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(81) Designated States (unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of national protection available): AE, AG, AL, AM, AO, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BH, BR, BW, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CL, CN, CO, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, DO, DZ, EC, EE, EG, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, GT, HN, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KM, KN, KP, KR, KZ, LA, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LY, MA, MD, ME, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, MY, MZ, NA, NG, NI, NO, NZ, OM, PE, PG, PH, PL, PT, RO, RS, RU, SC, SD, SE, SG, SK, SL, SM, ST, SV, SY, TH, TJ, TM, TN, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ, VC, VN, ZA, ZM, ZW.

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[Continued on next page]

(54) Title: ELECTROCHEMICAL CELLS COMPRISING POROUS STRUCTURES COMPRISING SULFUR

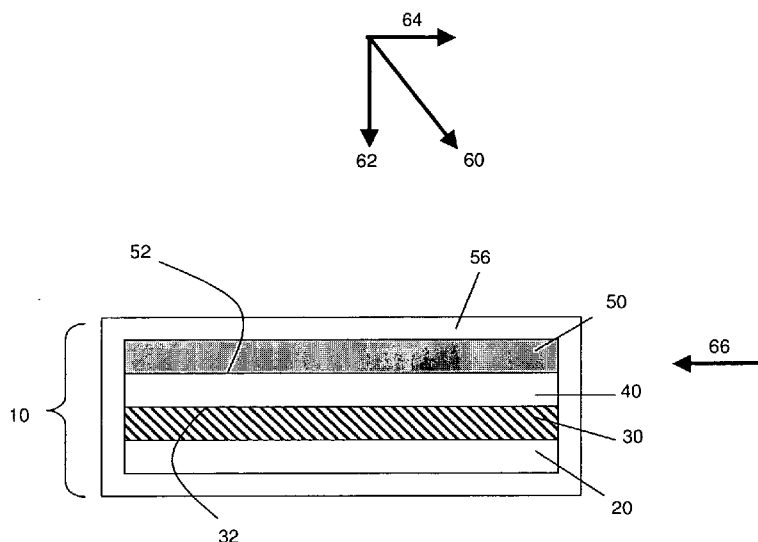


FIG. 1

(57) Abstract: The present invention relates to the use of porous structures comprising sulfur in electrochemical cells. Such materials may be useful, for example, in forming one or more electrodes in an electrochemical cell. For example, the systems and methods described herein may comprise the use of an electrode comprising a conductive porous support structure and a plurality of particles comprising sulfur (e.g., as an active species) substantially contained within the pores of the support structure. The inventors have unexpectedly discovered that, in some embodiments, the sizes of the pores within the porous support structure and/or the sizes of the particles within the pores can be tailored such that the contact between the electrolyte and the sulfur is enhanced, while the electrical conductivity and structural integrity of the electrode are maintained at sufficiently high levels to allow for effective operation of the cell. Also, the sizes of the pores within the porous support structures and/or the sizes of the

particles within the pores can be selected such that any suitable ratio of sulfur to support material can be achieved while maintaining mechanical stability in the electrode. The inventors have also unexpectedly discovered that the use of porous support structures comprising certain materials (e.g., metals such as nickel) can lead to relatively large increases in cell performance. In some embodiments, methods for forming sulfur particles within pores of a porous support structure allow for a desired relationship between the particle size and pore size. The sizes of the pores within the porous support structure and/or the sizes of the particles within the pores can also be tailored such that the resulting electrode is able to withstand the application of an anisotropic force, while maintaining the structural integrity of the electrode.



TM), European (AL, AT, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, HR, HU, IE, IS, IT, LT, LU, LV, MC, MK, MT, NL, NO, PL, PT, RO, SE, SI, SK, SM, TR), OAPI (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GQ, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

— *before the expiration of the time limit for amending the claims and to be republished in the event of receipt of amendments (Rule 48.2(h))*

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21 July 2011

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
PCT/US2010/002329**A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER*****H01M 4/02(2006.01)i, H01M 10/05(2010.01)i, H01B 1/00(2006.01)i, H01M 4/62(2006.01)i, H01M 4/58(2010.01)i***

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

H01M 4/02; H01M 4/60; B82Y 30/00; H01M 4/58

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Korean utility models and applications for utility models

Japanese utility models and applications for utility models

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)

eKOMPASS(KIPO internal) & Keywords: electrode, cell, support, porous, pore, particle, active material, sulfur, volume, quantity, and similar terms

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X A	KR 10-0436712 B1 (SAMSUNG SDI CO., LTD.) 22 June 2004 See abstract, examples 1-3, claims 1, 4, 10, 14, figs. 1, 2	1-6,35-40 70-75,110-115
A	KR 10-0484642 B1 (SAMSUNG SDI CO., LTD.) 20 April 2005 See abstract, example 1, claims 1, 21, figs. 2b, 3	1-6,35-40,70-75 ,110-115
A	JP 2007-234338 A (EQUOS RESEARCH CO., LTD.) 13 September 2007 See abstract, paragraphs 0004, 0007, 0011, 0012, claims 1-3	1-6,35-40,70-75 ,110-115
A	JP 09-147868 A (YAZAKI CORP.) 06 June 1997 See abstract, claim 1, paragraphs 0011-0016, 0029, 0030	1-6,35-40,70-75 ,110-115

☐ Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C.☒ See patent family annex.

* Special categories of cited documents:

"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance

"E" earlier application or patent but published on or after the international filing date

"L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of citation or other special reason (as specified)

"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means

"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed

"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention

"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone

"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art

"&" document member of the same patent family

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/US2010/002329**Box No. II Observations where certain claims were found unsearchable (Continuation of item 2 of first sheet)**

This international search report has not been established in respect of certain claims under Article 17(2)(a) for the following reasons:

1. ☐ Claims Nos.:
because they relate to subject matter not required to be searched by this Authority, namely:
2. ☐ Claims Nos.:
because they relate to parts of the international application that do not comply with the prescribed requirements to such an extent that no meaningful international search can be carried out, specifically:
3. ☒ Claims Nos.: 7-34, 41-69, 76-109, 116-149
because they are dependent claims and are not drafted in accordance with the second and third sentences of Rule 6.4(a).

Box No. III Observations where unity of invention is lacking (Continuation of item 3 of first sheet)

This International Searching Authority found multiple inventions in this international application, as follows:

1. ☐ As all required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this international search report covers all searchable claims.
2. ☐ As all searchable claims could be searched without effort justifying an additional fee, this Authority did not invite payment of any additional fee.
3. ☐ As only some of the required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this international search report covers only those claims for which fees were paid, specifically claims Nos.:
4. ☐ No required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant. Consequently, this international search report is restricted to the invention first mentioned in the claims; it is covered by claims Nos.:

Remark on Protest

- ☐ The additional search fees were accompanied by the applicant's protest and, where applicable, the payment of a protest fee.
- ☐ The additional search fees were accompanied by the applicant's protest but the applicable protest fee was not paid within the time limit specified in the invitation.
- ☐ No protest accompanied the payment of additional search fees.

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International application No.

PCT/US2010/002329

Patent document cited in search report	Publication date	Patent family member(s)	Publication date
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