US009853046B2

(12) **United States Patent**
Lu et al.

(10) **Patent No.: US 9,853,046 B2**
(45) **Date of Patent: Dec. 26, 2017**

(54) **APPARATUSES AND METHODS FOR FORMING MULTIPLE DECKS OF MEMORY CELLS**

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(73) Assignee: **Micron Technology, Inc.**, Boise, ID (US)

(*) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this patent is extended or adjusted under 35 U.S.C. 154(b) by 0 days.

(21) Appl. No.: **15/174,478**

(22) Filed: **Jun. 6, 2016**

(65) **Prior Publication Data**

US 2016/0284728 A1 Sep. 29, 2016

Related U.S. Application Data

(62) Division of application No. 14/509,621, filed on Oct. 8, 2014, now Pat. No. 9,362,300.

(51) **Int. Cl.**

H01L 29/76	(2006.01)
H01L 27/11582	(2017.01)
G11C 16/14	(2006.01)
G11C 16/34	(2006.01)
H01L 27/11524	(2017.01)
H01L 27/1157	(2017.01)
H01L 27/11556	(2017.01)
H01L 21/02	(2006.01)
G11C 16/26	(2006.01)

(Continued)

(52) **U.S. Cl.**

CPC ***H01L 27/11582*** (2013.01); ***G11C 16/04*** (2013.01); ***G11C 16/0475*** (2013.01); ***G11C 16/0483*** (2013.01); ***G11C 16/14*** (2013.01); ***G11C 16/26*** (2013.01); ***G11C 16/3445*** (2013.01); ***H01L 21/02178*** (2013.01); ***H01L 27/1157*** (2013.01); ***H01L 27/11524*** (2013.01); ***H01L 27/11529*** (2013.01); ***H01L 27/11556*** (2013.01); ***H01L 27/11573*** (2013.01)

(58) **Field of Classification Search**

CPC H01L 27/115; H01L 27/0207; H01L 29/41755; H01L 29/66825; H01L 29/66833; H01L 27/11524; H01L 27/11529; H01L 27/11556; H01L 27/1157; H01L 27/11573; H01L 27/11582; H01L 29/517

USPC 257/314

See application file for complete search history.

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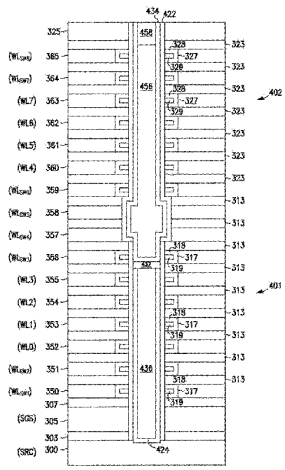
Primary Examiner — Long K Tran

(74) *Attorney, Agent, or Firm* — Schwegman Lundberg & Woessner, P.A.

(57) **ABSTRACT**

Some embodiments include apparatuses and methods having multiple decks of memory cells and associated control gates. A method includes forming a first deck having alternating conductor materials and dielectric materials and a hole containing materials extending through the conductor materials and the dielectric materials. The methods can also include forming a sacrificial material in an enlarged portion of the hole and forming a second deck of memory cells over the first deck. Additional apparatuses and methods are described.

11 Claims, 43 Drawing Sheets



(51) **Int. Cl.**

G11C 16/04	(2006.01)
H01L 27/11529	(2017.01)
H01L 27/11573	(2017.01)

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2014/0003148	A1*	1/2014	Sun	H01L 29/7889 365/185.17
2016/0104717	A1	4/2016	Lu et al.	

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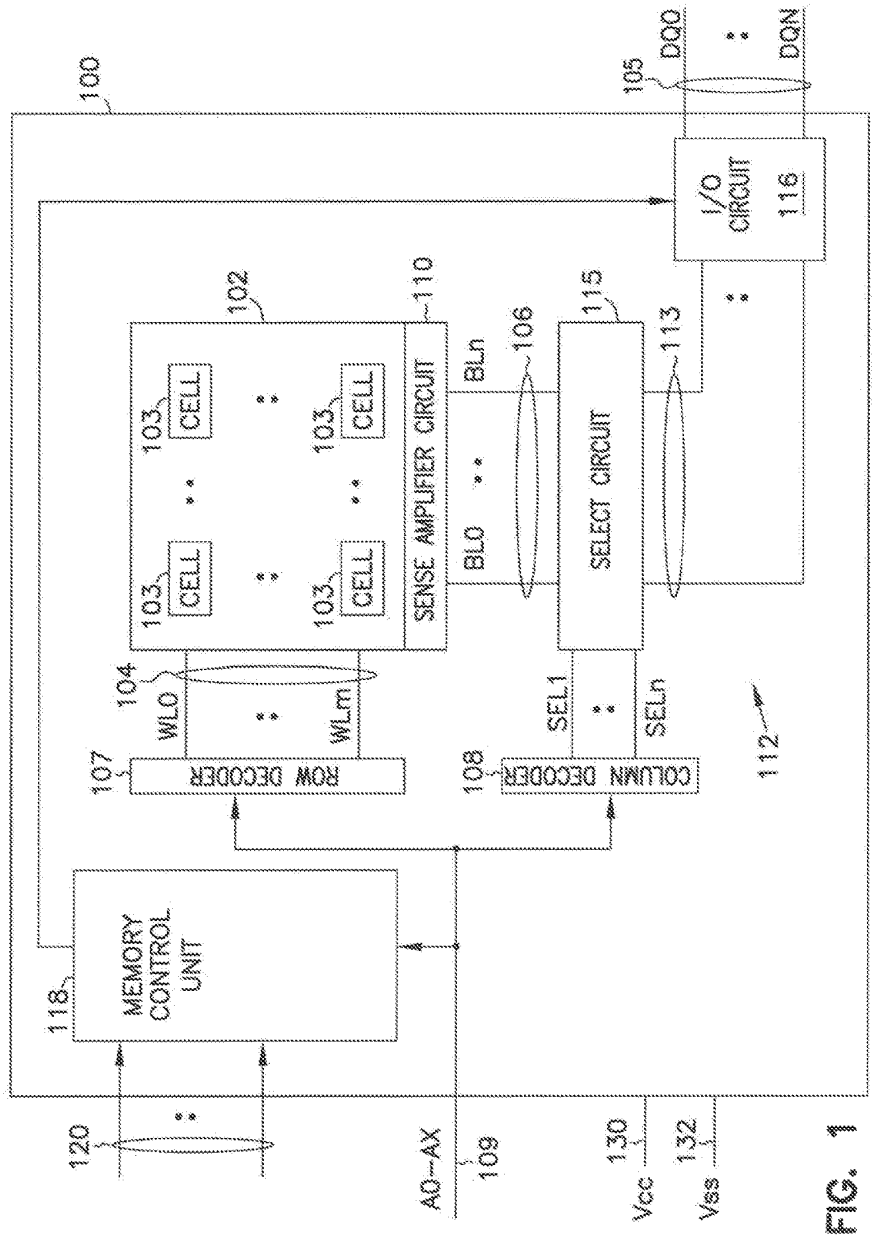

100
105
DQ0
DQN
I/O CIRCUIT
116
102
110
115
106
113
CELL
103
SENSE AMPLIFIER CIRCUIT
BLn
BL0
SELECT CIRCUIT
104
WL0
WLm
SEL1
SELn
107
ROW DECODER
108
COLUMN DECODER
112
MEMORY CONTROL UNIT
118
120
A0–AX
109
130
Vcc
132
Vss

FIG. 1

FIG. 2A

200

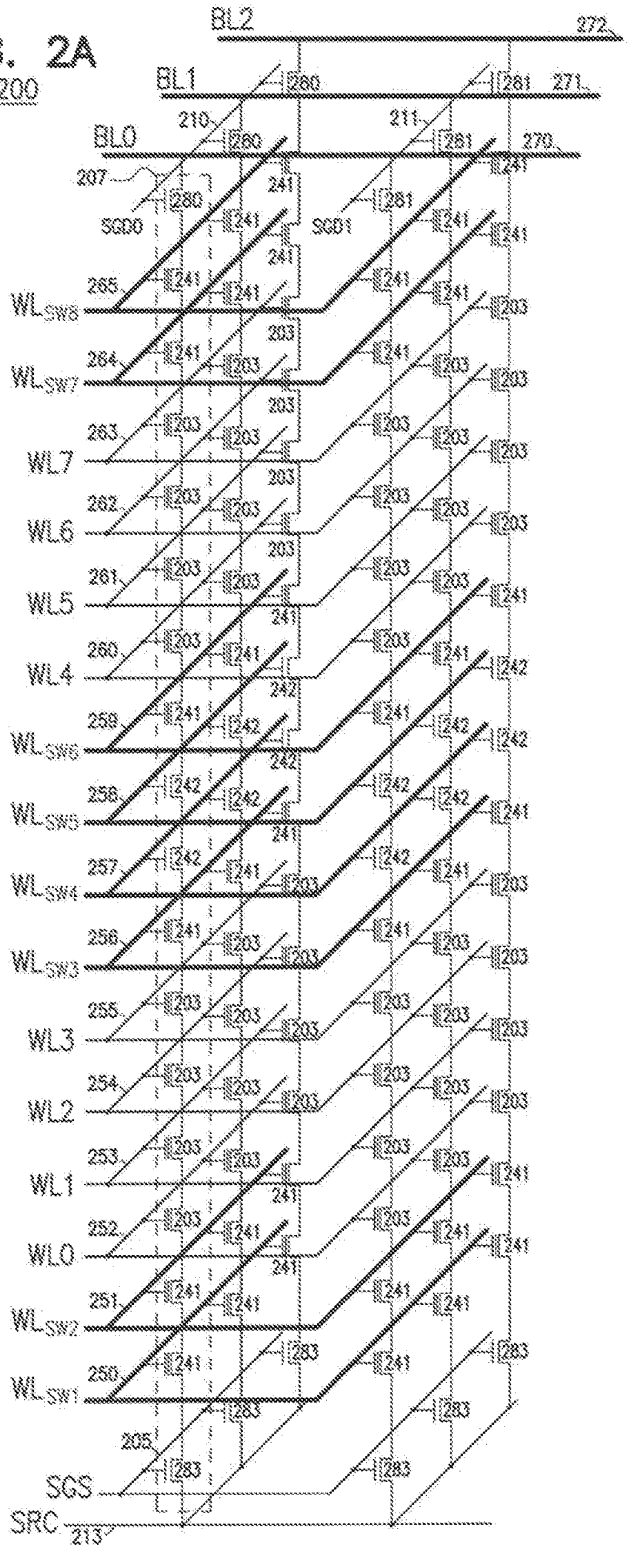

BL2
272
BL1
280
281
271
BL0
210
211
270
207
SGD0
SGD1
WLSW8
WLSW7
WL7
WL6
WL5
WL4
WLSW6
WLSW5
WLSW4
WLSW3
WL3
WL2
WL1
WL0
WLSW2
WLSW1
SGS
SRC
213
205

FIG. 2B

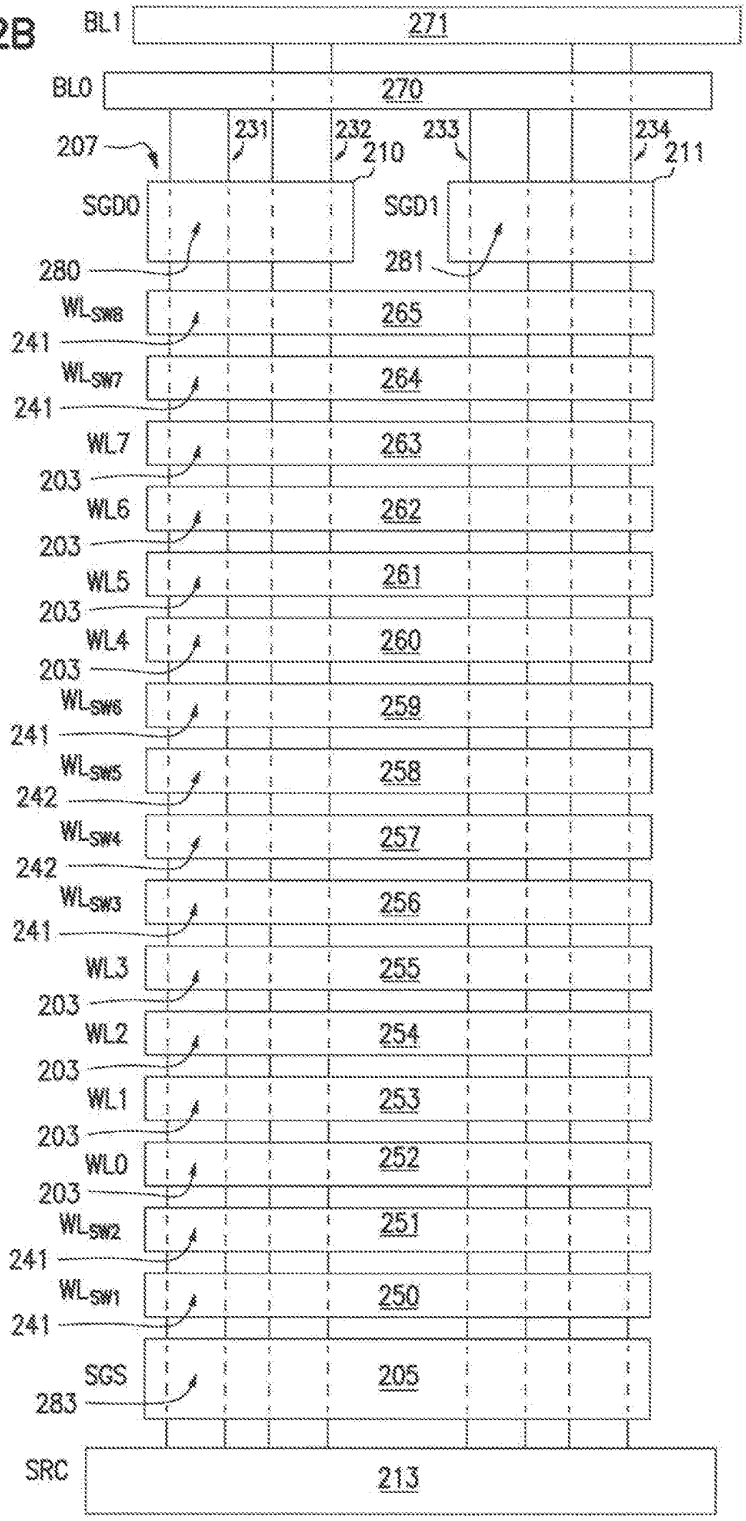

200
BL1
271
BL0
270
207
231
232
210
233
234
211
SGD0
SGD1
280
281
WLSW8
265
241
WLSW7
264
241
WL7
263
203
WL6
262
203
WL5
261
203
WL4
260
203
WLSW6
259
241
WLSW5
258
242
WLSW4
257
242
WLSW3
256
241
WL3
255
203
WL2
254
203
WL1
253
203
WL0
252
203
WLSW2
251
241
WLSW1
250
241
SGS
205
283
SRC
213

FIG. 2C

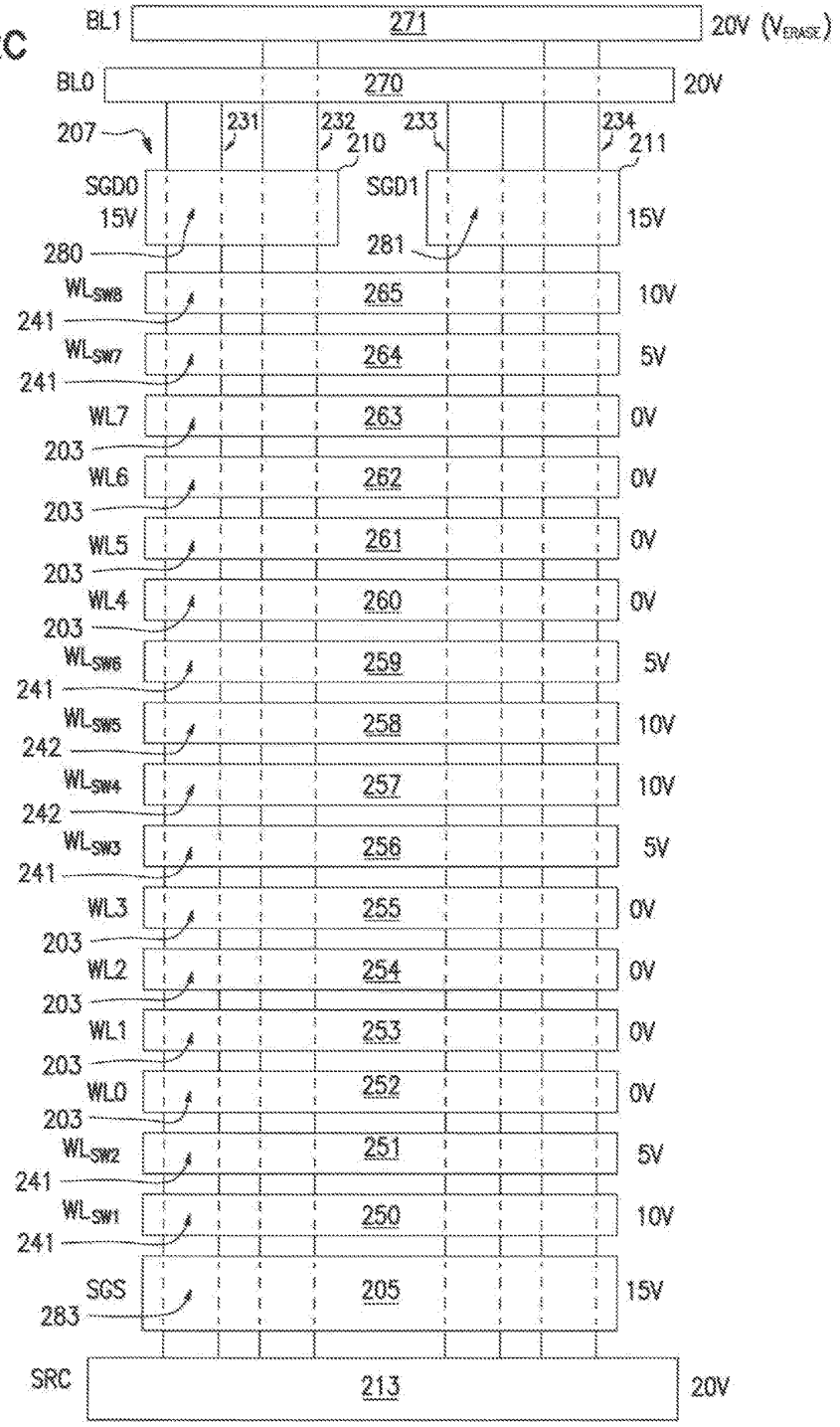

200
BL1
271
20V (V_{ERASE})
BL0
270
20V
207
231
232
233
234
210
211
SGD0
15V
SGD1
15V
280
281
WL_{SW8}
265
10V
241
WL_{SW7}
264
5V
241
WL7
263
0V
203
WL6
262
0V
203
WL5
261
0V
203
WL4
260
0V
203
WL_{SW6}
259
5V
241
WL_{SW5}
258
10V
242
WL_{SW4}
257
10V
242
WL_{SW3}
256
5V
241
WL3
255
0V
203
WL2
254
0V
203
WL1
253
0V
203
WL0
252
0V
203
WL_{SW2}
251
5V
241
WL_{SW1}
250
10V
241
SGS
205
15V
283
SRC
213
20V

FIG. 2D

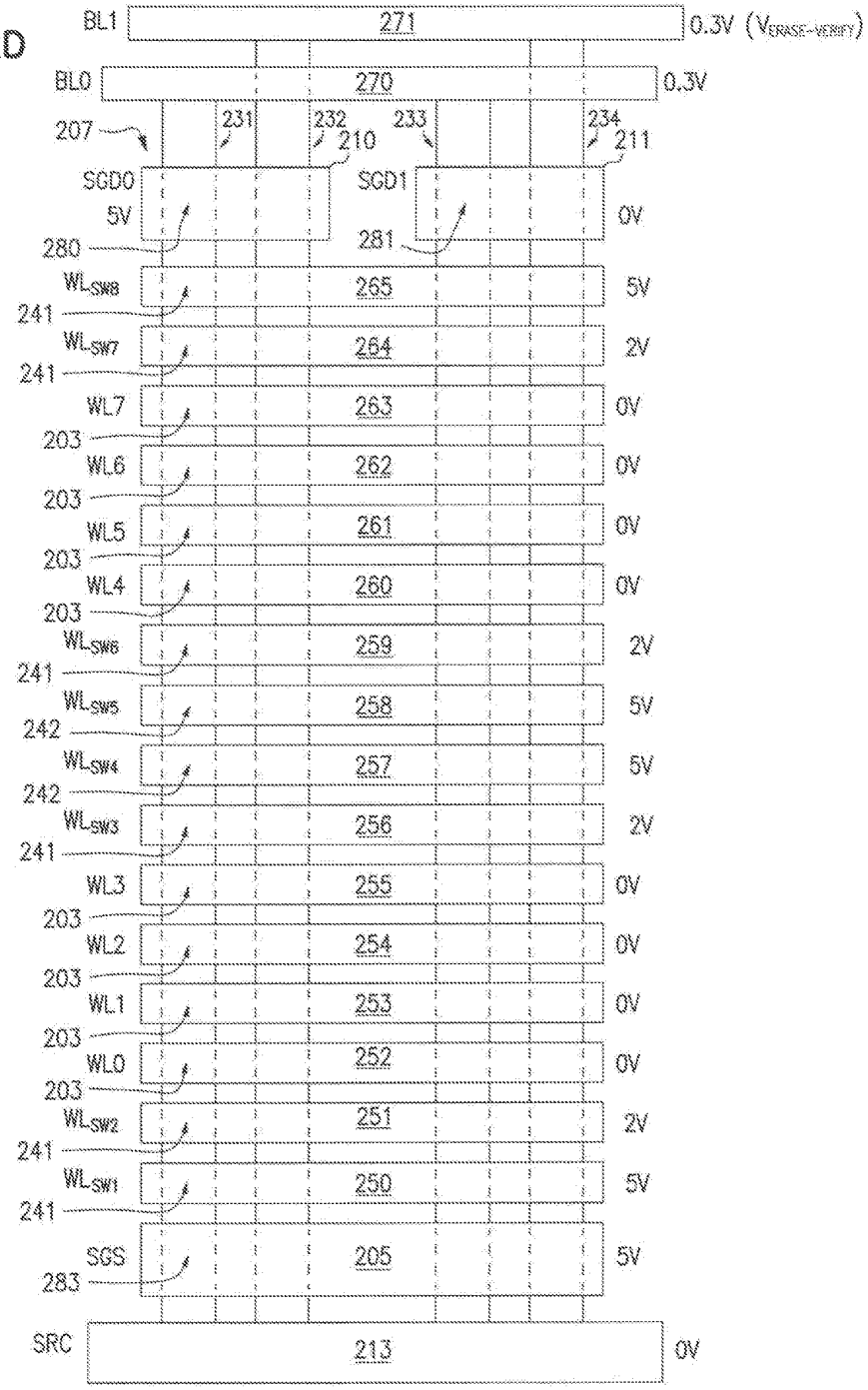

200
BL1
271
0.3V ($V_{ERASE-VERIFY}$)
BL0
270
0.3V
207
231
232
210
233
234
211
SGD0
5V
SGD1
0V
280
281
WL_{SW8}
265
5V
241
WL_{SW7}
264
2V
241
WL7
263
0V
203
WL6
262
0V
203
WL5
261
0V
203
WL4
260
0V
203
WL_{SW6}
259
2V
241
WL_{SW5}
258
5V
242
WL_{SW4}
257
5V
242
WL_{SW3}
256
2V
241
WL3
255
0V
203
WL2
254
0V
203
WL1
253
0V
203
WL0
252
0V
203
WL_{SW2}
251
2V
241
WL_{SW1}
250
5V
241
SGS
205
5V
283
SRC
213
0V

FIG. 2E

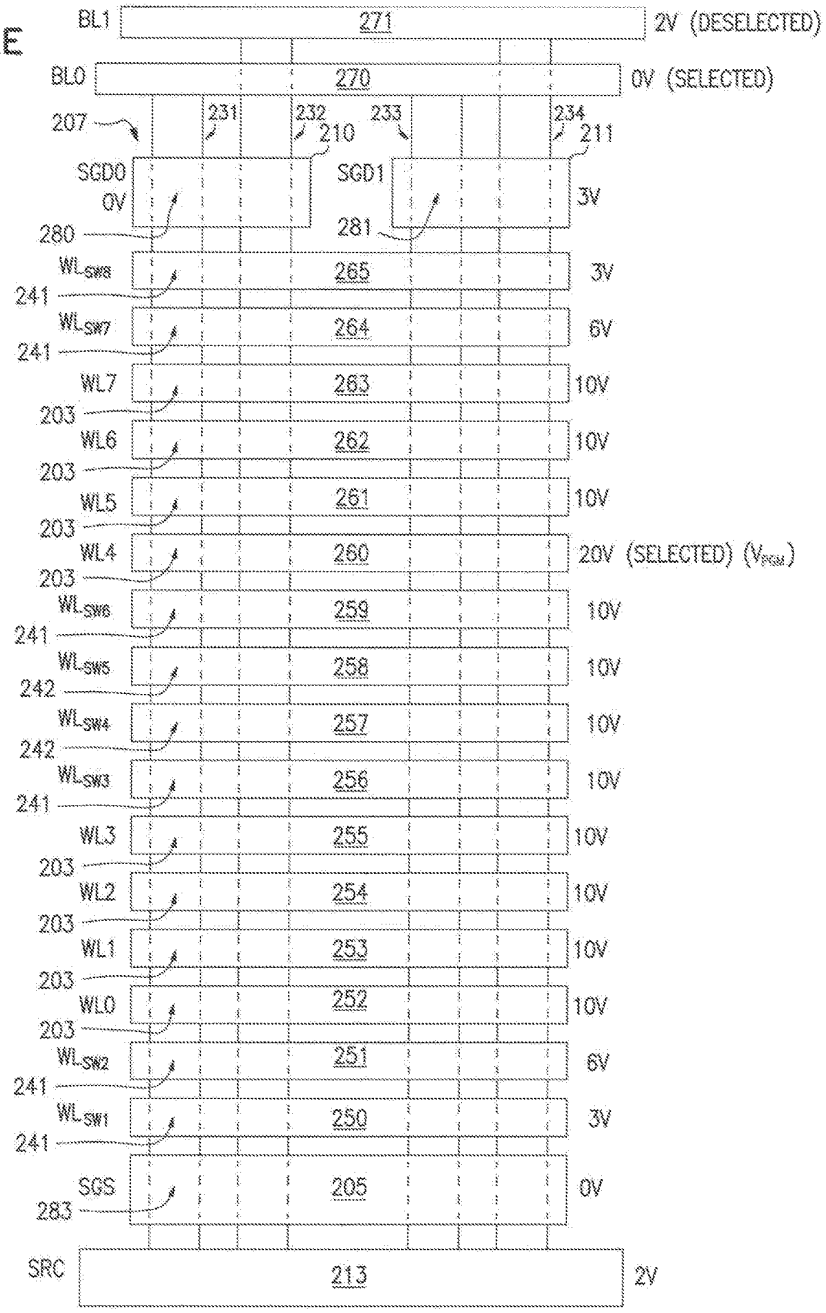
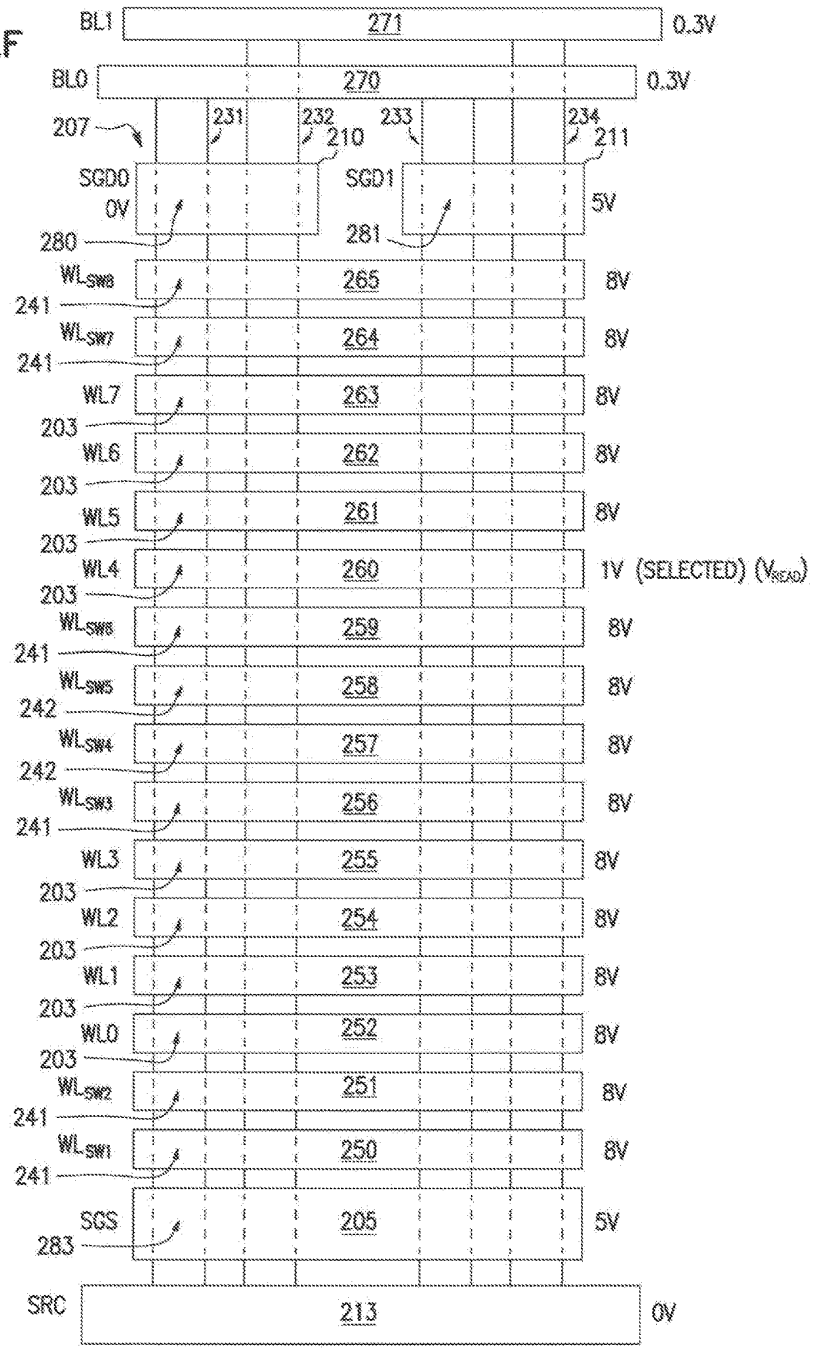

200
BL1
271
2V (DESELECTED)
BL0
270
0V (SELECTED)
207
231
232
233
234
210
211
SGD0
0V
SGD1
3V
280
281
WLSW8
265
3V
241
WLSW7
264
6V
241
WL7
263
10V
203
WL6
262
10V
203
WL5
261
10V
203
WL4
260
20V (SELECTED) (VPGM)
203
WLSW6
259
10V
241
WLSW5
258
10V
242
WLSW4
257
10V
242
WLSW3
256
10V
241
WL3
255
10V
203
WL2
254
10V
203
WL1
253
10V
203
WL0
252
10V
203
WLSW2
251
6V
241
WLSW1
250
3V
241
SGS
205
0V
283
SRC
213
2V

FIG. 2F


200
BL1
271
0.3V
BL0
270
0.3V
207
231
232
233
234
210
211
SGD0
0V
SGD1
5V
280
281
WLSW8
265
8V
241
WLSW7
264
8V
241
WL7
263
8V
203
WL6
262
8V
203
WL5
261
8V
203
WL4
260
1V (SELECTED) (VREAD)
203
WLSW6
259
8V
241
WLSW5
258
8V
242
WLSW4
257
8V
242
WLSW3
256
8V
241
WL3
255
8V
203
WL2
254
8V
203
WL1
253
8V
203
WL0
252
8V
203
WLSW2
251
8V
241
WLSW1
250
8V
241
SGS
205
5V
283
SRC
213
0V

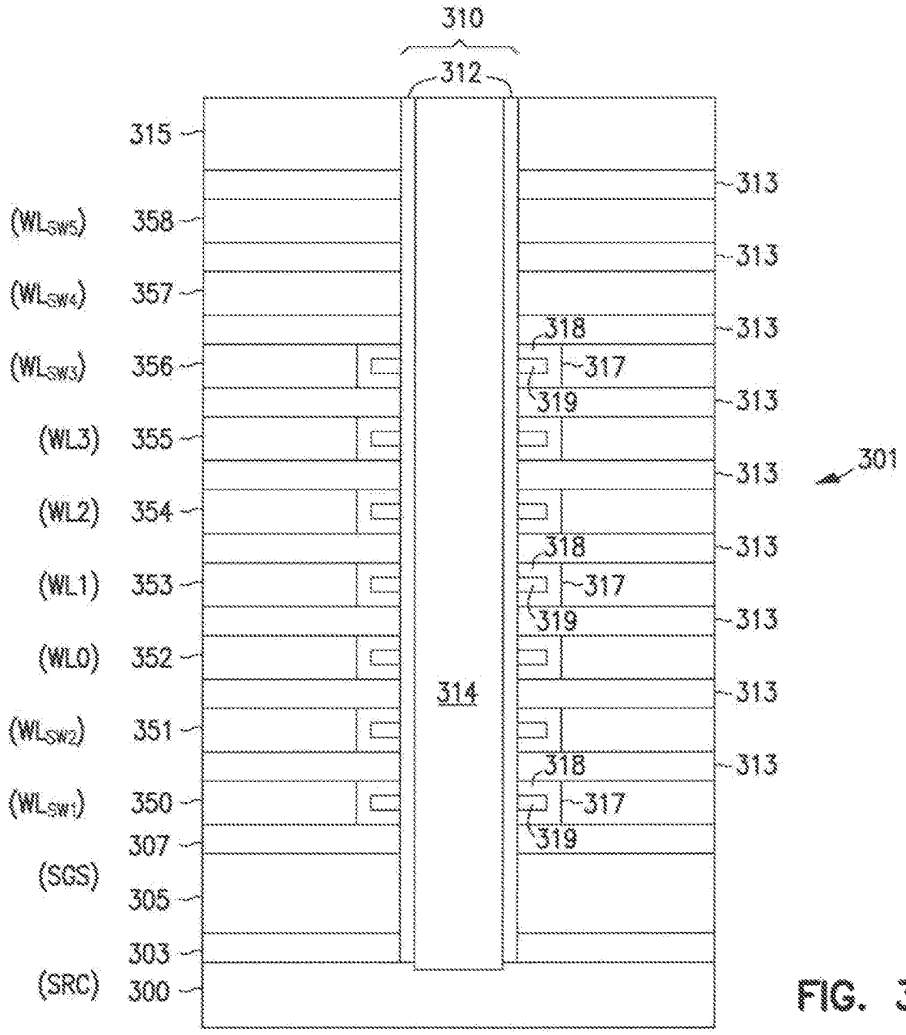

310
312
315
(WLSW5) 358
(WLSW4) 357
(WLSW3) 356
(WL3) 355
(WL2) 354
(WL1) 353
(WL0) 352
(WLSW2) 351
(WLSW1) 350
307
(SGS)
305
303
(SRC) 300
313
318
317
319
314
301

FIG. 3A

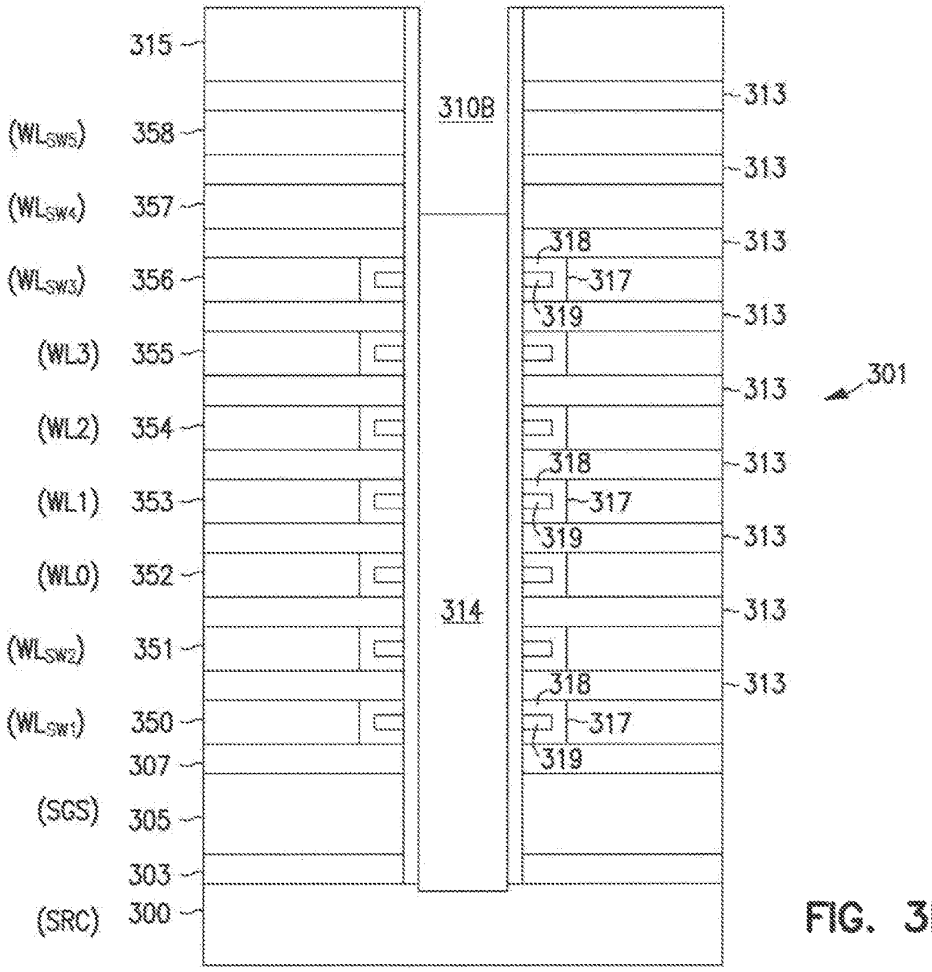

315
(WLSW5) 358
(WLSW4) 357
(WLSW3) 356
(WL3) 355
(WL2) 354
(WL1) 353
(WL0) 352
(WLSW2) 351
(WLSW1) 350
307
(SGS) 305
303
(SRC) 300
310B
314
313
318
317
319
301

FIG. 3B

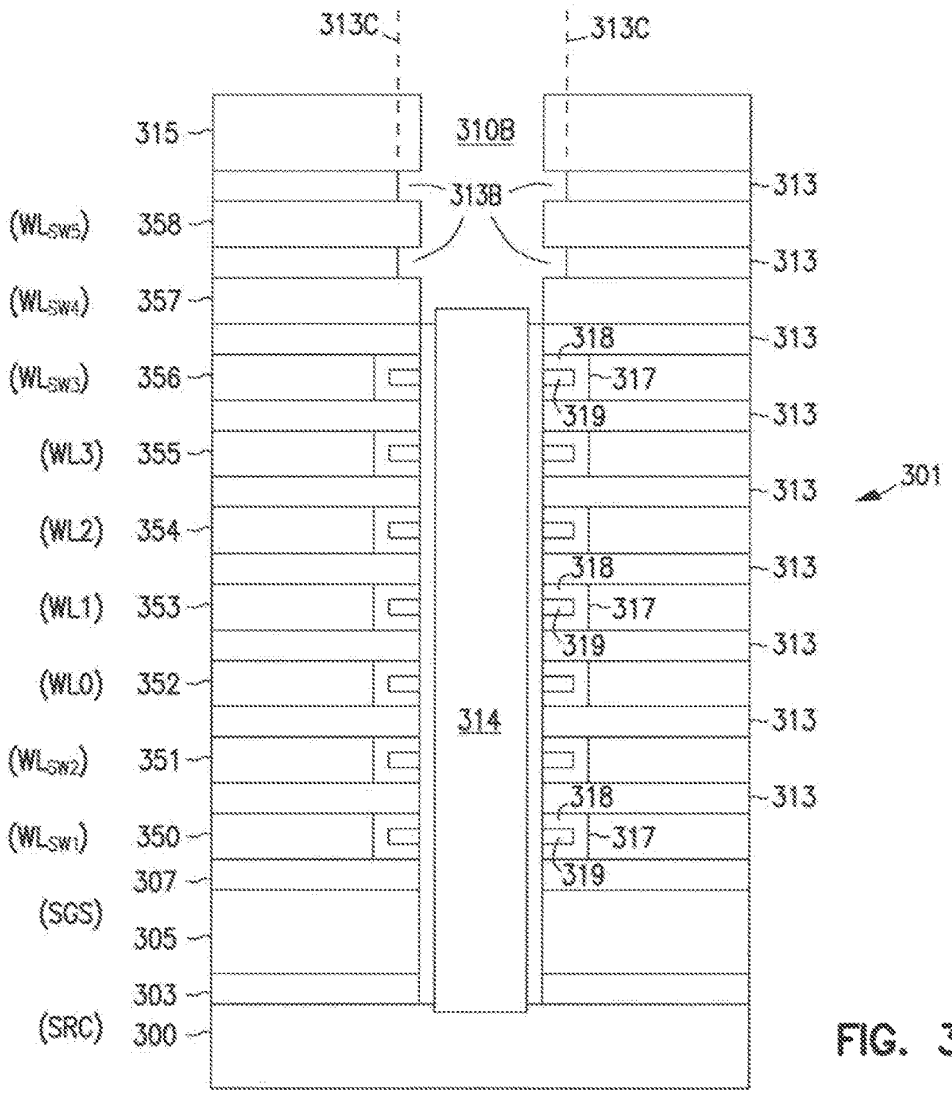

313C
313C
315
310B
313B
313
(WLSW5)
358
(WLSW4)
357
(WLSW3)
356
(WL3)
355
(WL2)
354
(WL1)
353
(WL0)
352
(WLSW2)
351
(WLSW1)
350
307
(SGS)
305
303
(SRC)
300
318
317
319
314
301

FIG. 3C

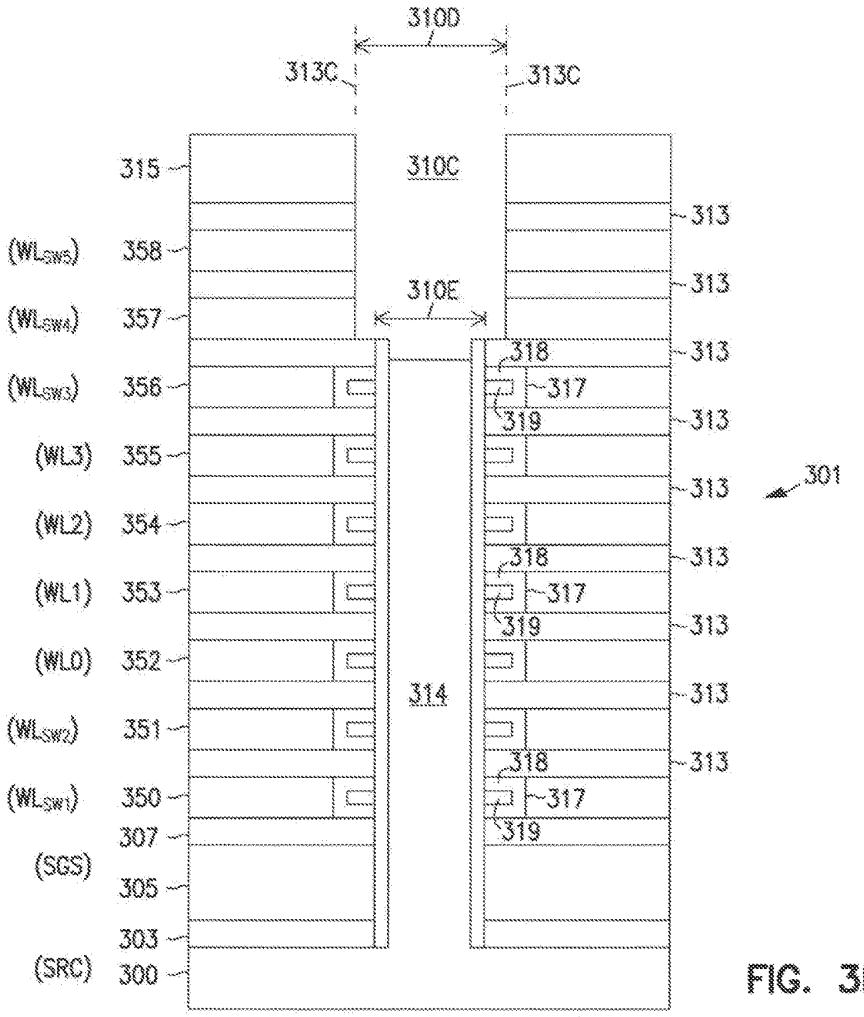

310D
313C
313C
315
310C
313
(WLSW3)
358
313
310E
(WLSW4)
357
313
318
(WLSW3)
356
317
319
313
(WL3)
355
313
301
(WL2)
354
318
313
(WL1)
353
317
319
313
(WL0)
352
314
313
(WLSW2)
351
318
313
(WLSW1)
350
317
307
319
(SGS)
305
303
(SRC)
300

FIG. 3D

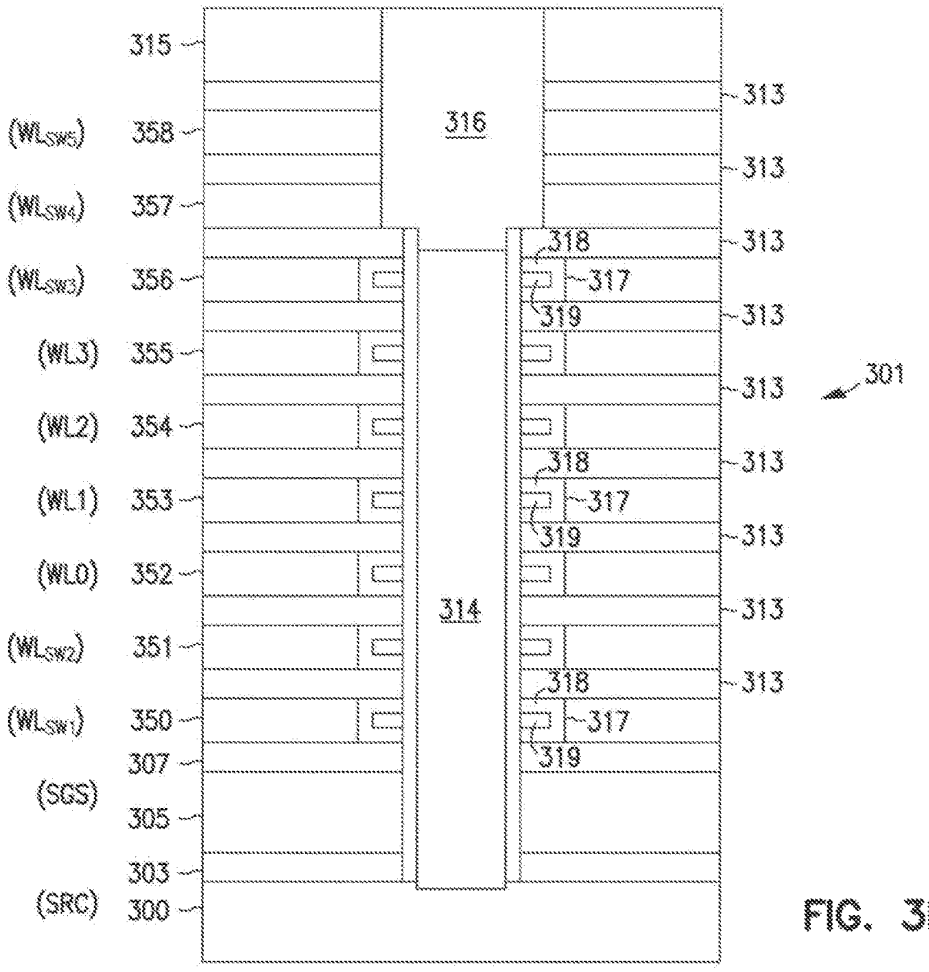

315
(WLSW6) 358
(WLSW4) 357
(WLSW3) 356
(WL3) 355
(WL2) 354
(WL1) 353
(WL0) 352
(WLSW2) 351
(WLSW1) 350
307
(SGS)
305
303
(SRC) 300
316
314
313
318
317
319
301

FIG. 3E

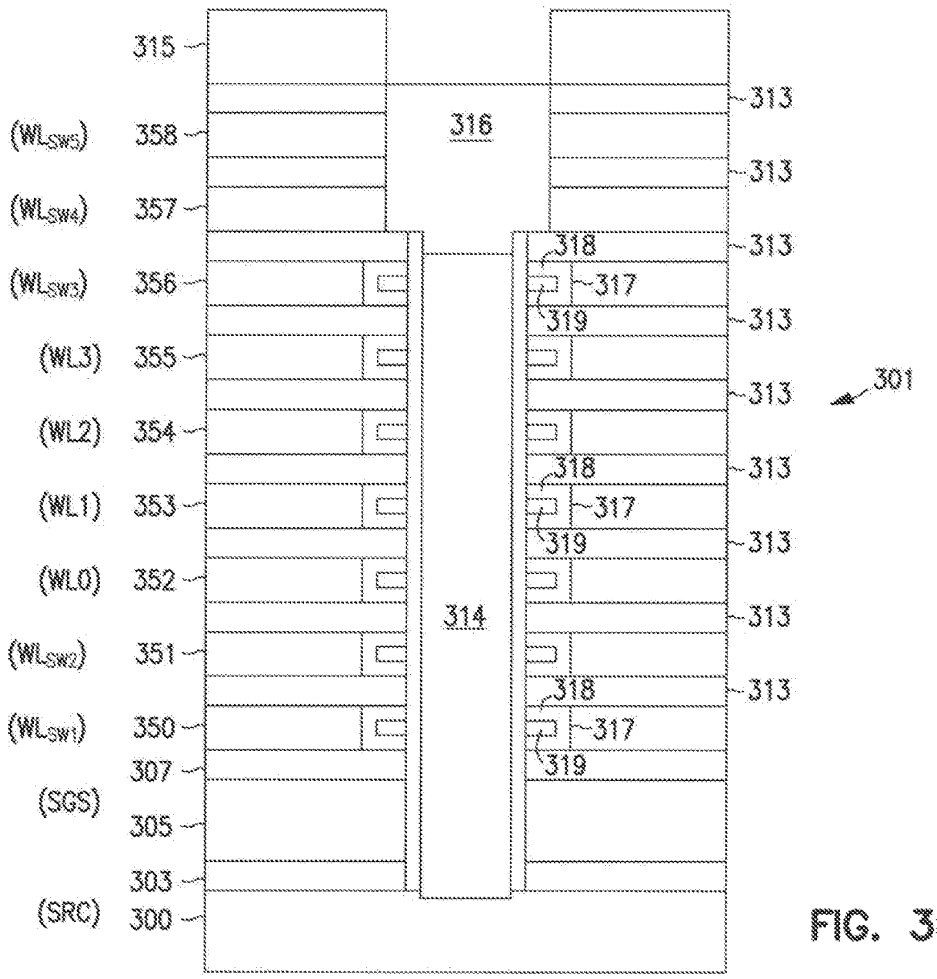

315
316
313
(WLSW3) 358
(WLSW4) 357
(WLSW5) 356
(WL3) 355
(WL2) 354
(WL1) 353
(WL0) 352
(WLSW2) 351
(WLSW1) 350
307
(SGS)
305
303
(SRC) 300
318
317
319
314
301

FIG. 3F

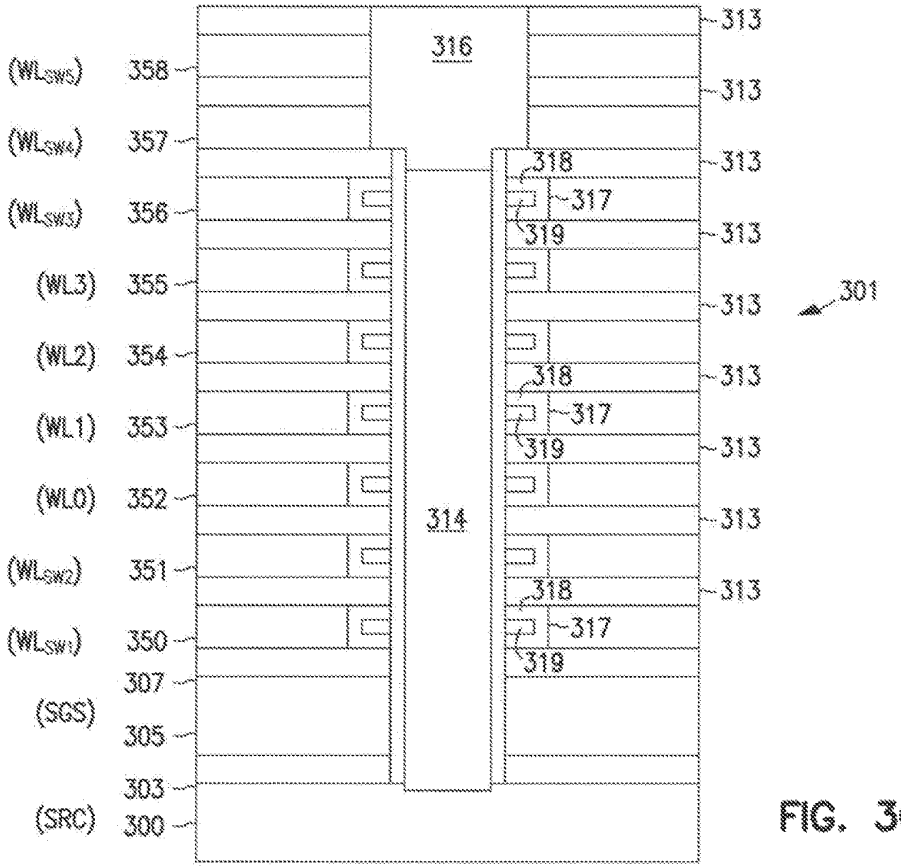

316
313
(WLSW5) 358
(WLSW4) 357
(WLSW3) 356
(WL3) 355
(WL2) 354
(WL1) 353
(WL0) 352
(WLSW2) 351
(WLSW1) 350
(SGS)
(SRC)
307
305
303
300
318
317
319
314
301

FIG. 3G

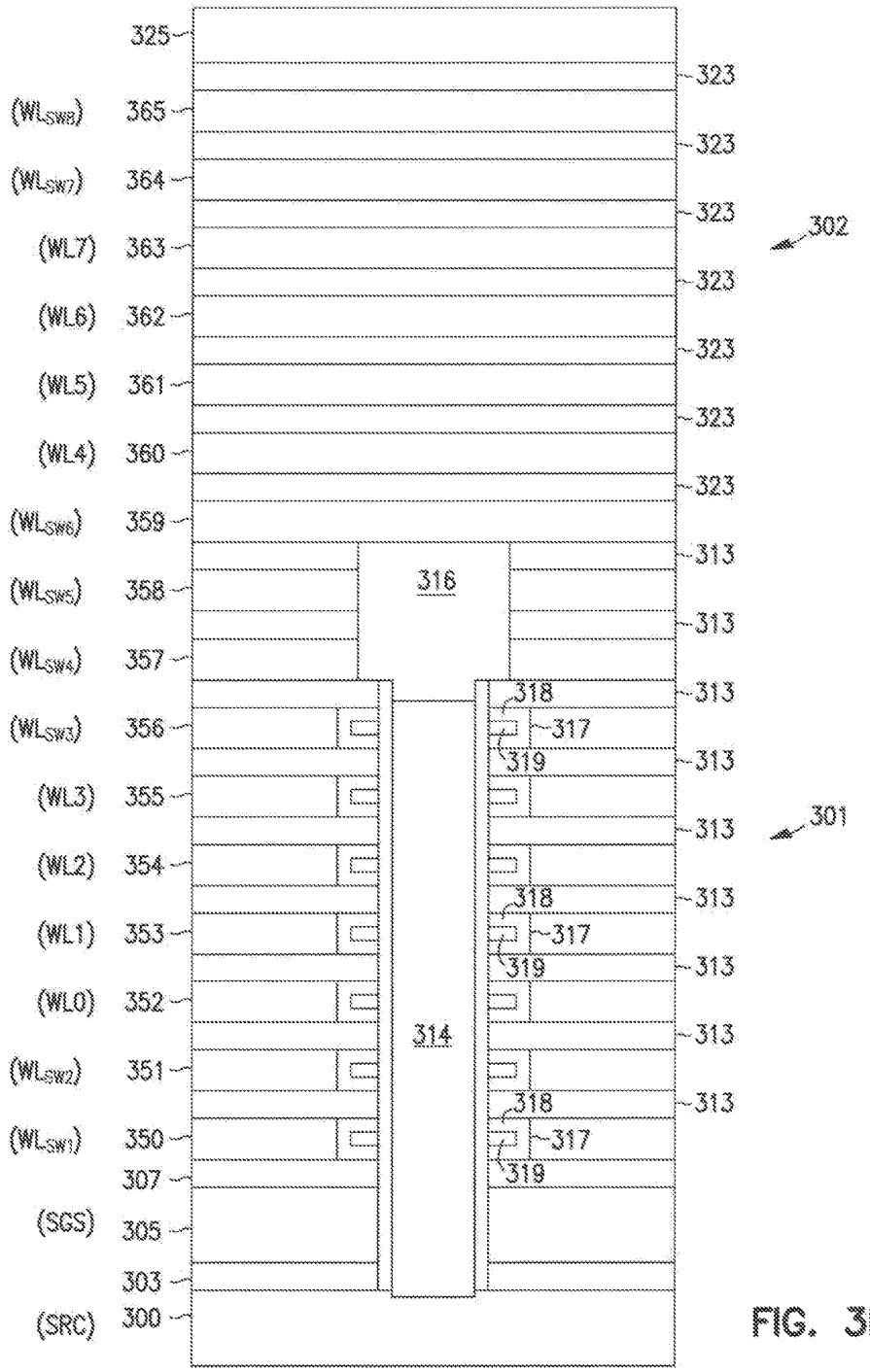

325
323
(WLSW8) 365
323
(WLSW7) 364
323
302
(WL7) 363
323
(WL6) 362
323
(WL5) 361
323
(WL4) 360
323
(WLSW6) 359
313
316
(WLSW5) 358
313
(WLSW4) 357
313
318
(WLSW3) 356
317
319
313
(WL3) 355
313
301
(WL2) 354
313
318
(WL1) 353
317
319
313
(WL0) 352
313
314
(WLSW2) 351
313
318
(WLSW1) 350
317
307
319
(SGS) 305
303
(SRC) 300

FIG. 3H

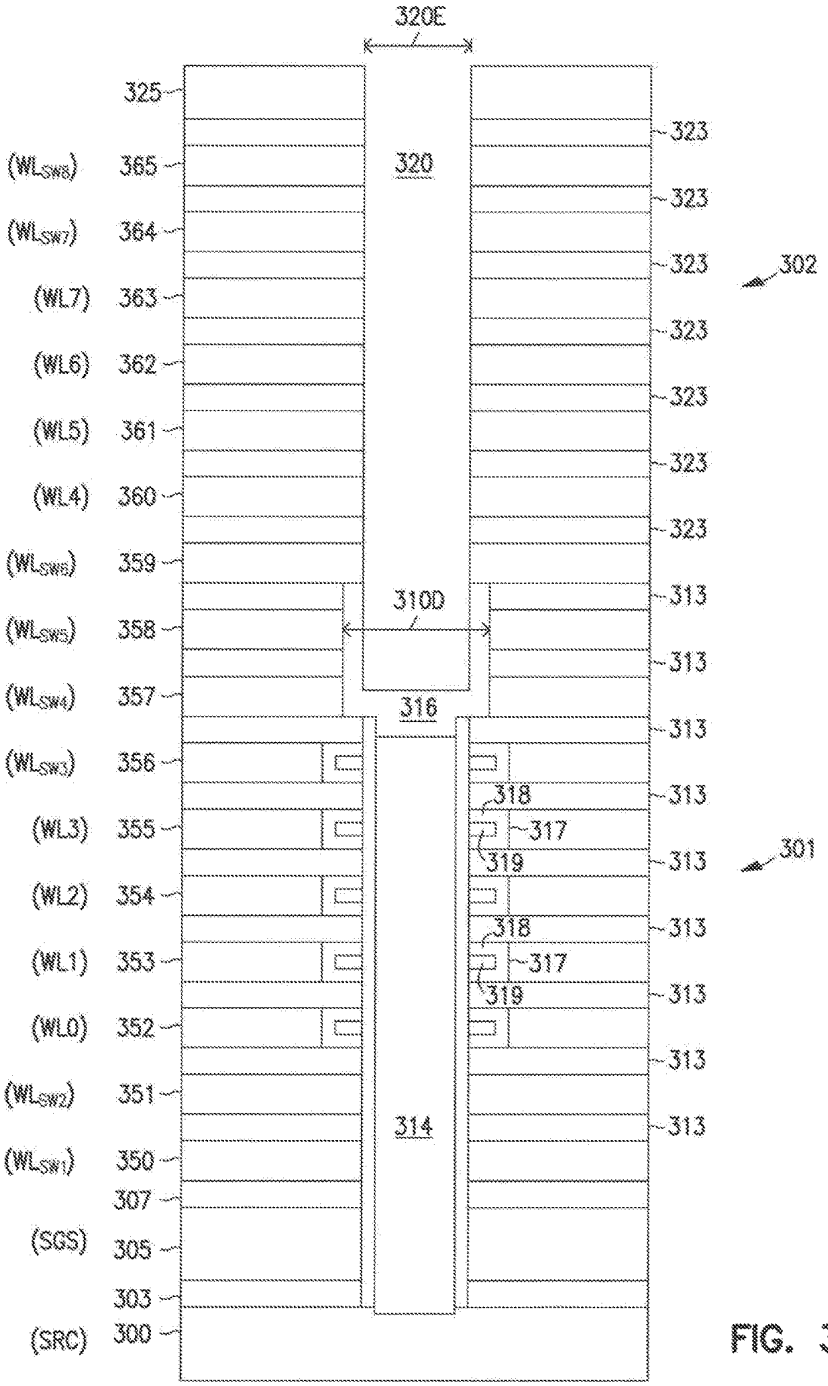

320E
325
(WLSW8) 365
(WLSW7) 364
(WL7) 363
(WL6) 362
(WL5) 361
(WL4) 360
(WLSW6) 359
(WLSW5) 358
(WLSW4) 357
(WLSW3) 356
(WL3) 355
(WL2) 354
(WL1) 353
(WL0) 352
(WLSW2) 351
(WLSW1) 350
307
(SGS) 305
303
(SRC) 300
320
323
302
310D
313
316
318
317
319
301
314

FIG. 31

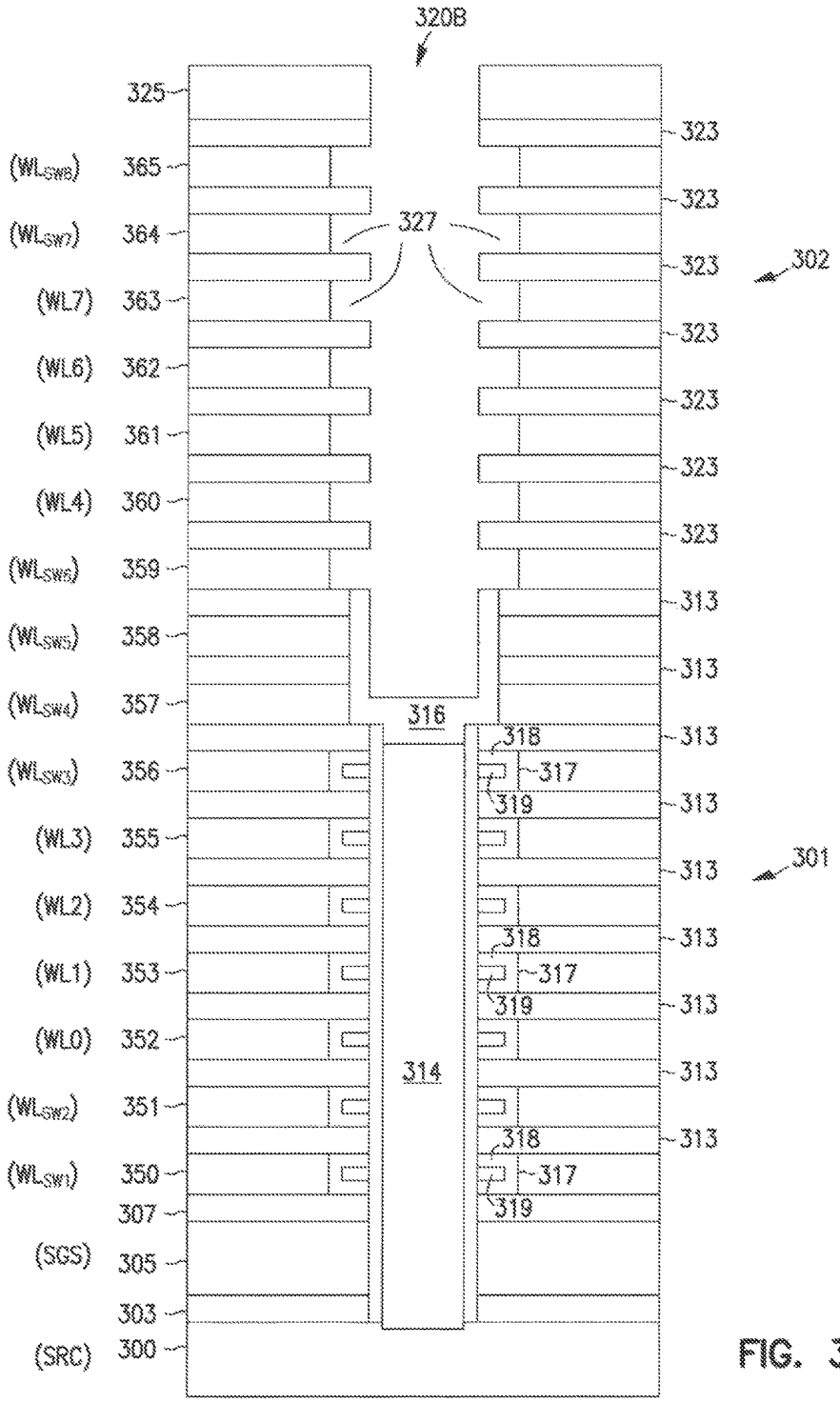

320B
325
(WLSW8) 365
(WLSW7) 364
(WL7) 363
(WL6) 362
(WL5) 361
(WL4) 360
(WLSW6) 359
(WLSW5) 358
(WLSW4) 357
(WLSW3) 356
(WL3) 355
(WL2) 354
(WL1) 353
(WL0) 352
(WLSW2) 351
(WLSW1) 350
307
(SGS) 305
303
(SRC) 300
327
316
314
318
317
319
323
313
302
301

FIG. 3J

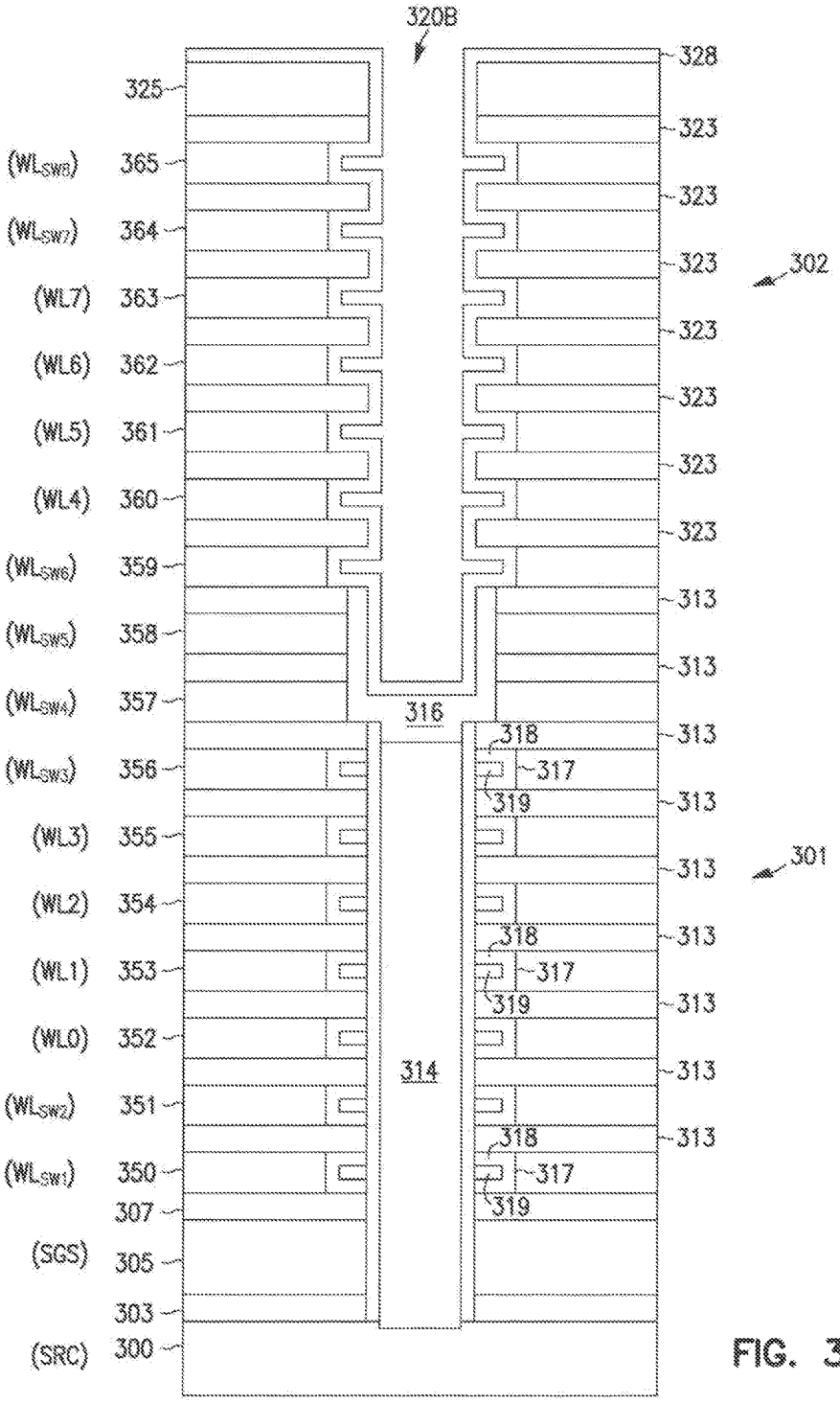

320B
328
325
323
(WLSW8) 365
(WLSW7) 364
(WL7) 363
(WL6) 362
(WL5) 361
(WL4) 360
(WLSW6) 359
(WLSW5) 358
(WLSW4) 357
(WLSW3) 356
(WL3) 355
(WL2) 354
(WL1) 353
(WL0) 352
(WLSW2) 351
(WLSW1) 350
307
(SGS) 305
303
(SRC) 300
302
301
313
316
318
317
319
314

FIG. 3K

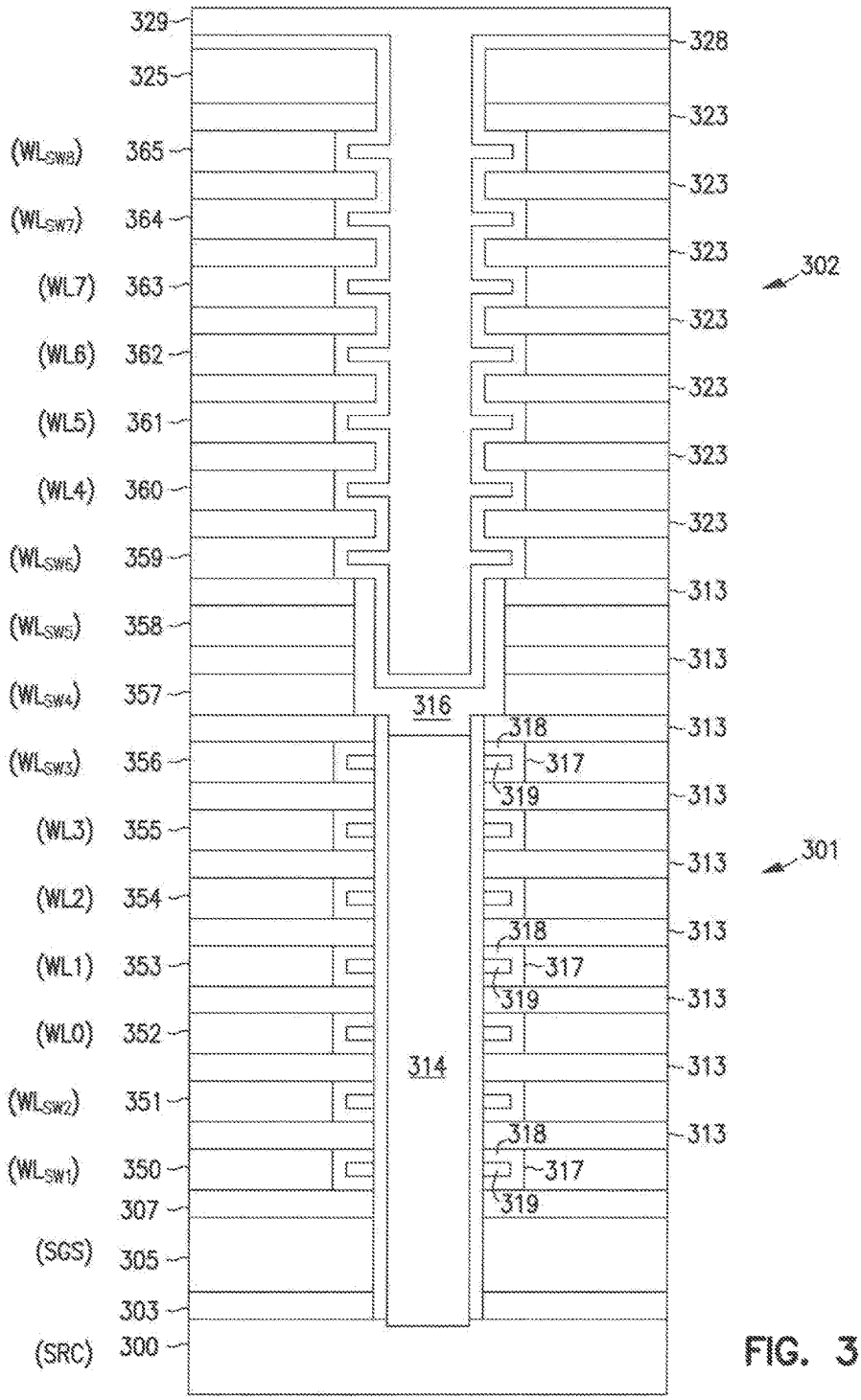
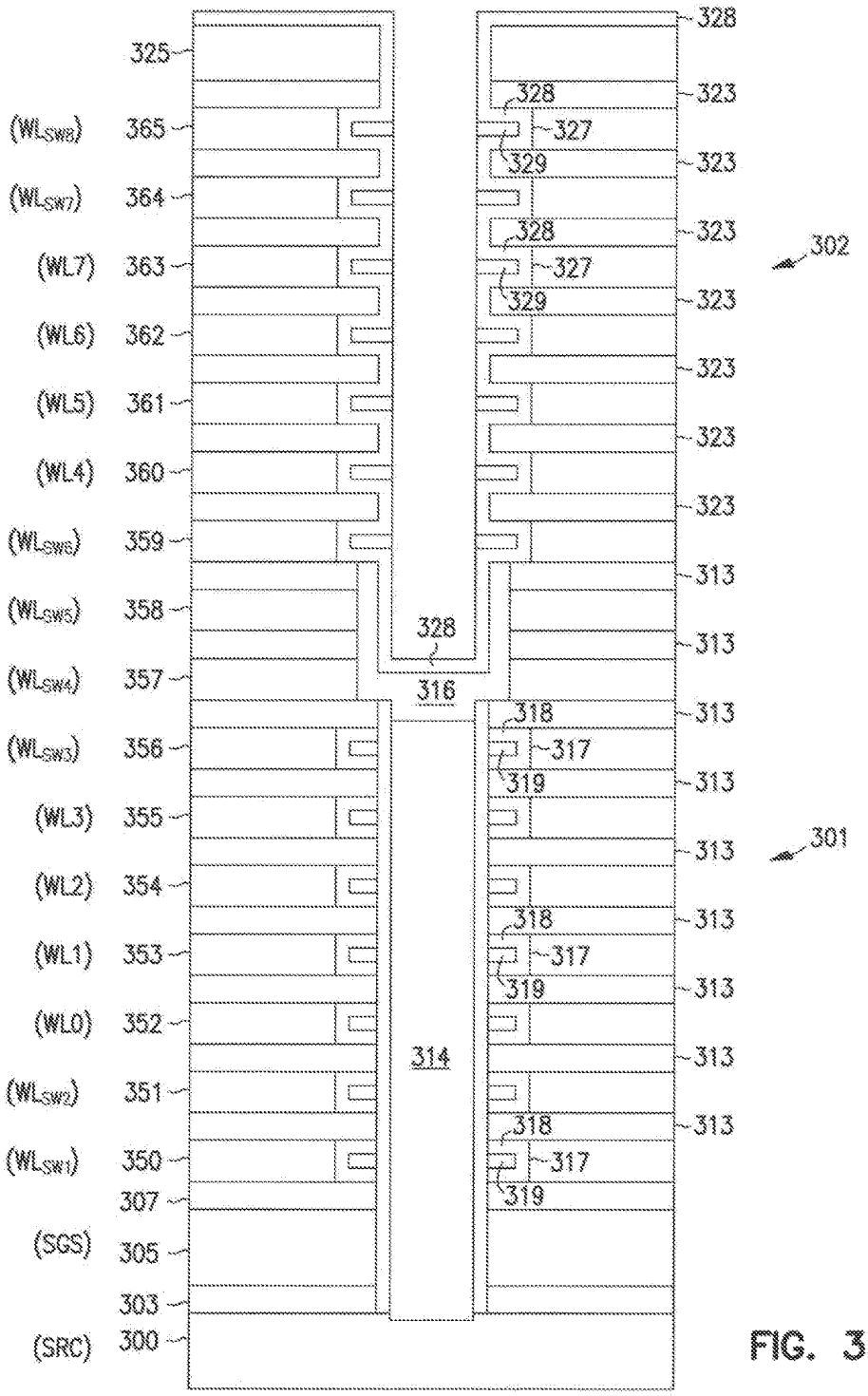

329
325
(WL$_{SW8}$) 365
(WL$_{SW7}$) 364
(WL7) 363
(WL6) 362
(WL5) 361
(WL4) 360
(WL$_{SW6}$) 359
(WL$_{SW5}$) 358
(WL$_{SW4}$) 357
(WL$_{SW3}$) 356
(WL3) 355
(WL2) 354
(WL1) 353
(WL0) 352
(WL$_{SW2}$) 351
(WL$_{SW1}$) 350
307
(SGS) 305
303
(SRC) 300
328
323
302
313
316
318
317
319
301
314

FIG. 3L


325
(WLSW8) 365
(WLSW7) 364
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(WL6) 362
(WL5) 361
(WL4) 360
(WLSW6) 359
(WLSW5) 358
(WLSW4) 357
(WLSW3) 356
(WL3) 355
(WL2) 354
(WL1) 353
(WL0) 352
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(WLSW1) 350
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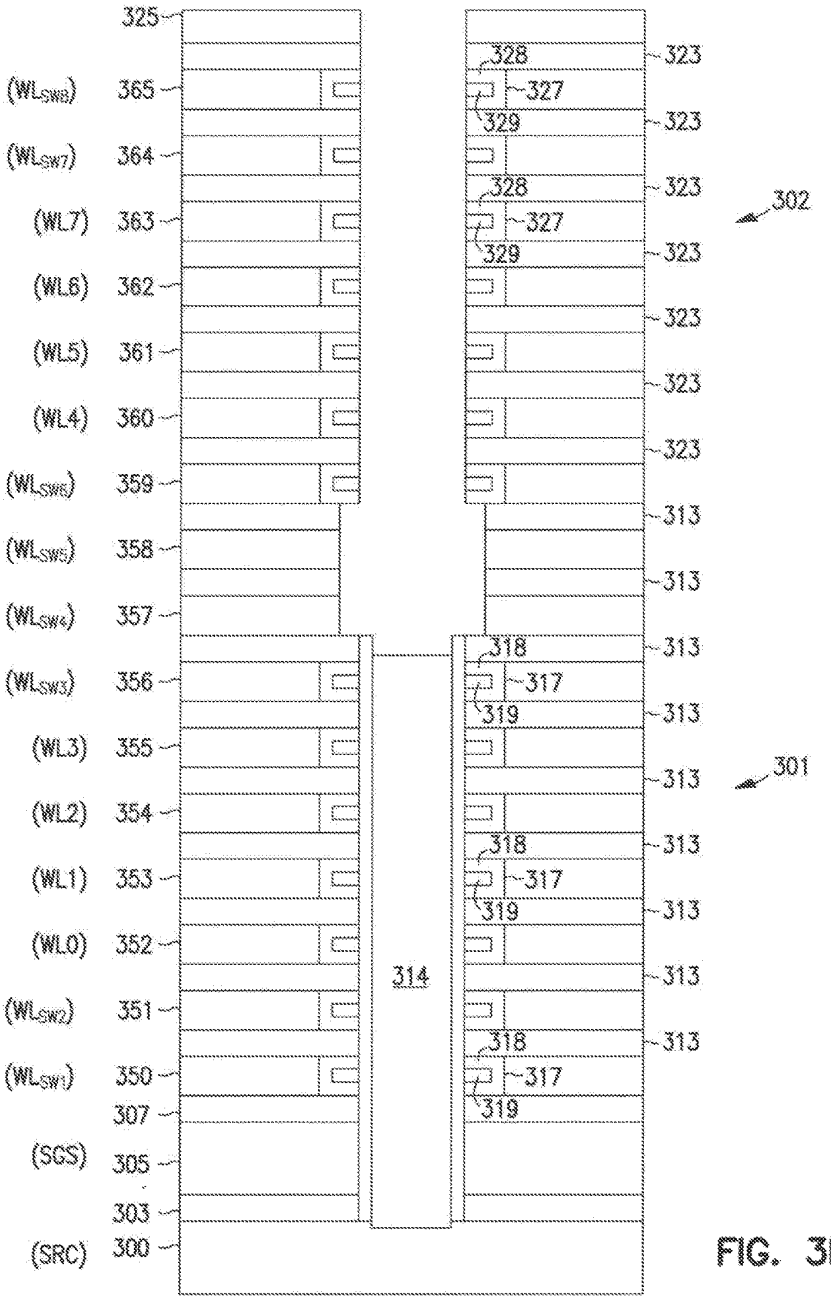
301
314

FIG. 3M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(WLSW3) 356
(WL3) 355
(WL2) 354
(WL1) 353
(WL0) 352
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(WLSW1) 350
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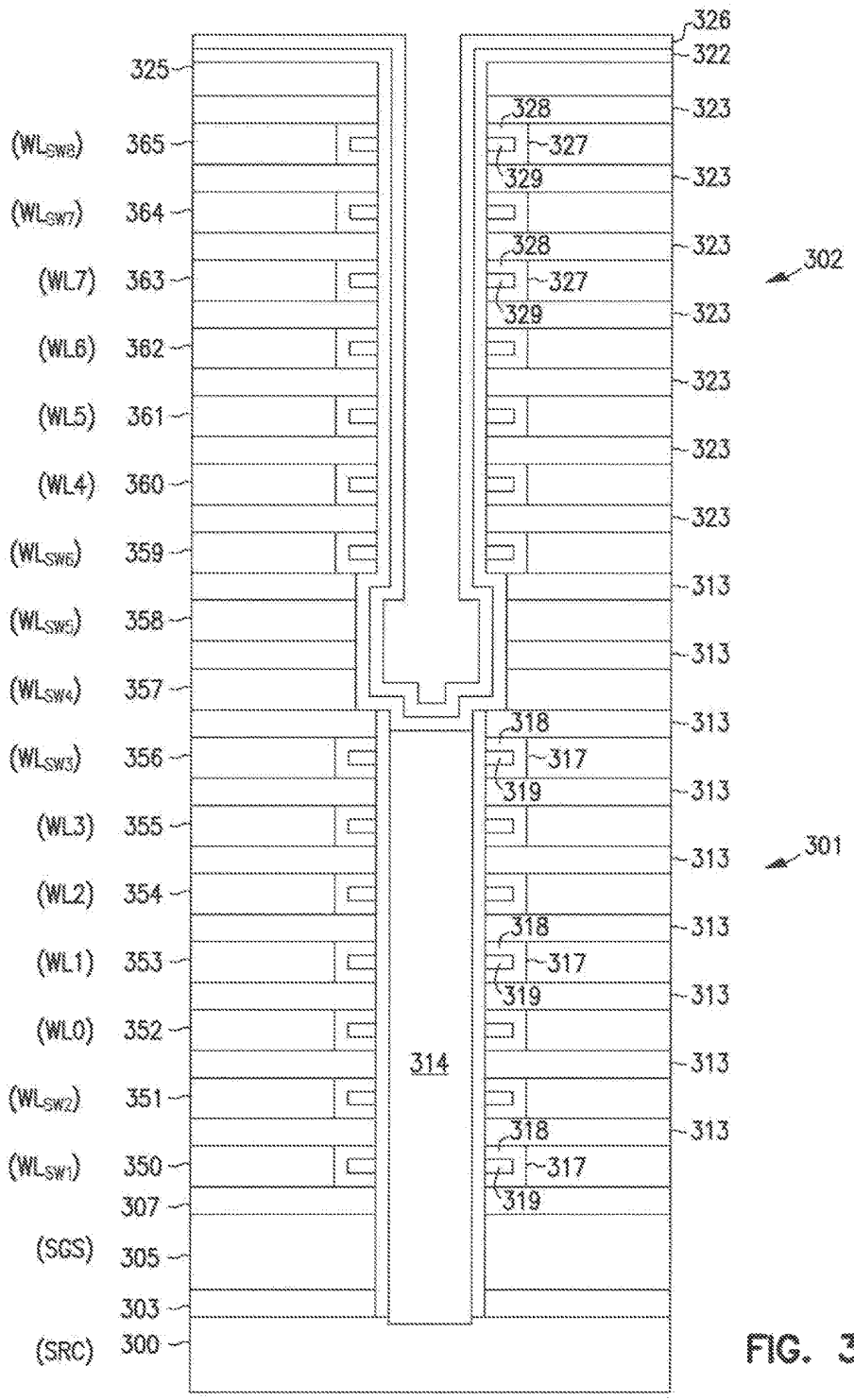
FIG. 3N


326
322
325
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327
329
323
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323
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(WL5) 361
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323
(WLSW6) 359
313
(WLSW5) 358
313
(WLSW4) 357
313
318
(WLSW3) 356
317
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313
(WL3) 355
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301
(WL2) 354
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313
(WL1) 353
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319
313
(WL0) 352
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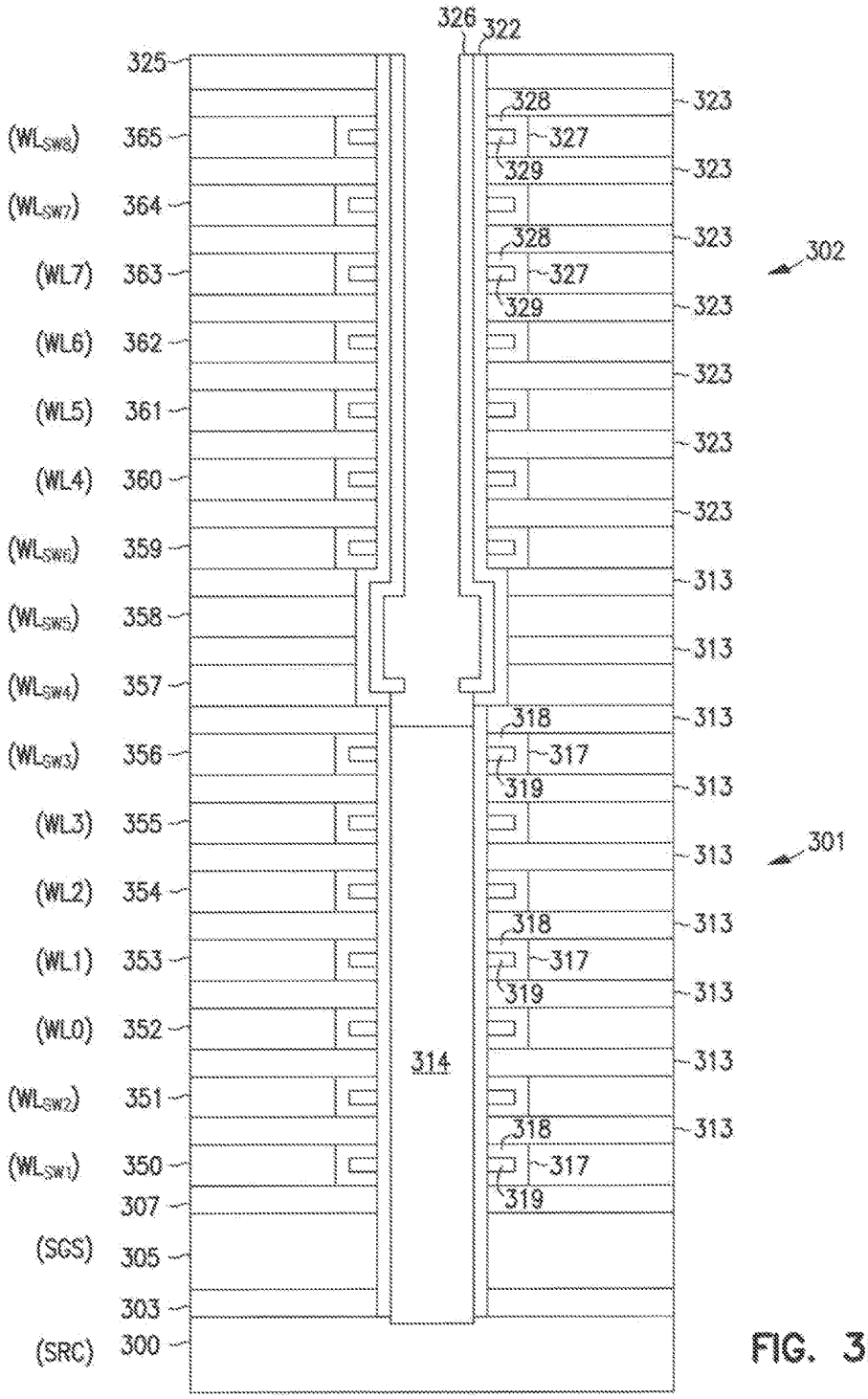
319
(SGS) 305
303
(SRC) 300

FIG. 30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322
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(WLSW5) 358
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(WLSW3) 356
(WL3) 355
(WL2) 354
(WL1) 353
(WL0) 352
(WLSW2) 351
(WLSW1) 350
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(SRC) 300
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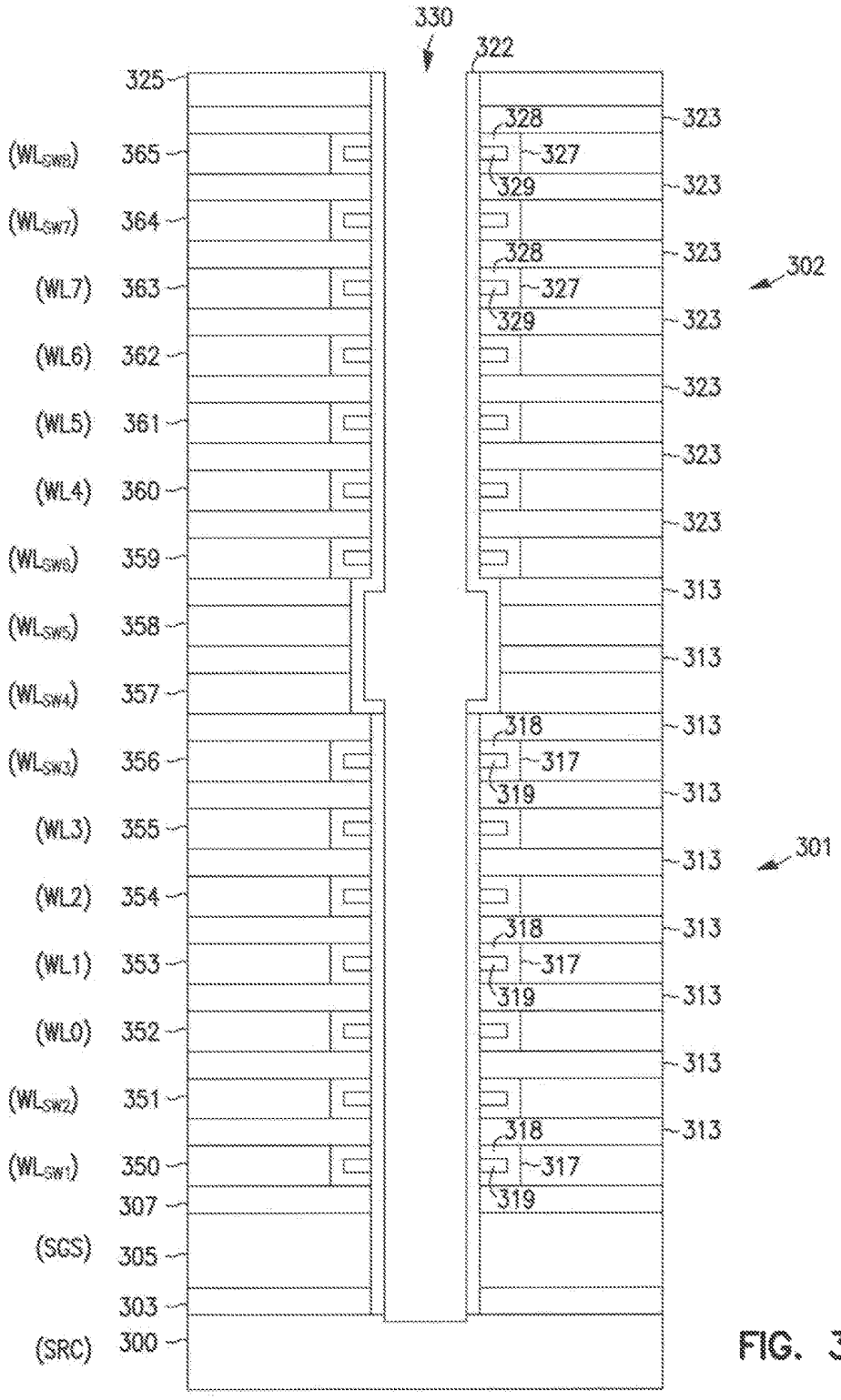
327
329
323
302
313
318
317
319
301
314

FIG. 3P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(WL4) 360
(WLSW6) 359
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(WLSW4) 357
(WLSW3) 356
(WL3) 355
(WL2) 354
(WL1) 353
(WL0) 352
(WLSW2) 351
(WLSW1) 350
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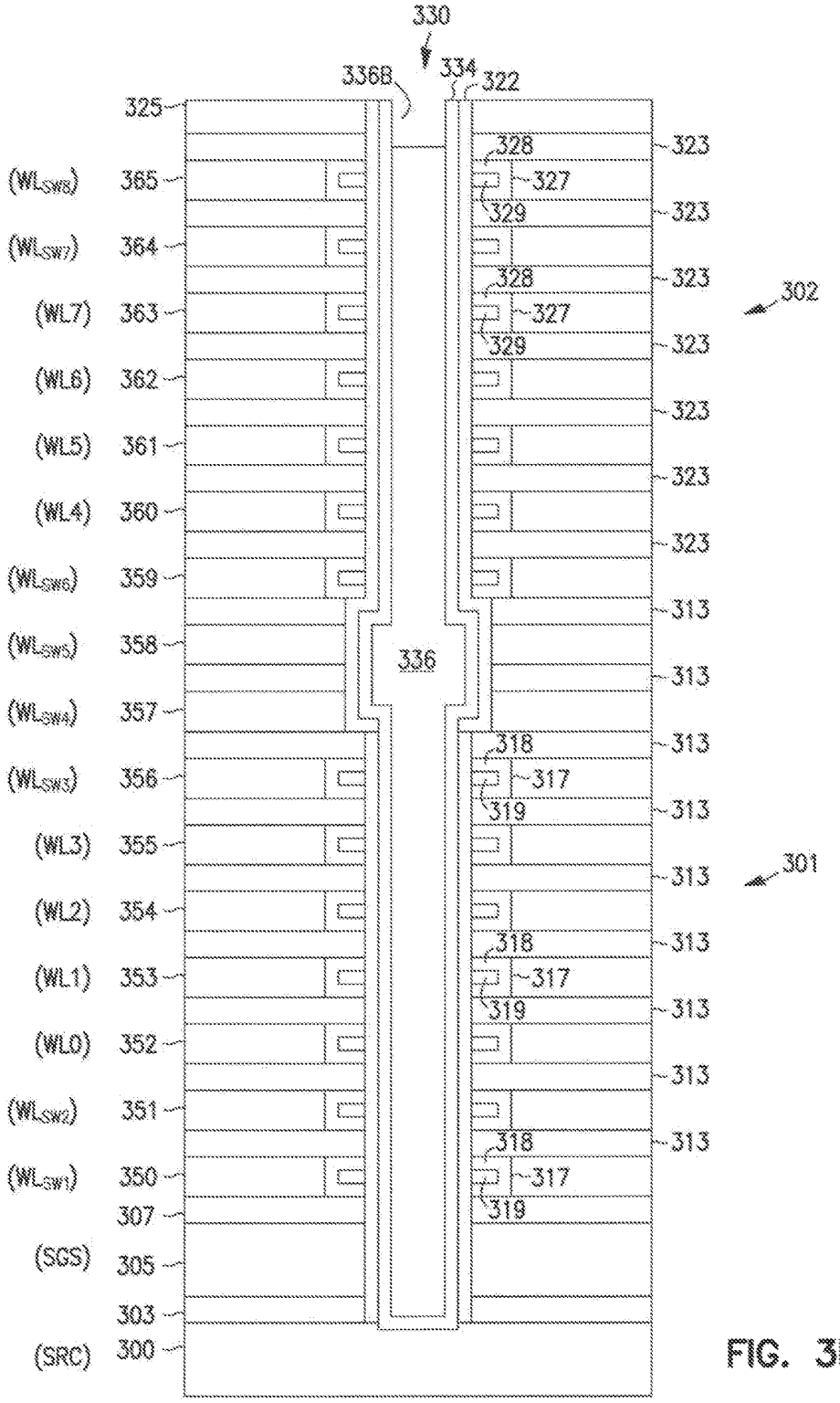
303
(SRC) 300
328
327
329
323
302
318
317
319
313
301

FIG. 3Q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336B
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325
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(WL5) 361
(WL4) 360
(WLSW6) 359
(WLSW5) 358
(WLSW4) 357
(WLSW3) 356
(WL3) 355
(WL2) 354
(WL1) 353
(WL0) 352
(WLSW2) 351
(WLSW1) 350
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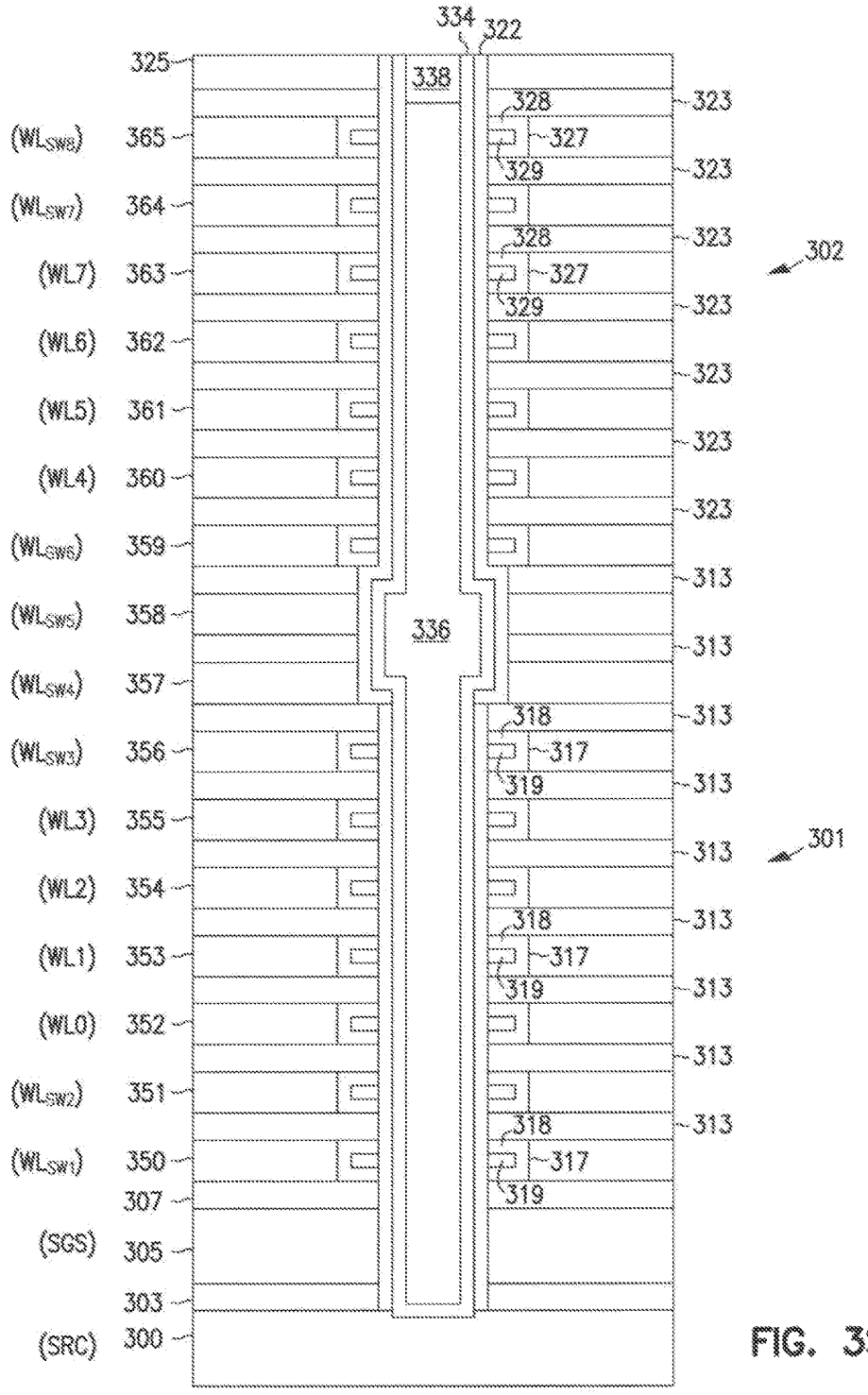
303
(SRC) 300
328
327
329
323
302
336
313
318
317
319
301

FIG. 3R


334
322
325
338
328
323
(WLSW8) 365
327
329
(WLSW7) 364
(WL7) 363
(WL6) 362
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(WL4) 360
(WLSW6) 359
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(WL3) 355
(WL2) 354
(WL1) 353
(WL0) 352
(WLSW2) 351
(WLSW1) 350
307
(SGS) 305
303
(SRC) 300
336
318
317
319
313
302
301

FIG. 3S

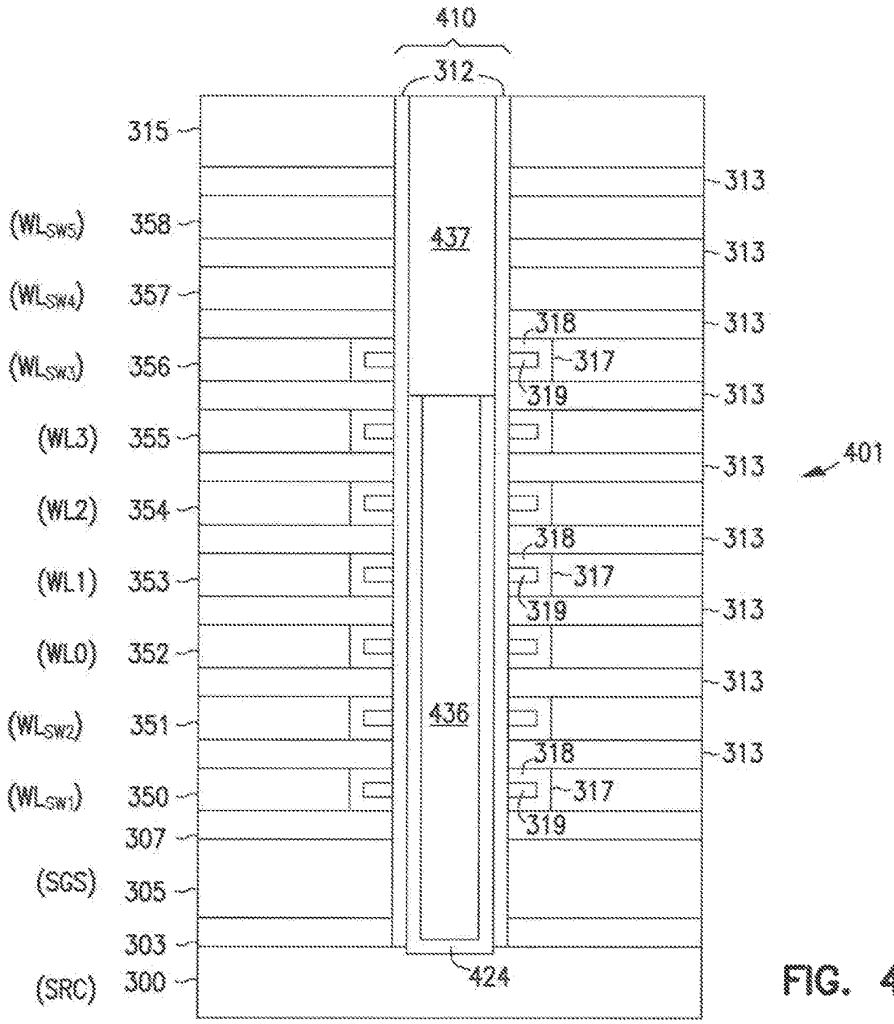
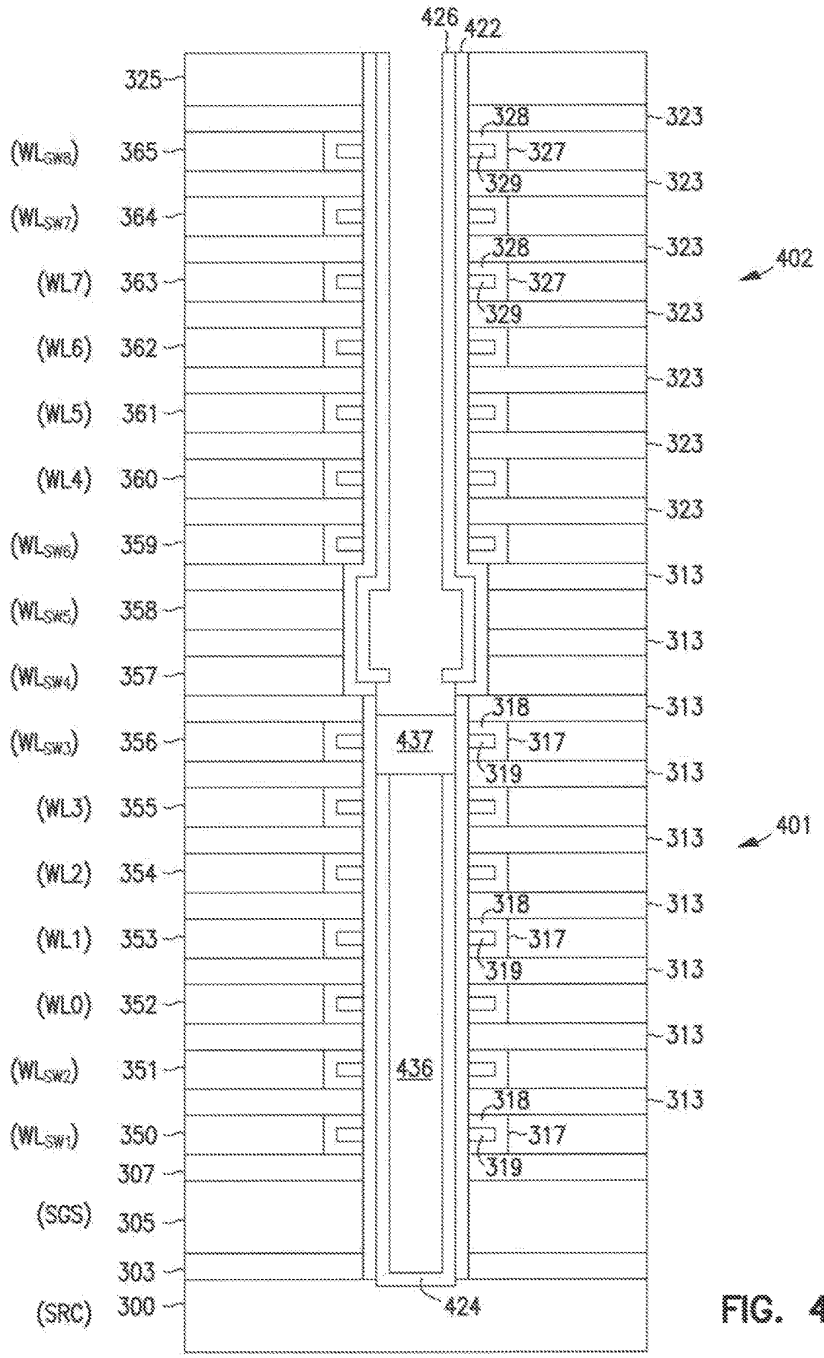

410
312
315
313
(WLSW5) 358
437
313
(WLSW4) 357
313
318
(WLSW3) 356
317
319
313
(WL3) 355
313
401
(WL2) 354
318
313
(WL1) 353
317
319
313
(WL0) 352
313
(WLSW2) 351
436
318
313
(WLSW1) 350
317
319
307
(SGS) 305
303
(SRC) 300
424

FIG. 4A


426
422
325
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(WL7) 363
(WL6) 362
(WL5) 361
(WL4) 360
(WLSW6) 359
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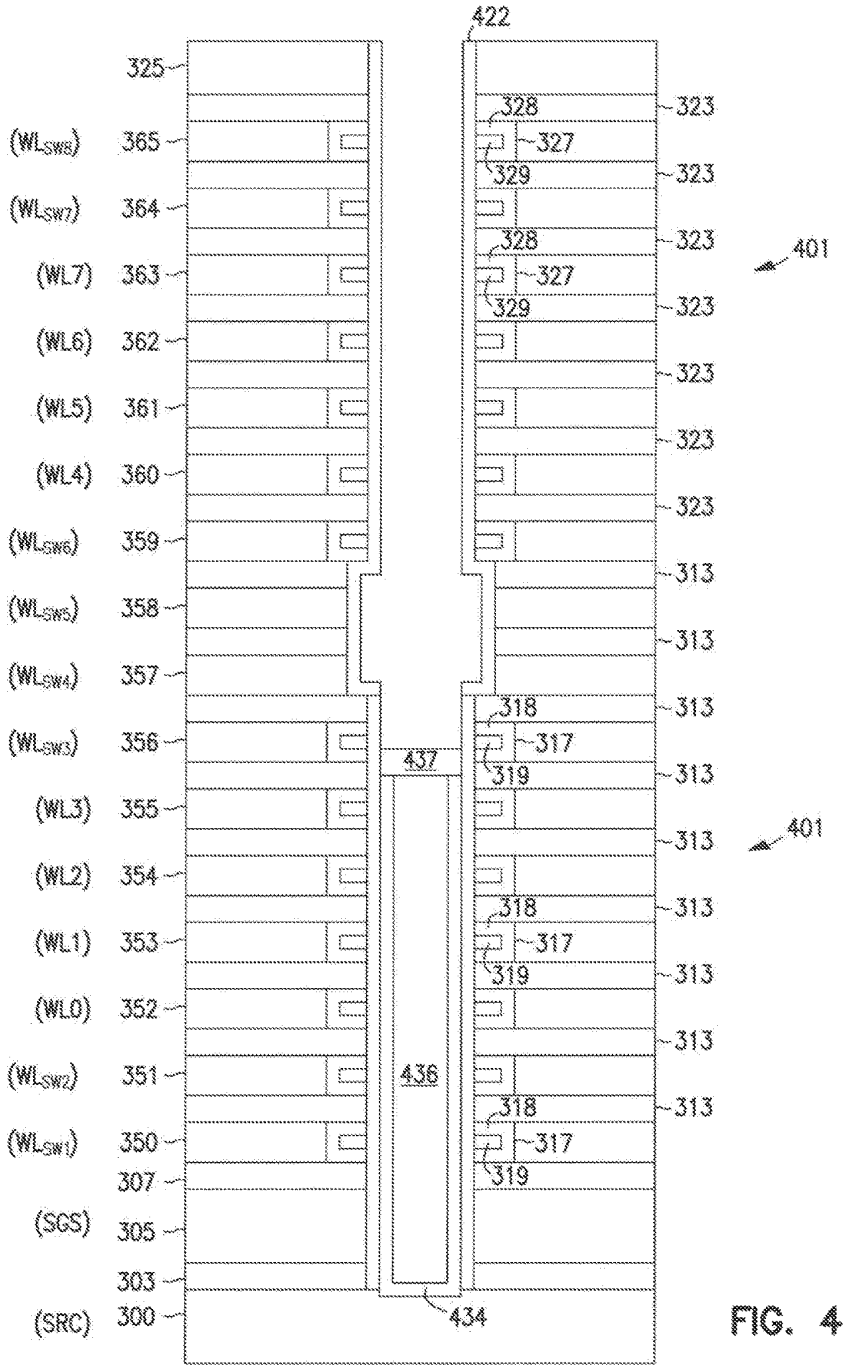
(WL3) 355
(WL2) 354
(WL1) 353
(WL0) 352
(WLSW2) 351
(WLSW1) 350
307
(SGS) 305
303
(SRC) 300
328
327
329
323
402
313
318
317
319
401
437
436
424

FIG. 4B


422
325
(WLSW8) 365
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(WL7) 363
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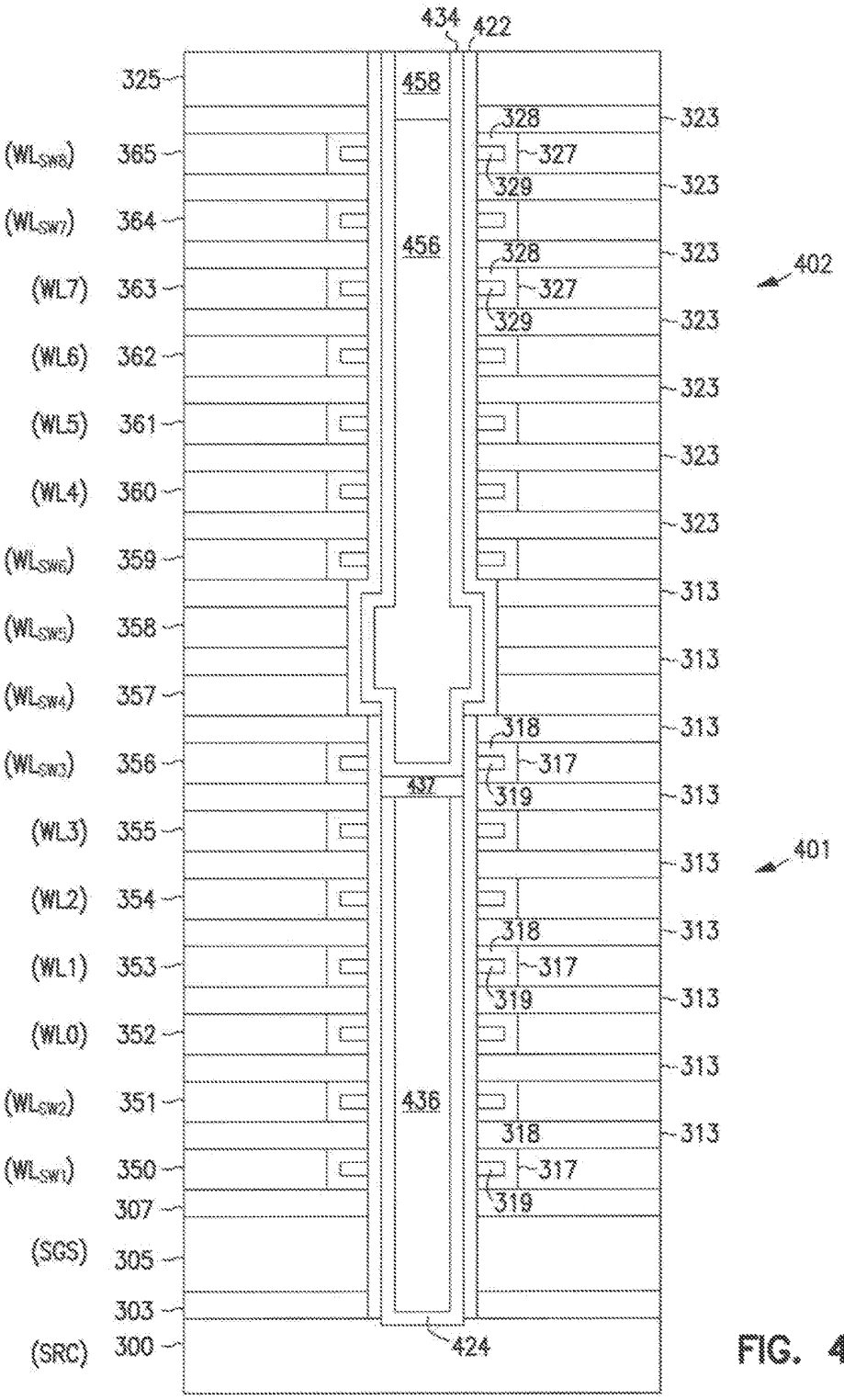
(WL5) 361
(WL4) 360
(WLSW6) 359
(WLSW5) 358
(WLSW4) 357
(WLSW3) 356
(WL3) 355
(WL2) 354
(WL1) 353
(WL0) 352
(WLSW2) 351
(WLSW1) 350
307
(SGS) 305
303
(SRC) 300
328
327
329
323
401
313
318
317
319
437
436
434

FIG. 4C


434
422
325
458
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327
329
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(WLSW7) 364
456
(WL7) 363
(WL6) 362
(WL5) 361
(WL4) 360
(WLSW6) 359
(WLSW5) 358
(WLSW4) 357
(WLSW3) 356
(WL3) 355
(WL2) 354
(WL1) 353
(WL0) 352
(WLSW2) 351
(WLSW1) 350
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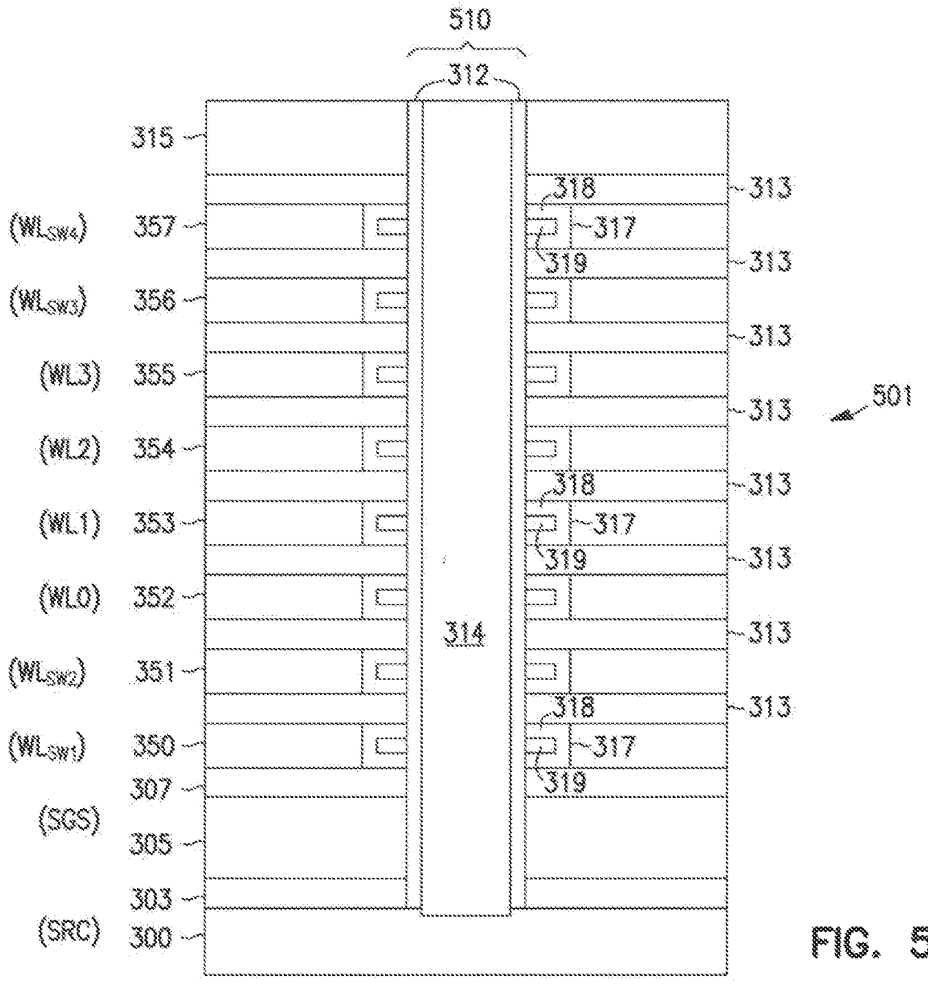
(SGS) 305
303
(SRC) 300
313
318
317
319
437
436
424
402
401

FIG. 4D


510
312
315
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(WLSW3) 356
(WL3) 355
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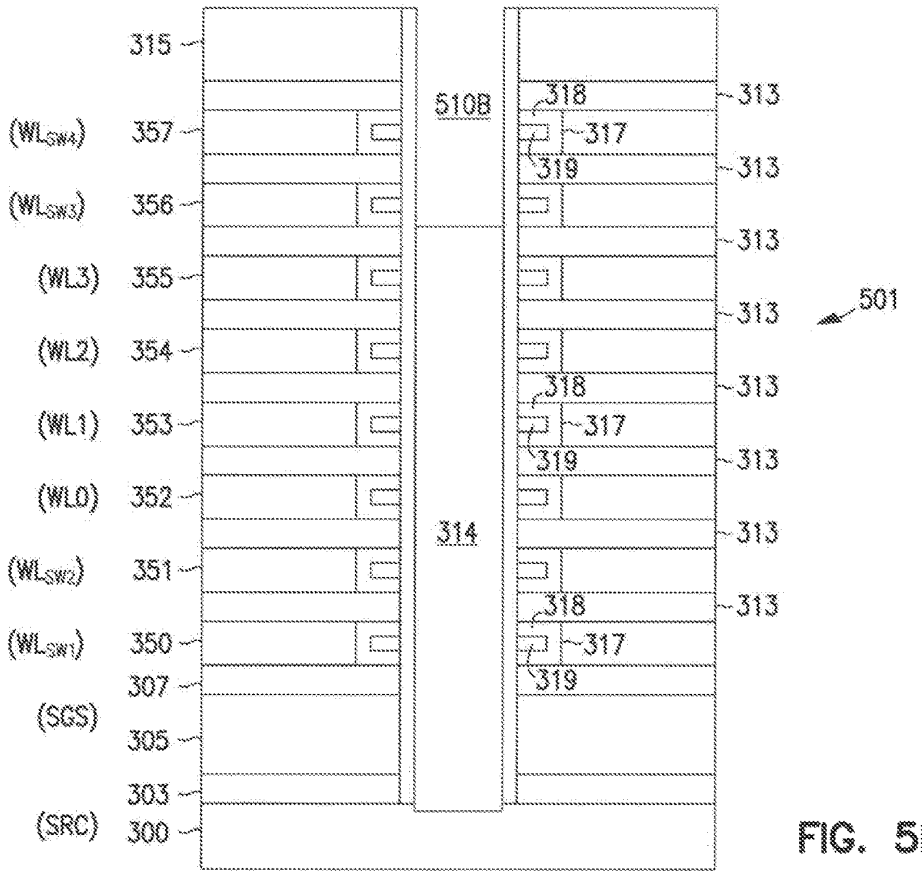
(WL0) 352
(WLSW2) 351
(WLSW1) 350
307
(SGS)
305
303
(SRC) 300
313
318
317
319
314
501

FIG. 5A


315
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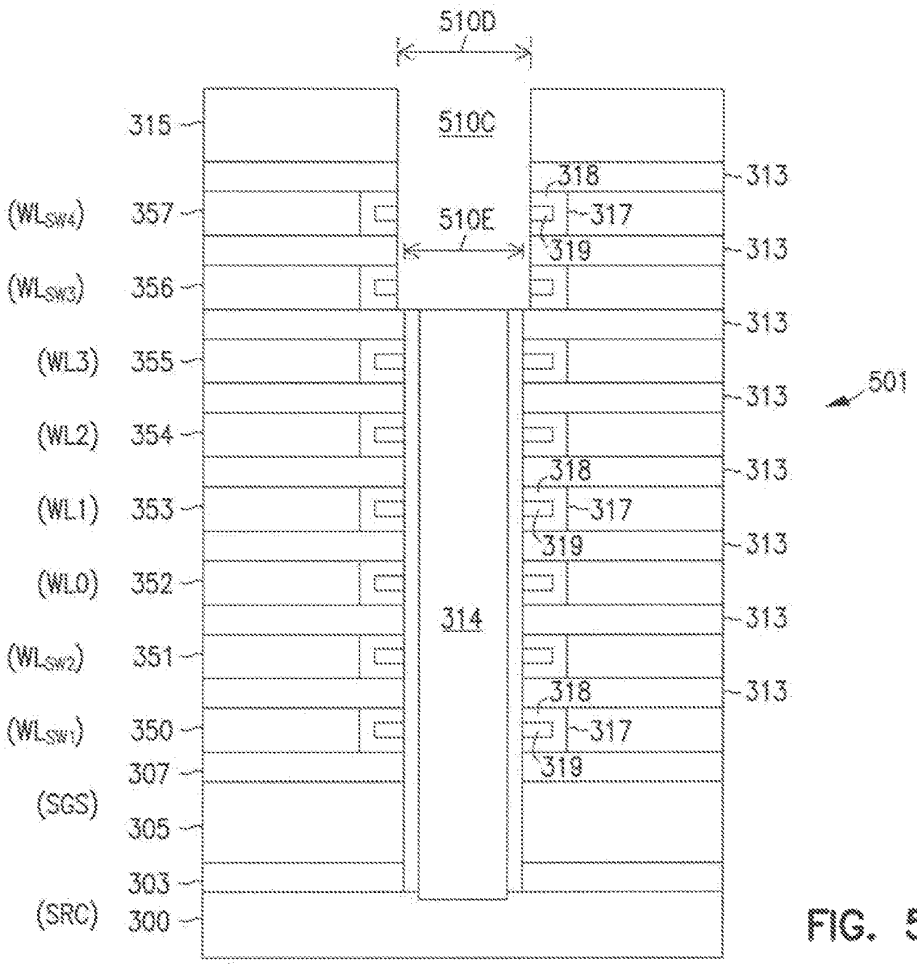
(WL3) 355
(WL2) 354
(WL1) 353
(WL0) 352
(WLSW2) 351
(WLSW1) 350
307
(SGS)
305
303
(SRC) 300
510B
314
318
317
319
313
501

FIG. 5B


510D
510C
510E
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(WL2) 354
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(WL0) 352
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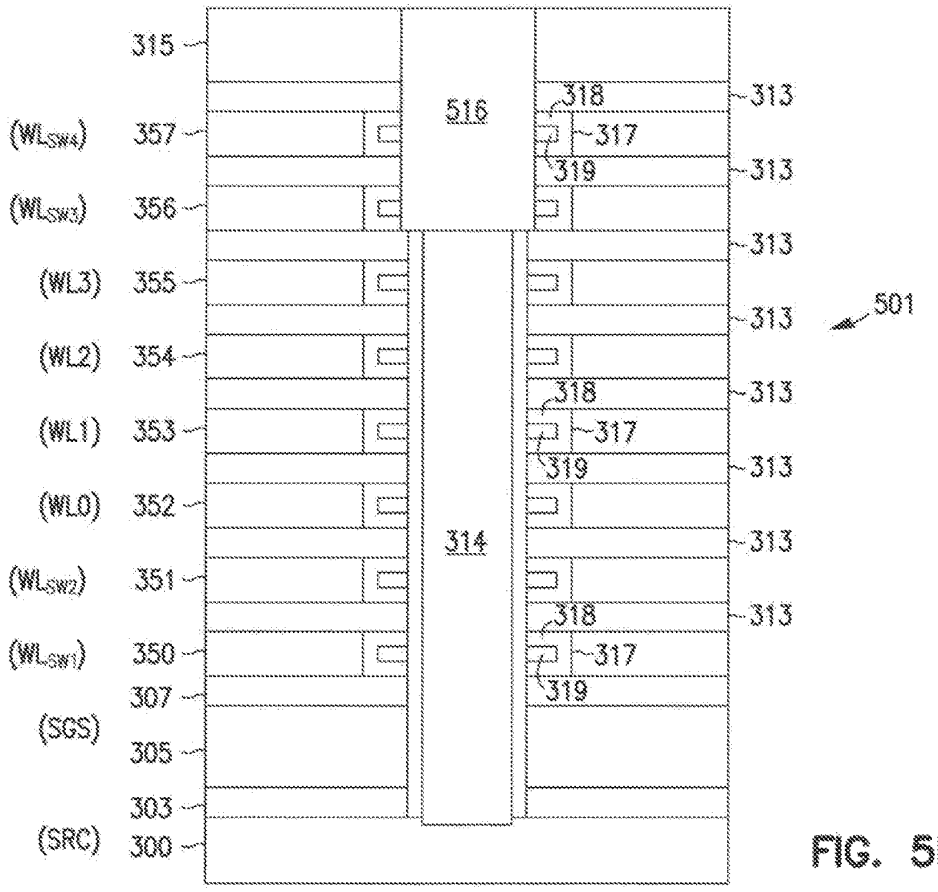
314
501

FIG. 5C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(SGS)
305
303
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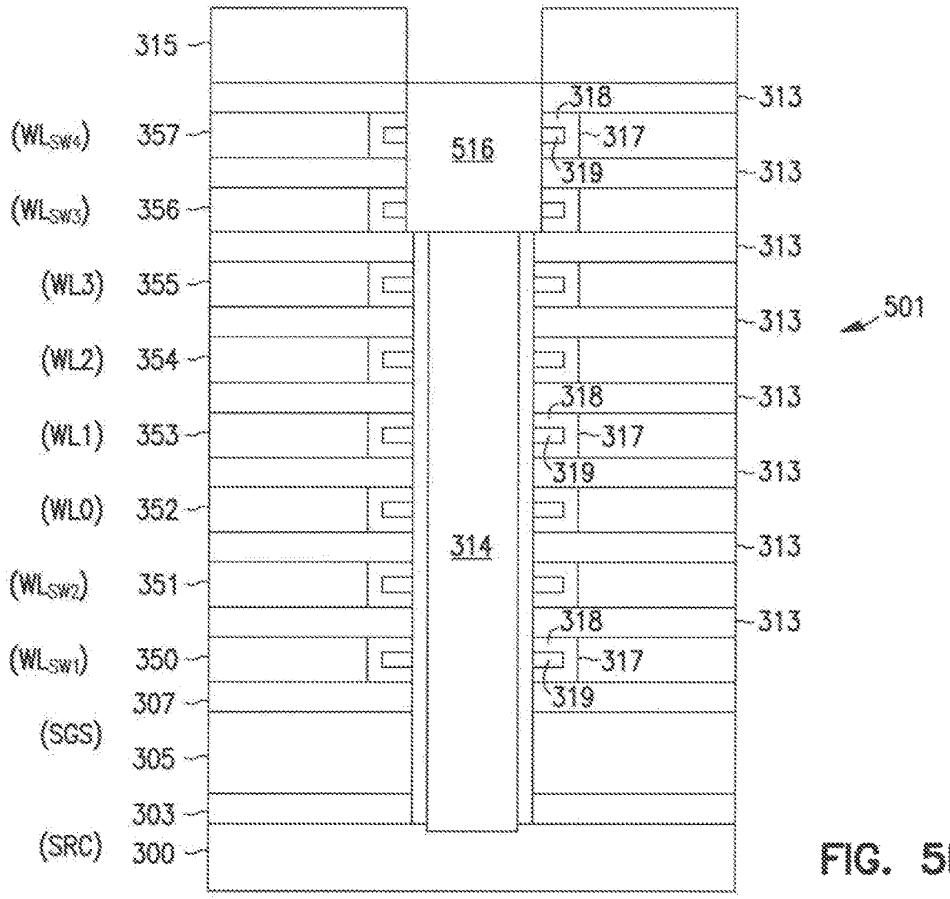
516
314
318
317
319
313
501

FIG. 5D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(WL0)
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303
(SRC)
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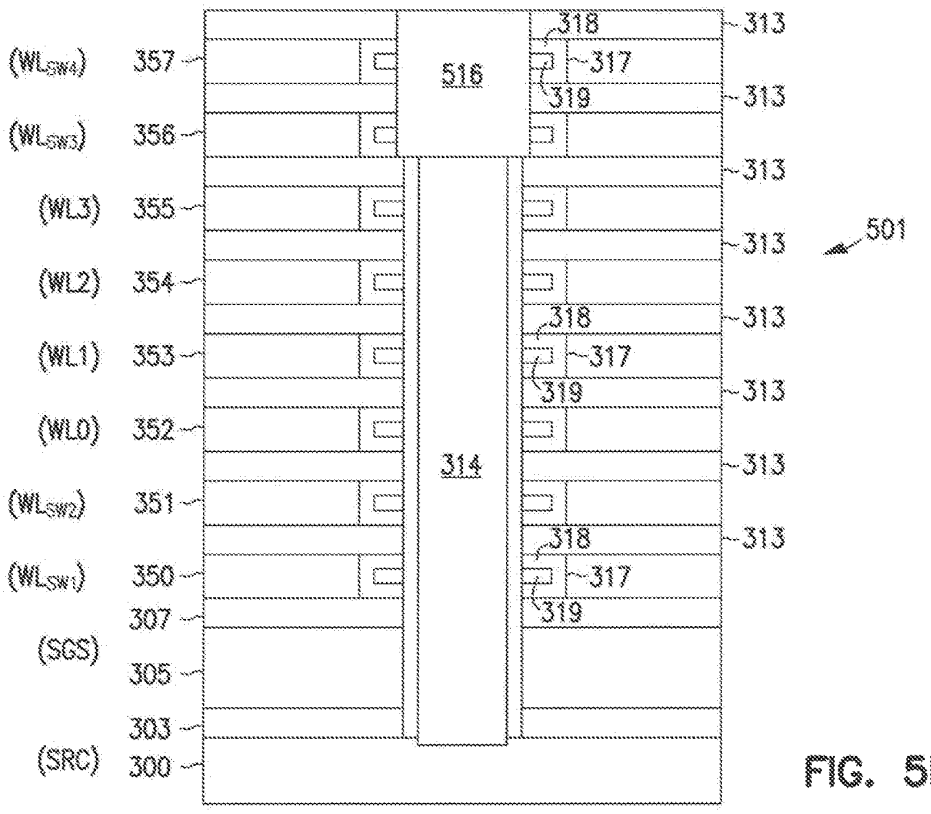
313
501

FIG. 5E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(WL2)
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(SRC)
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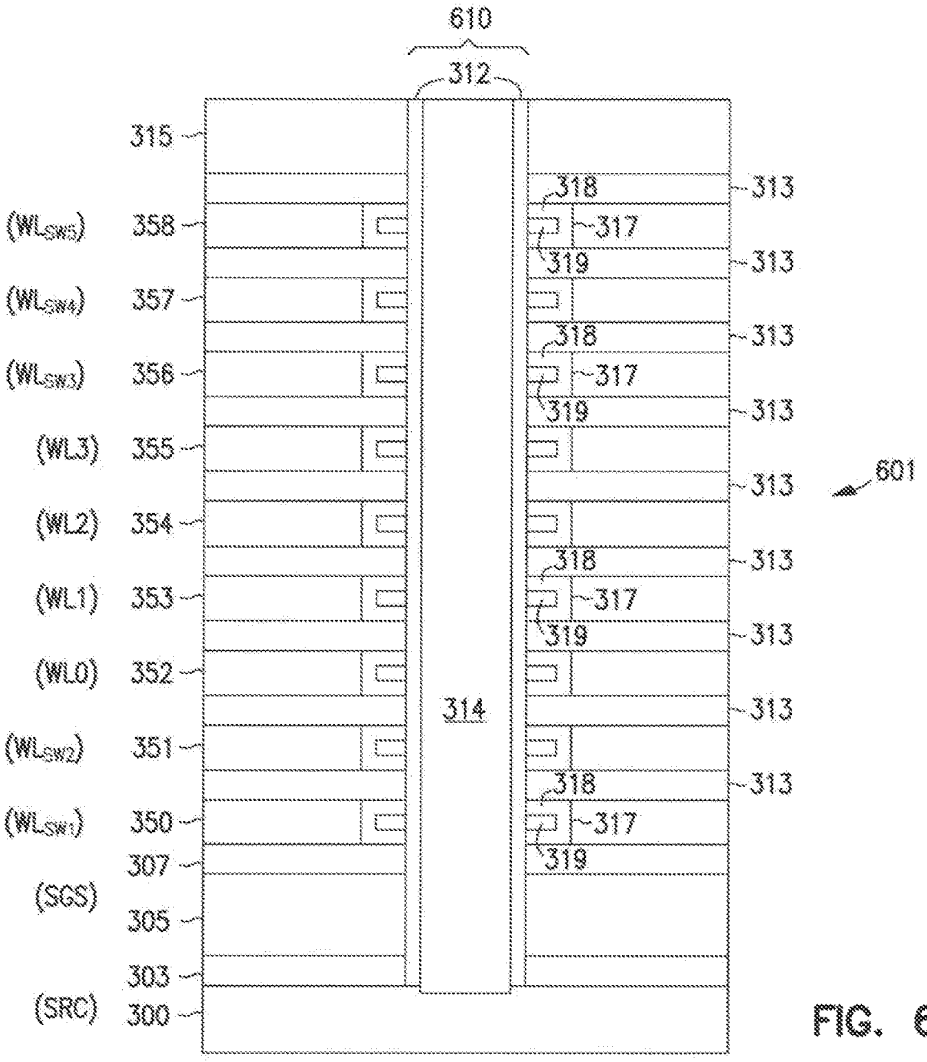
516
314
318
317
319
313
501

FIG. 5F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(WL3) 355
(WL2) 354
(WL1) 353
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(WLSW1) 350
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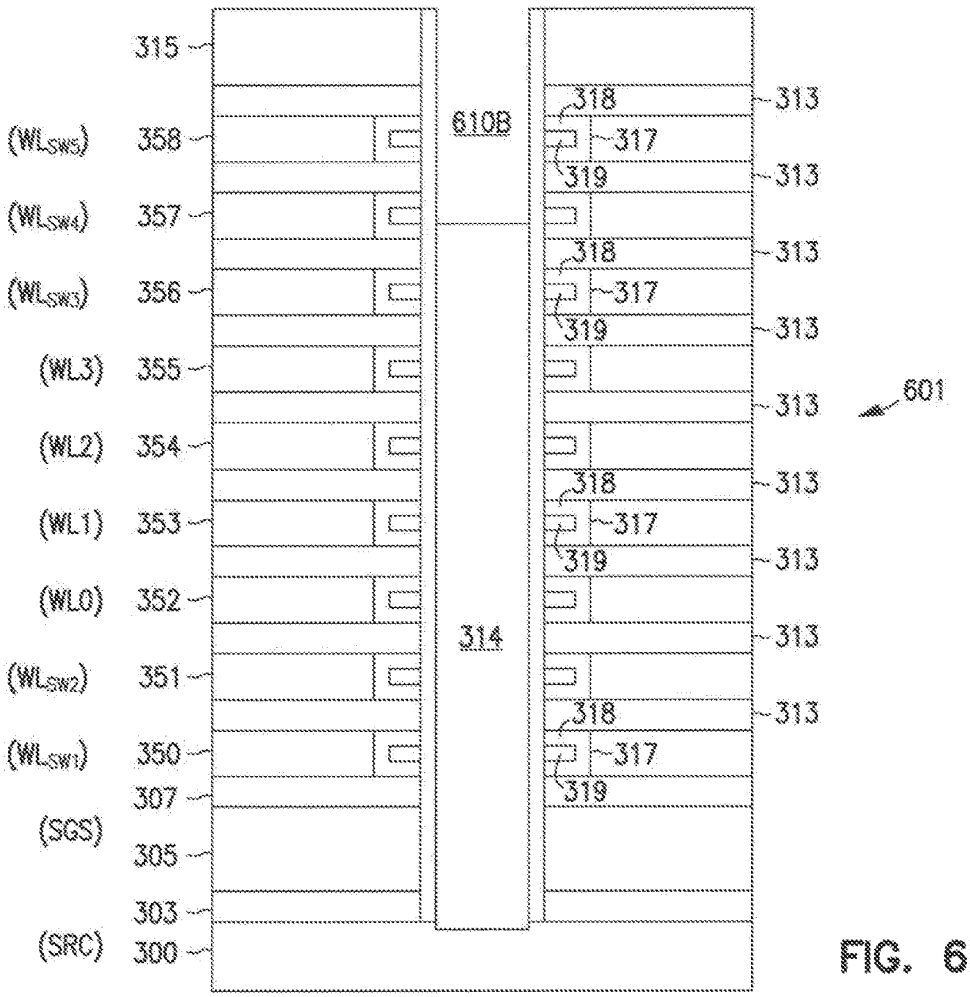
314
601

FIG. 6A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(WL2)
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(WLSW2)
351
(WLSW1)
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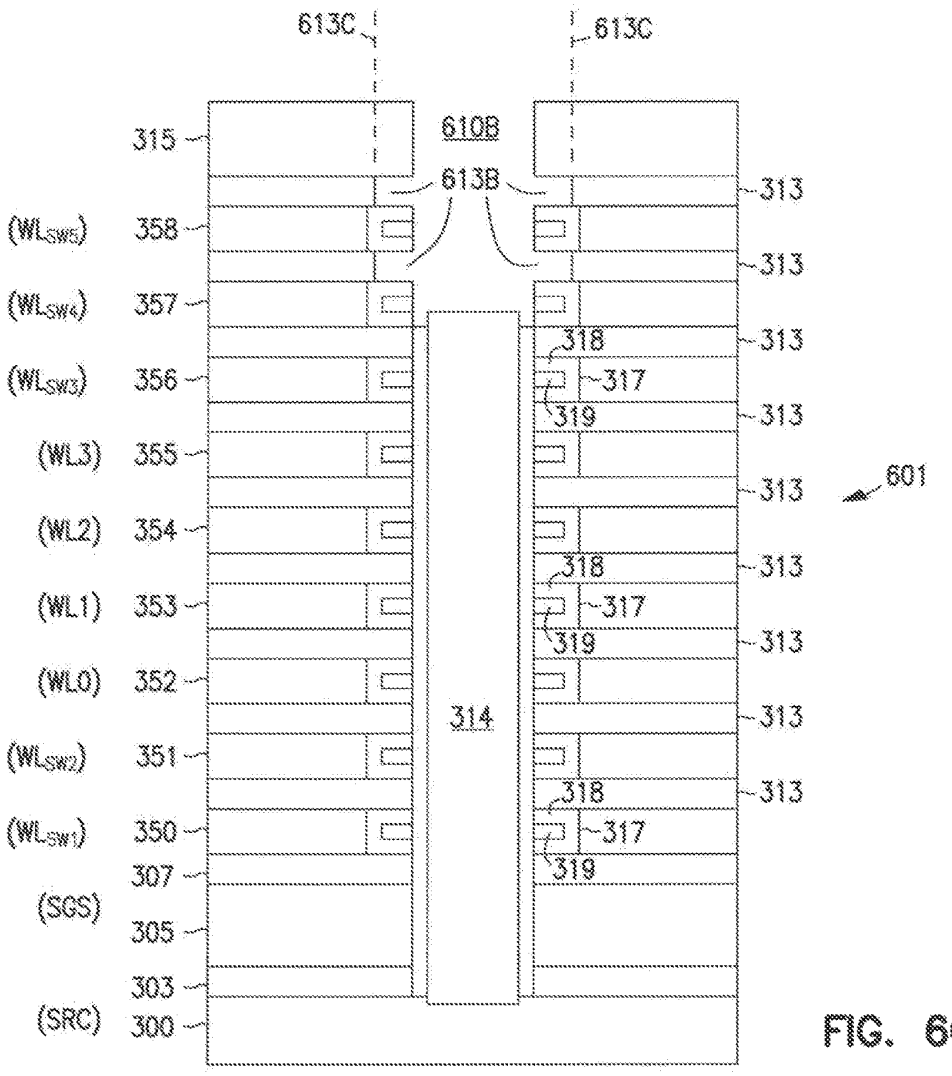
303
(SRC)
300
610B
314
318
317
319
313
601

FIG. 6B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613C
610B
613B
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(SRC)
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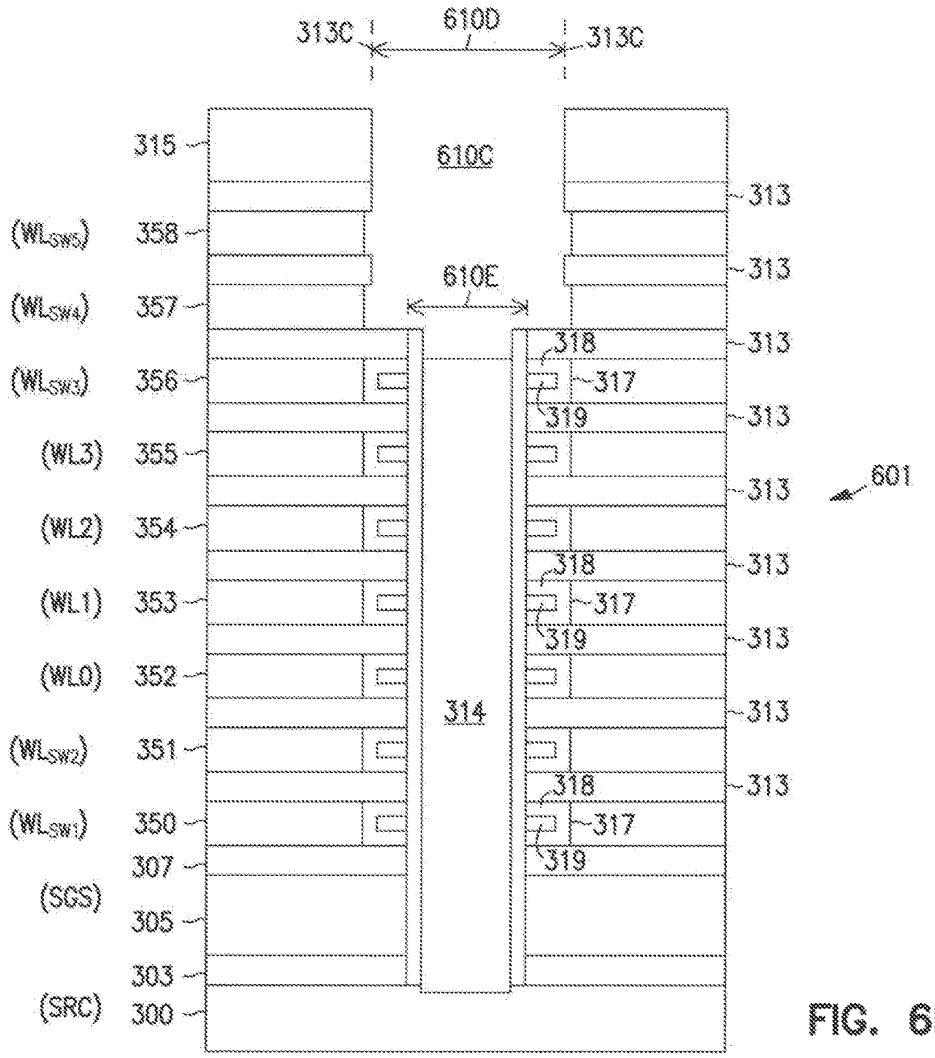
313
318
317
319
314
601

FIG. 6C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610D
313C
315
610C
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610E
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356
317
319
313
(WL3)
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601
(WL2)
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313
(WL1)
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313
(WL0)
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(SGS)
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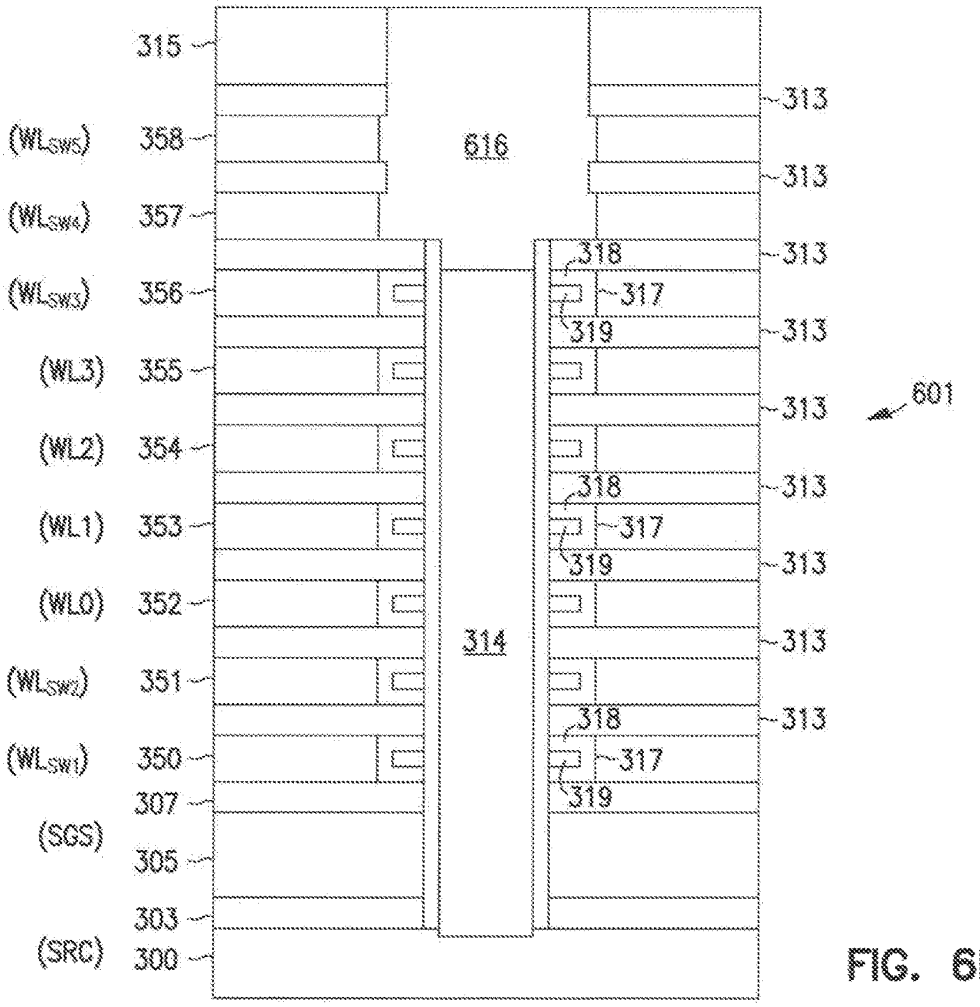
(SRC)
300

FIG. 6D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(WLSW3) 356
(WL3) 355
(WL2) 354
(WL1) 353
(WL0) 352
(WLSW2) 351
(WLSW1) 350
307
(SGS)
305
303
(SRC) 300
616
314
313
318
317
319
601

FIG. 6E

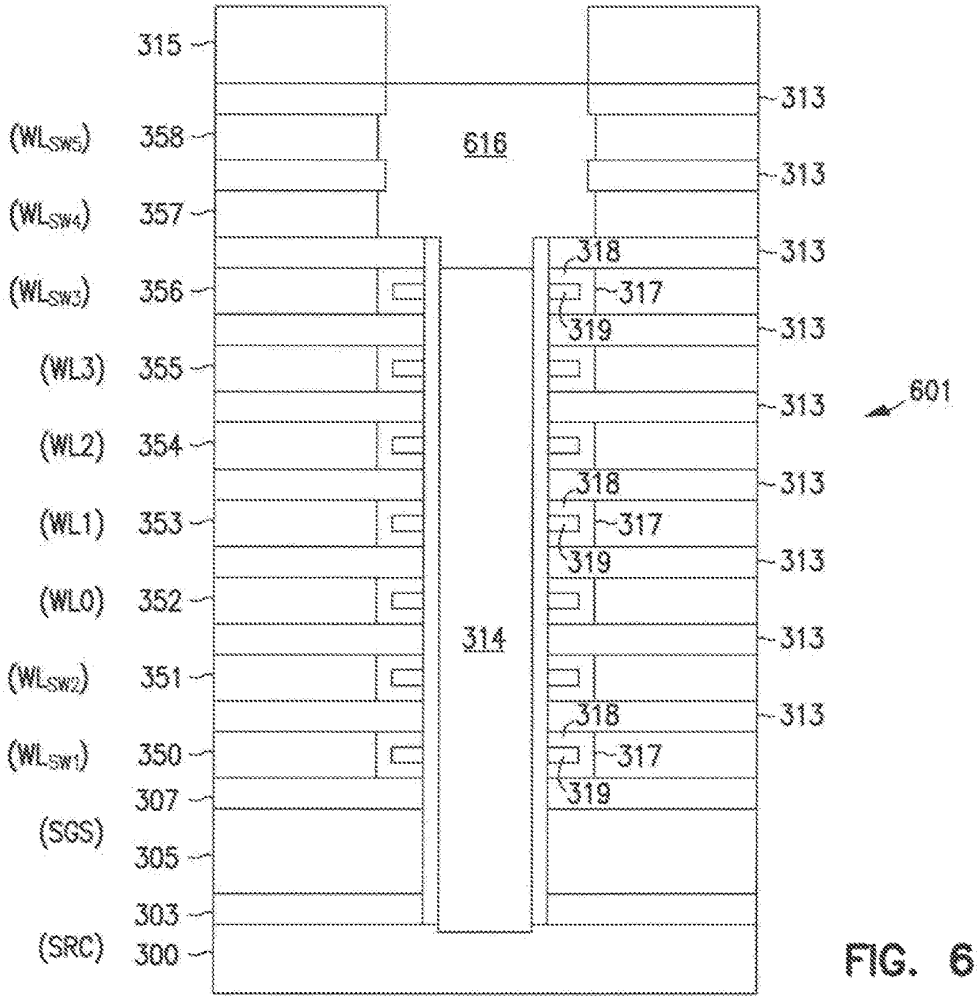
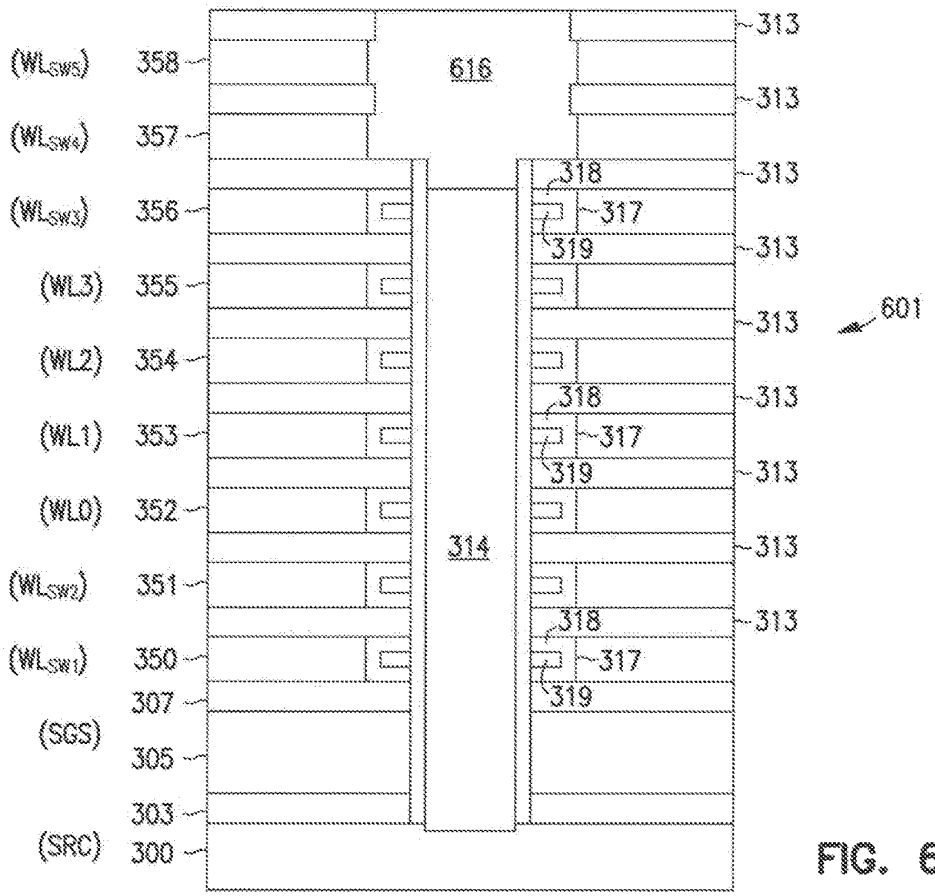

315
(WLSW5) 358
(WLSW4) 357
(WLSW3) 356
(WL3) 355
(WL2) 354
(WL1) 353
(WL0) 352
(WLSW2) 351
(WLSW1) 350
307
(SGS)
305
303
(SRC) 300
616
314
313
318
317
319
601

FIG. 6F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(WLSW4)
357
(WLSW3)
356
(WL3)
355
(WL2)
354
(WL1)
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(WLSW2)
351
(WLSW1)
350
307
(SGS)
305
303
(SRC)
300
616
314
313
318
317
319
601

FIG. 6G

APPARATUSES AND METHODS FOR FORMING MULTIPLE DECKS OF MEMORY CELLS

PRIORITY APPLICATION

This application is a divisional of U.S. application Ser. No. 14/509,621, filed Oct. 8, 2014, which is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.

BACKGROUND

Many electronic systems, such as computers and mobile devices, usually include one or more memory devices to store information. Memory devices include memory cells. Some memory devices may include memory cells arranged in multiple levels of the device. As demand for storage capacity increases, the number of memory cell levels in some memory devices may be increased to accommodate the increased storage capacity. In some cases, forming such memory devices using conventional techniques may pose a challenge.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. **1** shows a block diagram of an apparatus in the form of a memory device, according to an embodiment of the invention.

FIG. **2**A shows a schematic diagram of a memory device including memory cells and switches, according to an embodiment of the invention.

FIG. **2**B shows a representation of a side view of a portion of a structure of the memory device of FIG. **2**A, according to an embodiment of the invention.

FIG. **2**C through FIG. **2**F show example voltages applied during erase, erase verify, write, and read operations of the memory device of FIG. **2**B, according to an embodiment of the invention.

FIG. **3**A through FIG. **3**S show different portions of fabrication processes of forming a memory device, according to an embodiment of the invention.

FIG. **4**A through FIG. **4**D show different portions of fabrication processes of forming a memory device with a double channel, according to an embodiment of the invention.

FIG. **5**A through FIG. **5**F show different portions of another fabrication processes of forming a memory device, according to an embodiment of the invention.

FIG. **6**A through FIG. **6**G show different portions of a further fabrication processes of forming a memory device, according to an embodiment of the invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

FIG. **1** shows a block diagram of an apparatus in the form of a memory device **100**, according to an embodiment of the invention. Memory device **100** can include a memory array **102** having a number of memory cells **103**. Memory cells **103** can be arranged in rows and columns along with access lines **104** (e.g., word lines to conduct signals WL**0** through WLm) and data lines **106** (e.g., bit lines to conduct signals BL**0** through BLn). Memory device **100** can use access lines **104** and data lines **106** to transfer information to and from memory cells **103**. A row decoder **107** and a column decoder **108** decode address signals A**0** through AX on address lines **109** to determine which ones of memory cells **103** are to be accessed.

A sense amplifier circuit **110** operates to determine the value of information read from memory cells **103** and transmits the information in the form of signals to data lines **106**. Sense amplifier circuit **110** can also use the signals on data lines **106** to determine the values of information to be written to memory cells **103**.

Memory device **100** is further shown to include circuitry **112** to transfer information between memory array **102** and input/output (I/O) lines **105**. Signals DQ**0** through DQN on I/O lines **105** can represent information read from or to be written into memory cells **103**. I/O lines **105** can include nodes within memory device **100** (or alternatively, pins, solder balls, or other interconnect technologies such as controlled collapse chip connections (C**4**), or flip chip attach (FCA)) on a package where memory device **100** can reside. Other devices external to memory device **100** (e.g., a memory controller or a processor, not shown in FIG. **1**) can communicate with memory device **100** through I/O lines **105**, address lines **109**, or control lines **120**.

Memory device **100** can perform memory operations, such as a read operation, to read information from selected ones of memory cells **103**; and a write operation (e.g., a programming operation) to store (e.g., to program) information in selected ones of memory cells **103**. Memory device **100** can also perform an erase operation to clear information from some or all of memory cells **103**. A memory control unit **118** controls memory operations based on signals present on control lines **120**. Examples of the signals presented on control lines **120** can include one or more clock signals and other signals to indicate which operation (e.g., read, write, or erase operation) memory device **100** can or should perform. Other devices external to memory device **100** (e.g., a processor or a memory controller) can control the values of control signals on control lines **120**. Specific combinations of values of the signals on control lines **120** can produce a command (e.g., a write, read, or erase command) that can cause memory device **100** to perform a corresponding memory operation (e.g., a write, read, or erase operation).

Each of memory cells **103** can be programmed to a different one of at least two data states to represent, for example, a value of a single bit or a value of multiple bits such as two, three, four, or a higher number of bits. For example, each of memory cells **103** can be programmed to one of two data states to represent a binary value of "0" or "1" of a single bit. Such a cell is sometimes called a single level cell. In another example, each of memory cells **103** can be programmed to one of more than two data states to represent a value of, for example, multiple bits, such as one of four possible values "00," "01," "10," and "11" of two bits, one of eight possible values "000," "001," "010," "011," "100," "101," "110," and "111" of three bits, or one of another set of values of multiple bits. A cell that can be programmed to more than two data states is sometimes referred to as a multi-level cell (or multi-state cell). Different operations on these types of cells are discussed in more detail, below.

Memory device **100** can receive a supply voltage, including supply voltage signals V_{cc} and V_{ss}, on a supply line **130** and a supply line **132**, respectively. Supply voltage signal V_{ss} can, for example, be at a ground potential (e.g., having a value of approximately zero volts). Supply voltage signal V_{ss} can also operate at other voltages. Supply voltage signal V_{cc} can include an external voltage supplied to memory device **100** from an external power source such as a battery or an alternating-current to direct-current (AC-DC) converter circuitry (not shown in FIG. **1**).

Circuitry **112** of memory device **100** is further shown to include a select circuit **115** and an I/O circuit **116**. Select circuit **115** can respond to signals SEL**1** through SELn to select signals on data lines **106** and **113** to represent the information read from or to be programmed into memory cells **103**. Column decoder **108** can selectively activate the SEL**1** through SELn signals based on the A**0** through AX address signals on address lines **109**. Select circuit **115** can select the signals on data lines **106** and **113** to provide communication between memory array **102** and I/O circuit **116** during read and write operations.

Memory device **100** can include a non-volatile memory device and memory cells **103** can include non-volatile memory cells, such that memory cells **103** can retain information stored therein when power (e.g., V_{cc}, V_{ss}, or both) is disconnected from memory device **100**.

Each of memory cells **103** can include a memory element having material, at least a portion of which can be programmed to a desired data state (e.g., by storing a corresponding amount of charge on a charge-storage structure, such as a floating gate or charge trap). Different data states can thus represent different values of information programmed in each of memory cells **103**.

Memory device **100** can perform a write operation when it receives (e.g., from an external processor or a memory controller) a write command and a value of information to be programmed into one or more selected ones of memory cells **103**. Based on the value of the information, memory device **100** can program the selected memory cells to appropriate data states to represent the values of the information to be stored therein.

One of ordinary skill in the art may recognize that memory device **100** may include other components, at least some of which are discussed herein. However, several of these components are not necessarily shown in the figure, so as not to obscure the embodiments described. Memory device **100** may include devices and memory cells, and operate using memory operations (e.g., read, write, and erase operations) similar to, or identical to, those described below with reference to FIG. **2**A through FIG. **6**G.

FIG. **2**A shows schematic diagram of a memory device **200** including memory cells **203** and switches **241** and **242**, according to an embodiment of the invention. Memory device **200** can include data lines **270**, **271**, and **272** (e.g., bit lines) that can conduct corresponding signals BL**0**, BL**1**, and BL**2**. Data lines **270**, **271**, and **272** can correspond to data lines **106** of FIG. **1**. FIG. **2**A shows memory device **200** having three data lines **270**, **271**, and **272** as an example. However, the number of data lines can vary.

Memory device **200** can include select lines (e.g., drain-side select lines) **210** and **211**, a select line (e.g., source-side select line) **205**, and a source (e.g., source line) **233** that can conduct a signal SRC. Select lines **210** can conduct a signal SGD**0** to control (e.g., turn or turn off) select transistors **280**. Select line **211** can conduct a signal SGD**1** to control (e.g., turn or turn off) select transistors **281**. Select line **205** can conduct a signal SCS to control (e.g., turn or turn off) select transistors **283**.

Memory device **200** can include control gates **250** through **265** that can be part of access lines (e.g., word lines) to conduct corresponding signals WL**0** through WL**7** and WL_{SW1} to WL_{SW8}. The access lines (that include control gates **250** through **265**) of memory device **200** can correspond to access lines **104** of FIG. **1**. FIG. **2**A shows memory device **200** having 16 control gates **250** through **265** as an example. However, the number of control gates can vary.

Control gates **252** through **255** and **260** through **263** can respond to signals WL**0** through WL**3** and WL**4** though WL**7**, respectively, to access memory cells **203**.

Control gates **250**, **251**, **256**, **259**, **264**, and **265** can respond to signals WL_{SW1}, WL_{SW2}, WL_{SW3}, WL_{SW6}, WL_{SW7}, and WL_{SW8}, respectively, to control (e.g., turn or turn off) corresponding switches **241**.

Control gates **257** and **258** can respond to signals WL_{SW4}, and WL_{SW5}, respectively, to control (e.g., turn or turn off) corresponding switches **242**. Each of control gates **257** and **258** can have an insulated transistor-gate structure (e.g., a metal-oxide-semiconductor (MOS) gate structure, or another type of insulated gate structure), such that switches **242** can operate as transistors (e.g., MOS transistors) when control gates **257** and **258** respond to signals WL_{SW4} and WL_{SW5}.

Memory cells **203** and switches **241** and **242** can be organized in different strings (e.g., strings including memory cells) between source **213** and each of data lines **270**, **271**, and **271**. For example, FIG. **2**A shows string **207** including some of memory cells **203** and some of switches **241** and **242** coupled between source **213** and data line **270**. FIG. **2**A shows memory device **200** having six strings as an example. However, the number of strings can vary.

Switches **241** (controlled by control gates **250**, **251**, **256**, **259**, **264**, **265**) can have the same structures (e.g., memory cell structures) as that of memory cells **203**. However, unlike the memory cells **203**, the structures of switches **241** may not be configured to store information. Switches **241** may be configured to operate as transistors (e.g., pass transistors) to conduct current in corresponding strings during operations of memory device **200**. For example, in string **207**, switches **241** can operate as transistors to conduct current in string **207** between source **213** and data line **270**.

Switches **242** (controlled by control gates **257** and **258**) can have structures different from that of switches **241** and memory cells **203**. Switches **242** may be configured to operate as transistors (e.g., pass transistors) to conduct current in corresponding strings during operations of memory device **200**. For example, in string **207**, switches **242** can operate as transistors (e.g., pass transistors) to conduct current in string **207** between source **213** and data line **270**.

Some of the reasons for including switches **241** and **242** in the same string as memory cells **203** are discussed below with reference to FIG. **2**B.

FIG. **2**B shows a representation of side view of a portion of a structure of memory device **200** of FIG. **2**A, according to an embodiment of the invention. For simplicity, FIG. **2**B shows only two data lines **270** and **271** and four strings (including string **207**) of FIG. **2**A. As shown in FIG. **2**B memory cells **203**, switches **241** and **242** and control gates **250** through **265** can be located in different levels of memory device **200**. For example, control gates **250** through **255** (associated with signals WL_{SW1}, WL_{SW2}, and WL**0** through WL**3**) and memory cells **203** controlled by control gates **250** through **255** can be located in a portion (e.g., bottom portion) of memory device **200**. Control gates **260** through **265** (associated with signals WL**4** through WL**7**, WL_{SW7}, and WL_{SW8}) and memory cells **203** controlled by control gates **260** through **263** can be located in another portion (e.g., top portion) of memory device **200**. Control gates **256** through **259** (associated with signals WL_{SW3} through WL_{SW6}) and switches **241** and **242** controlled by control gates **256** through **259** can be located in levels between control gates **250** through **255** (associated with signals WL**0**

through WL3) and control gates **260** through **263** (associated with signals WL4 through WL7).

FIG. **2**B also shows four pillars **231**, **232**, **233**, and **234** associated with four strings of memory device **200**. Each of pillars **231**, **232**, **233**, and **234** can contain materials (e.g., a hole filled with materials) extending through control gates **250** through **265**. At least one the materials in a pillar can include a conductive material (or conductive materials) configured to operate as a channel to conduct current between source **213** and one of data lines **270**, **271**, and **272** during an operation of memory device **200**.

Some fabrication processes to form memory device **200** (e.g., some of the processes described below with reference to FIG. **3**A through FIG. **6**G) may change memory cell structures associated with some of the control gates **250** through **265**. For example, memory cell structures associated with control gates **257** and **258** may change to different structures (e.g., transistors) that can be configured to operate as switches (e.g., switches **242**). In some operations (e.g., read, write, and erase operations) of memory device **200**, certain biases (e.g., voltages) can be applied to control gates **257** and **258**. These biases may create high electric field or parasitic coupling (or both) between control gates **257** and **256** and between control gates **258** and **259**. During such operations, biases having specific values are also applied to control gates **256** and **259**. The difference between the biases applied to control gates **257** and **258** and the biases applied to control gates **256** and **259** during such operations may prevent memory cell structures associated with control gates **256** and **259** to be reliably configured to operate as memory cells. Thus, memory cell structures associated with control gate **256** and **259** may not be configured to operate as memory cells. However, in order to maintain channel continuity and current in a string (e.g., string **207**), the memory cell structures associated with control gate **256** and **259** can be configured to operate as switches (e.g., switches **241** controlled by control gates **256** and **259**).

Similarly, during some operations, high electric field or parasitic coupling (or both) may also occur between select lines **210** and **211** and control gates **264** and **265** and between select line **205** and control gates **250** and **251**. Thus, although control gates **250**, **251**, **264**, and **265** are associated with memory cell structures, such memory cell structures may not be configured to operate as memory cells but they can be configured to operate as switches (e.g., switches **241** controlled by control gates **250**, **251**, **264**, and **265**).

In operation (e.g., read, write, or erase operation), memory device **200** may apply different biases (e.g., apply different voltages) to control gates **250** through **265**, depending on which operation is being performed and which memory cells are selected and deselected (unselected) for the operation.

FIG. **2**C shows example voltages applied to data lines **270** and **271**, select lines **210** and **211**, control gates **250** through **265**, select line **205**, and source **213** during an erase operation of memory device **200**, according to an embodiment of the invention.

During an erase operation, a voltage (e.g., 10V provided by signals WL_{SW4} and WL_{SW5}) applied to control gates **257** and **258** (associated switches **242**) can be greater than (e.g., more positive than) a voltage (e.g., 0V provided by signals WL**0** through WL**3** and WL**4** through WL7) applied to control gates **252** through **255** and **260** through **263** (associated memory cells **203**).

During an erase operation, a voltage (e.g., 5V provided by signals WL_{SW3} and WL_{SW6}) applied to control gates **256** and **259** (associated with switches **241**) can be between a voltage (e.g., 0V) applied to control gates **252** through **255** and **260** through **263** (associated with and memory cells **203**) and a voltage (e.g., 10V) applied to control gates **257** and **258** (associated with switches **242**).

During an erase operation, the voltage (e.g. V_{ERASE}=20V) applied to data lines **270** and **271** and voltages applied to select lines **210** and **211**, control gates **250**, **251**, **264**, and **265**, select line **205**, and source **213** can have values relative to each other (less than, equal to, or greater than) as shown by example values in FIG. **2**C.

FIG. **2**D shows example voltages applied to data lines **270** and **271**, select lines **210** and **211**, control gates **250** through **265**, select line **205**, and source **213** during an erase verify operation of memory device **200**, according to an embodiment of the invention.

During an erase verify operation, a voltage (e.g., 5V provided by signals WL_{SW4} and WL_{SW5}) applied to control gates **257** and **258** (associated with switches **242**) can be greater than (e.g., more positive than) a voltage (e.g., 0V provided by signals WL**0** through WL**3** and WL**4** through WL7) applied to control gates **252** through **255** and **260** through **263** (associated with memory cells **203**).

During an erase verify operation, a voltage (e.g., 2V provided by signals WL_{SW3} and WL_{SW6}) applied to control gates **256** and **259** (associated with switches **241**) can be between a voltage (e.g., 0V) applied to control gates **252** through **255** and **260** through **263** (associated with memory cells **203**) and a voltage (e.g., 5V) applied to control gates **257** and **258** (associated with switches **242**).

During an erase verify operation, the voltage (e.g., $V_{ERASE\text{-}VERIFY}$=0.3V) applied to data lines **270** and **271** and voltages applied to select lines **210** and **211**, control gates **250**, **251**, **264**, and **265**, select line **205**, and source **213** can have values relative to each other (less than, equal to, or greater than) as shown by example values in FIG. **2**D.

FIG. **2**E shows example voltages applied to data lines **270** and **271**, select lines **210** and **211**, control gates **250** through **265**, select line **205**, and source **213** during a write (e.g., programming) operation of memory device **200**, according to an embodiment of the invention.

During a write operation, a voltage (e.g., 10V) applied to control gates **256** through **259** can be the same as a voltage (e.g., 10V) applied to deselected (e.g., unselected) control gates among control gates **252** through **255** and **260** through **263**. FIG. **2**E shows an example where control gates **252** through **255** and **261** through **264** are deselected control gates (associated with unselected memory cells **203**). Control gate **260** is a selected control gate (associated with selected memory cells **203** to store information). FIG. **2**E also shows an example where data line **270** is a deselected data line (which is coupled to deselected strings) and data line **271** is a selected data line (which is coupled to selected string having a memory cell being selected to store information).

During a write operation, the voltage applied to the selected control gate **260** (e.g., V_{PGR}=20V) and the voltages applied to data lines **270** and **271**, select lines **210** and **211**, control gates **250**, **251**, **264**, and **265**, select line **205**, and source **213** can have values relative to each other (less than, equal to, or greater than) as shown by example values in FIG. **2**E.

FIG. **2**F shows example voltages applied to data lines **270** and **271**, select lines **210** and **211**, control gates **250** through **265**, select line **205**, and source **213** during a read operation or write verify operation of memory device **200**, according to an embodiment of the invention.

During a read operation (or a write verify operation), a voltage (e.g., 8V) applied to control gates **256** through **259** can be the same as a voltage (e.g., 8V) applied to a deselected control gates among control gates **252** through **255** and **260** through **263**. FIG. **2**F shows an example where control gates **252** through **255** and **261** through **264** are deselected control gates (associated with unselected memory cells **203**). Control gate **260** is a selected control gate (associated with selected memory cells **203** where information is to be obtained (e.g., read)).

During a read operation (or a write verify operation), the voltage applied to the selected control gate **260** (e.g., V_{READ}=1V) and the voltages applied to data lines **270** and **271**, select lines **210** and **211**, control gates **250**, **251**, **264**, and **265**, select line **205**, and source **213** can have values relative to each other (less than, equal to, or greater than) as shown by example values in FIG. **2**F.

In FIG. **2**C through FIG. **2**F, the values of voltages are used as examples. The values of such voltages can be different from the values shown in FIG. **2**C through FIG. **2**F.

The structure of memory device **200** (e.g., FIG. **2**A through FIG. **2**F) can be formed using a deck-by-deck process. In this process, some of the control gates and associated memory cells and switches can be formed first (e.g., in one deck). Then, the other control gates and associated memory cells and switches can be formed (e.g., in another deck). For example, in FIG. **2**B, control gates **250** through **258** and associated memory cells **203** and switches **241** and **242** (located in the same levels as control gates **250** through **258**) can be formed in a bottom deck memory device **200**. Then, control gates **259** through **265** and associated memory cells **203** and switches **241** and **242** (located in the same levels as control gates **259** through **265**) can be formed in a top deck stacked over the bottom deck memory device **200**.

FIG. **3**A through FIG. **3**S show different portions of fabrication processes of forming a memory device, according to an embodiment of the invention. The processes described below with reference to FIG. **3**A through FIG. **3**S can be used to form a memory device, such as memory device **100** (FIG. **1**) and memory device **200** (FIG. **2**A and FIG. **2**B). The techniques and fabrication processes described herein can be extended to a number of different apparatuses (e.g., in addition to memory devices) to be fabricated using processes, including, for example, a three-dimensional process. However, fabrication of a NAND memory device will be described below to retain clarity and consistency in the discussions that follow.

FIG. **3**A shows a structure of a deck **301** of a memory device (e.g., memory device **100** of FIG. **1** or memory device **200** of FIG. **2**A and FIG. **2**B). Deck **301** can include a source material **300**, a dielectric material **303**, a select gate material **305** (e.g., conductively doped polysilicon), and a dielectric material **307**.

Deck **301** can be formed by techniques known to those skilled in the art. For example, each of the materials of deck **301** (and other materials described herein) may be applied, deposited, or otherwise formed according to techniques and methods known independently in the art. The techniques and methods can include one or more deposition activities, such as chemical vapor deposition (CVD), atomic level deposition (ALD), physical vapor deposition (PVD), or other techniques known independently in the art. Forming multiple materials in different levels may be accomplished by stacked deposition operations.

Although the process acts and operations described herein may refer to particular conductor, semiconductor, or dielectric materials (such as silicon, an oxide of silicon (e.g., silicon dioxide), silicon nitride, or others), a person of ordinary skill in the art and familiar with this disclosure will recognize that other conductor, semiconductor, and dielectric materials may be substituted and still be within a scope of the disclosed subject matter. Thus, the material choices and selections presented are merely provided as an aid in understanding one example of a fabrication process.

For example, different types of semiconductor materials, such as different elemental and compound semiconductors, may be used as an alternative for or in conjunction with silicon. Additionally, different types of dielectric materials, such as tantalum pentoxide (Ta_2O_5), silicon nitride (Si_xN_y), aluminum oxide (Al_2O_3), hafnium oxide (HfO_2), and a variety of other dielectric materials can be used as an alternative to or in conjunction with silicon dioxide or silicon nitride.

In FIG. **3**A, source material **300** can be part of a source that can correspond to source **213** of FIG. **2**B. Source material **300** in FIG. **3**A can include, for example, a conductively doped polysilicon (N+ doped polysilicon) material, a silicide material (e.g., WSi_2), or other conductive materials, formed in or on semiconductor substrate. In another example, source material **300** can include a conductively doped region of a semiconductor substrate. In some cases, source material **300** can include a combination of two different levels of materials. For example, source material **300** can include one level of a silicide material (e.g., WSi_2) formed on a semiconductor substrate and another level of conductively doped polysilicon (e.g., N+ doped polysilicon) formed on the level of the silicide material.

As referred to herein, a semiconductor substrate can be any of different types of substrates used in the semiconductor and allied industries, such as silicon wafers, compound wafers, thin film head assemblies, and polyethylene-terephthalate (PET) films deposited or otherwise formed with a semiconducting material, as well as numerous other types of substrates known independently in the art, and/or portions thereof. In some cases, in FIG. **3**A, source material **300** may be formed over a non-semiconductor material.

Dielectric materials **303** and **307** may include the same material or different materials. For example, dielectric materials **303** and **307** can include silicon dioxide (SiO_2). Further, dielectric materials **303** and **307** may be formed from the same material but by different techniques. For example, dielectric material **303** may be a thermally-grown silicon dioxide material and dielectric material **307** may be a deposited silicon dioxide material (or vice versa).

Select gate material **305** can include a conductor material (e.g., conductively doped polysilicon). Select gate material **305** can be part of a select gate (e.g., source-side select gate), such as select gate **205** of FIG. **2**B.

As shown in FIG. **3**A, deck **301** can also include alternating materials that include conductor materials **350** through **358** and dielectric materials **313**. Conductor materials **350** through **358** can include conductively doped polysilicon or a number of other conductor materials. Dielectric materials **313** can include silicon dioxide or a number of other dielectric materials.

Conductor materials **350** through **358** can be part of control gates similar to, or identical to, control gates **250** through **258**, respectively, of FIG. **2**B. FIG. **3**A shows some of the signals associated with control gates **250** through **258** in FIG. **2**B (e.g., WL**0** through WL**3** and WL_{SW1} through WL_{SW5}) to indicate that the control gates that include

conductor materials **350** through **358** in FIG. **3**A can also conduct signals similar to, or identical to, the signals in FIG. **2**B.

In FIG. **3**A, conductor materials **350** through **356** can include conductively doped polysilicon of the same conductivity type (e.g., n-type) that may be different from the conductivity type of conductively doped polysilicon of conductor materials **357** and **358**. For example, conductor materials **350** through **356** can include conductively doped polysilicon of n-type and conductor materials **357** and **358** can conductively doped polysilicon of p-type.

FIG. **3**A shows four conductor materials **352** through **355** as an example. The number of conductor materials **352** through **355** can vary, depending on the number of levels of memory cells in deck **301**. For example, deck **301** shows four levels of memory cells associated with four corresponding levels of conductor materials **352** through **355**. However, if the levels of operational memory cells is N (e.g., an integer), then the number of conductor materials **352** through **355** can also be equal to N.

As shown in FIG. **3**A, deck **301** can also include capping material **315** that can include, for example, p-type polysilicon or nitride. As described below, capping material **315** may be removed before forming another deck (e.g., a top deck) over deck **301**. In some processes, p-type polysilicon may be easier to remove than nitride. Thus, in some processes, capping material **315** in FIG. **3**A may include p-type polysilicon instead of nitride.

Deck **301** can also include a recess **317**, inter-polysilicon dielectric (IPD) material **318** (e.g., a charge blocking material) formed on sidewalls of recess **317**, and a charge-storage material **319** formed adjacent IPD material **318**. IPD material **318** can include one or more dielectric materials, including high-κ dielectric materials. For example, IPD material **318** can include an oxide-nitride-oxide (ONO) material. Charge-storage material **319** can include one or more of the semiconductor materials. For example, charge-storage material **319** can include polysilicon. In another example, charge-storage material **319** can include silicon nitride (e.g., Si_3N_4).

Charge-storage material **319** can be a part of a memory cell structure that can be configured to store information. FIG. **3**A shows seven memory cell structures (that include seven different charge-storage materials **319**) formed on the seven corresponding levels where conductor materials **350** through **356** are located. However, only four of the seven memory cell structures may be configured to operate as memory cells to store information. Three of the seven memory cell structures may not be configured to operate as memory cells to store information but may be configured to operate as switches (e.g., transistors).

For example, four memory cell structures formed on the same levels where conductor materials **352** through **355** are located may be configured to operate as four memory cells to store information. These four memory cells (that can be accessed by four corresponding access lines that include conductor materials **352** through **355**) can correspond to memory cells **203** in string **207** that can be accessed by control gates **252** through **255** of FIG. **2**B.

In FIG. **3**A, three memory cell structures formed on the same levels where conductor materials **350**, **351**, and **356** are located may be configured to operate as switches. These switches (that can be controlled by access lines that include conductor materials **350**, **351**, and **365**) can correspond to switches **241** in string **207** controlled by control gates **250**, **251**, and **265**.

FIG. **3**A does not show memory cell structures formed on the same levels where conductors materials **357** and **358** are located. However, these structures can also be configured to operate as switches (e.g., transistors). These switches can correspond to switches **242** in string **207** controlled by corresponding control gate **257** and **258**. In FIG. **3**A, the switches (having no memory cell structures) can be controlled by corresponding access lines that include conductor materials **357** and **358**.

Deck **301** can also include a hole **310** containing tunneling material **312** and material **314** extending through conductor materials **311** and dielectric materials **313**. Hole **310** containing tunneling material **312** and material **314** can be part of a pillar, such as pillar **231** of FIG. **2**B. In FIG. **3**A, material **314** may include polysilicon. Tunneling material **312** may be formed from a number of dielectric materials that allow for Fowler-Nordheim tunneling of electrons or direct tunneling of holes or other injection mechanisms. For example, tunneling material **312** can include deposited and/or thermally-grown silicon dioxide.

During a process of forming deck **301**, hole **310** and materials **312** and **314** can be formed by removing (e.g., by etching) a portion of materials (e.g., **350** through **358**, **313**, and **315**) where hole **310** is located (as shown in FIG. **3**A). Then, tunneling material **312** can be formed on sidewalls of hole **310** followed by a formation of material **314** adjacent tunneling material **312**.

In FIG. **3**B, a portion of material **314** can be removed (e.g., by etching) from a hole portion **310**B of hole **310**. As shown in FIG. **3**B, hole portion **310**B may include a recess (e.g., opening) extending from capping material **315** to conductor material **357**.

In FIG. **3**C, tunneling material **312** at hole portion **310**B can be removed (e.g., by wet etching). A portion of dielectric materials **313** at locations adjacent hole portion **310**B can also be removed (e.g., by wet etching), such that recesses **313**B are formed. Each of recesses **313**B can include a vertical sidewall formed by edge **313**C of dielectric materials **313**. As shown in FIG. **3**C, edge **313**C can extend laterally from hole portion **310**B to a location not beyond the recesses where IPD material **318** and charge-storage material **319** are located. The lateral dimension between edge **313**C may create a sufficient critical dimension (CD) of a sacrificial material to be subsequently formed in hole portion **310**B, as described below.

In FIG. **3**D, the size of hole portion **310**B can be enlarged to form an enlarged hole portion **310**C. Forming enlarged hole portion **310**C can include selectively removing a portion of capping material **315** at locations adjacent hole portion **310**B (FIG. **3**C) and a portion of conductor materials **357** and **358** at locations adjacent hole portion **310**B (FIG. **3**C). A dry etch or wet etch (e.g., using tetramethyl ammonium hydroxide (TMAH)) may be used to remove a portion of capping material **315** and a portion of conductor materials **357** and **358**. In FIG. **3**D, the amount of capping material **315** and conductor materials **357** and **358** that is removed can be dependent on the amount of dielectric material **313** (adjacent hole portion **310**B) that was removed in the process shown in FIG. **3**C. For example, as shown in FIG. **3**D, portions of capping material **315** and conductor materials **357** and **358** can be removed selective to edge **313**C.

Enlarged hole portion **310**C can have a diameter **310**D that is greater than a diameter **310**E (e.g., a diameter of an un-enlarged portion of hole **310**). The value of diameter **310**D can be selected based on a value of an alignment margin for forming a channel (in an additional deck) directly over enlarged hole portion **310**C. In some processes, as an example, diameter **310**D can be approximately 12 to 15 nanometers greater than diameter **310**E.

Forming enlarged hole portion **310**B described above with reference to FIG. **3**D may improve the process (e.g., a deck-by-deck process) of forming a channel (e.g., a multi-deck channel as described below) that extends through multiple decks including a deck that is formed over deck **301**. For example, in comparison with an un-enlarged hole, enlarged hole portion **310**B may allow for selecting a value of an alignment margin to satisfy a critical dimension value for building an additional hole (in an additional deck) directly aligned over hole **310**.

In FIG. **3**E, a sacrificial material **316** is formed in enlarged hole portion **310**C. Sacrificial material **316** may allow a process (e.g., a dry etch) associated with forming a pillar (e.g., pillar **231** of FIG. **2**B) between deck **301** and an additional deck (formed over deck **301**) to be efficiently performed. For example, forming sacrificial material **316** as described herein may help forming a relatively straight pillar (e.g., pillar **207** in FIG. **2**B) profile and allow the process (e.g., dry etch) to stop uniformly.

In FIG. **3**E, after sacrificial material **316** is formed, a flattening process (e.g., chemical-mechanical polishing (CMP) process) may be performed to flatten (e.g., to planarize) sacrificial material **316** such that its top surface may be co-planar with the top surface of capping material **315**. In an alternative process, the flattening process (e.g., CMP process) associated with FIG. **3**E may be skipped.

Sacrificial material **316** in FIG. **3**E will be removed in a subsequent process, as described below. Thus, sacrificial material **316** can include a material that can be selectively removable (e.g., by wet chemistry over polysilicon, nitride, and oxide). As an example, sacrificial material **316** can include aluminum oxide (Al_2O_3).

In FIG. **3**F, a portion of sacrificial material **316** can be removed. For example, hydrofluoric acid (HF) can be used to remove a portion of sacrificial material **316** adjacent material **315**.

In FIG. **3**G, capping material **315** (shown in FIG. **3**F) can be removed (e.g., by selective dry etch, wet etch, or CMP). In an alternative process, the processes associated with FIG. **3**F and FIG. **3**G can be combined such that a portion of sacrificial material **316** (that was removed in FIG. **3**F) and capping material **315** (FIG. **6**F) can be removed in a single step (e.g., using TMAH). In FIG. **3**G, after capping material **315** is removed, a flattening process (e.g., CMP) may be performed to improve planarity of deck **301** before an additional deck is formed over deck **301**.

In FIG. **3**H, a process of forming a deck **302** can start. Forming deck **302** can include forming alternating conductor materials **359** through **365** and dielectric materials **323**, and capping material **325** over the first deck **301**. Deck **302** can be formed by techniques known to those skilled in the art. For example, each of the materials of deck **302** (and other materials described herein) may be applied, deposited, or otherwise formed according to techniques and methods known independently in the art. The techniques and methods can include one or more deposition activities, such as CVD, ALD, PVD, or other techniques known independently in the art. Forming multiple materials in different levels may be accomplished by stacked deposition operations.

In FIG. **3**H, conductor materials **359** through **365** can include conductively doped polysilicon of the same conductivity type (e.g., n-type). Capping material **325** can have the same material as or different materials from that of capping material **315** (FIG. **3**A). Examples of materials for capping material **325** include p-type polysilicon or nitride.

Conductor materials **359** through **365** can be part of control gates similar to, or identical to, control gates **259** through **265**, respectively of FIG. **2**B. FIG. **3**H shows some of the signals associated with control gates **259** through **265** in FIG. **2**B (e.g., WL**4** through WL**7** and WL_{SW6} through WL_{SW8}) to indicate that the control gates that include conductors **359** through **365** in FIG. **3**H can also conduct signals similar to, or identical to, the signals in FIG. **2**B.

FIG. **3**H shows seven conductor materials **359** through **365** in deck **302** as an example. The number of conductor materials in deck **302** can vary, depending on the number of levels of memory cells in deck **302**.

In FIG. **3**I, a hole **320** can be formed through conductor materials **359** through **365**, dielectric materials **323**, and capping material **325** in deck **302**. Hole **320** can have a diameter **320**E less than diameter **310**D (which is the diameter of enlarged hole portion **310**C (FIG. **3**D)). The process of forming hole **320** in FIG. **3**I can be similar to the process of forming hole **310** (FIG. **3**A). Thus, diameter **320**E of hole **320** (FIG. **3**I) can be equal to diameter **310**E (FIG. **3**D) of hole **310**.

In FIG. **3**I, forming hole **320** can include removing (e.g., by etching) a portion of conductor materials **359** through **365**, dielectric materials **323**, and capping material **325** (stopping at sacrificial material **316**). Forming hole **320** may also include removing a portion of sacrificial material **316**. After hole **320** is formed, at least a portion of the sacrificial material **316** may be exposed through hole **320**, as shown in FIG. **3**I.

In FIG. **3**J, a recessed hole **320**B can be formed. Forming recessed hole **320**B can including removing portions of conductor materials **359** through **365** (e.g., by using an isotropic etch), such that portions conductor materials **359** through **365** can be recessed (e.g., laterally removed from the sidewalls of hole **320** in FIG. **3**I) to form recesses **327**. Etchant such as TMAH (or other etchant) may be used to form recessed hole **320**B.

In FIG. **3**K, an IPD material **328** can be formed on the sidewalls of recessed hole **320**B. The material of IDP material **328** can be similar to, or identical to, the material (e.g., ONO) of IDP material **318** of FIG. **3**A.

In FIG. **3**L, a charge-storage material **329** can be formed adjacent to IPD material **328** in recessed holed **320**B. The material of charge-storage **329** can be similar to, or identical to, the material (e.g., polysilicon or nitride) of charge-storage material **319** of FIG. **3**A.

In FIG. **3**M, a portion of charge-storage material **329** can be removed, leaving other portions of charge-storage material remaining in recesses **327**. In order to avoid damage to the portion (e.g., the bottom) of IDP material **328** adjacent sacrificial material **316**, a combination of dry etch and wet etch may be used during the removal of the portion of charge-storage material **329**.

Charge-storage material **329** can be a part of a memory cell structure that can be configured to store information. FIG. **3**M shows seven memory cell structures (that include seven different charge-storage materials **329**) formed on the seven corresponding levels where conductor materials **359** through **365** are located. However, only four of the seven memory cell structures may be configured to operate as memory cells to store information. Three of the seven memory cell structures may not be configured to operate as memory cells to store information but may be configured to operate as switches (e.g., transistors).

For example, four memory cell structures formed on the same levels where conductor materials **360** through **363** are located may be configured to operate as four memory cells to store information. These four memory cells (that can be accessed by four corresponding access lines that include

conductor materials **360** through **363**) can correspond to memory cells **203** in string **207** that can be accessed by control gates **260** through **263** of FIG. **2**B.

In FIG. **3**M, three memory cell structures formed on the same levels where conductor materials **359**, **364**, and **365** are located may be configured to operate as switches. These switches (that can be controlled by access lines that include conductor materials **359**, **364**, and **365**) can correspond to switches **241** in string **207** controlled by control gates **259**, **264**, and **265**.

In FIG. **3**N, a portion of IDP material **328** that is outside recesses **327** can be removed. Sacrificial material **316** can also be removed. The process of removing the portion of IDP **328** and sacrificial material **316** may cause capping material **325** to get thinner.

In FIG. **3**O, tunneling material **322** is formed. Sacrificial liner **326** is also formed on tunneling material **322**. Sacrificial liner **326** may protect tunneling material **322** from a subsequent punch-etch process. An example material for sacrificial liner **326** includes polysilicon.

In FIG. **3**P, portions of sacrificial liner **326** and tunneling material **322** on top of capping material **325**, a portion (e.g., the bottom) of sacrificial liner **326**, and a portion (e.g., the bottom) of tunneling material **322** can be removed (e.g., by a punch-etch and wet oxide removal process). This process exposes a portion of material **314**.

In FIG. **3**Q, the remaining portion of sacrificial liner **326** (that was not removed in FIG. **3**P) and material **314** can be removed, thereby forming a hole **330** that extends through deck **302** and **301**. TMAH chemistry can be used to remove the remaining portion of sacrificial liner **326** and material **314** if source material **300** is a single level of silicide material (e.g., WSi_2). As described above with reference to FIG. **3**A, in some cases, source material **300** can include a level of a silicide material (e.g., WSi_2) formed on a semiconductor substrate and another level of conductively doped polysilicon (e.g., N+ doped polysilicon) formed on the level of the silicide material. In such cases, an additional sacrificial liner may be formed and then an additional punch-etch can be performed to remove the additional sacrificial liner to expose source material **300** (e.g., expose the N+ doped polysilicon buffer layer).

In FIG. **3**R, a channel material **334** can be formed adjacent tunneling material **322** (e.g., silicon dioxide) in hole **330** and contacting source material **300**. Channel material **334** can include conductively doped polysilicon material. A dielectric material **336** can also be formed (e.g., filled) in hole **330**, such that dielectric material **336** is surrounded by channel material **334**. An etch (e.g., wet etch) process can be performed to recess the top of dielectric material **336** to form a recess **336**B.

In FIG. **3**S, a conductor material **338** (e.g., conductively doped polysilicon, such as N+ doped polysilicon) can be formed to fill recess **336**B. A CMP process may be performed to flatten conductor material **338**, such that it can be co-planar with capping material **325**.

As shown in FIG. **3**S, the channel formed by channel material **334** is a hollow (e.g., not solid) multi-deck channel, such that channel material **334** does not fill hole **303** but is formed on the sidewalls and bottom of hole **330**. In an alternative structure, however, channel material **334** can fill hole **330** and dielectric material **336** can be omitted, such that the channel formed by channel material **334** is solid multi-deck channel.

In FIG. **3**S, hole **330** containing tunneling material **312**, channel material **334**, and materials **336** and **338** can part of a pillar (e.g., pillar **231** of FIG. **2**B). Channel material **334** can be part of a channel (e.g., a single multi-deck channel) in such a pillar (e.g., pillar **231** of FIG. **2**B) to conduct current between a source (that includes source material **300**) and a data line (e.g., data line **270** of FIG. **2**B).

Further processes can be performed to complete a memory device that includes multiple decks (e.g., deck **301** and **302**) of memory cells.

The processes described above with reference to FIG. **3**A through FIG. **3**S, and other similar processes described below, may efficiently be performed in order to increase the number of memory cell levels in a memory device and still maintain proper operation of the memory device.

FIG. **4**A through FIG. **4**D show different portions of fabrication processes of forming a memory device, according to an embodiment of the invention. Some of the processes described below with reference to FIG. **4**A through FIG. **4**D can be similar to, or identical to, the processes described above with reference to FIG. **3**A through FIG. **3**S. Thus, similar or identical features or materials between FIG. **3**A through FIG. **3**S and FIG. **4**A through FIG. **4**D are not repeated in the description associated with FIG. **4**A through FIG. **4**D.

In some cases, instead of forming a single channel (e.g., single hollow channel formed by channel material **334** in FIG. **3**R), the processes described below with reference to FIG. **4**A through FIG. **4**D may be used to form a double hollow channel with solid conductive plug (e.g., polysilicon plug) between the double hollow channel.

In FIG. **4**A, deck **401** can include a hole **410** extending through materials that include conductor materials **350** through **358**, dielectric materials **313**, and capping material **315**. Hole **410** can contain tunneling material **312** on its sidewalls. At a portion of hole **410** (e.g., portion from source material **300** to approximately dielectric material **313** between conductor materials **355** and **356**), a channel material **424** is formed adjacent tunneling material **312** and source material **300**. A dielectric material **436** is also formed in hole **410** and is surrounded by channel material **424**. A material **437** can be formed adjacent tunneling material **312** in another portion of hole **410** (e.g., portion from capping material **315** to approximately dielectric material **313** between conductor materials **355** and **356**). Material **437** can include polysilicon (e.g., conductively doped polysilicon).

In FIG. **4**B, using the processes similar to that described above with reference to FIG. **3**A through FIG. **3**P, tunneling material **422** and sacrificial liner **426** can be formed. Tunneling material **422** and sacrificial liner **426** can be similar to tunneling material **322** and sacrificial liner **326** of FIG. **3**P.

In FIG. **4**C, sacrificial liner **426** can be removed (e.g., by using TMAH in liner strip process). A portion of material **437** can also be removed. Thus, the thickness of material **437** (e.g., height) is reduced.

In FIG. **4**D, using the processes similar to that described above with reference to FIG. **3**R and FIG. **3**S, channel material **434**, dielectric material **456**, and material **458** can be formed. Materials **434**, **456**, and **458** can include materials similar to, identical to, that of materials **334**, **336**, and **338**, respectively, of FIG. **3**S.

In FIG. **4**D, channel materials **424** and **434** contact each other and can be part of a double hollow channel included in decks **401** and **402**.

FIG. **5**A through FIG. **5**F show different portions of fabrication processes of forming a memory device, according to an embodiment of the invention. Some of the processes described below with reference to FIG. **5**A through FIG. **5**F can be similar to, or identical to, the processes described above with reference to FIG. **3**A through FIG. **3**S.

Thus, similar or identical features or materials between FIG. **3**A through FIGS. **3**S and **5**A through FIG. **5**F are not repeated in the description associated with FIG. **5**A through FIG. **5**F.

The processes described below with reference to FIG. **5**A through FIG. **5**F may be simpler than the processes described above with reference to FIG. **3**A through FIG. **3**S. However, the processes associated with FIG. **5**A through FIG. **5**F may provide an alignment margin that is smaller than that of the processes associated with FIG. **3**A through FIG. **3**S.

In FIG. **5**A, deck **501** can include structures and materials similar to, or identical to, that of deck **301** of FIG. **3**A. In FIG. **5**A, the level where conductor material **357** is located can include a memory cell structure. However, this memory cell structure may not be configured to store information. It may be configured to operate as a switch. This is similar to the memory cell structure associated with conductor material **356** that may also be configured to operate as a switch. In deck **501** of FIG. **5**A, conductor material **358** (shown in FIG. **3**A) is omitted. However, conductor material **358** may also be included in deck **501** and can have a memory cell structure configured to operate as a switch.

As shown in FIG. **5**A, deck **501** can include a hole **510** extending through materials that include conductor materials **350** through **357**, dielectric materials **313**, and capping material **315**. Hole **510** can contain tunneling material **312** on its sidewalls and material **314** adjacent tunneling material **312**.

In FIG. **5**B, a portion of material **314** can be removed (e.g., by etching) from a hole portion **510**B of hole **510**. As shown in FIG. **3**B, hole portion **510**B may include a recess (e.g., opening) extending from capping material **315** to conductor material **356**. The depth of the recess can be dependent on subsequent processes that may include an etch process, a clean process, or both.

In FIG. **5**C, the size of hole portion **510**B (FIG. **5**B) can be enlarged to form an enlarged hole portion **510**C. Forming enlarged hole portion **510**C can include removing tunneling material **312** from hole portion **510**B. Enlarged hole portion **510**C can have a diameter **510**D that is greater than a diameter **510**E (e.g., a diameter of an un-enlarged portion of hole **510**). The value of diameter **510**D can be selected based on an alignment margin for forming a conducting channel in an additional deck (e.g., similar to deck **302** in FIG. **3**S) directly over enlarged hole portion **510**C. In some processes, as an example, diameter **510**D can be approximately 14 nanometers greater than diameter **510**E.

Enlarged hole portion **510**C may improve a process (e.g., allowing more alignment margin) for forming a channel (e.g., multi-deck channel) in an additional deck formed over deck **501**.

In FIG. **5**D, a sacrificial material **516** is formed in enlarged hole portion **510**C. After sacrificial material **516** is formed, a flattening process (CMP process) may be performed to flatten sacrificial material **516** such that its top surface may be co-planar with the top surface of capping material **315**. In an alternative process, the flattening process (e.g., CMP process) may be skipped.

Sacrificial material **516** can include a material similar to, or identical to that of sacrificial material **316** (FIG. **3**E).

In FIG. **5**E, a portion of sacrificial material **516** can be removed. For example, hydrofluoric acid (HF) can be used to remove a portion of sacrificial material **516** adjacent material **315**.

In FIG. **5**F, capping material **315** can be removed (e.g., by selective dry etch, wet etch, or CMP). In an alternative process, the processes associated with FIG. **5**E and FIG. **5**F can be combined such that a portion of sacrificial material **516** (that was removed in FIG. **5**E) and capping material **315** (FIG. **5**E) can be removed in a single step (e.g., using TMAH). In FIG. **5**F, after capping material **315** is removed, a flattening process (e.g., CMP) may be performed to improve the planarity of deck **501** before an additional deck is formed over deck **501**.

Further processes similar to, or identical to, that described above with reference to FIG. **3**H through FIG. **3**S can be used to form multiple decks of memory cells including a multi-deck channel associated with the memory cells.

FIG. **6**A through FIG. **6**G show different portions of fabrication processes of forming a memory device, according to an embodiment of the invention. Some of the processes described below with reference to **6**A through FIG. **6**G can be similar to, or identical to, the processes described above with reference to FIG. **3**A through FIG. **3**S. Thus, similar or identical features or materials between FIG. **3**A through FIGS. **3**S and **6**A through FIG. **6**G are not repeated in the description associated with FIG. **6**A through FIG. **6**G.

The processes described below with reference to FIG. **6**A through FIG. **6**G may provide an alignment margin that is greater than other alignment margins described above with reference to FIG. **3**A through FIG. **5**F.

In FIG. **6**A, deck **601** can include structures and materials similar to, or identical to, that of deck **301** of FIG. **3**A. In FIG. **6**A, each of the levels where conductor materials **350** through **358** are located can include a memory cell structure.

As shown in FIG. **6**A, deck **601** can include a hole **610** extending through materials that include conductor materials **350** through **358**, dielectric materials **313**, and capping material **315**. Hole **510** can contain tunneling material **312** on its sidewalls and material **314** adjacent tunneling material **312**.

In FIG. **6**B, a portion of material **314** can be removed (e.g., by etching) from a hole portion **610**B of hole **610**. As shown in FIG. **6**B, hole portion **610**B may include a recess (e.g., opening) extending from capping material **315** to conductor material **357**. The depth of the recess can be dependent on subsequent processes that may include an etch process, a clean process, or both.

In FIG. **6**C, portions of dielectric materials **313** adjacent hole portion **610**B can be removed (e.g., by wet etching), such that recesses **613**B are formed. Each of recesses **613**B can include a vertical sidewall formed by edge **613**C of dielectric materials **313**. As shown in FIG. **6**C, edge **613**C can extend laterally from hole portion **610**B to a location beyond the interface (e.g., vertical interface) between IDP material **318** and charge-storage material **319**. The lateral dimension between edge **613**C may create sufficient CD of a sacrificial material to be formed in hole portion **610**B, as described below.

In FIG. **6**D, the size of hole portion **610**B in FIG. **6**C can be enlarged to form an enlarged hole portion **610**C. Forming enlarged hole portion **610**C can include selectively removing a portion of capping material **315** at locations adjacent hole portion **310**B, IDP material **318**, and charge-storage material **319** at locations adjacent hole portion **610**B (FIG. **6**C). A dry etch (e.g., isotropic dry etch) and wet etch may be used to form enlarged hole portion **610**C. Enlarged hole portion **610**C can have a diameter **610**D that is greater than a diameter **610**E (e.g., a diameter of an un-enlarged portion of hole **610**). The value of diameter **610**D can be selected based on a value of an alignment margin for forming a channel (in an additional deck) directly over enlarged hole

portion **610**C. In some processes, as an example, diameter **610**D can be approximately 50 nanometers greater than diameter **610**E.

Enlarged hole portion **610**C may improve a process (e.g., allowing more alignment margin) for forming a channel (e.g., multi-deck channel) in an additional deck formed over deck **601**.

In FIG. **6**E, a sacrificial material **616** is formed in enlarged hole portion **610**C. After sacrificial material **616** is formed, a flattening process (CMP process) may be performed to flatten sacrificial material **616** such that its top surface may be co-planar with the top surface of capping material **315**. In an alternative process, the flattening process (e.g., CMP process) may be skipped.

Sacrificial material **616** can include a material similar to, or identical to that of sacrificial material **316** (FIG. **3**E).

In FIG. **6**F, a portion of sacrificial material **616** can be removed. For example, hydrofluoric acid (HF) can be used to remove a portion of sacrificial material **616** adjacent material **315**.

In FIG. **6**G, capping material **315** can be removed (e.g., by selective dry etch, wet etch, or CMP). In an alternative process, the processes associated with FIG. **6**F and FIG. **6**G can be combined such that a portion of sacrificial material **616** (that was removed in FIG. **6**F) and capping material **315** (FIG. **6**F) can be removed in a single step (e.g., using TMAH). In FIG. **6**G, after capping material **315** is removed, a flattening process (e.g., CMP) may be performed to improve the planarity of deck **601** before an additional deck is formed over deck **601**.

Further processes similar to, or identical to, that described above with reference to FIG. **3**H through FIG. **3**S can be used to form multiple decks of memory cells including a multi-deck channel associated with the memory cells.

The illustrations of the apparatuses (e.g., memory devices **100** and **200**) and methods (e.g., processes described above with reference to FIG. **3**A through FIG. **6**G and operations of memory devices **100** and **200**) are intended to provide a general understanding of the structure of different embodiments and are not intended to provide a complete description of all the elements and features of an apparatus that might make use of the structures described herein.

The apparatuses and methods described above can include or be included in high-speed computers, communication and signal processing circuitry, single or multi-processor modules, single or multiple embedded processors, multi-core processors, message information switches, and application-specific modules including multilayer, multi-chip modules. Such apparatuses may further be included as sub-components within a variety of other apparatuses (e.g., electronic systems), such as televisions, cellular telephones, personal computers (e.g., laptop computers, desktop computers, handheld computers, tablet computers, etc.), workstations, radios, video players, audio players (e.g., MP3 (Motion Picture Experts Group, Audio Layer 3) players), vehicles, medical devices (e.g., heart monitor, blood pressure monitor, etc.), set top boxes, and others.

The embodiments described above with reference to FIG. **1** through FIG. **6**G include apparatuses and methods having multiple decks of memory cells and associated control gates. A method includes forming a first deck having alternating conductor materials and dielectric materials and a hole containing materials extending through the conductor materials and the dielectric materials. The methods can also include forming a sacrificial material in an enlarged portion of the hole, and forming a second deck of memory cells over the first deck. Other embodiments, including additional apparatuses and methods, are described.

The above description and the drawings illustrate some embodiments to enable those skilled in the art to practice the embodiments of the invention. Other embodiments may incorporate structural, logical, electrical, process, and other changes. Examples merely typify possible variations. Portions and features of some embodiments may be included in, or substituted for, those of other embodiments. Many other embodiments will be apparent to those of skill in the art upon reading and understanding the above description.

What is claimed is:

1. An apparatus comprising:

a first deck including alternating first conductor materials and first dielectric materials;

a second deck over the first deck, the second deck including alternating second conductor materials and second dielectric materials; and

a hole containing materials extending through the first conductor materials and the first dielectric materials and through the second conductor materials and the second dielectric materials, the hole including a first portion in the first deck, a second portion in the second deck, and a third portion between the first and second portions, wherein a diameter of the third portion of the hole is greater than a diameter of each of the first and second portions of the hole.

2. The apparatus of claim **1**, wherein one of the materials contained in the hole includes a tunneling material formed on sidewalls of the hole.

3. The apparatus of claim **2**, wherein one of the materials contained in the hole includes conductively doped semiconductor material adjacent the tunneling material.

4. The apparatus of claim **3**, wherein the materials contained in the hole include a third dielectric material, the third dielectric material being surrounded by at least the conductively doped semiconductor material.

5. The apparatus of claim **1**, wherein the first conductor materials include:

a first level of conductor material having a first conductivity type; and

a second level of conductor material having a second conductivity type.

6. The apparatus of claim **1**, wherein the apparatus comprises a memory device.

7. An apparatus comprising:

a first deck including alternating first conductor materials and first dielectric materials, the first conductor materials including first levels of conductor materials having a first conductivity type, and second levels of conductor materials having a second conductivity type;

a second deck over the first deck, the second deck including alternating second conductor materials and second dielectric materials, the second conductor materials including third levels of conductor materials having the first conductivity type, wherein the second levels of conductor materials are between the first levels of conductor materials and the third levels of conductor materials; and

a hole containing materials extending through the first conductor materials and the first dielectric materials and through the second conductor materials and the second dielectric materials.

8. The apparatus of claim **7**, wherein the first conductivity type includes an n-type conductivity, and the second conductivity type includes a p-type conductivity.

9. The apparatus of claim **7**, wherein the hole includes a first portion in the first deck, a second portion in the second deck, and a third portion between the first and second portions, wherein a diameter of the third portion of the hole is greater than a diameter of each of the first and second portions of the hole.

10. The apparatus of claim **9**, wherein the materials contained in the hole include conductively doped semiconductor material extending continuously between the first, second, and third portions of the hole.

11. The apparatus of claim **10**, wherein the conductively doped semiconductor material include conductively doped polysilicon material.

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