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Patent Public Search | Text View

United States Patent Application Publication

20250259882

Kind Code

A1

Publication Date

August 14, 2025

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SEMICONDUCTOR DEVICE AND METHOD

Abstract

Methods for forming improved isolation features in semiconductor devices and semiconductor devices formed by the same are disclosed. In an embodiment, a method includes etching a first trench in a substrate; depositing a first insulation layer in the first trench with a first flowable chemical vapor deposition process; depositing a second insulation layer on the first insulation layer with a second flowable chemical vapor deposition process, the second flowable chemical vapor deposition process having process parameters different from the first flowable chemical vapor deposition process, and a portion of the first trench remaining unfilled by the first insulation layer and the second insulation layer; and forming an insulating fin in the portion of the first trench unfilled by the first insulation layer and the second insulation layer.

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Family ID: 86349458

Appl. No.: 19/193289

Filed: April 29, 2025

Related U.S. Application Data

parent US continuation 17729546 20220426 parent-grant-document US 12315758 child US 19193289

us-provisional-application US 63267155 20220126

Publication Classification

Int. Cl.: H01L21/762 (20060101)

U.S. Cl.:

Background/Summary

PRIORITY CLAIM AND CROSS-REFERENCE [0001] This application is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 17/729,546, filed Apr. 26, 2022, which claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application No. 63/267,155, filed on Jan. 26, 2022, which applications are hereby incorporated herein by reference.

BACKGROUND

[0002] Semiconductor devices are used in a variety of electronic applications, such as, for example, personal computers, cell phones, digital cameras, and other electronic equipment. Semiconductor devices are typically fabricated by sequentially depositing insulating or dielectric layers, conductive layers, and semiconductor layers of material over a semiconductor substrate, and patterning the various material layers using lithography to form circuit components and elements thereon.

[0003] The semiconductor industry continues to improve the integration density of various electronic components (e.g., transistors, diodes, resistors, capacitors, etc.) by continual reductions in minimum feature size, which allow more components to be integrated into a given area.

Description

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0004] Aspects of the present disclosure are best understood from the following detailed description when read with the accompanying figures. It is noted that, in accordance with the standard practice in the industry, various features are not drawn to scale. In fact, the dimensions of the various features may be arbitrarily increased or reduced for clarity of discussion.

[0005] FIG. 1 illustrates an example of a semiconductor device including fin field-effect transistors (FinFETs) in a three-dimensional view, in accordance with some embodiments.

[0006] FIGS. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6A, 6B, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11A, 11B, 12A, 12B, 12C, 13A, 13B, 13C, 14A, 14B, 14C, 15A, 15B, 15C, 15D, 16A, 16B, 17A, 17B, 18A, 18B, 19A, 19B, 20A, 20B, 21A, 21B, 22, 23A, and 23B are cross-sectional views of intermediate stages in the manufacturing of semiconductor devices, in accordance with some embodiments.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0007] The following disclosure provides many different embodiments, or examples, for implementing different features of the invention. Specific examples of components and arrangements are described below to simplify the present disclosure. These are, of course, merely examples and are not intended to be limiting. For example, the formation of a first feature over or on a second feature in the description that follows may include embodiments in which the first and second features are formed in direct contact, and may also include embodiments in which additional features may be formed between the first and second features, such that the first and second features may not be in direct contact. In addition, the present disclosure may repeat reference numerals and/or letters in the various examples. This repetition is for the purpose of simplicity and clarity and does not in itself dictate a relationship between the various embodiments and/or configurations discussed.

[0008] Further, spatially relative terms, such as “beneath,” “below,” “lower,” “above,” “upper” and the like, may be used herein for ease of description to describe one element or feature's relationship to another element(s) or feature(s) as illustrated in the figures. The spatially relative terms are

intended to encompass different orientations of the device in use or operation in addition to the orientation depicted in the figures. The apparatus may be otherwise oriented (rotated 90 degrees or at other orientations) and the spatially relative descriptors used herein may likewise be interpreted accordingly.

[0009] Various embodiments provide a method for forming improved isolation features in semiconductor devices and semiconductor devices formed by said methods. The method includes forming semiconductor fins on a semiconductor substrate and forming an isolation structure on the semiconductor fins. The isolation structure may be formed by depositing a first isolation layer on the semiconductor substrate and depositing a second isolation layer on the first isolation layer. The first isolation layer and the second isolation layer may be deposited by flowable chemical vapor deposition (FCVD) processes. The first isolation layer and the second isolation layer may be deposited using different process parameters. Specifically, one of the first isolation layer or the second isolation layer is deposited using process parameters that result in a more conformal layer and the other of the first isolation layer or the second isolation layer is deposited using process parameters that result in a layer having better gap-filling. Forming the isolation structure using this two-step deposition process results in the isolation structure filling first trenches adjacent to some of the semiconductor fins, while second trenches adjacent to others of the semiconductor fins are unfilled and have a reduced thickness of the isolation structure. This reduces device defects caused by insufficient gap-filling of the first trenches, while allowing larger insulating fins (also referred to as hybrid fins or dielectric fins) to be formed in the second trenches, which improves device performance.

[0010] FIG. 1 illustrates an example of FinFETs, in accordance with some embodiments. The FinFETs comprise fins 55 on a substrate 50 (e.g., a semiconductor substrate). Shallow trench isolation (STI) regions 69 are disposed in the substrate 50 and the fins 55 protrude above and from between neighboring STI regions 69. Although the STI regions 69 are described/illustrated as being separate from the substrate 50, as used herein the term “substrate” may be used to refer to the semiconductor substrate alone, or a semiconductor substrate inclusive of STI regions. Additionally, although the fins 55 are illustrated as single, continuous materials with the substrate 50, the fins 55 and/or the substrate 50 may comprise a single material or a plurality of materials. In this context, the fins 55 refer to the portions extending between the neighboring STI regions 69.

[0011] Gate dielectric layers 100 extend along sidewalls and on top surfaces of the fins 55, and gate electrodes 102 extend on the gate dielectric layers 100. Epitaxial source/drain regions 92 (e.g., source regions and/or drain regions) are disposed on opposite sides of the fins 55, the gate dielectric layers 100, and the gate electrodes 102. FIG. 1 further illustrates reference cross-sections that are used in later figures. Cross-section A-A' is along a longitudinal axis of a gate electrode 102 and in a direction, for example, perpendicular to the direction of current flow between the epitaxial source/drain regions 92 of the FinFETs. Cross-section B-B' is perpendicular to cross-section A-A' and is along a longitudinal axis of a fin 55 and in a direction of, for example, the current flow between the epitaxial source/drain regions 92 of the FinFETs. Cross-section C-C' is parallel to cross-section A-A' and extends through the epitaxial source/drain regions 92 of the FinFETs. Subsequent figures refer to these reference cross-sections for clarity.

[0012] Some embodiments discussed herein are discussed in the context of fin field effect transistors (FinFETs) formed using gate-last processes. In some embodiments, a gate-first process may be used. Some embodiments contemplate aspects used in planar devices (e.g., planar field effect transistors), nanostructure (e.g., nanosheet, nanowire, gate-all-around, or the like) field effect transistors (nano-FETs), or the like.

[0013] FIGS. 2 through 23B are cross-sectional views of intermediate stages in the manufacturing of FinFETs, in accordance with some embodiments. FIGS. 2 through 5, 6A, 7-10, 11A, 12A, 13A, 14A, 15A, 16A, 17A, 18A, 19A, 20A, 21A, 22, and 23A are illustrated along reference cross-section A-A' illustrated in FIG. 1. FIGS. 11B, 12B, 13B, 14B, 15B, 16B, 17B, 18B, 19B, 20B, 21B,

and 23B are illustrated along a similar cross-section B-B' illustrated in FIG. 1. FIGS. 12C, 13C, 14C, 15C, and 15D are illustrated along reference cross-section C-C' illustrated in FIG. 1. FIG. 6B is a top-down view.

[0014] In FIG. 2, a substrate 50 is provided. The substrate 50 may be a semiconductor substrate, such as a bulk semiconductor, a semiconductor-on-insulator (SOI) substrate, or the like, which may be doped (e.g., with a p-type or an n-type dopant) or undoped. The substrate 50 may be a wafer, such as a silicon wafer. Generally, an SOI substrate is a layer of a semiconductor material formed on an insulator layer. The insulator layer may be, for example, a buried oxide (BOX) layer, a silicon oxide layer, or the like. The insulator layer is provided on a substrate, typically a silicon or glass substrate. Other substrates, such as a multi-layered or gradient substrate may also be used. In some embodiments, the semiconductor material of the substrate 50 may include silicon; germanium; a compound semiconductor including silicon carbide, gallium arsenide, gallium phosphide, indium phosphide, indium arsenide, and/or indium antimonide; an alloy semiconductor including silicon-germanium, gallium arsenide phosphide, aluminum indium arsenide, aluminum gallium arsenide, gallium indium arsenide, gallium indium phosphide, and/or gallium indium arsenide phosphide; or combinations thereof.

[0015] The substrate 50 includes an n-type region 50N and a p-type region 50P. The n-type region 50N can be for forming n-type devices, such as NMOS transistors, e.g., n-type FinFETs. The p-type region 50P can be for forming p-type devices, such as PMOS transistors, e.g., p-type FinFETs. The n-type region 50N may be physically separated from the p-type region 50P, and any number of device features (e.g., other active devices, doped regions, isolation structures, etc.) may be disposed between the n-type region 50N and the p-type region 50P. FIGS. 3 through 23B illustrate features in either of the n-type region 50N or the p-type region 50P. For example, the structures illustrated in FIGS. 3 through 23B may be applicable to both the n-type region 50N and the p-type region 50P. Differences (if any) in the structures of the n-type region 50N and the p-type region 50P are described in the text accompanying each figure.

[0016] In FIG. 3, a first mask layer 52 and a second mask layer 54 are formed on the substrate 50 and fins 55 are formed in the substrate 50. The first mask layer 52 and the second mask layer 54 may comprise oxides, nitrides, oxynitrides, or the like. In some embodiments, the first mask layer 52 comprises an oxide material, such as silicon dioxide or the like, and may be formed using atomic layer deposition (ALD), chemical vapor deposition (CVD), a combination thereof, or the like. In some embodiments, the second mask layer 54 comprises a nitride material, such as silicon nitride or the like, and may be formed using ALD, CVD, a combination thereof, or the like. The first mask layer 52 and the second mask layer 54 may be used to aid in patterning the substrate 50 to form the fins 55. In some embodiments, the first mask layer 52 and/or the second mask layer 54 may be omitted.

[0017] The first mask layer 52, the second mask layer 54, and the substrate 50 are patterned by a patterning process to form the fins 55 and trenches adjacent the fins 55. The fins 55 are semiconductor strips. In some embodiments, first mask layer 52 and the second mask layer 54 may be patterned and then used as masks to pattern the fins 55 in the substrate 50. The patterning process may comprise a first patterning process followed by a second patterning process. In some embodiments, the first patterning process is performed on the first mask layer 52 and the second mask layer 54 to form a desired pattern in the first mask layer 52 and the second mask layer 54. The first patterning process may comprise suitable photolithography and etch processes. The etch processes may be any acceptable etch processes, such as a reactive ion etch (RIE), a neutral beam etch (NBE), a combination thereof, or the like. The etch processes may be anisotropic.

[0018] Subsequently, the second patterning process is performed on the substrate 50 to transfer the pattern of the first mask layer 52 and the second mask layer 54 into the substrate 50. The second patterning process may comprise a suitable etch process, while using the first mask layer 52 and the second mask layer 54 as an etch mask. The etch process may be any acceptable etch process, such

as RIE, NBE, a combination thereof, or the like. The etch process may be anisotropic.

[0019] The spacing between each of the fins 55 (e.g., the widths of trenches formed adjacent the fins 55) may vary. For example, a spacing S.sub.1 between bottom side surfaces (e.g., at a point at which the fins 55 meet a bulk material of the substrate 50) of the fins 55 may be in a range from about 3.5 nm to about 4.5 nm, a spacing S.sub.2 between bottom side surfaces of the fins 55 may be in a range from about 3 nm to about 4 nm, and a spacing S.sub.3 between bottom side surfaces of the fins 55 may be in a range from about 2 nm to about 3 nm. In some embodiments, the fins 55 may be grouped into fin groups (such as fin groups G.sub.1 and G.sub.2 illustrated in FIG. 3), with the fin groups being separated by a spacing S.sub.4 between bottom side surfaces of the fins 55, which may be in a range from about 40 nm to about 120 nm. A spacing S.sub.5 between top side surfaces (e.g., at a level with top surfaces of the fins 55) of the fins 55 may be in a range from about 7.5 nm to about 9.5 nm, a spacing S.sub.6 between top side surfaces of the fins 55 may be in a range from about 5.5 nm to about 7.5 nm, and a spacing S.sub.7 between top side surfaces of the fins 55 may be in a range from about 3.5 nm to about 5.5 nm. The fins 55 may have heights H.sub.1 in a range from about 80 nm to about 140 nm.

[0020] A ratio of the heights H.sub.1 of the fins 55 to the spacing S.sub.4 between the fin groups may be in a range from about 1 to about 3. A ratio of the heights H.sub.1 of the fins 55 to the spacing S.sub.1 may be in a range from about 18 to about 35. A ratio of the heights H.sub.1 of the fins 55 to the spacing S.sub.2 and S.sub.3 may be in a range from about 20 to about 70. As will be discussed in detail below, improved methods are provided to deposit insulation layers (such as the first insulation layer 56 and the second insulation layer 58, discussed below with respect to FIG. 4) on the fins 55 and the substrate 50. The insulation layers may be deposited to fill the trenches between fins 55 within the fin groups G1/G2, while providing a minimal thickness of the insulation layers between the fin groups G1 and G2. This prevents undesired materials from being deposited between the fins 55 within the fin groups G1/G2, while maximizing the size of insulating fins (such as the insulating fins 67, discussed below with respect to FIG. 8) formed between the fin groups G1 and G2, both of which reduce device defects and improve device performance.

[0021] The above method for forming the fins 55 is merely an example method for forming the fins 55. The fins 55 may be formed by any suitable method. For example, the fins 55 may be formed using one or more photolithography processes, including double-patterning or multi-patterning processes. Generally, double-patterning or multi-patterning processes combine photolithography and self-aligned processes, allowing patterns to be created that have, for example, pitches smaller than what is otherwise obtainable using a single, direct photolithography process. For example, in some embodiments, a sacrificial layer is formed on a substrate and patterned using a photolithography process. Spacers are formed alongside the patterned sacrificial layer using a self-aligned process. The sacrificial layer is then removed, and the remaining spacers may then be used as a mask to form the fins 55. In some embodiments, the mask (or other layer) may remain on the fins 55.

[0022] In FIG. 4, a first insulation layer 56 is deposited on the fins 55, the first mask layer 52, the second mask layer 54, and the substrate 50 and a second insulation layer 58 is deposited on the first insulation layer 56. The first insulation layer 56 and the second insulation layer 58 may be oxides, nitrides, oxynitrides, combinations thereof, or the like. In some embodiments, either of the first insulation layer 56 and the second insulation layer 58 may include silicon dioxide (SiO.sub.2), silicon nitride (Si.sub.3N.sub.4), silicon oxynitride (SiON), or the like. The first insulation layer 56 and the second insulation layer 58 may be deposited by flowable CVD (FCVD) processes (e.g., contouring FCVD processes) or the like. FCVD processes are a CVD-based material deposition in a remote plasma system followed by a post-deposition cure to convert the deposited material to another material, such as an oxide. The first insulation layer 56 and the second insulation layer 58 may be deposited as silicon nitride or silicon oxynitride and converted to silicon oxide by the post-deposition cure.

[0023] Process parameters used to deposit the first insulation layer 56 and the second insulation layer 58 may be different from one another. For example, the first insulation layer 56 may be deposited by an FCVD process that deposits material with a relatively higher viscosity, a higher flowability, and better gap-filling. The first insulation layer 56 may be deposited in a bottom-up manner. This helps the first insulation layer 56 to fill the trenches between the fins 55 within the fin groups G1 and G2, but also increases the thickness of the first insulation layer 56 on the substrate 50 between the fin groups G1 and G2. The second insulation layer 58 may be deposited by an FCVD process that deposits material with a relatively lower viscosity and as a more conformal layer. This helps to fill the remaining portions of the trenches between the fins 55 within the fin groups G1 and G2, while keeping the combined thickness of the first insulation layer 56 and the second insulation layer 58 on the substrate 50 between the fin groups G1 and G2 to a minimum. By using FCVD to deposit both the first insulation layer 56 and the second insulation layer 58, the first insulation layer 56 and the second insulation layer 58 are deposited without voids or seams. This prevents undesired materials from filling any voids or seams in the first insulation layer 56 and the second insulation layer 58, which reduces device defects and improves device performance. Using different process parameters to deposit the first insulation layer 56 and the second insulation layer 58 further ensures a small thickness of the first insulation layer 56 and the second insulation layer 58 on the substrate 50 between the fin groups G1 and G2, which allows for larger insulating fins to be formed between the fin groups G1 and G2. This further improves device performance.

[0024] The FCVD processes used to deposit the first insulation layer 56 and the second insulation layer 58 may include exposing the fins 55, the first mask layer 52, the second mask layer 54, and the substrate 50 to a silicon-containing precursor and a nitrogen-containing precursor. In some embodiments, the silicon-containing precursor is a polysilazane, which may include silicon and nitrogen atoms in an alternating sequence having the formula $[R_{1.1}Si-NR_{3.1}]_n$. In some embodiments, the silicon-containing precursor is a silylamine, such as trisilylamine (TSA), disilylamine (DSA), combinations thereof, or the like. One or more carrier gases may also be included with the silicon-containing precursor. The carrier gases may include helium (He), argon (Ar), nitrogen (N_2), combinations thereof, or the like.

[0025] The nitrogen-containing precursor may include ammonia (NH_3), nitrogen (N_2), a combination thereof, or the like. In some embodiments, the nitrogen-containing precursor is activated into plasma (e.g., containing NH^* , NH_2^* , combinations thereof, or the like) in a remote plasma system (RPS) outside of the deposition chamber used to deposit the first insulation layer 56 and the second insulation layer 58. An oxygen source gas, such as O_2 or the like, may be included with the nitrogen-containing precursor and activated into plasma in the RPS. Plasma generated in the RPS is carried into the deposition chamber by a carrier gas, which may include helium (He), argon (Ar), nitrogen (N_2), combinations thereof, or the like.

[0026] The first insulation layer 56 is deposited on the fins 55, the first mask layer 52, the second mask layer 54, and the substrate 50. The silicon-containing precursor and the nitrogen-containing precursor mix and react to deposit the first insulation layer 56 on the fins 55, the first mask layer 52, the second mask layer 54, and the substrate 50. In some embodiments, the silicon-containing precursor is dispensed at a flow rate in a range from about 800 sccm to about 1000 sccm and the nitrogen-containing precursor is dispensed at a flow rate in a range from about 40 sccm to about 80 sccm. A ratio of the flow rate of the nitrogen-containing precursor to the flow rate of the silicon-containing precursor may be in a range from about 0.04 to about 0.10. The FCVD process may be performed at a low pressure. For example, the deposition chamber may be maintained at a pressure ranging from about 0.4 Torr to about 0.9 Torr. In some embodiments, the deposition chamber is maintained at a temperature in a range from about 55° C. to about 85° C., the substrate 50 on which the first insulation layer 56 is deposited is maintained at a temperature in a range from about 55° C. to about 85° C., and the deposition rate of the first insulation layer 56 may be in a range from about 2 Å/s to about 10 Å/s. Performing the FCVD process with the specified process conditions (e.g.,

precursor flow rates, pressure, temperature, etc.) allows the flowable material to be deposited with a high viscosity (previously described). This helps to fill the trenches between the fins **55** within the fin groups **G1** and **G2** in a bottom-up manner and with improved gap filling. The first insulation layer **56** may be deposited with a thickness $T_{sub.1}$ on the substrate in a range from about 5 nm to about 10 nm, a thickness $T_{sub.2}$ on side surfaces of the fins **55** in a range from about 2 nm to about 4 nm, and a thickness $T_{sub.3}$ on top surfaces of the second mask layer **54** in a range from about 2 to about 4 nm.

[0027] As illustrated in FIG. 4, the first insulation layer **56** may fill some of the trenches between the fins **55** within the fin groups **G1** and **G2**, while others of the trenches between the fins **55** within the fin groups **G1** and **G2** remain unfilled. The first insulation layer **56** may fill trenches having a ratio of the heights $H_{sub.1}$ of the fins **55** to the spacing $S_{sub.2}$ and $S_{sub.3}$ (see FIG. 3) in a range from about 20 to about 70, while trenches having a ratio of the heights $H_{sub.1}$ of the fins **55** to the spacing $S_{sub.1}$ (see FIG. 3) in a range from about 18 to about 35 remain at least partially unfilled.

[0028] The second insulation layer **58** is deposited on the first insulation layer **56**. The silicon-containing precursor and the nitrogen-containing precursor mix and react to deposit the second insulation layer **58** on the first insulation layer **56**. In some embodiments, the silicon-containing precursor is dispensed at a flow rate in a range from about 800 sccm to about 1000 sccm and the nitrogen-containing precursor is dispensed at a flow rate in a range from about 20 sccm to about 30 sccm. A ratio of the flow rate of the nitrogen-containing precursor to the flow rate of the silicon-containing precursor may be in a range from about 0.02 to about 0.04. The FCVD process may be performed at a low pressure. For example, the deposition chamber may be maintained at a pressure ranging from about 0.4 Torr to about 0.9 Torr. In some embodiments, the deposition chamber is maintained at a temperature in a range from about 55° C. to about 85° C., the substrate **50** on which the second insulation layer **56** is deposited is maintained at a temperature in a range from about 55° C. to about 85° C., and the deposition rate of the second insulation layer **56** may be in a range from about 2 Å/s to about 10 Å/s. Performing the FCVD process with the specified process conditions (e.g., precursor flow rates, pressure, temperature, etc.) allows the flowable material to be deposited as a conformal layer. This helps to fill the trenches between the fins **55** within the fin groups **G1** and **G2**, while maintaining a minimal thickness of the second insulation layer **58** on the substrate **50** between the fin groups **G1** and **G2**. The second insulation layer **58** may be deposited with a thickness $T_{sub.4}$ on the substrate in a range from about 5 nm to about 8 nm, a thickness $T_{sub.5}$ on side surfaces of the fins **55** in a range from about 2 nm to about 4 nm, and a thickness $T_{sub.6}$ on top surfaces of the second mask layer **54** in a range from about 2 to about 4 nm. A thickness $T_{sub.7}$ of the first insulation layer **56** and the second insulation layer **58** on the substrate **50** between the fin groups **G1** and **G2** may be in a range from about 10 nm to about 18 nm. As illustrated in FIG. 4, the first insulation layer **56** and the second insulation layer **58** fill the trenches between the fins **55** within the fin groups **G1** and **G2**.

[0029] The first insulation layer **56** and the second insulation layer **58** may be deposited as flowable materials, which are then cured to form solid dielectric materials. The first insulation layer **56** and the second insulation layer **58** may be cured simultaneously after depositing the second insulation layer **58**, or the first insulation layer **56** may be cured before depositing the second insulation layer **58**. The first insulation layer **56** and the second insulation layer **58** may be cured by an anneal process, which may be an oxidation process. The oxidation process may include an anneal in an oxygen containing ambient (e.g., steam). The conversion process may convert the first insulation layer **56** and the second insulation layer **58** to oxides, such as silicon oxide (SiO_x). In some embodiments, the anneal process may be a wet thermal anneal process performed at a temperature in a range from about 300° C. to about 700° C., and for a duration of several hours. In some embodiments, the wet thermal anneal process may be performed at a pressure in a range from about 400 Torr to about 760 Torr. In some embodiments, the wet anneal includes wet steam that may be generated by use of a water vapor generator, a water vaporizer, or combining hydrogen and

oxygen gases in a torch unit.

[0030] It is appreciated that depending on the material and the composition (elements and the percentage of elements), the second insulation layer **58** may be, or may not be, distinguishable from the first insulation layer **56**. For example, either of the first insulation layer **56** and the second insulation layer **58** may or may not include elements such as carbon, hydrogen, nitrogen, or the like in addition to silicon and oxygen. Furthermore, the density of the second insulation layer **58** may be lower than, equal to, or higher than that of the first insulation layer **56**. The distinction between the second insulation layer **58** and the first insulation layer **56** may be achieved by determining the elements and the corresponding atomic percentages of the elements in these layers/materials, for example, by using X-ray Photoelectron Spectroscopy (XPS).

[0031] In FIG. 5, a third insulation layer **60** and a fourth insulation layer **62** are formed on the second insulation layer **58**. The third insulation layer **60** and the fourth insulation layer **62** may be deposited by conformal deposition processes, such as ALD, CVD, physical vapor deposition (PVD), or the like. The third insulation layer **60** may be formed of an oxide, such as silicon dioxide, and may be provided to adjust a sidewall thickness and profile of the first insulation layer **56** and the second insulation layer **58**. The third insulation layer **60** may have a thickness in a range from about 2 nm to about 5 nm. The third insulation layer **60** is optional and may be omitted in some embodiments.

[0032] The fourth insulation layer **62** may be formed of one or more dielectric material(s) having a high etch selectivity from the etching of the fins **55**, the first insulation layer **56**, the second insulation layer **58**, and the third insulation layer **60**. For example, the fourth insulation layer **62** may include as silicon nitride, silicon carbonitride, silicon oxycarbonitride, or the like. The fourth insulation layer **62** may be used to protect subsequently formed insulating fins from etching of the first insulation layer **56**, the second insulation layer **58**, and the third insulation layer **60**.

[0033] In FIGS. 6A and 6B, a cut process is performed on the fins **55** and a clean process is performed. The cut process may be performed a cut region **63** illustrated in FIG. 6B. The cut process may be an anisotropic etch process, such as a dry etch process. The cut process may be used to cut the fins **55** to desired lengths. The cut process may cut through the fins **55** and into the substrate **50** to a depth DI in the substrate **50** ranging from about 30 nm to about 40 nm below bottom extents of the fins **55** and a major surface of the substrate **50**. The cut process may expose side surfaces of the fins **55**, the substrate **50**, the first mask layer **52**, the second mask layer **54**, the first insulation layer **56**, the second insulation layer **58**, the third insulation layer **60**, and the fourth insulation layer **62**. The clean process may then be performed to remove any residues remaining from the cut process. For example, an oxide removal using, for example, dilute hydrofluoric (dHF) acid may be used. In some embodiments, the clean process may use dHF, which includes a ratio of HF:DI water of about 1:100 for a period in a range of about 5 seconds to about 15 seconds.

[0034] The fourth insulation layer **62** may be used to protect the underlying first insulation layer **56**, second insulation layer **58**, and third insulation layer **60** from the clean process. If the first insulation layer **56** and the second insulation layer **58** are formed with seams, the dHF used in the clean process may penetrate into the first insulation layer **56** and the second insulation layer **58** from the sides, expanding the seams to create voids in the first insulation layer **56** and the second insulation layer **58**. These voids may subsequently be filled with undesired materials, which may cause device defects and reduce device performance. Forming the first insulation layer **56** and the second insulation layer **58** using the FCVD processes described above prevents the formation of seams in the first insulation layer **56** and the second insulation layer **58**, which reduces device defects and improves device performance.

[0035] In FIG. 7, a fifth insulation layer **64**, a first insulation material **66**, and a second insulation material **68** are formed on the fourth insulation layer **62**. The fifth insulation layer **64** may be deposited by conformal deposition processes, such as ALD, CVD, physical vapor deposition (PVD), or the like. The fifth insulation layer **64** may be formed of one or more dielectric

material(s) having a high etch selectivity from the etching of the fins 55, the first insulation layer 56, the second insulation layer 58, and the third insulation layer 60. For example, the fifth insulation layer 64 may include as silicon nitride, silicon carbonitride, silicon oxycarbonitride, or the like. In some embodiments, the fifth insulation layer 64 may include the same materials as the fourth insulation layer 62. The fifth insulation layer 64 may be used to protect subsequently formed insulating fins from etching of the first insulation layer 56, the second insulation layer 58, and the third insulation layer 60.

[0036] In devices in which seams or voids are present in the first insulation layer 56 and the second insulation layer 58, the fifth insulation layer 64 may be deposited in the seams or voids through side surfaces exposed during the cut process discussed above with respect to FIGS. 6A and 6B. However, by forming the first insulation layer 56 and the second insulation layer 58 according to the FCVD processes discussed above, the first insulation layer 56 and the second insulation layer 58 are formed without seams or voids. As such, the fifth insulation layer 64 does not extend into the first insulation layer 56 and the second insulation layer 58, which reduces device defects and improves device performance.

[0037] The first insulation material 66 is formed on the fifth insulation layer 64. The first insulation material 66 may fill remaining portions of the trenches between and adjacent the fin groups G1 and G2. The first insulation material 66 may form the bulk of the lower portions of insulating fins 67 (see FIG. 8) to insulate subsequently formed source/drain regions (see FIGS. 15A through 15D) from each other. The first insulation material 66 may be formed by an acceptable deposition process such as ALD, CVD, FCVD, PVD, or the like. The first insulation material 66 may be formed of one or more dielectric material(s) having a high etch selectivity from the etching of the fourth insulation layer 62 and the fifth insulation layer 64. The first insulation material 66 may be formed of a low-k dielectric material (e.g., a dielectric material having a k-value less than about 3.5). In some embodiments, the first insulation material 66 may be an oxide, such as silicon oxide, silicon oxynitride, silicon oxycarbonitride, silicon oxycarbide, the like, or combinations thereof.

[0038] Upper portions of the first insulation material 66 may be removed using one or more acceptable planarization and/or etching processes. The etching processes may be selective to the first insulation material 66 (e.g., the etching processes may selectively etch the first insulation material 66 at a faster rate than the fifth insulation layer 64). After etching, top surfaces of the first insulation material 66 may be below top surfaces of the fins 55. In some embodiments, the first insulation material 66, the fifth insulation layer 64, and/or the fourth insulation layer 62 may be recessed below top surfaces of the fins 55.

[0039] The second insulation material 68 is formed on the first insulation material 66. The second insulation material 68 may fill portions of the trenches between and adjacent the fin groups G1 and G2 that are unfilled by removing the upper portions of the first insulation material 66. The second insulation material 68 may be formed by an acceptable deposition process such as ALD, CVD, PVD, or the like. The second insulation material 68 may be formed of one or more dielectric material(s) having a high etch selectivity from the etching of the fins 55, the first insulation layer 56, the second insulation layer 58, and the third insulation layer 60. For example, the second insulation material 68 may comprise a high-k material such as hafnium oxide, zirconium oxide, zirconium aluminum oxide, hafnium aluminum oxide, hafnium silicon oxide, aluminum oxide, the like, or combinations thereof. In some embodiments, the second insulation material 68 may include as silicon nitride, silicon carbonitride, silicon oxycarbonitride, or the like. The second insulation material 68 may serve as a hard mask that protects the underlying first insulation material 66 from subsequent etching processes.

[0040] The second insulation material 68 may be deposited covering the fifth insulation layer 64. Subsequently, a removal process is applied to remove excess material(s) of the second insulation material 68. In some embodiments, a planarization process such as a CMP, an etch-back process, combinations thereof, or the like may be utilized. The planarization process exposes the fifth

insulation layer **64** such that top surfaces of the second insulation material **68** and the fifth insulation layer **64** are coplanar (within process variations).

[0041] In FIG. **8**, a removal process is applied to the second insulation material **68**, the fifth insulation layer **64**, the fourth insulation layer **62**, the third insulation layer **60**, the second insulation layer **58**, the first insulation layer **56**, the second mask layer **54**, the first mask layer **52**, and the fins **55**. The removal process may be used to remove excess insulation material over the fins **55**. In some embodiments, a planarization process such as a chemical mechanical polish (CMP), an etch-back process, combinations thereof, or the like may be utilized. The planarization process may planarize the second insulation material **68**, the fifth insulation layer **64**, the fourth insulation layer **62**, the third insulation layer **60**, the second insulation layer **58**, the first insulation layer **56**, and the fins **55** and remove the second mask layer **54** and the first mask layer **52**. The planarization process exposes the fins **55** such that top surfaces of the fins **55**, the second insulation material **68**, the fifth insulation layer **64**, the fourth insulation layer **62**, the third insulation layer **60**, the second insulation layer **58**, and the first insulation layer **56** are level after the planarization process is complete.

[0042] The removal process forms insulating fins **67** (also referred to as hybrid fins or dielectric fins) between and adjacent the fin groups **G1** and **G2**. The insulating fins **67** comprise the second insulation material **68**, the first insulation material **66**, the fifth insulation layer **64**, and the fourth insulation layer **62**. Forming the first insulation layer **56** and the second insulation layer **58** according to the above-described methods ensures that the thickness of the first insulation layer **56** and the second insulation layer **58** below the insulating fins **67** is minimized, which allows the insulating fins **67** to be formed with larger volumes. This improves insulation between the fins groups **G1** and **G2**.

[0043] In FIG. **9**, the third insulation layer **60**, the second insulation layer **58**, and the first insulation layer **56** are recessed to form shallow trench isolation (STI) regions **69**. The third insulation layer **60**, the second insulation layer **58**, and the first insulation layer **56** are recessed such that upper portions of the fins **55** and the insulating fins **67** protrude from between neighboring STI regions **69**. The top surfaces of the STI regions **69** may have flat surfaces as illustrated, convex surfaces, concave surfaces (such as dishing), or a combination thereof. The top surfaces of the STI regions **69** may be formed flat, convex, and/or concave by an appropriate etch. The STI regions **69** may be recessed using an acceptable etching process, such as one that is selective to the material of the third insulation layer **60**, the second insulation layer **58**, and the first insulation layer **56** (e.g., etches the material of the third insulation layer **60**, the second insulation layer **58**, and the first insulation layer **56** at a faster rate than the material of the fins **55**, the second insulation material **68**, the fifth insulation layer **64**, and the fourth insulation layer **62**). For example, an oxide removal using, for example, dilute hydrofluoric (dHF) acid may be used. Forming the first insulation layer **56** and the second insulation layer **58** according to the above-described methods ensures that the STI regions **69** are formed without voids or seams and without undesired materials, such as portions of the fifth insulation layer **64**, formed therein. This improves insulation provided by the STI regions **69**, reduces device defects, and improves device performance.

[0044] The process described with respect to FIGS. **3** through **9** is just one example of how the fins **55** may be formed. In some embodiments, the fins **55** may be formed by an epitaxial growth process. For example, a dielectric layer can be formed over a top surface of the substrate **50**, and trenches can be etched through the dielectric layer to expose the underlying substrate **50**. Homoepitaxial structures can be epitaxially grown in the trenches, and the dielectric layer can be recessed such that the homoepitaxial structures protrude from the dielectric layer to form fins. Additionally, in some embodiments, heteroepitaxial structures can be used for the fins **55**. For example, the fins **55** in FIG. **9** can be recessed, and a material different from the fins **55** may be epitaxially grown over the recessed fins **55**. In such embodiments, the fins **55** comprise the

recessed material as well as the epitaxially grown material disposed over the recessed material. In some embodiments, a dielectric layer can be formed over a top surface of the substrate **50**, and trenches can be etched through the dielectric layer. Heteroepitaxial structures can then be epitaxially grown in the trenches using a material different from the substrate **50**, and the dielectric layer can be recessed such that the heteroepitaxial structures protrude from the dielectric layer to form the fins **55**. In some embodiments where homoepitaxial or heteroepitaxial structures are epitaxially grown, the epitaxially grown materials may be in situ doped during growth, which may obviate prior and subsequent implantations although in situ and implantation doping may be used together.

[0045] Still further, it may be advantageous to epitaxially grow a material in the n-type region (e.g., an NMOS region) different from the material in p-type region (e.g., a PMOS region). In some embodiments, upper portions of the fins **55** may be formed from silicon-germanium ($\text{Si.sub.xGe.sub.1-x}$, where x can be in the range of 0 to 1), silicon carbide, pure or substantially pure germanium, a III-V compound semiconductor, a II-VI compound semiconductor, or the like. For example, the available materials for forming III-V compound semiconductor include, but are not limited to, indium arsenide, aluminum arsenide, gallium arsenide, indium phosphide, gallium nitride, indium gallium arsenide, indium aluminum arsenide, gallium antimonide, aluminum antimonide, aluminum phosphide, gallium phosphide, and the like.

[0046] Further in FIG. **9**, appropriate wells (not separately illustrated) may be formed in the fins **55** and/or the substrate **50**. In some embodiments, a P well may be formed in the n-type region, and an N well may be formed in the p-type region. In some embodiments, a P well or an N well are formed in both the n-type region and the p-type region.

[0047] In the embodiments with different well types, the different implant steps for the n-type region and the p-type region may be achieved using a photoresist or other masks (not separately illustrated). For example, a photoresist may be formed over the fins **55** and the STI regions **69** in the n-type region. The photoresist is patterned to expose the p-type region of the substrate **50**, such as a PMOS region. The photoresist can be formed by using a spin-on technique and can be patterned using acceptable photolithography techniques. Once the photoresist is patterned, an n-type impurity implant is performed in the p-type region, and the photoresist may act as a mask to prevent n-type impurities from being implanted into the n-type region, such as an NMOS region. The n-type impurities may be phosphorus, arsenic, antimony, or the like implanted in the region to a concentration of equal to or less than 1×10^{18} atoms/cm³, such as between about 1×10^{16} atoms/cm³ and about 1×10^{18} atoms/cm³. After the implant, the photoresist is removed, such as by an acceptable ashing process.

[0048] Following the implanting of the p-type region, a photoresist is formed over the fins **55** and the STI regions **69** in the p-type region. The photoresist is patterned to expose the n-type region of the substrate **50**, such as the NMOS region. The photoresist can be formed by using a spin-on technique and can be patterned using acceptable photolithography techniques. Once the photoresist is patterned, a p-type impurity implant may be performed in the n-type region, and the photoresist may act as a mask to prevent p-type impurities from being implanted into the p-type region, such as the PMOS region. The p-type impurities may be boron, boron fluoride, indium, or the like implanted in the region to a concentration of equal to or less than 1×10^{18} atoms/cm³, such as between about 1×10^{16} atoms/cm³ and about 1×10^{18} atoms/cm³. After the implant, the photoresist may be removed, such as by an acceptable ashing process.

[0049] After the implants of the n-type region and the p-type region, an anneal may be performed to repair implant damage and to activate the p-type and/or n-type impurities that were implanted. In some embodiments, the grown materials of epitaxial fins may be in situ doped during growth, which may obviate the implantations, although in situ and implantation doping may be used together.

[0050] In FIG. **10**, dummy dielectric layers **70** are formed on the fins **55** and the substrate **50**. The

dummy dielectric layers **70** may be, for example, silicon oxide, silicon nitride, a combination thereof, or the like, and may be deposited or thermally grown according to acceptable techniques. A dummy gate layer **72** is formed over the dummy dielectric layers **70**, and a mask layer **74** is formed over the dummy gate layer **72**. The dummy gate layer **72** may be deposited over the dummy dielectric layers **70** and then planarized by a process such as CMP. The mask layer **74** may be deposited over the dummy gate layer **72**. The dummy gate layer **72** may be conductive or non-conductive materials and may be selected from a group including amorphous silicon, polycrystalline-silicon (polysilicon), polycrystalline silicon-germanium (poly-SiGe), metallic nitrides, metallic silicides, metallic oxides, and metals. The dummy gate layer **72** may be deposited by physical vapor deposition (PVD), CVD, sputter deposition, or other techniques known and used in the art for depositing the selected material. The dummy gate layer **72** may be made of other materials that have a high etching selectivity from the material of the STI regions **69**. The mask layer **74** may include, for example, silicon nitride, silicon oxynitride, or the like. In this example, a single dummy gate layer **72** and a single mask layer **74** are formed. It is noted that the dummy dielectric layers **70** are shown covering only the fins **55** and the substrate **50** for illustrative purposes only. In some embodiments, the dummy dielectric layers **70** may be deposited such that the dummy dielectric layers **70** cover the STI regions **69**, extending between the dummy gate layer **72** and the STI regions **69**.

[0051] In FIGS. **11A** and **11B**, the mask layer **74** (see FIG. **10**) may be patterned using acceptable photolithography and etching techniques to form masks **78**. An acceptable etching technique may be used to transfer the pattern of the masks **78** to the dummy gate layer **72** to form dummy gates **76**. In some embodiments, the pattern of the masks **78** may also be transferred to the dummy dielectric layers **70**. The dummy gates **76** cover respective channel regions **71** of the fins **55**. The pattern of the masks **78** may be used to physically separate each of the dummy gates **76** from adjacent dummy gates **76**. The dummy gates **76** may also have a lengthwise direction substantially perpendicular to the lengthwise direction of respective fins **55**. The dummy dielectric layers **70**, the dummy gates **76**, and the masks **78** may be collectively referred to as “dummy gate stacks.”

[0052] In FIGS. **12A** through **12C**, a first spacer layer **80** and a second spacer layer **82** are formed over the structures illustrated in FIGS. **11A** and **11B**. In FIGS. **12A** through **12C**, the first spacer layer **80** is formed on top surfaces of the STI regions **69**, top surfaces and sidewalls of the fins **55** and the masks **78**, and sidewalls of the dummy gates **76** and the dummy dielectric layers **70**. The second spacer layer **82** is deposited over the first spacer layer **80**. The first spacer layer **80** may be formed by thermal oxidation or deposited by CVD, ALD, or the like. The first spacer layer **80** may be formed of silicon oxide, silicon nitride, silicon oxynitride, or the like. The second spacer layer **82** may be deposited by CVD, ALD, or the like. The second spacer layer **82** may be formed of silicon oxide, silicon nitride, silicon oxynitride, or the like.

[0053] In FIGS. **13A** through **13C**, the first spacer layer **80** and the second spacer layer **82** are etched to form first spacers **81** and second spacers **83**. The first spacer layer **80** and the second spacer layer **82** may be etched using a suitable etching process, such as an anisotropic etching process (e.g., a dry etching process) or the like. The first spacers **81** and the second spacers **83** may be disposed on sidewalls of the fins **55**, the dummy dielectric layers **70**, the dummy gates **76**, and the masks **78**. The first spacers **81** and the second spacers **83** may have different heights adjacent the fins **55** and the dummy gate stacks due to the etching processes used to etch the first spacer layer **80** and the second spacer layer **82**, as well as different heights between the fins **55** and the dummy gate stacks. Specifically, as illustrated in FIGS. **13B** and **13C**, in some embodiments, the first spacers **81** and the second spacers **83** may extend partially up sidewalls of the fins **55** and the dummy gate stacks. In some embodiments, the first spacers **81** and the second spacers **83** may extend to top surfaces of the dummy gate stacks.

[0054] After the first spacers **81** and the second spacers **83** are formed, implants for lightly doped source/drain (LDD) regions (not separately illustrated) may be performed. In After the first spacers

81 and the second spacers **83** are formed, implants for lightly doped source/drain (LDD) regions (not separately illustrated) may be performed. In embodiments with different device types, similar to the implants discussed above in FIG. **9**, a mask, such as a photoresist, may be formed over the n-type region, while exposing the p-type region, and appropriate type (e.g., p-type) impurities may be implanted into the exposed fins **55** and the substrate **50** in the p-type region. The mask may then be removed. Subsequently, a mask, such as a photoresist, may be formed over the p-type region while exposing the n-type region, and appropriate type impurities (e.g., n-type) may be implanted into the exposed fins **55** and the substrate **50** in the n-type region. The mask may then be removed. The n-type impurities may be the any of the n-type impurities previously discussed, and the p-type impurities may be the any of the p-type impurities previously discussed. The lightly doped source/drain regions may have a concentration of impurities of from about 1×10^{15} atoms/cm³ to about 1×10^{19} atoms/cm³. An anneal may be used to repair implant damage and to activate the implanted impurities.

[0055] It is noted that the above disclosure generally describes a process of forming spacers and LDD regions. Other processes and sequences may be used. For example, fewer or additional spacers may be utilized, different sequence of steps may be utilized (e.g., the first spacers **81** may be formed prior to forming the second spacers **83**, additional spacers may be formed and removed, and/or the like). Furthermore, the n-type and p-type devices may be formed using a different structures and steps.

[0056] In FIGS. **14A** through **14C**, the substrate **50** and the fins **55** are etched to form recesses **86**. As illustrated in FIG. **14C**, top surfaces of the STI regions **69** may be level with top surfaces of the fins **55**. In some embodiments, bottom surfaces of the recesses **86** are disposed above or below the top surfaces of the STI regions **69**. The fins **55** and the substrate **50** are etched using anisotropic etching processes, such as RIE, NBE, or the like. The first spacers **81**, the second spacers **83**, and the masks **78** mask portions of the fins **55** and the substrate **50** during the etching processes used to form the recesses **86**. A single etch process or multiple etch processes may be used to form the recesses **86**. Timed etch processes may be used to stop the etching of the recesses **86** after the recesses **86** reach a desired depth.

[0057] In FIGS. **15A** through **15D**, epitaxial source/drain regions **92** (e.g., source regions and/or drain regions) are formed in the recesses **86** (see FIGS. **14A** through **14C**) to exert stress on the channel regions **71** of the fins **55**, thereby improving performance. As illustrated in FIG. **15B**, the epitaxial source/drain regions **92** are formed in the recesses **86** such that each dummy gate **76** is disposed between respective neighboring pairs of the epitaxial source/drain regions **92**. In some embodiments, the first spacers **81** are used to separate the epitaxial source/drain regions **92** from the dummy gates **76** by an appropriate lateral distance so that the epitaxial source/drain regions **92** do not short out subsequently formed gates of the resulting FinFETs.

[0058] The epitaxial source/drain regions **92** in the n-type region, e.g., the NMOS region, may be formed by masking the p-type region, e.g., the PMOS region. Then, the epitaxial source/drain regions **92** are epitaxially grown in the recesses **86**. The epitaxial source/drain regions **92** may include any acceptable material, such as appropriate for n-type FinFETs. For example, if the fins **55** are silicon, the epitaxial source/drain regions **92** may include materials exerting a tensile strain on the fins **55**, such as silicon, silicon carbide, phosphorous-doped silicon carbide, silicon phosphide, or the like. The epitaxial source/drain regions **92** may have surfaces raised from respective surfaces of the fins **55** and may have facets.

[0059] The epitaxial source/drain regions **92** in the p-type region, e.g., the PMOS region, may be formed by masking the n-type region, e.g., the NMOS region. Then, the epitaxial source/drain regions **92** are epitaxially grown in the recesses **86**. The epitaxial source/drain regions **92** may include any acceptable material, such as appropriate for p-type NSFETs. For example, if the fins **55** are silicon, the epitaxial source/drain regions **92** may comprise materials exerting a compressive strain on the fins **55**, such as silicon-germanium, boron doped silicon-germanium, germanium,

germanium tin, or the like. The epitaxial source/drain regions **92** may also have surfaces raised from respective surfaces of the fins **55** and may have facets.

[0060] The epitaxial source/drain regions **92**, the fins **55**, and/or the substrate **50** may be implanted with dopants to form source/drain regions, similar to the process previously discussed for forming lightly-doped source/drain regions, followed by an anneal. The source/drain regions may have an impurity concentration of between about 1×10^{19} atoms/cm³ and about 1×10^{21} atoms/cm³. The n-type and/or p-type impurities for source/drain regions may be any of the impurities previously discussed. In some embodiments, the epitaxial source/drain regions **92** may be in situ doped during growth.

[0061] The epitaxy processes used to form the epitaxial source/drain regions **92** in the n-type region and the p-type region form the epitaxial source/drain regions **92** with upper surfaces that have facets, which expand laterally outward beyond sidewalls of the fins **55**. In some embodiments, these facets cause adjacent epitaxial source/drain regions **92** of a same FinFET (e.g., in a same fin group **G1/G2**) to merge as illustrated by FIG. **15C**. In some embodiments, adjacent epitaxial source/drain regions **92** remain separated after the epitaxy process is completed as illustrated by FIG. **15D**. In the embodiments illustrated in FIGS. **15C** and **15D**, the first spacers **81** may be formed covering portions of the sidewalls of the fins **55** that extend above the STI regions **69** thereby blocking the epitaxial growth. In some embodiments, the spacer etch used to form the first spacers **81** may be adjusted to remove the spacer material to allow the epitaxially grown region to extend to the surface of the STI region **69**. Moreover, the insulating fins **67** separate and provide insulation between the epitaxial source/drain regions **92** formed over each of the fin groups **G1** and **G2**.

[0062] The epitaxial source/drain regions **92** may comprise one or more semiconductor material layers. For example, the epitaxial source/drain regions **92** may comprise a first semiconductor material layer **92A**, a second semiconductor material layer **92B**, and a third semiconductor material layer **92C**. Any number of semiconductor material layers may be used for the epitaxial source/drain regions **92**. Each of the first semiconductor material layer **92A**, the second semiconductor material layer **92B**, and the third semiconductor material layer **92C** may be formed of different semiconductor materials and/or may be doped to different dopant concentrations. In some embodiments, the first semiconductor material layer **92A** may have a dopant concentration less than the second semiconductor material layer **92B** and greater than the third semiconductor material layer **92C**. In embodiments in which the epitaxial source/drain regions **92** comprise three semiconductor material layers, the first semiconductor material layer **92A** may be deposited, the second semiconductor material layer **92B** may be deposited over the first semiconductor material layer **92A**, and the third semiconductor material layer **92C** may be deposited over the second semiconductor material layer **92B**.

[0063] In FIGS. **16A** and **16B**, a first interlayer dielectric (ILD) **96** is deposited over the structure illustrated in FIGS. **15A** and **15B**, respectively. The first ILD **96** may be formed of a dielectric material, and may be deposited by any suitable method, such as CVD, plasma-enhanced CVD (PECVD), or FCVD. Dielectric materials may include phospho-silicate glass (PSG), boro-silicate glass (BSG), boron-doped phospho-silicate glass (BPSG), undoped silicate glass (USG), or the like. In some embodiments, the dielectric materials for the first ILD **96** may include silicon oxide, silicon nitride, silicon oxynitride, or the like. Other insulation materials formed by any acceptable process may be used. In some embodiments, a contact etch stop layer (CESL) **94** is disposed between the first ILD **96** and the epitaxial source/drain regions **92**, the masks **78**, and the first spacers **81**. The CESL **94** may comprise a dielectric material, such as, silicon nitride, silicon oxide, silicon oxynitride, or the like, having a different etch rate than the material of the overlying first ILD **96**. In some embodiments, the first ILD **96** may be formed of silicon oxide or silicon nitride and the CESL **94** may be formed of silicon oxide or silicon nitride.

[0064] In FIGS. **17A** and **17B**, a planarization process, such as a CMP, may be performed to level

top surfaces of the first ILD **96** and the CESL **94** with top surfaces of the dummy gates **76**, the first spacers **81**, and the second spacers **83**. The planarization process may also remove the masks **78** on the dummy gates **76**, and portions of the first spacers **81** along sidewalls of the masks **78**. After the planarization process, top surfaces of the dummy gates **76**, the first spacers **81**, the second spacers **83**, the CESL **94**, and the first ILD **96** are level. Accordingly, the top surfaces of the dummy gates **76** are exposed through the first ILD **96**. In some embodiments, the masks **78** may remain, in which case the planarization process levels top surfaces of the first ILD **96** and the CESL **94** with top surfaces of the masks **78**, the first spacers **81**, and the second spacers **83**.

[0065] In FIGS. **18A** and **18B**, the dummy gates **76**, and the masks **78** if present, are removed in an etching step(s) forming recesses **98**. Portions of the dummy dielectric layers **70** below the dummy gates **76** may also be removed. In some embodiments, only the dummy gates **76** are removed, the dummy dielectric layers **70** remain, and the dummy dielectric layers **70** are exposed by the recesses **98**. In some embodiments, the dummy dielectric layers **70** are removed from below the dummy gates **76** in a first region of a die (e.g., a core logic region) and remain below the dummy gates **76** in a second region of the die (e.g., an input/output region). In some embodiments, the dummy gates **76** are removed by an anisotropic dry etch process. For example, the etching process may include a dry etch process using reaction gas(es) that selectively etch the dummy gates **76** at a faster rate than the first ILD **96**, the CESL **94**, the first spacers **81**, and the second spacers **83**. Each of the recesses **98** exposes and/or overlies a channel region **71** of a respective fin **55**. Each channel region **71** is disposed between neighboring pairs of the epitaxial source/drain regions **92**. During the removal, the dummy dielectric layers **70** may be used as etch stop layers when the dummy gates **76** are etched. The dummy dielectric layers **70** may be optionally removed after removing the dummy gates **76**.

[0066] In FIGS. **19A** and **19B**, gate dielectric layers **100** and gate electrodes **102** are formed for replacement gates. The gate dielectric layers **100** may be formed by depositing one or more layers in the recesses **98**, such as on top surfaces and side surfaces of the fins **55**, the first spacers **81**, and the insulating fins **67**; and on top surfaces of the STI regions **69**, the first ILD **96**, the CESL **94**, and the second spacers **83**. The gate dielectric layers **100** may comprise one or more layers of silicon oxide, silicon nitride, metal oxides, metal silicates, or the like. For example, in some embodiments, the gate dielectric layers **100** include an interfacial layer of silicon oxide formed by thermal or chemical oxidation and an overlying high-k dielectric material, such as a metal oxide or a silicate of hafnium, aluminum, zirconium, lanthanum, manganese, barium, titanium, lead, a combination thereof, or the like. The gate dielectric layers **100** may include a dielectric layer having a k-value greater than about 7.0. The gate dielectric layers **100** may be deposited by molecular-beam deposition (MBD), ALD, PECVD, or the like. In embodiments where portions of the dummy dielectric layers **70** remain on the fins **55**, the gate dielectric layers **100** may include a material of the dummy dielectric layers **70** (e.g., SiO₂).

[0067] The gate electrodes **102** are deposited on the gate dielectric layers **100** and fill remaining portions of the recesses **98**. The gate electrodes **102** may include a metal-containing material such as titanium nitride, titanium oxide, tantalum nitride, tantalum carbide, cobalt, ruthenium, aluminum, tungsten, combinations thereof, or multi-layers thereof. For example, although a single layer gate electrode **102** is illustrated in FIG. **19B**, the gate electrodes **102** may comprise any number of liner layers, any number of work function tuning layers, and a fill material. After the filling of the recesses **98**, a planarization process, such as a CMP, is performed to remove excess portions of the gate dielectric layers **100** and the gate electrodes **102**, which excess portions are over top surfaces of the first ILD **96**, the CESL **94**, the first spacers **81**, and the second spacers **83**. The remaining portions of the gate electrodes **102** and the gate dielectric layers **100** form replacement gates of the resulting FinFETs. The gate electrodes **102** and the gate dielectric layers **100** may be collectively referred to as “gate stacks.” The gate stacks may extend along top surfaces and side surfaces of the channel regions **71** of the fins **55**.

[0068] The formation of the gate dielectric layers **100** in the n-type region and the p-type region may occur simultaneously such that the gate dielectric layers **100** in each region are formed from the same materials. The formation of the gate electrodes **102** may occur simultaneously such that the gate electrodes **102** in each region are formed from the same materials. In some embodiments, the gate dielectric layers **100** in each region may be formed by distinct processes, such that the gate dielectric layers **100** may be different materials. The gate electrodes **102** in each region may be formed by distinct processes, such that the gate electrodes **102** may be different materials. Various masking steps may be used to mask and expose appropriate regions when using distinct processes.

[0069] In FIGS. **20A** and **20B**, a second ILD **106** is deposited over the first ILD **96**, the CESL **94**, the first spacers **81**, the second spacers **83**, the gate dielectric layers **100**, and the gate electrodes **102**. In some embodiments, the second ILD **106** is a flowable film formed by FCVD. In some embodiments, the second ILD **106** is formed of a dielectric material such as PSG, BSG, BPSG, USG, or the like, and may be deposited by any suitable method, such as CVD, PECVD, or the like. In some embodiments, the dielectric materials for the second ILD **106** may include silicon oxide, silicon nitride, silicon oxynitride, or the like. In some embodiments, before the formation of the second ILD **106**, the gate stacks (including the gate dielectric layers **100** and the corresponding overlying gate electrodes **102**) are recessed, so that recesses are formed directly over each of the respective gate stacks and between opposing portions of the first spacers **81**. Gate caps **104** comprising one or more layers of dielectric material, such as silicon nitride, silicon oxynitride, or the like, are filled in the recess, followed by a planarization process to remove excess portions of the dielectric material extending over the first ILD **96**, the CESL **94**, the first spacers **81**, and the second spacers **83**. Subsequently formed gate contacts (such as the gate contacts **110**, discussed below with respect to FIGS. **21A** and **21B**) penetrate through the gate caps **104** to contact top surfaces of the recessed gate electrodes **102**.

[0070] In FIGS. **21A** and **21B**, gate contacts **110** are formed through the second ILD **106** and the gate caps **104** and source/drain contacts **112** are formed through the second ILD **106**, the first ILD **96**, and the CESL **94**. Openings for the source/drain contacts **112** are formed through the second ILD **106**, the first ILD **96**, and the CESL **94** and openings for the gate contacts **110** are formed through the second ILD **106** and the gate caps **104**. The openings may be formed using acceptable photolithography and etching techniques. In some embodiments, after the openings for the source/drain contacts **112** are formed through the second ILD **106**, the first ILD **96**, and the CESL **94**, silicide regions **108** are formed over the epitaxial source/drain regions **92**. The silicide regions **108** may be formed by first depositing a metal (not separately illustrated) capable of reacting with the semiconductor materials of the underlying epitaxial source/drain regions **92** (e.g., silicon, silicon germanium, germanium) to form silicide or germanide regions, such as nickel, cobalt, titanium, tantalum, platinum, tungsten, other noble metals, other refractory metals, rare earth metals or their alloys, over the exposed portions of the epitaxial source/drain regions **92**, then performing a thermal anneal process to form the silicide regions **108**.

[0071] A liner, such as a diffusion barrier layer, an adhesion layer, or the like, and a conductive material are formed in the openings for the source/drain contacts **112** and the gate contacts **110**. The liner may include titanium, titanium nitride, tantalum, tantalum nitride, or the like. The conductive material may be copper, a copper alloy, silver, gold, tungsten, cobalt, aluminum, nickel, or the like. A planarization process, such as a CMP, may be performed to remove excess material from a surface of the second ILD **106**. The remaining liner and conductive material form the source/drain contacts **112** and the gate contacts **110** in the openings. The source/drain contacts **112** are electrically coupled to the epitaxial source/drain regions **92** through the silicide regions **108** and the gate contacts **110** are electrically coupled to the gate electrodes **102**. The source/drain contacts **112** and the gate contacts **110** may be formed in different processes, or may be formed in the same process. Although shown as being formed in the same cross-sections, it should be appreciated that each of the source/drain contacts **112** and the gate contacts **110** may be formed in different cross-

sections, which may avoid shorting of the contacts.

[0072] Forming the first insulation layer **56** and the second insulation layer **58** by FCVD using the process parameters discussed above ensures that the first insulation layer **56** and the second insulation layer **58** fill gaps between the fins **55** within the fin groups **G1** and **G2** without seams or voids and that the first insulation layer **56** and the second insulation layer **58** have a minimal thickness between and adjacent to the fin groups **G1** and **G2**. This prevents undesired materials from being deposited within the first insulation layer **56** and the second insulation layer **58**, which improves isolation between the fins **55** within the fin groups **G1** and **G2**. Moreover, the insulating fins **67** may be formed with greater volumes, which improves isolation between the fin groups **G1** and **G2**. This helps to reduce device defects and improve device performance.

[0073] FIGS. **22** through **23B** illustrate an embodiment in which the deposition order for the first insulation layer **56** and the second insulation layer **58** is reversed. In FIG. **22**, the second insulation layer **58** is deposited on the fins **55**, the first mask layer **52**, the second mask layer **54**, and the substrate **50** and the first insulation layer **56** is deposited on the second insulation layer **58**. The second insulation layer **58** and the first insulation layer **56** may be oxides, nitrides, oxynitrides, combinations thereof, or the like. In some embodiments, either of the second insulation layer **58** and the first insulation layer **56** include silicon dioxide (SiO_2), silicon nitride (Si_3N_4), silicon oxynitride (SiON), or the like. The second insulation layer **58** and the first insulation layer **56** may be deposited by FCVD processes (e.g., contouring FCVD processes) or the like. FCVD processes are a CVD-based material deposition in a remote plasma system followed by a post-deposition cure to convert the deposited material to another material, such as an oxide. The second insulation layer **58** and the first insulation layer **56** may be deposited as silicon nitride or silicon oxynitride and converted to silicon oxide by the post-deposition cure.

[0074] Process parameters used to deposit the second insulation layer **58** and the first insulation layer **56** may be different from one another. For example, the second insulation layer **58** may be deposited by an FCVD process that deposits material with a relatively lower viscosity and as a more conformal layer. This helps to deposit the second insulation layer **58** on the fins **55**, the first mask layer **52**, the second mask layer **54**, and the substrate **50** within the fin groups **G1** and **G2**, while keeping a combined thickness of the second insulation layer **58** and the first insulation layer **56** on the substrate **50** between the fin groups **G1** and **G2** to a minimum. The first insulation layer **56** may be deposited by an FCVD process that deposits material with a relatively higher viscosity, a higher flowability, and better gap-filling. The first insulation layer **56** may be deposited in a bottom-up manner. This helps the first insulation layer **56** to fill the trenches between the fins **55** within the fin groups **G1** and **G2**, but also increases the thickness of the first insulation layer **56** on the substrate **50** between the fin groups **G1** and **G2**. By using FCVD to deposit both the second insulation layer **58** and the first insulation layer **56**, the second insulation layer **58** and the first insulation layer **56** are deposited without voids or seams. This prevents undesired materials from filling any voids or seams in the second insulation layer **58** and the first insulation layer **56**, which reduces device defects and improves device performance. Using different process parameters to deposit the second insulation layer **58** and the first insulation layer **56** further ensures a small thickness of the second insulation layer **58** and the first insulation layer **56** on the substrate **50** between the fin groups **G1** and **G2**, which allows for larger insulating fins to be formed between the fin groups **G1** and **G2**. This further improves device performance.

[0075] The second insulation layer **58** and the first insulation layer **56** may be deposited with process parameters similar to or the same as those discussed above with respect to FIG. **4**, except that the order of deposition is reversed. For example, the second insulation layer **58** is deposited on the fins **55**, the first mask layer **52**, the second mask layer **54**, and the substrate **50**. The silicon-containing precursor and the nitrogen-containing precursor mix and react to deposit the second insulation layer **58** on the fins **55**, the first mask layer **52**, the second mask layer **54**, and the substrate **50**. In some embodiments, the silicon-containing precursor is dispensed at a flow rate in a

range from about 800 sccm to about 1000 sccm and the nitrogen-containing precursor is dispensed at a flow rate in a range from about 20 sccm to about 30 sccm. A ratio of the flow rate of the nitrogen-containing precursor to the flow rate of the silicon-containing precursor may be in a range from about 0.02 to about 0.04. The FCVD process may be performed at a low pressure. For example, the deposition chamber may be maintained at a pressure ranging from about 0.4 Torr to about 0.9 Torr. In some embodiments, the deposition chamber is maintained at a temperature in a range from about 55° C. to about 85° C., the substrate **50** on which the second insulation layer **56** is deposited is maintained at a temperature in a range from about 55° C. to about 85° C., and the deposition rate of the second insulation layer **56** may be in a range from about 2 Å/s to about 10 Å/s. Performing the FCVD process with the specified process conditions (e.g., precursor flow rates, pressure, temperature, etc.) allows the flowable material to be deposited as a conformal layer. This helps to fill the trenches between the fins **55** within the fin groups **G1** and **G2**, while maintaining a minimal thickness of the second insulation layer **58** on the substrate **50** between the fin groups **G1** and **G2**. The second insulation layer **58** may be deposited with a thickness T.sub.5 on the substrate in a range from about 5 nm to about 8 nm, a thickness T.sub.9 on side surfaces of the fins **55** in a range from about 2 nm to about 4 nm, and a thickness T.sub.10 on top surfaces of the second mask layer **54** in a range from about 2 to about 4 nm.

[0076] The first insulation layer **56** is deposited on the second insulation layer **58**. The silicon-containing precursor and the nitrogen-containing precursor mix and react to deposit the first insulation layer **56** on the second insulation layer **58**. In some embodiments, the silicon-containing precursor is dispensed at a flow rate in a range from about 800 sccm to about 1000 sccm and the nitrogen-containing precursor is dispensed at a flow rate in a range from about 40 sccm to about 80 sccm. A ratio of the flow rate of the nitrogen-containing precursor to the flow rate of the silicon-containing precursor may be in a range from about 0.04 to about 0.10. The FCVD process may be performed at a low pressure. For example, the deposition chamber may be maintained at a pressure ranging from about 0.4 Torr to about 0.9 Torr. In some embodiments, the deposition chamber is maintained at a temperature in a range from about 55° C. to about 85° C., the substrate **50** on which the first insulation layer **56** is deposited is maintained at a temperature in a range from about 55° C. to about 85° C., and the deposition rate of the first insulation layer **56** may be in a range from about 2 Å/s to about 10 Å/s. Performing the FCVD process with the specified process conditions (e.g., precursor flow rates, pressure, temperature, etc.) allows the flowable material to be deposited with a high viscosity (previously described). This helps to fill the trenches between the fins **55** within the fin groups **G1** and **G2** in a bottom-up manner and with improved gap filling. The first insulation layer **56** may be deposited with a thickness T.sub.11 on the substrate in a range from about 5 nm to about 10 nm, a thickness T.sub.12 on side surfaces of the fins **55** in a range from about 2 nm to about 4 nm, and a thickness T.sub.13 on top surfaces of the second mask layer **54** in a range from about 2 nm to about 4 nm. A thickness T.sub.14 of the second insulation layer **58** and the first insulation layer **56** on the substrate **50** between the fin groups **G1** and **G2** may be in a range from about 10 nm to about 18 nm. As illustrated in FIG. 22, the second insulation layer **58** and the first insulation layer **56** fill the trenches between the fins **55** within the fin groups **G1** and **G2**.

[0077] The second insulation layer **58** and the first insulation layer **56** may be deposited as flowable materials, which are then cured to form solid dielectric materials, as described above with respect to FIG. 4. It is appreciated that depending on the material and the composition (elements and the percentage of elements), the second insulation layer **58** may be, or may not be, distinguishable from the first insulation layer **56**. For example, either of the first insulation layer **56** and the second insulation layer **58** may or may not include elements such as carbon, hydrogen, nitrogen, or the like in addition to silicon and oxygen. Furthermore, the density of the second insulation layer **58** may be lower than, equal to, or higher than that of the first insulation layer **56**. The distinction between the second insulation layer **58** and the first insulation layer **56** may be achieved by determining the elements and the corresponding atomic percentages of the elements in

these layers/materials, for example, by using X-ray Photoelectron Spectroscopy (XPS). [0078] FIGS. 23A and 23B illustrate structures similar to or the same as the structures illustrated in FIGS. 21A and 21B, except that the second insulation layer 58 and the first insulation layer 56 are deposited in the opposite order. Processes similar to or the same as those discussed with respect to FIGS. 5 through 21B may be performed on the structure of FIG. 22 to form the structures of FIGS. 23A and 23B.

[0079] Embodiments may achieve various advantages. For example, forming the first insulation layer 56 and the second insulation layer 58 by FCVD using the process parameters discussed above ensures that the first insulation layer 56 and the second insulation layer 58 fill gaps between the fins 55 within the fin groups G1 and G2 without seams or voids and that the first insulation layer 56 and the second insulation layer 58 have a minimal thickness between and adjacent to the fin groups G1 and G2. This prevents undesired materials from being deposited within the first insulation layer 56 and the second insulation layer 58, which improves isolation between the fins 55 within the fin groups G1 and G2. Moreover, the insulating fins 67 may be formed with greater volumes, which improves isolation between the fin groups G1 and G2. This helps to reduce device defects and improve device performance.

[0080] The disclosed FinFET embodiments could also be applied to nanostructure devices such as nanostructure (e.g., nanosheet, nanowire, nano-ribbon, multi-bridge-channel, gate-all-around, or the like) field effect transistors (NSFETs). In an NSFET embodiment, the fins are replaced by nanostructures formed by patterning a stack of alternating layers of channel layers and sacrificial layers. Dummy gate stacks and source/drain regions are formed in a manner similar to the above-described embodiments. After the dummy gate stacks are removed, the sacrificial layers are partially or fully removed in channel regions. The replacement gate structures are formed in a manner similar to the above-described embodiments. The replacement gate structures may partially or completely fill openings left by removing the sacrificial layers, and the replacement gate structures may partially or completely surround the channel layers in the channel regions of the NSFET devices. ILDs and contacts to the replacement gate structures and the source/drain regions may be formed in a manner similar to the above-described embodiments.

[0081] In accordance with an embodiment, a method includes etching a first trench in a substrate; depositing a first insulation layer in the first trench with a first flowable chemical vapor deposition process; depositing a second insulation layer on the first insulation layer with a second flowable chemical vapor deposition process, the second flowable chemical vapor deposition process having process parameters different from the first flowable chemical vapor deposition process, and a portion of the first trench remaining unfilled by the first insulation layer and the second insulation layer; and forming an insulating fin in the portion of the first trench unfilled by the first insulation layer and the second insulation layer. In an embodiment, the first insulation layer and the second insulation layer include silicon dioxide. In an embodiment, the first flowable chemical vapor deposition process and the second flowable chemical vapor deposition process include exposing the substrate to trisilylamine and ammonia. In an embodiment, the first flowable chemical vapor deposition process includes dispensing trisilylamine in a deposition chamber at a first flow rate in a range from 800 sccm to 1000 sccm and dispensing ammonia in the deposition chamber at a second flow rate in a range from 40 sccm to 80 sccm, and the second flowable chemical vapor deposition process includes dispensing trisilylamine in the deposition chamber at a third flow rate in a range from 800 sccm to 1000 sccm and dispensing ammonia in the deposition chamber at a fourth flow rate in a range from 20 sccm to 30 sccm. In an embodiment, the first flowable chemical vapor deposition process includes dispensing trisilylamine in a deposition chamber at a first flow rate in a range from 800 sccm to 1000 sccm and dispensing ammonia in the deposition chamber at a second flow rate in a range from 20 sccm to 30 sccm, and the second flowable chemical vapor deposition process includes dispensing trisilylamine in the deposition chamber at a third flow rate in a range from 800 sccm to 1000 sccm and dispensing ammonia in the deposition chamber at a fourth flow

rate in a range from 40 sccm to 80 sccm. In an embodiment, the first insulation layer is formed with a first thickness on a bottom surface of the first trench in a first direction perpendicular to a major surface of the substrate, the first insulation layer is formed with a second thickness on a side surface of the first trench in a second direction parallel to the major surface of the substrate, the second insulation layer is formed with a third thickness on the bottom surface of the first trench in the first direction, the second insulation layer is formed with a fourth thickness on the side surface of the first trench in the second direction, and a ratio of the second thickness to the first thickness is less than a ratio of the fourth thickness to the third thickness. In an embodiment, the first insulation layer is formed with a first thickness on a bottom surface of the first trench in a first direction perpendicular to a major surface of the substrate, the first insulation layer is formed with a second thickness on a side surface of the first trench in a second direction parallel to the major surface of the substrate, the second insulation layer is formed with a third thickness on the bottom surface of the first trench in the first direction, the second insulation layer is formed with a fourth thickness on the side surface of the first trench in the second direction, and a ratio of the second thickness to the first thickness is greater than a ratio of the fourth thickness to the third thickness. In an embodiment, the method further includes etching a second trench and a third trench in the substrate, the first insulation layer being deposited to fill the second trench, and the first insulation layer and the second insulation layer being deposited to fill the third trench.

[0082] In accordance with another embodiment, a method includes forming a plurality of fins on a substrate, a first trench and a second trench being formed adjacent the fins; depositing a first oxide layer on the substrate by a first flowable chemical vapor deposition (FCVD), the first oxide layer filling the first trench, the first oxide layer partially filling the second trench, and a first width of the first trench being less than a second width of the second trench; and depositing a second oxide layer on the first oxide layer by a second FCVD, the second oxide layer filling a remaining portion of the second trench. In an embodiment, the first oxide layer is deposited in contact with the fins and the substrate, and the second oxide layer is deposited in contact with the first oxide layer. In an embodiment, the method further includes depositing a third oxide layer over and in contact with the second oxide layer by atomic layer deposition (ALD). In an embodiment, precursors for depositing the first oxide layer and depositing the second oxide layer include trisilylamine and ammonia, and the first oxide layer is deposited with a different ammonia flow rate from the second oxide layer. In an embodiment, the first oxide layer is deposited with a first ammonia flow rate in a range from 40 sccm to 80 sccm, and the second oxide layer is deposited with a second ammonia flow rate in a range from 20 sccm to 30 sccm. In an embodiment, a first height to width ratio of the first trench is from 20 to 70, and wherein a second height to width ratio of the second trench is from 18 to 35.

[0083] In accordance with yet another embodiment, a method includes forming a plurality of trenches in a substrate, a plurality of fins being formed adjacent the trenches and extending from the substrate; depositing a first oxide layer in the trenches by a first flowable chemical vapor deposition (FCVD); and depositing a second oxide layer on the first oxide layer by a second FCVD, the first oxide layer being deposited with a greater conformality than the second oxide layer. In an embodiment, the first oxide layer is deposited in contact with the fins and the substrate, and the second oxide layer is deposited in contact with the first oxide layer. In an embodiment, precursors for depositing the first oxide layer and depositing the second oxide layer include trisilylamine and ammonia, and the first oxide layer is deposited with a different ammonia flow rate from the second oxide layer. In an embodiment, the first oxide layer is deposited with a first ammonia flow rate in a range from 20 sccm to 30 sccm, and the second oxide layer is deposited with a second ammonia flow rate in a range from 40 sccm to 80 sccm. In an embodiment, a first height to width ratio of a first trench of the trenches is from 18 to 35, wherein a second height to width ratio of a second trench of the trenches is from 20 to 70, the first oxide layer partially fills the first trench and the second trench, and the second oxide layer fills a first remainder of the first trench and a second remainder of the second trench. In an embodiment, the method further includes

forming a first isolation fin over the second oxide layer, a combined thickness of the first oxide layer and the second oxide layer under the first isolation fin in a direction perpendicular to a major surface of the substrate being less than 18 nm.

[0084] The foregoing outlines features of several embodiments so that those skilled in the art may better understand the aspects of the present disclosure. Those skilled in the art should appreciate that they may readily use the present disclosure as a basis for designing or modifying other processes and structures for carrying out the same purposes and/or achieving the same advantages of the embodiments introduced herein. Those skilled in the art should also realize that such equivalent constructions do not depart from the spirit and scope of the present disclosure, and that they may make various changes, substitutions, and alterations herein without departing from the spirit and scope of the present disclosure.

Claims

1. A method comprising: forming a plurality of fin groups on a substrate, wherein each fin group comprises multiple semiconductor fins arranged with a first spacing between adjacent fins within each fin group, and wherein adjacent fin groups are separated by a second spacing greater than the first spacing; etching a plurality of trenches in the substrate, wherein first trenches are formed between adjacent fins within each fin group and second trenches are formed between adjacent fin groups; depositing a first insulation layer on the substrate by a first flowable chemical vapor deposition process, wherein the first insulation layer partially fills the first trenches and the second trenches; depositing a second insulation layer on the first insulation layer by a second flowable chemical vapor deposition process having different process parameters than the first flowable chemical vapor deposition process, wherein the first insulation layer and the second insulation layer completely fill the first trenches and partially fill the second trenches; forming insulating fins in the second trenches in portions unfilled by the first insulation layer and the second insulation layer; recessing the first insulation layer and the second insulation layer to form shallow trench isolation regions, wherein upper portions of the semiconductor fins and the insulating fins protrude from the shallow trench isolation regions; forming gate structures over channel regions of the semiconductor fins, wherein each gate structure extends across multiple semiconductor fins within a fin group and is separated from an adjacent gate structure by at least one insulating fin; and forming epitaxial source/drain regions in the semiconductor fins adjacent to the gate structures, wherein epitaxial source/drain regions of adjacent semiconductor fins within each fin group merge with one another.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein the first flowable chemical vapor deposition process deposits the first insulation layer with a first viscosity.
3. The method of claim 2, wherein the second flowable chemical vapor deposition process deposits the second insulation layer with a second viscosity lower than the first viscosity.
4. The method of claim 1, further comprising curing the first insulation layer and the second insulation layer to form solid dielectric materials.
5. The method of claim 1, wherein forming the insulating fins comprises depositing a third insulation layer and a fourth insulation layer.
6. The method of claim 5, wherein the fourth insulation layer comprises a material different from the first insulation layer and the second insulation layer.
7. The method of claim 1, further comprising forming lightly doped source/drain regions in the semiconductor fins before forming the epitaxial source/drain regions.
8. A semiconductor device comprising: a substrate with multiple fin groups, each group comprising semiconductor fins arranged with a first spacing between adjacent fins within each group; wherein adjacent fin groups are separated by a second spacing greater than the first spacing; shallow trench isolation regions formed between the semiconductor fins within each group; insulating fins formed in trenches between adjacent fin groups, wherein the insulating fins comprise multiple layers

including a first insulation material and a second insulation material; gate structures extending across multiple semiconductor fins within each fin group, wherein each gate structure is separated from an adjacent gate structure by at least one insulating fin; and epitaxial source/drain regions formed in the semiconductor fins, wherein epitaxial source/drain regions of adjacent semiconductor fins within each group merge with one another, and wherein the insulating fins provide isolation between epitaxial source/drain regions of adjacent fin groups.

9. The semiconductor device of claim 8, wherein the first insulation material comprises a flowable dielectric material.

10. The semiconductor device of claim 9, wherein the second insulation material comprises a high-k dielectric material.

11. The semiconductor device of claim 8, wherein the insulating fins further comprise a third insulation material between the first insulation material and the semiconductor fins.

12. The semiconductor device of claim 8, wherein upper portions of the semiconductor fins and the insulating fins protrude from the shallow trench isolation regions.

13. The semiconductor device of claim 8, further comprising: gate dielectric layers on the semiconductor fins; and contacts to the gate structures and the epitaxial source/drain regions, wherein the insulating fins provide isolation between contacts of adjacent fin groups.

14. A method comprising: forming fin groups on a substrate, wherein fins within each fin group have a first spacing between adjacent fins, and adjacent fin groups are separated by a second spacing greater than the first spacing; depositing a first flowable insulation layer on the substrate by a first flowable chemical vapor deposition process; depositing a second flowable insulation layer on the first flowable insulation layer by a second flowable chemical vapor deposition process, wherein the second flowable chemical vapor deposition process has different parameters than the first flowable chemical vapor deposition process; etching back the first flowable insulation layer and the second flowable insulation layer to form shallow trench isolation regions between fins within each fin group and insulating fins between adjacent fin groups; forming dummy gate structures across the fin groups; creating epitaxial source/drain regions in the fins; and replacing the dummy gate structures with metal gates that span multiple fins within each fin group and are separated by the insulating fins.

15. The method of claim 14, wherein the first flowable chemical vapor deposition process deposits the first flowable insulation layer with a first viscosity.

16. The method of claim 15, wherein the second flowable chemical vapor deposition process deposits the second flowable insulation layer with a second viscosity lower than the first viscosity.

17. The method of claim 14, further comprising forming a third insulation layer and a fourth insulation layer to complete the insulating fins.

18. The method of claim 17, wherein the fourth insulation layer comprises a material different from the first flowable insulation layer and the second flowable insulation layer.

19. The method of claim 14, wherein creating the epitaxial source/drain regions comprises merging epitaxial regions of adjacent fins within each fin group.

20. The method of claim 14, further comprising forming contacts to the metal gates and the epitaxial source/drain regions, wherein the insulating fins provide isolation between contacts of adjacent fin groups.
