

## High Quality ALD of Silicon Nitride Films Via Microwave Plasma

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Modern integrated circuit processing for DRAM, flash, and logic devices require silicon nitride (SiN) spacer layers with exacting requirements for chemical, physical, and electrical performance. High quality SiN thin films can be achieved by low pressure chemical vapor deposition (LPCVD) at elevated deposition temperatures (>800°C). However, modern device design rules require low thermal budget (<400°C) for these and other applications.

In this abstract, we demonstrate with a custom built PEALD system utilizing a high power (~1kW) microwave plasma source. Utilizing this system, we can achieve composition with low oxygen, carbon, and hydrogen content similar to what is achieved in higher temperature LPCVD reactions.

The dependence of the SiN film properties on processes parameters including plasma power and plasma treatment cycle, are investigated. Specifically, the wet etch rates in dilute hydrofluoric acid (H<sub>2</sub>O:HF 200:1) with respect to plasma power and treatment cycle times can be varied because of the effects of radicals and ions generated by the plasma source during deposition. Wet etch rates comparable to LPCVD SiN films can be demonstrated at significantly reduced temperature by PEALD. X-ray reflectometry (XRR) and X-ray photoemission spectroscopy (XPS) studies show the higher plasma power and extended plasma treatment cycles can vary the density and the composition of SiN films.