voltage pickup of the V/I sensor can be precisely correlated to a particular known RF voltage passing through the measurement opening of the V/I sensor. Similarly, a particular
20 signal voltage generated by the current pickup 312 of the V/I sensor can be precisely correlated to a particular known RF current passing through the measurement opening of the V/I sensor. In this way, a calibration coefficient can be generated for the voltage pickup and another calibration coefficient can be generated for the current pickup 312. In subsequent operation, signal voltages generated by the voltage pickup
25 and multiplied by the appropriate calibration coefficient can precisely indicate the RF voltage passing through the measurement opening at any instant in time. Similarly, signal voltages generated by the current pickup 312 and multiplied by the appropriate calibration coefficient can precisely indicate the RF current passing through the measurement opening at any instant in time. One such embodiment is described
30 below in conjunction with FIG. 5.

[0056] FIG. 5 sets forth a flow chart of process for calibrating a V/I sensor, according to various embodiments of the disclosure. Although the process is described in conjunction with RF plasma system 100 in FIGS. 1-4, persons skilled in the art will understand that the process may be performed with other types of RF plasma systems. The control algorithms for the method 500 reside in controller 150, the machine-compatible controller configured to control the operation of plasma processing chamber 120, or in a separate computing device coupled to RF plasma system 100 during the calibration process. These control algorithms may be implemented in whole or in part as software- or firmware-implemented logic, and/or as hardware-implemented logic circuits.

[0057] Prior to the process, a suitable RF generator is coupled to a dummy load of a known impedance, via an RF match and a suitable transmission lines of a known impedance. More specifically, the RF generator, the dummy load, and the RF match are selected to form a matched RF system, i.e., an RF system with no reflection. For example, in one embodiment, second RF generator 140 is coupled to a 50 ohm dummy load via second RF match 142 and transmission lines 142. In addition, prior to the process, the transmission lines is fed through a measurement opening of the V/I sensor to be calibrated, such as V/I sensor 152.

[0058] A method 500 begins at block 501, in which RF power is generated by second RF generator 140 at a particular RF frequency. For example, in one embodiment, second RF generator 140 generates 2500W at 27 MHz. In some embodiments, the magnitude of RF power generated in block 501 is equal to a maximum RF power expected to be employed by second RF generator 140 at the particular frequency.

[0059] At block 502, the V/I probe through which transmission lines 141 is fed, for example first V/I probe 310, generates a first voltage signal and a second voltage signal. Voltage pickup 311 generates the first voltage signal, which is proportional to the RF voltage found at the measurement opening 315 of first V/I probe 310. Current pickup 312 generates the second voltage signal, which is proportional to the RF

current passing through measurement opening 315 of first V/I probe 310. The control circuitry 150 may then store these received measurement signals in memory.

[0060] At block 503, a calibration coefficient is determined for voltage pickup 311 based on the first voltage signal and the known RF voltage passing through measurement opening 315. It is noted that because there is no reflection in the matched RF system employed in method 500, the RF voltage equals the square root of the product of RF power and resistance of the system. Because both RF power and resistance of the system are known, the RF voltage is known. Therefore, after completing blocks 501-503 at least twice a V/I probe voltage versus the known magnitude of the RF voltage curve can be formed. Since the calibration curve will be linear and the intercept will be at zero volts, the coefficient will equal the slope of the formed curve, which is then be used as the calibration coefficient for the V/I probe voltage.

[0061] Also at block 503, a calibration coefficient is determined for current pickup 312 based on the second voltage signal and the known RF current passing through measurement opening 315. Because there is no reflection in the matched RF system employed in method 500, the RF current is also known, since current equals the square root of the ratio of RF power to resistance of the system. Because both RF power and resistance of the system are known, the RF current is known. Therefore, after completing blocks 501-503 at least twice a V/I probe current measurement (e.g., voltage signal) versus the known magnitude of the RF current curve can be formed. Since the calibration curve will be linear and the intercept will be at zero volts, the coefficient will equal the slope of the formed curve, which is then be used as the calibration coefficient for the V/I probe current measurement.

[0062] In some embodiment, the determined calibration coefficient for the voltage pickup 311 and/or the calibration coefficient for current pickup 312 for each V/I probe are stored within memory of the control circuitry 150 for use by portions of the control circuitry to adjust the measured RF current and voltage values by the V/I probes that are then used by the RF matching elements and/or RF power supply elements used in a processing chamber.

- [0063]** In some embodiments, an RF generator may be employed in an RF plasma system to provide mixed operating frequencies. For example, in some situations, two RF frequencies simultaneously drive the PECVD plasma to control plasma density and ion energy proximate a substrate 210 being processed. Also, pulsing operation
5 may be employed to optimize certain film properties. In either case, when more than one frequency is present in an RF system, the signals generated by a current pickup 312 and a voltage pickup of a V/I sensor are typically fed through a band-pass filter (not shown) at each of the operating frequencies before reaching magnitude and phase detection circuitry. Insertion of such band-pass filters can introduce magnitude
10 differences (attenuation) and phase differences between the signal generated by the current pickup 312 and the signal generated by the voltage pickup that can then be used to adjust the RF power provided by each of the RF generators and/or adjust the RF match parameters associated with each RF source's respective RF matching element(s).
- [0064]** According to some embodiments, when an RF generator is employed in an RF plasma system to provide mixed operating frequencies, the calibration process of method 500 may be employed at different RF power levels at each of the RF frequencies used in the processing chamber to produce accurate calibration coefficients for each of the driven RF frequencies. Specifically, the calibration process
20 of method 500 may be employed at each operating frequency, to generate calibration coefficients for each operating frequency, thereby enabling calibration for attenuation of the generated signal(s) caused by the above-described band-pass filters. In addition, because the RF system employed in method 500 is a matched RF system with no reflection, any phase difference detected between the first voltage signal and
25 the second voltage signal is actually the phase offset of the RF system that is detected by the measurement circuitry caused by the band-pass filter included therein. For multiple frequency operation of an RF system, a different system phase offset is generally employed at each driven RF frequency, and each such phase offset being determined in a different implementation of method 500. Therefore, the phase
30 difference measured in method 500 at a particular frequency can be considered a system phase offset that may be employed for that particular operating frequency for

use in the correction of the detected RF power parameters by the V/I probes that can then be used to control the RF power provided by each of the RF generators and/or adjust the RF match parameters associated with each RF source's respective RF matching element(s).

5 **[0065]** FIG. 6 sets forth a flow chart of a process for controlling RF power applied to a plasma processing chamber 120, according to various embodiments of the disclosure. Although the process is described in conjunction with RF plasma system 100 in FIGS. 1-4, persons skilled in the art will understand that the process may be performed with other types of RF plasma systems. The control algorithms for the
10 method reside in controller 150, or the machine-compatible control circuitry configured to control the operation of plasma processing chamber 120. These control algorithms may be implemented in whole or in part as software- or firmware-implemented logic, and/or as hardware-implemented logic circuits.

[0066] Prior to the process, suitable calibration coefficients are determined, for
15 example via method 500, for each V/I probe associated with RF plasma system 100. For example, for V/I sensor 152, a suitable calibration coefficient is determined for each of voltage pickup 311, current pickup 312, voltage pickup 321, current pickup 322, voltage pickup 331, and current pickup 332. In addition, in embodiments in which
20 second RF generator 140 is configured to generate a mixed frequency, a system phase offset from measurement circuitry of RF plasma system 100 is also determined for each frequency.

[0067] A method 600 begins at block 601, in which RF power is generated by second RF generator 140 at a particular RF frequency and output magnitude. The magnitude of RF power generated at block 601 is intended to result in a target RF
25 power being coupled to processing region 246. Generally, the target RF power is associated with a particular process being run in plasma processing chamber 120. Thus, for a different process, a different target RF power may be employed at block 601.

[0068] At block 602, V/I sensor 152 generates at least a first voltage signal and a
30 second voltage signal, where voltage pickup 311 generates the first voltage signal,

and current pickup 312 generates the second voltage signal. The first voltage signal is proportional to the RF voltage passing through measurement opening 315 of V/I probe 310, and the second voltage signal is proportional to the RF current passing through measurement opening 315 of V/I probe 310. In embodiments in which V/I sensor 152
5 includes multiple probes, V/I sensor generates additional voltage signals, such as voltage signals that measure RF voltage and current associated with conductive leads 161 and 162.

[0069] In some embodiments, V/I sensor 152 generates a first voltage signal and a second voltage signal at an interval in a range of 1 μ s to 1 second. In some
10 embodiments, the interval is in a range of 1 μ s to 1 ms. In so doing, it may be possible to generate the respective waveforms of the RF voltage and RF current.

[0070] At block 603, actual RF power delivered to processing region 246 in plasma processing chamber 120 is determined. In some embodiments, determining the actual RF power delivered includes applying a first calibration coefficient to the first voltage
15 signal and a second calibration coefficient to the second voltage signal. As noted above, the first and second calibration coefficients are typically determined in a previously performed calibration process, such as method 500.

[0071] During the process of determining the actual RF power delivered to processing region 246, the control circuitry 150 may retrieve the first calibration
20 coefficient and the second calibration coefficient from memory, and then multiply the appropriate calibration coefficient with the appropriate measure signal value collected from the appropriate V/I probe to determine a corrected measurement signal value that can then be used to control the RF power provided by each of the RF generators and/or adjust the RF match parameters associated with each RF source's respective
25 RF matching element(s). For example, in some embodiments, the first voltage signal is multiplied by the first calibration coefficient to generate a measured voltage value that accurately indicates the actual voltage passing through V/I sensor 152, and the second voltage signal is multiplied by the second calibration coefficient to generate a measured current value that accurately indicates the actual current passing through
30 V/I sensor 152. The actual RF power coupled to processing region 246 can then be

computed based on the measured voltage value and the measured current value. The actual RF power that is coupled to processing region 246 can then be used by software running within the control circuitry 150 to more accurately control a process that is being performed in the processing chamber and/or be displayed on graphical user interface (e.g., monitor or display) that is coupled to the control circuitry 150 and accessible to a user.

[0072] In some embodiments, the actual RF power coupled to processing region 246 is further based on a measured phase difference between the measured voltage value and the measured current value. Specifically, in such embodiments, the instantaneous transmission lines power at the point of the measurements is the product of the measured voltage value, the measured current value, and the cosine of the measured phase difference between voltage pickup 311 and current pickup 312. The measured phase difference can then be used by software running within the control circuitry 150 to more accurately control the RF related processes that are being performed in the processing chamber and/or be displayed on graphical user interface (e.g., monitor or display) that is coupled to the control circuitry 150 and accessible to a user.

[0073] In embodiments in which a mixed frequency is generated by second RF generator 140, a previously determined system phase offset is first subtracted from the measured phase difference between the first voltage signal (from voltage pickup 311) and the second voltage signal (from current pickup 312). In this way, the actual phase difference between voltage pickup 311 and current pickup 312 can be determined prior to calculating the actual RF power coupled to processing region 246 at block 603.

[0074] In some embodiments, the actual RF power coupled to processing region 246 is also based on lost RF power that is not delivered to processing region 245. For example, in such embodiments, the actual RF power delivered to processing region 246 is also based on RF power measured in conductive leads 161 and 162.

[0075] At block 604, the determination is made whether the actual RF power coupled to processing region 246 is within a predetermined range of the target RF

power being coupled to processing region 246. If yes, the current output magnitude remains unchanged, and method 600 proceeds to block 601; if no, 600 proceeds to block 605.

5 **[0076]** In block 605, the current output magnitude is adjusted so that the actual RF power being coupled to processing region 246 is closer or equal to the target RF power being coupled to processing region 246. Method 600 then proceeds back to block 601.

10 **[0077]** Implementation of method 600 enables improved measurement and control of RF voltage, current, phase, and coupled RF power in high-temperature environments. Because RF voltage and current can be measured at a location proximate the processing region of a plasma processing chamber 120, coupled RF power can be more accurately determined, thereby improving performance of the plasma processing chamber 120 and reducing chamber-to-chamber variation of a plasma process.

15 **[0078]** In some embodiments disclosed herein, a V/I sensor includes a planar body 301 comprised of a non-organic, electrically insulative material, a measurement opening formed in the planar body 301, a voltage pickup disposed around the measurement opening, and a current pickup disposed around the measurement opening. Because of the planar configuration and material composition of the V/I
20 sensor, the V/I sensor can be disposed proximate to or even in contact with a high-temperature surface of a plasma processing chamber 120. In fact, the inventors have recently, surprisingly discovered that the V/I sensors described herein can be placed within the plasma processing chamber 120. As noted above, in some embodiments, a voltage signal, which is proportional to the RF voltage passing through the V/I sensor,
25 is derived from the voltage pickup portion of the V/I sensor and a voltage signal, which is proportional to the RF current passing through the V/I sensor, is derived from the current pickup portion of the V/I sensor, which due to the nature of sensed signals creates no significant measurement interaction between sensors and thus minimizes errors induced in the measured values. Therefore, based on one or more of these
30 factors, the RF voltage and current measurements provided by one or more of the

embodiments disclosed herein are generally more accurate than V/I sensors placed outside of the plasma processing chamber.

[0079] Aspects of the present embodiments may be embodied as a system, method or computer program product. Accordingly, aspects of the present disclosure
5 may take the form of an entirely hardware embodiment, an entirely software embodiment (including firmware, resident software, micro-code, etc.) or an embodiment combining software and hardware aspects that may all generally be referred to herein as a “circuit,” “module” or “system.” Furthermore, aspects of the present disclosure may take the form of a computer program product embodied in one
10 or more computer readable medium(s) having computer readable program code embodied thereon.

[0080] Any combination of one or more computer readable medium(s) may be utilized. The computer readable medium may be a computer readable signal medium or a computer readable storage medium. A computer readable storage medium may
15 be, for example, but not limited to, an electronic, magnetic, optical, electromagnetic, infrared, or semiconductor system, apparatus, or device, or any suitable combination of the foregoing. More specific examples (a non-exhaustive list) of the computer readable storage medium would include the following: an electrical connection having one or more wires, a portable computer diskette, a hard disk, a random access
20 memory (RAM), a read-only memory (ROM), an erasable programmable read-only memory (EPROM or Flash memory), an optical fiber, a portable compact disc read-only memory (CD-ROM), an optical storage device, a magnetic storage device, or any suitable combination of the foregoing. In the context of this document, a computer readable storage medium may be any tangible medium that can contain, or store a
25 program for use by or in connection with an instruction execution system, apparatus, or device.

[0081] Embodiments of the present disclosure relate to methods and apparatus for controlling various parameters of a radio frequency (RF) at multiple frequencies. Some embodiments of the disclosure advantageously utilize sensors placed within the
30 processing chamber to minimize the distance between the sensor and the substrate

during processing. Some embodiments of the disclosure advantageously acquire and/or process data regarding the RF to dynamically control the RF in real-time.

[0082] Disclosed herein are methods and apparatus to acquire and process RF voltage, current, and phase information based on time domain waveforms streamed in real time. Further, some embodiments of the disclosure provide for the application of digital signal processing techniques to derive coupled RF power at multiple points of RF sensor locations and at multiple frequencies in CVD equipment running at elevated temperature environments.

[0083] New sensors and new methods of calibrating these sensors under high power are disclosed which enable the use of the sensors inside a plasma processing chamber for process monitoring. To date, there has not been any RF sensors inside a plasma processing chamber in order to directly provide data.

[0084] FIGS. 7A-7C show schematics of typical CVD systems with simplified versions of the RF equivalent circuit. FIG. 7A illustrates one that corresponds to an actual Precision chamber running at elevated wafer temperatures of about 500 °C to about 650 °C. FIG. 7B shows a simplified circuit corresponding to the RF only circuit. FIG. 7C shows an ideal 50 Ohm RF transmission line model.

[0085] FIGS. 7A-7C illustrate possible RF paths for leakage that needs to be controlled in a modern CVD system in order to achieve production worthy thin films. In order to heat the wafer and the chamber to a high temperature, RF filters are used to block RF energy from going into the heater driver circuits, typically in DC or 50/60 Hz range of frequency. Without being bound by theory, it is noted that since practical filters can not achieve infinite impedance at RF frequencies, it is unavoidable that some leakage current will go through the filters and escape the main RF control circuit. The leakage current results in a loss of RF power to the wafer, as well as a loss of control of the power coupled to the wafer. In modern semiconductor manufacturing environments, it is preferred that a percent level control or better for the main RF control is maintained.

[0086] Accordingly, some embodiments of the disclosure place embedded RF sensors into the system instead of external to the system. The embedded RF sensors are preferably directly at the wafer for authentic measurement, although this placement may not be possible due to elevated wafer temperatures. Accordingly, in
5 some embodiments the embedded RF sensors are placed as close as possible to the wafer.

[0087] Some embodiments of the disclosure provide for a dual-sensor configuration in which a first sensor is positioned above the wafer and a second sensor is positioned below the wafer. Some embodiments of the disclosure provide
10 for a single sensor positioned below the wafer where the current sensor coil and voltage ring enclose the RF rod that connects to the ESC electrode.

[0088] Additional embodiments of this disclosure provide methods and apparatus to do the same to an RF transmission line of equivalent power level to that of CVD equipment, but of known characteristics such as voltage, current, phase, and
15 propagation delay. In some embodiments, said RF transmission line is used as a calibration tool allowing for conversion of the RF sensor signals to the voltage, current, and phase unit against the time stamp with microsecond to millisecond time resolution.

[0089] As illustrated in FIGS. 4A and 4B, the sensors generate voltage signals
20 related to the RF voltage and RF current, but the voltage signals generated are not the RF voltage in volts and RF current in ampere. The voltage signals need to be calibrated against known voltage and current at the operating frequency, or frequencies, before deploying to the chamber for measurements.

[0090] FIGS. 8A-8E show examples of how to construct and use test jigs to
25 calibrate the sensors under high power. Without being bound by theory, it is believed that it is necessary to perform calibration at the same or equivalent power level as that in the chamber in order to include any possible non-linear effects with respect to the power, e.g., power loss depends on the drive power level.

[0091] From FIGS. 8A-8E, it is recognized that a high power RF generator and a dummy load of 50 Ohm characteristic impedance are used to drive power through a transmission line of either 50 Ohm impedance or of non-50 Ohm impedance shown in FIGS. 8A-8E. In the non-50 Ohm cases, a reactive RF load consisting of a network of capacitors and inductors provides an impedance of $R + jX$ that is known to the tester (FIGS. 8C and 8D).

[0092] The inventors have also observed a phase shift picked up by the top and bottom sensor due to a change in the coaxial cable length. As shown in FIG. 8A, a 1 foot coaxial cable provides a different phase shift than a similar jig (FIG. 8B) with a shorter cable, or no cable.

[0093] FIGS. 8A and 8B show test jigs #1 and #2 have 50 Ohm transmission lines which generate a voltage that is in phase with the current anywhere along the line. The reflected power back to the RF generator is zero for the matched 50 Ohm transmission lines. Upon applying full power to the 50 Ohm transmission line, it is delivered to the dummy load at 100% or with zero reflection.

[0094] This can be verified with the power meters located before and after the sensors. If the characteristic impedance of the transmission line is 50 Ohm and the power delivered is 1000W, the voltage signal in Volts corresponds to 233.6Vrms, the current signal in Volts corresponds to 4.472Arms, and the phase difference at this moment is zero degree. The described calibration procedure can be performed by a skilled artisan to the second or the third RF frequency.

[0095] Following the described calibration procedures, the obtained compensation coefficients can be applied back to the measurements for the RF voltage, current and phase for each of the operating frequencies. The calibration is done at the maximum delivery power for each frequency such that all operating powers are lower, thereby ensuring any non-linear effect with respect to the power which may be introduced by the sensor measurement system.

[0096] FIGS. 8C and 8D show test jigs #3 and #4 containing reactive elements such as inductors and capacitors and are not 50 Ohm transmission lines throughout

the entire transmission line. However, careful selection of the reactive elements allows one to create a transmission line that appears to be 50 Ohm to the RF generator. By so doing, full power can be delivered to the 50 Ohm dummy load. For example in test jig #4 (FIG. 8D), a capacitive load of $-j170$ Ohm is canceled out by an inductive load of $j170$ Ohm, leaving 50 Ohm load impedance apparent to the RF generator. In so doing, one skilled in the art can calibrate the inductive load against a known reactive load.

[0097] One example showed that an inductive load of around $j170$ Ohm which resulted a reflection of 44%. In this case the top sensors picked up 55.5W and the bottom sensor pair picked up 50.6 W, both are in close agreement with alternative power measurements coming from power meters.

[0098] Some embodiments of the disclosure relate to the Digital Signal Processing (DSP) techniques associated with the above described methods and are elaborated in further details include digital filtering techniques such as low pass, high pass and band pass, FIR filtering, RF harmonics analysis including Fast Fourier Transform, phase determination based on zero-crossing and cycle averaging, transmission line delay time based on voltage probe signal cross-referencing, and coupled power calculation based on time domain waveforms. All of these techniques are implemented in hard timed loops executed on FPGA hardware controlling data streaming and manipulation.

[0099] Some embodiments of the disclosure relate to the DSP techniques and the data acquisition (DAQ) hardware that supports the DSP algorithms. FIG. 8 shows a block diagram of the DAQ comprising an RF front end of 200 MHz at least but preferably 1 GHz or higher for 4 channels simultaneously, typically based on Analog Devices, Inc. or equivalent for example, Texas Instruments, Inc. Model ADC32RF4x, a 14-bit, 3 Gsps ADC converter, supported by an FPGA controller based on for example, Altera Arria V model as integrated on the TI reference board model TSW14J56.

[00100] In some embodiments, alternative architectures are available including those marketed by Pico Technology, Ltd. that integrated the high speed ADC together with the FPGA controller, such as Picoscope 6000 series.

[00101] Exemplary DSP algorithms include RMS value detection which takes the full waveforms streamed of multiple cycles and calculate the root mean square value over the sampled cycles. In some embodiments, the waveforms and the charting of the voltage and current RMS values against time in mili-second resolution. FFT executed
5 on the waveforms after applying a windows filtering function, or that of the Hanning window, is also performed and marked with the fundamental frequency of 27.12 MHz and its harmonics up to 5th.

[00102] The phase detection is based on the zero-crossing algorithm where the time stamps for a particular waveform are detected as the voltage signal changes sign
10 when going through zero, and the same is done for the reference waveform yielding two arrays of zero-crossing time stamps. Delta time stamps array is obtained by subtracting the two array yielding the time difference between the two waveforms in nano-second, either leading or lagging, and the phase shift in degree between the two waveforms is the averaged time difference for all cycles divided by the cycle time, and
15 then multiplied by 360/6.18.

[00103] One can develop a matrix of the figure of merit to completely characterize the chamber behavior for either single or multiple RF frequencies. In case of multiple frequencies, algorithms may be applied separately to each single frequency after applying band pass filter to the mix frequency waveforms, digitally. These variations
20 are also covered under the current invention disclosure.

[00104] For example, one additional algorithm is Total Harmonics Distribution (THD) that is derived based on FFT amplitude which can characterize the total power distributed among the harmonics vs. that in the fundamental frequency, for example 10% power in THD meaning 90% of power in the fundamental frequency which is
25 under system control, and the variation over time may change the power delivered to the wafer.

[00105] Another example of an applicable algorithm is to calculate coupled power based on the waveforms. At any moment of time the power is the product of the voltage and current, i.e., $P(t) = V(t) * I(t)$, where $V(t)$ and $I(t)$ are the waveforms
30 acquired by the V, I sensors embedded in the chamber. The average power over time

is therefore the mean of $P(t)$ over multiple RF cycles. This operation can be done by multiplying the voltage array and the current array before taking the average on the product. When the load is resistive, the voltage and current are in phase and the coupled power is maximum due to averaging, and when they are 90 degree out of phase, the coupled power is minimum or close to zero.

[00106] Some embodiments of the disclosure relate to how to use multiple sensor sets located upstream and downstream of the wafer to derive power coupled to the wafer. Based on the power coupled to the wafer, control schemes where such coupled power to the wafer is either kept constant throughout the entire film deposition or varied partially to a particular step or steps of the entire deposition process are also disclosed. The same measurement and control methodology applies when the target of the monitor or control is changed to voltage for example, or current and phase, depending upon which particular film property figure of merit is of concern, and such film properties including but are not limited to deposition rate, modulus, refractive indexes, wet etch rate, single layer film thickness uniformity, single layer film stress and its uniformity, film stack thickness uniformity, film stack stress and uniformity, and lithography aspect such as Inter Process Displacement.

[00107] The above described methods and techniques can be applied for single RF frequency or multiple frequencies powered systems.

[00108] Method of using multiple of RF sensors in a high temperature PECVD chamber operating at multiple frequencies, where the magnitude of the RF voltage, current and the phase difference between the voltage and current are provided to the host controller for further achieve and used as a feedback control target individually, or collectively

[00109] Based on the above mentioned RF voltage, current and phase measurement a construction of the quantity of the product of the average of Voltage*Current which represents the couple RF power at the particular frequency, and further archiving and use of the product as the real time control target to achieve desired, and consistent wafer deposition results.

[00110] Design and construction of the aforementioned sensors to work on both high power bench test jig for calibration purposes and inside a CVD chamber under high temperature.

[00111] Method of calibrating the said embedded sensors using high power 50 Ohm
5 resistive load or non-50 Ohm reactive load where the reactive load consists of inductive, capacitive, or a network of both inductive and capacitive load whereas, such network of reactive load can either appear to be 50 Ohm to the RF generator leading to no reflection, or non-50 Ohm causing a non-zero power reflection towards the RF generator. In case of non-zero reflection, the reflected power is known based on the
10 existing network element values, or can be measured separately by using an independent power meter or by using an equivalent power measurement built into the RF generator. Such RF network of known characteristics is constructed in a fashion that is geometrically similar to the chamber which the sensors are going to be used in, or is an equivalent electrically to the chamber in terms of RF wave propagation at the
15 operating frequency, or frequencies.

[00112] Data acquisition system which support waveforms streaming to a host computer RAM in real time or executed in hard timed loops consisting of a multiple channel ADC capable of greater than 1 Gsps sampling rate, and with minimum of 14-bit of ADC voltage resolution; the said DAQ system further consisting of FPGA based
20 controller that transfer the acquired raw waveform data to the host computer for further DSP processing, or transfer the processed data based on the raw waveforms to the host computer in real time or hard timed loops; and further consisting of chamber controller in RT (real time) which can either log the pre and post processed RF sensor data, or taking actions upon the post processed RF sensor data through
25 the RF tuning system subjected to the chamber RT controller; such actions include but are not limited to feed-back or feed-forward adjustment of any one RF sensor figure of merit, or a collection of several of them, based on the optimization of on the wafer results; such adjustment also includes holding steady certain aspect of the sensor feed-back or changing it partially during the deposition process during select step of
30 the deposition recipes.

5 **[00113]** Further claim of use for chamber match purposes where the embedded sensors act as indicator individually or collectively which results in isolation or identification of the individual part, assemblies, or their collection as the root cause of certain film property not meeting specification, or rule out the same as the root cause for such.

10 **[00114]** Digital signal processing techniques and algorithms developed based on the waveforms which include but are not limited to RMS detection peak detection, FFT based harmonics detection and quantification, phase detection based on zero-crossing algorithm or other appropriate techniques, filtering based on FIR or other establish techniques, cross-correlation analysis, coupled power detection, etc.

15 **[00115]** Reference throughout this specification to "one embodiment," "certain embodiments," "one or more embodiments" or "an embodiment" means that a particular feature, structure, material, or characteristic described in connection with the embodiment is included in at least one embodiment of the disclosure. Thus, the appearances of the phrases such as "in one or more embodiments," "in certain embodiments," "in one embodiment" or "in an embodiment" in various places throughout this specification are not necessarily referring to the same embodiment of the disclosure. Furthermore, the particular features, structures, materials, or characteristics may be combined in any suitable manner in one or more embodiments.

20 **[00116]** Although the disclosure herein has been described with reference to particular embodiments, those skilled in the art will understand that the embodiments described are merely illustrative of the principles and applications of the present disclosure. It will be apparent to those skilled in the art that various modifications and variations can be made to the method and apparatus of the present disclosure without
25 departing from the spirit and scope of the disclosure. Thus, the present disclosure can include modifications and variations that are within the scope of the appended claims and their equivalents.