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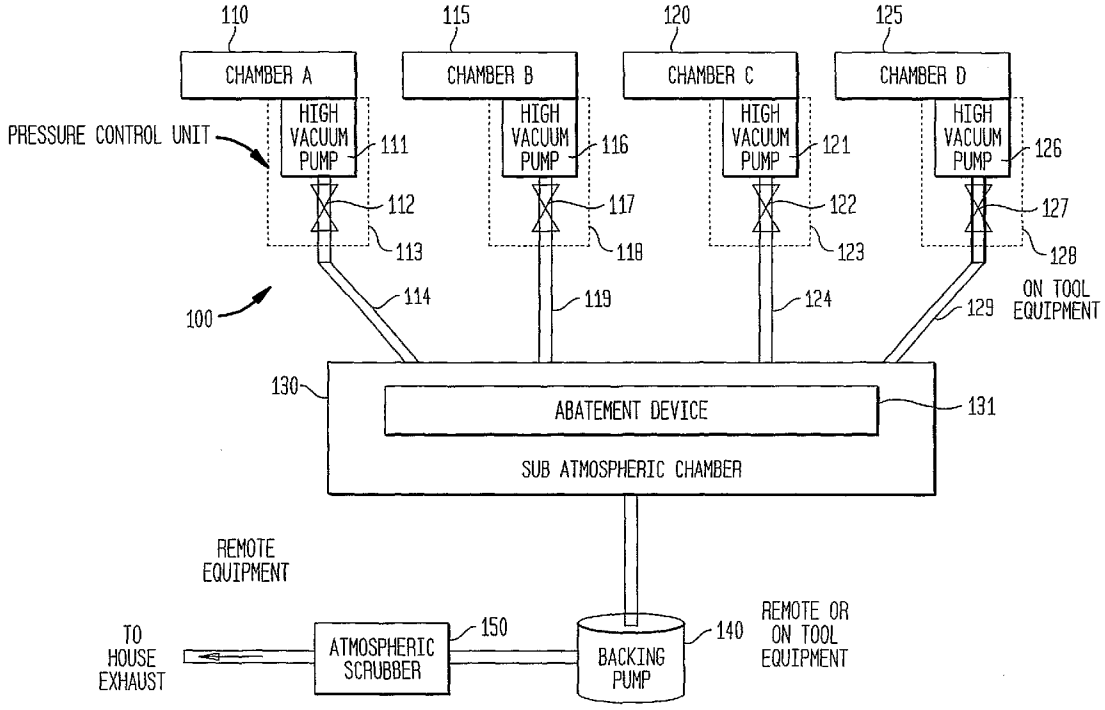
Declarations under Rule 4.17:

— *as to applicant's entitlement to apply for and be granted a patent (Rule 4.17(ii))*

— *as to the applicant's entitlement to claim the priority of the earlier application (Rule 4.17(iii))*

[Continued on next page]

(54) **Title:** FORE-LINE PRECONDITIONING FOR VACUUM PUMPS



(57) **Abstract:** The present invention is an apparatus and method for evacuating a number of vacuum processing chambers containing incompatible gases. The gases are directed to a subatmospheric abatement chamber containing preconditioning devices. The gases are treated in the abatement chamber to render them compatible. The compatible gases are then drawn from the abatement chamber as a single stream 6 through a backing pump.

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