

A PROCESS FOR PREPARING A DIELECTRIC INTERLAYER FILM
CONTAINING SILICON BETA ZEOLITE

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0001] The next generation of microelectronic devices will require an increase in the density of circuit elements per unit volume. As the distance between the metal lines decreases, there will be increased problems due to capacitive coupling (cross talk) and propagation delay. This problem can be avoided or minimized if the circuit wires are separated by insulator layers of increasingly lower dielectric constant. Because of these requirements, attention has been focused on developing porous dielectric materials. One such class of materials are zeolitic materials, and especially virtually aluminum free zeolitic materials.

[0002] For example US 6,329,062 B1 discloses a two component porous material including small silicalite crystals in a porous binder which provides a low dielectric constant material useful as an insulating layer in microelectronic devices. The silicalite nanocrystals are smaller than the characteristic dimensions of the features on the integrated circuit device, while the binder is an amorphous porous material that links the silicalite nanocrystals together. US 6,533,855 B1 discloses the chemical modification of the surface of silicalite and high silica zeolite nanoparticles permitting such particles to be dispersed in non-polar hydrophobic solvents which can then be used to form interlayer dielectric layers.

US 6,573,131 B2 discloses a process for producing a silica zeolite film on a semi-conductor substrate in which a zeolite synthesis composition is prepared from a silica source and an organic hydroxide zeolite structure directing agent, coating the substrate with this synthesis composition and heating the substrate and synthesis composition to produce a silica zeolite film on the substrate. Finally, US 6,660,245 B1 discloses a process for removing structured directing agents from a silicalite or zeolite crystal low dielectric constant film by using oxidative attack with a combination of ammonia, water, and hydrogen peroxide at elevated temperatures.

[0003] As the above cited art shows, it is important that the zeolite be essentially free of aluminum in order for it to have a low enough dielectric constant. Applicants have

determined that zeolite beta would have desirable properties as a low-k dielectric insulator. However, applicants have discovered that it is extremely difficult to synthesize zeolite beta in both an essentially silicon only form and having crystallites on the order of 5 to 40 nanometers in size. Applicants have developed a process in which zeolite beta containing silicon and aluminum is first synthesized to give crystallites in the nanometer range and then dealuminated thereby removing virtually all the aluminum. A slurry of this essentially aluminum free zeolite beta with crystallites on the order of 5-40 nanometers can now be spin coated onto silicon wafers to form a thin film and then baked to remove the organic template and optionally chemically treated to neutralize any terminal hydroxides and provide a low dielectric constant insulating layer.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

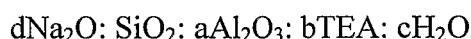
[0004] As stated, this invention relates to a process for depositing a zeolite beta film onto a substrate which is part of an integrated circuit. Zeolite beta is a well known zeolite and is described in RE-28,341 which is incorporated by reference in its entirety. It is stated in the 341' patent that zeolite beta has a composition described by the formula:



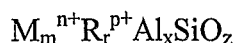
[0005] Where X is less than 1, preferably less than 0.75; TEA represents tetraethylammonium ion; Y is greater than 5 but less than 100 and W is up to 4 depending on the condition of dehydration and on the metal cation present. The zeolite beta is formed by crystallization from a reaction mixture which contains reactive forms of aluminum, silicon, tetraethyl ammonium ion, and alkali or alkaline earth metal such as sodium and water. Crystallization is carried out at a temperature from 75°C to 200°C and atmospheric pressure. There are a number of patents which disclose various other methods of preparing zeolite beta and include US 4,554,145 which discloses the use of dibenzyl-1, 4-diaza-bicyclo [2.2.2] octane compound as the structure directing agent; US 4,642,226 discloses the use of dibenzyl dimethyl ammonium ion as the templating agent; US 5,139,759 discloses the use of diethanol amine in addition to tetraethyl ammonium ion for the synthesis of zeolite beta; US 5,256,392 discloses treating a synthesized zeolite beta with an ion exchange medium and then calcining at a temperature of 400° to 700°C followed by another ion exchange treatment and

US 5,427,765 discloses reacting a granular amorphous aluminosilicate with alkaline metal hydroxide and tetraethyl ammonium compound to produce zeolite beta.

[0006] Although any of the methods described above can be used to synthesize zeolite beta, the following process is usually preferred. A reaction mixture is prepared from a silicon source, an aluminum source, a TEA source, and water; sources of silica include but are not limited to tetraethyl orthosilicate, colloidal silica, precipitated silica, and alkali silicates. The sources of aluminum include but are not limited to aluminum alkoxides, precipitated alumina, aluminum metal, sodium aluminate, aluminum salts, and alumina salts. Sources of the TEA ion include but are not limited to the hydroxide and halide compounds. The reaction mixture has a composition given by the empirical formula:



[0007] Where "a" has a value from 0.004 to 0.125, "b" has a value from 0.10 to 0.5, "c" has a value from 5 to 30, and "d" has a value from 0 to 0.1. The reaction mixture is now reacted at a temperature of 90°C to 140°C for a period of 0.5 days to 40 days in a sealed reaction vessel under autogenous pressure. After crystallization is complete, the solid product is isolated from the heterogeneous mixture by means such as filtration or centrifugation and then washed with deionized water and dried in air at ambient temperature up to 100°C. As will be shown in the examples, by controlling the reaction mixture one can obtain zeolite beta with nano sized crystallites. The synthesis of nano-crystalline zeolite beta is also reported in the literature. See, 1) M.A. Camblor et al in *Progress in Zeolite and Microporous Materials Studies in Surface Science and Catalysis*, Vol. 105, H. Chan, S.-K. Ihm and Y.S. Uh editors. Elsevier Science, 1997, pp. 341-348; and 2) M.A. Camblor et al, *Microporous and Mesoporous Materials*, 25 (1998) pp. 59-74. The resulting zeolite beta has a composition on an as synthesized and anhydrous basis expressed by an empirical formula of:



where M is at least one exchangeable cation selected from the group consisting of alkali and alkaline earth metals, R is an organic cation selected from the group consisting of tetraethylammonium ion, dibenzyl-dimethylammonium ion, dibenzyl-1, 4-diazo-bicyclo [2.2.2] octane, diethanol amine and mixtures thereof, "m" is the mole fraction of M and has a value from 0 to 0.125, "n" is the weighted average valence of M and has a value of 1 to 2, "r" is the mole fraction of R and has a value of 0.1 to 0.5, "p" is the weighted average valence

of R and has a value of 1 to 2, "x" is the mole fraction of Al and has a value from 0.01 to 0.25 and "z" is the mole fraction of O and has a value from 2.02 to 2.25.

[0008] The next step in the process of the invention is to treat the synthesized beta zeolite in order to remove aluminum atoms from the framework and optionally substitute silicon atoms into those sites. Although the dealumination process described below will remove the organic cation from the exchange sites in the zeolite beta, optionally the zeolite beta can be calcined at a temperature of 350°C to 650°C for a time sufficient (usually 30 minutes to 10 hours) to remove the organic template and thus increase the effectiveness of the dealumination. One method of dealuminating the zeolite beta involves the use of a fluorosilicate salt. The fluorosilicate salt serves two purposes. It removes aluminum atoms from the framework and provides a source of extraneous silicon, which can be inserted into the framework (replacing the aluminum). A detailed description of this process can be found in US 4,610,856.

[0009] Another method of dealuminating zeolite beta is to contact it with an acid (acid extraction). The acids which can be used in carrying out acid extraction include without limitation mineral acids, carboxylic acids and mixtures thereof. Examples of these include sulfuric acid, nitric acid, ethylene diaminetetraacetic acid (EDTA), citric acid, oxalic acid, etc. The concentration of acid which can be used is not critical but is conveniently between 1 wt.% to 80 wt.% acid and preferably between 5 wt.% and 40 wt.% acid. Acid extraction conditions include a temperature of 10°C to 100°C for a time of 10 minutes to 24 hours. Once treated with the acid, the zeolite beta is isolated by means such as filtration, washed with deionized water and optionally dried at ambient temperature up to 100°C.

[0010] The dealuminated nano-beta zeolite which has a Si/Al ratio of at least 25 is now dispersed in a solvent in order to form a slurry. The solvents which can be used for this purpose include but are not limited to polyols, water, polar organics and mixtures thereof. Examples of polyols include but are not limited to ethylene glycol, propylene glycol and glycerol. Examples of polar organic solvents include but are not limited to methanol, ethanol, isopropanol, t-butanol, isopropanol, hexanol, octanol, decanol, tetrahydrofuran, dimethylformamide, dimethylsulfoxane, acetone, methyl ethyl ketone, acetonitrile and methylene chloride. Optionally, a dispersing agent compatible with the solvent composition including but not limited to ethyltrimethylammonium bromide, anionic and cationic polyelectrolytes, non-ionic

surfactants and polyols can be used. The amount of zeolite beta in the slurry can vary considerably but usually is from 0.05 to 10 wt. % and preferably from 0.1 to 2 wt. %, while the amount of dispersing agent can vary from 0 to 1 wt. %. The zeolite beta slurry may optionally contain a binding agent to help bind the zeolite film to the substrate. Examples of binding agents include but are not limited to tetraethylorthosilicate (TEOS), methyltrimethoxysilane, methyltriethoxysilane, aqueous or alcoholic colloidal silica and mixtures thereof.

[0011] Having obtained a zeolite beta slurry, it is next deposited onto a substrate by spin coating techniques which are well known in the art. Spin coating techniques are disclosed in US 6,329,062 B1 and US 6,573,131 B2. The substrate which is used is usually a silicon wafer substrate typically used in integrated circuit devices. Once the zeolitic film is deposited onto the substrate, the film and substrate are heated to a temperature of 200 to 400°C and for a time sufficient to evaporate the solvent and bind the crystals to the substrate. Usually this time can vary from 30 seconds to 3 hours and preferably from 1 minute to 15 minutes.

[0012] In order to obtain a layer with a low k, it is necessary to chemically modify the zeolite beta in order to remove or substantially reduce terminal hydroxyl groups on the zeolite. The chemical modification is usually done by treating the zeolite beta with a silylating agent at silylation conditions. Silylation can be carried out on the zeolite beta either before depositing it onto the substrate, i.e. before preparing a slurry or after the zeolite film has been formed on the substrate. Silylation is carried out by contacting the zeolite beta film with a silylating agent at silylation conditions which are well known. Silylation can be done either in the liquid or gas phase. In the liquid phase, silylation is carried out in a batch mode by admixing the zeolite and silylating agent at a temperature of 10°C to 150°C and contacting for a time of 10 minutes to 72 hours. The silylation agent can be used neat or can be dissolved in a solvent such as toluene, acetone or methanol. Alternatively, the silylating agent (neat or in a solvent) can be vaporized and contacted with the zeolite at temperatures and times as described above. The gas phase process is preferred when silylation is carried out on the zeolite film. When silylation is completed, the coated zeolite (either as a powder or film) is heated at a temperature of 300°C to 500°C for a time sufficient to convert the silylating agent to silica and remove as much organic material as possible. This time will vary from 30 seconds to 4 hours; and preferably from 2 minutes to 1 hour. Silylating agents which can be used can be described by the empirical formula R_mSiX_n , where R is an organic group, X is a halogen, organoaminosilane or an organic

alcoxy group, m varies from 1 to 3 and $n = 4 - m$. Examples of silylating agents include but are not limited to trimethyl chlorosilane and hexamethyldisilazane.

[0013] In order to more fully illustrate the invention, the following examples are set forth. It is to be understood that the examples are only by way of illustration and are not intended as an undue limitation on the broad scope of the invention as set forth in the appended claims.

EXAMPLE 1

[0014] Several samples of zeolite beta were prepared according to the following procedure. An aluminosilicate reaction mixture was prepared in the following manner. Aluminum sec-butoxide (95+%) was added to TEAOH (35%) with vigorous stirring. To this mixture, deionized water was added, followed by the addition of fumed silica (CabosilTM). The reaction mixture was homogenized for 1 hr with a high speed mechanical stirrer and was then transferred to a TeflonTM-lined autoclave. The autoclave was placed in an oven set at 140°C and the mixture reacted for various amounts of time at autogenous pressure. The solid product was collected by centrifugation, washed with water, and dried at 100°C. Table 1 presents the make up of the reaction mixture, reaction conditions and the Si/Al molar ratio of the zeolite beta product.

Table 1

Sample I.D.	Reaction Mixture Composition*			React. Cond.		Time (days)	Si/Al	Crystal Size (nm)
	SiO ₂	Al ₂ O ₃	TEAOH	H ₂ O	T(°C)			
A	100	1	54	1500	140	5 ¹	20	20-40
B	100	1	54	1500	140	5 ²	20	20-40
C	100	4	60	1500	140	10 ¹	10	10-15
D	100	4	60	1500	140	10 ¹	12	10-15
E	100	6.25	64.5	1500	140	30 ²	NA	5-10
F	100	6.25	64.5	1500	140	30 ²	8	5-10
G	100	-	40	1200	140	7 ²	∞	250-500

*Mole Ratio; 1 stirred; 2 static; NA=not analyzed

EXAMPLE 2

[0015] Portions of the above samples were treated to remove the aluminum. The treatment conditions, wt.% aluminum before and after dealumination, and pore volume before and after dealumination are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Sample I.D.	Treatment Conditions*	Al(Wt%) Before	Al(Wt%) After	Pore Volume (cc/g)	
				Before	After
A	calcined; 16N HNO ₃	2.12	0.011	0.260	0.224
B	as synthesized; 16N HNO ₃	2.16	0.11	-	-
C	calcined; 2 times 4N HNO ₃	3.2	0.012	0.213	0.184
D	as synthesized; 16N HNO ₃	2.9	0.044	-	-
E	as synthesized; 16N HNO ₃		0.0121	-	-
F	as synthesized; 2 times, 16N HNO ₃	5.08	0.079	0.177	0.170
F	calcined; 2 times, 16N HNO ₃	5.08	0.0045		

*Calcination was carried out at 550°C for 4 hours. Treatment with nitric acid was carried out at 75°C for 16 hours.

[0016] Table 2 shows that nitric acid treatment can remove a substantial amount of aluminum while maintaining crystallinity as shown by the retention of pore volume. The results also indicate that calcination prior to contact with the acid results in a greater removal of aluminum.

EXAMPLE 3

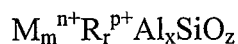
[0017] A portion of dealuminated sample A was formed into a film as follows. Sample A was dispersed in ethanol to provide a slurry containing 0.77 wt.% solids. A 1.5 ml portion of this zeolite beta slurry was spin coated onto a 200 mm diameter silicon wafer at 700 rpm. The wafer was then baked at 350°C for 1 minute under nitrogen. Next the wafer was spin coated with hexamethyldisilazane (HMDS) using the same procedure. A second wafer with a

zeolite beta (sample A) film was prepared using the same procedure. The film thickness for each wafer was determined to be 100 nm. Finally, the dielectric constant was measured and determined to be 1.6 and 2.1 respectively.

CLAIMS:

1. A process for depositing a zeolite beta dielectric layer onto a substrate comprising dealuminating a starting zeolite beta at dealumination conditions to provide a dealuminated zeolite beta having a Si/Al molar ratio of greater than 25; slurring the dealuminated zeolite beta in a solvent selected from the group consisting of polar organics, water, polyols and mixtures thereof to form a slurry; coating the substrate with the slurry and heating the coated substrate to evaporate the solvent and form a zeolite beta film on the substrate; treating the zeolite beta with a silylating agent at silylation condition to substantially reduce the terminal hydroxyl groups on the zeolite; and where the substrate comprises a silicon wafer which is part of an integrated circuit.
2. The process of claim 1 where the dealumination comprises contacting the starting zeolite with a dealuminating agent selected from the group consisting of acids, fluorosilicate compounds and mixtures thereof at a temperature of 10°C to 100°C and a time of 10 minutes to 24 hours.
3. The process of claim 1 further comprising calcining the starting zeolite prior to dealuminating the zeolite and where the calcination is carried out at a temperature of 350°C to 650°C and for a time of 30 minutes to 10 hours.
4. The process of claim 1 or 2 or 3 where the slurry further comprises a dispersing agent selected from the group consisting of non-ionic surfactants, polyols, anionic and cationic polyelectrolytes, ethyltrimethylammonium bromide and mixtures thereof.
5. The process of claim 1 or 2 or 3 or 4 where the slurry further comprises a binder selected from the group consisting of tetraethylorthosilicate, methyltrimethoxysilane, colloidal silica and mixtures thereof.
6. The process of claim 1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5 where the silylating agent is selected from the group consisting of trimethylchlorosilane, dimethylchlorosilane, hexamethyldisilazane, and mixtures thereof.
7. The process of claim 1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5 or 6 where the silylation step is carried out after the zeolite film is deposited on the substrate.
8. A process for preparing a nano-crystalline zeolite beta composition having a Si/Al molar ratio of at least 25 comprising providing a starting zeolite beta having a

composition on an as synthesized and anhydrous basis expressed by an empirical formula of:



where M is at least one exchangeable cation selected from the group consisting of alkali and alkaline earth metals, R is an organic cation selected from the group consisting of tetraethylammonium ion, dibenzyl-dimethylammonium ion, dibenzyl-1, 4-diazo-bicyclo [2.2.2] octane, diethanol amine and mixtures thereof, "m" is the mole fraction of M and has a value from 0 to 0.125, "n" is the weighted average valence of M and has a value of 1 to 2, "r" is the mole fraction of R and has a value of 0.1 to 0.5, "p" is the weighted average valence of R and has a value of 1 to 2, "x" is the mole fraction of Al and has a value from 0.01 to 0.25 and "z" is the mole fraction of O and has a value from 2.02 to 2.25 and characterized in that it comprises crystals having an average diameter of 5 to 40 nano-meters; dealuminating the starting zeolite beta at dealumination conditions thereby removing at least a fraction of the aluminum atoms from the framework and provide a nano-crystalline zeolite beta having a Si/Al molar ratio of at least 25.

9. The process of claim 8 where the dealumination comprises contacting the starting zeolite with a dealuminating agent selected from the group consisting of acids, fluorosilicate compounds and mixtures thereof at dealumination conditions comprising a temperature of 10°C to 100°C and a time of 10 minutes to 24 hours.

10. The process of claim 8 or 9 further comprising calcining the starting zeolite prior to dealuminating the zeolite and where the calcination is carried out at a temperature of 350°C to 650°C and for a time of 30 minutes to 10 hours.