

US Patent & Trademark Office

Patent Public Search | Text View

United States Patent Application Publication	20250266702
Kind Code	A1
Publication Date	August 21, 2025
Inventor(s)	Giuliano; David

BATTERY MANAGEMENT INFRASTRUCTURE

Abstract

Briefly, example architectures and/or circuit topologies are disclosed herein that may be implemented, in whole or in part, to facilitate and/or support one or more operations and/or techniques for battery management infrastructure, such as for use with one or more power converters, which may include, for example, one or more switched-capacitor power converters.

Inventors:	Giuliano; David (Bedford, NH)
Applicant:	Murata Manufacturing Co., Ltd. (Kyoto, JP)
Family ID:	1000008589743
Appl. No.:	19/204376
Filed:	May 09, 2025

Related U.S. Application Data

parent US continuation 18480752 20231004 PENDING child US 19204376
parent US continuation 18551958 20230922 parent-grant-document US 12308684 US continuation
PCT/US2022/021498 20220323 child US 18480752
us-provisional-application US 63165519 20210324

Publication Classification

Int. Cl.: **H02J7/00** (20060101); **H02J7/02** (20160101); **H02J7/06** (20060101); **H02J50/00** (20160101); **H02J50/10** (20160101); **H02M1/32** (20070101); **H02M3/07** (20060101)

U.S. Cl.:

CPC **H02J7/007** (20130101); **H02J7/02** (20130101); **H02J50/10** (20160201); **H02M1/32** (20130101); **H02M3/07** (20130101); **H02J7/06** (20130101); **H02J50/00** (20160201);

Background/Summary

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION [0001] This application is a continuation of U.S. application Ser. No. 18/551,958 filed on Sep. 22, 2023, which is a national phase under 35 USC 371 of international application no. PCT/US2022/021498 filed Mar. 23, 2022 which claims the benefit of the priority date of U.S. Provisional Application No. 63/165,519, filed Mar. 24, 2021. The contents of the above listed applications are incorporated herein by reference in their entirety.

TECHNICAL FIELD

[0002] The present disclosure relates generally to power conversion and, more particularly, to battery management infrastructure for use with power converters, which may include, for example, switched-capacitor power converters.

BACKGROUND

[0003] At times, certain electronic devices, such as portable electronic devices (e.g., smartphones, laptops, tablet computers, etc.), for example, may be used while plugged into an alternating current (AC) source. During this time, a battery manager or like device or system may provide power to charge an associated battery, if appropriate, and to operate a portable electronic device itself. In some instances, such as if an AC source is disconnected, a battery manager or like device or system may switch over so that a battery provides power to the electronic device. At times, an increasing demand in a diversity of loads in battery-operated portable electronic devices may reduce battery life. To address these or like challenges, in some instances, higher battery cell counts may be incorporated into such devices. However, this may increase battery charging time once a battery is depleted. Accordingly, how to implement more effective and/or more efficient battery management, for example, to extend battery life, reduce battery charging time, etc., continues to be an area of development.

Description

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0004] Subject matter is described with particularity throughout the specification. However, both as to organization and/or method of operation, together with objects, features, and/or advantages thereof, it may best be understood by reference to the following detailed description if read with the accompanying drawings.

[0005] FIG. 1 is a schematic diagram illustrating an implementation of example battery management infrastructure.

[0006] FIGS. 2 and 3 are schematic diagrams illustrating implementations of example charging circuits with one or more respective charge pumps.

[0007] FIGS. 4 and 5 illustrate battery charging current and battery charging voltage graphs, respectively.

[0008] FIG. 6 illustrates an implementation of a CC-CV charging transistor or charger.

[0009] FIG. 7A illustrates an implementation of a merged CP and BKBST converter topology.

[0010] FIG. 7B shows a first embodiment of an adjustable version of the inductor of FIG. 7A.

[0011] FIG. 7C shows a second embodiment of an adjustable version of the inductor of FIG. 7A.

[0012] FIG. 8 illustrates an implementation of an example merged buck converter topology.

[0013] FIG. 9 illustrates an implementation of an example 2-phase merged buck converter topology.

[0014] FIG. **10** is a schematic diagram illustrating an implementation of an example system bus converter.

[0015] FIGS. **11A-C** through **14** illustrate example implementations of various circuit topologies.

[0016] FIG. **15** is a schematic diagram illustrating an implementation of an example load switch.

[0017] FIG. **16** is a diagram of a system embodiment may comprise a local network (e.g., second device and computer-readable medium) and/or another type of network, such as a computing and/or communications network.

[0018] Reference is made in the following detailed description to accompanying drawings, which form a part hereof, wherein like numerals may designate like parts throughout that are corresponding and/or analogous.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0019] Some example architectures and/or circuit topologies are disclosed herein that may be used, in whole or in part, to facilitate and/or support one or more operations and/or techniques for battery management infrastructure, such as for use with one or more power converters, which may include, for example, one or more switched-capacitor power converters. As discussed in greater detail below, in one or more particular embodiments, battery management infrastructure may incorporate, for example, one or more charge pumps (CP) and/or hybrid converters, such as to facilitate and/or support power delivery in and/or for battery-operated portable electronic devices. To promote clarity in explaining one or more concepts, reference is sometimes made to one or more specific circuits and/or topologies, such as, for example, specific switched-capacitor circuits and/or specific switched-capacitor circuit topologies. It should be understood, however, that such references are merely provided as examples and should not be construed as limiting.

[0020] It should be noted that, throughout the present disclosure, “charge pumps” should be interpreted broadly and refers to a variety of charge pumps, such as a resonant charge pump (e.g., a charge pump with an inductive element, an LC filter, etc.), a non-resonant charge pump, adiabatic, partially adiabatic, diabatic, fully resonant, partially resonant, and so forth, just to name a few examples. Typically, for higher power applications, a resonant charge pump may be employed, for example, and for lower power applications, a non-resonant charge pump may be employed.

[0021] FIG. **1** a schematic diagram illustrating an implementation of an example battery management infrastructure **100**. In an implementation, battery management infrastructure **100** may include, for example, a portable electronic device, illustrated as a mobile device **102** (e.g., a smartphone, laptop, tablet computer, etc.). Mobile device **102** may, for example, be capable of receiving power (such as to facilitate and/or support charging a battery or a battery stack **104**) via a wired power delivery path (e.g., USB-C, etc.), referenced generally via an arrow at **106**. Note that the terms “battery” and “battery stack” may be used interchangeably herein. Mobile device **102** also may, for example, be capable of receiving power (such as to facilitate and/or support charging battery **104**) via a wireless power delivery path (e.g., Qi, etc.), referenced generally via an arrow at **108**. It should be noted that a particular power delivery path may depend, at least in part, on mobile device capabilities, among other aspects. For example, a smartphone may be capable of receiving power via a wired as well as a wireless power delivery path, and a laptop computer may be capable of receiving power via a wired power delivery path. It should also be noted that, in some instances, mobile device **102** may, for example, be capable of providing power, such as if a load is coupled to a suitable USB cable, such as USB cable **122** and/or **124** discussed below.

[0022] As also illustrated, to facilitate and/or support power delivery, one or more adapters, such as AC/DC adapters **110** and **112** may be employed. In at least one implementation, AC/DC adapters **110** and/or **112** may comprise, for example, Type-C USB travel adapters that may attach to a wall outlet that supplies an AC voltage. In some instances, with respect to wireless power delivery path **108**, AC/DC adapter **110** may provide a DC voltage to an inverter **114** (e.g., to generate a higher frequency AC), which may be part of a wireless transmitter **116**, such as via a USB cable **122**. As also illustrated, wireless transmitter **116** and/or inverter **114** may include a first coil that may be

brought in proximity with a second coil within mobile device **102** so as to form an air-core transformer, referenced generally at **118**. Air-core transformer **118** may, for example, permit energy provided by the first coil to be made available at the second coil so that such energy can be used to charge an applicable battery (e.g., battery **104**, etc.), as will be discussed in greater detail below. A voltage provided via air-core transformer **118** may be rectified using one or more applicable techniques, such as via a suitable circuit that, in a particular implementation, may comprise, for example, a bridge rectifier and a low drop-out regulator (LDO) **120**, and such rectified voltage may be subsequently provided within mobile device **102** (e.g., as a 20-30 VDC, etc.).

[0023] In an implementation, with respect to wired power delivery path **106**, AC/DC adapter **112** may, for example, provide power to mobile device **102**, such as directly via a suitable USB cable **124**. Depending on an implementation, power provided to mobile device **102** via wired power delivery path **106** may be in a range between 5 and 50 volts, which in turn may depend, at least in part, on a particular mobile device **102**, its utilization, or the like. Although not shown, battery management infrastructure **100** and/or mobile device **102** may further include one or more suitable controllers, such as to facilitate and/or support one or more battery management-related operations and/or techniques. For example, at times, such one or more controllers may provide one or more control signals to a suitable control circuit CTRL **126**. In an implementation, CTRL **126** may be capable of communicating with AC/DC adapter **112** and/or **110**, which may involve transmitting one or more suitable commands (e.g., digital information, etc.) via USB cable **124** and/or an air gap of air-core transformer **118** (as illustrated via a link **127** and USB cable **122**). Such one or more commands may, for example, instruct AC/DC adapter **112** and/or **110** to provide a regulated input voltage and/or current in order to charge battery **104**, or to adjust the AC voltage output of the inverter **114**. This may, for example, be useful in implementations in which a mobile device **102** may not have a voltage regulating capability (e.g., may comprise charge pumps, may have no requisite switches, etc.), but may rely on an applicable AC/DC adapter to supply a battery with a desired voltage, such as via a suitable control circuitry (e.g., CTRL **126**, etc.).

[0024] In an implementation, a regulated power may be alternately provided to battery **104** via wired power delivery path **106**, such as by closing a switch S2 and opening a switch S1, or via wireless power delivery path **108**, such as by closing switch S1 and opening switch S2. CTRL **126** and/or other suitable circuitry in mobile device **102** may determine which power delivery path to use in order to supply a regulated power to battery **104**, such as by closing and/or opening switches S1 and S2. In some instances, a bypass switch S3 may be used, at least in part, to facilitate and/or support fixed input voltages (e.g., 5V, etc.) from legacy AC/DC converters. As illustrated, in some instances, bypass switch S3 may allow regulated power to skip a charge pump (CP) stage **128** (e.g., 2:1, etc.) by closing switch S3 and opening switch S2. As also seen, an output of charge pump stage **128** may comprise an input to a charging circuit **130** having one or more charge pumps (e.g., CP/3L), which charges battery **104** and/or provides a system voltage V.sub.SYS. As will also be seen, one or more suitable power architectures for a charging circuit, referenced generally at **132**, that incorporate one or more charge pumps may be implemented within battery management infrastructure **100**, in whole or in part, such as to facilitate and/or support charging battery **104**.

[0025] FIGS. 2 and 3 are schematic diagrams illustrating implementations of example charging circuits with one or more respective charge pumps (CP/CHRG circuits) **200**, **300**. In some instances, CP/CHRG circuits **200**, **300** may, for example, be implemented, in whole or in part, instead of or in addition to charging circuit **132** of FIG. 1. CP/CHRG circuits **200**, **300** may facilitate and/or support charging respective batteries **202**, **302**, for example, and may provide a system voltage V.sub.SYS so as to power one or more appropriate loads.

[0026] As illustrated, depending on an implementation, a conversion ratio of an initial CP **204**, **304** may be fixed (e.g., 2×, 3×, 4×, etc.) or may be reconfigurable. In some implementations, respective CP/CHRG circuits **200**, **300** may include, for example, an additional CP (e.g., fixed conversion ratio or reconfigurable) **214**, **314**, a buck-boost (BKBST) converter **206**, **306**, and a charging

transistor **208, 308**, such as a constant current-constant voltage (CC-CV) charging transistor controlled by a control signal $V_{sub.C}$. CC-CV charging transistors **208** and **308** may, for example, be coupled in series with respective batteries (e.g., **202** and **302**) so as to regulate and/or control battery charging. Particular examples of CC-CV charging transistors or simply CC-CV chargers will be discussed in greater detail below. In certain implementations, CPs **214** and/or **314** and/or BKBST converters **206** and/or **306** may incorporate gallium nitride (GaN) or any other suitable compound semiconductor switches, as also discussed below.

[0027] Respective CP/CHRG circuits **200, 300** may further include, for example, a respective bypass switch **210, 310**. Such a bypass switch **210, 310** may, for example, be used to bypass an associated CP (e.g., CP **204, 304**, etc.), if suitable or desired. By way of example but not limitation, if a voltage provided via a USB source is non-programmable (e.g., fixed, etc.) and/or relatively low (e.g., about 5 volts, etc.), then a CP (e.g., initial CPs **204, 304**, etc.) may be bypassed, such as via closing an applicable bypass switch (e.g., switches **210, 310**, etc.) since the CP may not be able to provide more precise or otherwise suitable voltage to an applicable battery (e.g., **202, 302**, etc.). Typically, although not necessarily, CPs may be useful with relatively higher voltages, programmable voltage supply, etc.

[0028] Since a BKBST converter **206, 306** may be capable of receiving relatively wide input ranges and providing relatively wide output ranges for a battery, the BKBST converter **206, 306** may be used, at least in part, to support one or more legacy-type applications. For example, as indicate above, if a voltage supplied via a USB source is non-programmable (e.g., fixed, etc.) and/or relatively low (e.g., may need boosting), then an initial CP (e.g., **204, 304**, etc.) may be bypassed and routed to an applicable BKBST converter (e.g., **206, 306**, etc.). With respect to a BKBST converter, a buck aspect or feature may be used to decrease a USB-provided voltage, for example, and a boost aspect or feature may be used to increase a USB-provided voltage, such as using one or more appropriate techniques to facilitate and/or support appropriate battery charging.

[0029] According to certain implementations, battery **202, 302** may be charged via a number of phases, such as preconditioning, constant current, and constant voltage. In some instances, these phases may, for example, be further sub-divided into a number of sub-phases or zones. As a way of illustration, these sub-phases or zones may include, for example, a trickle charge phase, a pre-charge phase, a constant current (CC) phase, and a constant voltage (CV) or taper phase. In these or like charging phases, a charger may monitor one or more applicable temperatures, for example, and may reduce a charge current, such as if a particular monitored temperature meets or exceeds its threshold. By way of example but not limitation, FIGS. 4 and 5 illustrate battery charging current and battery charging voltage graphs, respectively. Referring also to an accompany table **402, 502**, in a trickle charge phase, a battery is charged with a trickle current $I_{sub.TC}$, and in a pre-charge phase, the battery is charged with a pre-charge current $I_{sub.PC}$. Once a battery voltage crosses a $V_{sub.CC1}$ threshold, a battery is charged with a first fast charging constant current $I_{sub.CC1}$, for example, and switches to a second fast charging constant current $I_{sub.CC2}$ if a battery voltage crosses a $V_{sub.CC2}$ threshold. As a battery voltage reaches $V_{sub.REG}$, the battery is held at a constant voltage of $V_{sub.REG}$ and the charge current tapers off as the battery approaches full charge. The point at which there is a switch-over from a charge pump (CP) operation to a switcher (SW) operation in the taper or constant voltage phase may be decided by various trigger points, such as, for example, time, voltage, current, or the like. If a battery current reaches $I_{sub.TERM}$, charging is complete.

[0030] Referring back to FIGS. 2 and 3, a system bus $V_{sub.SYS}$ may be separated from a battery **202, 302** by a charging transistor, such as a CC-CV charging transistor **208, 308**, that may control charging of the battery **202, 302**, in whole or in part. Even if a battery **202, 302** is depleted, $V_{sub.SYS}$ may be regulated above a minimum or otherwise suitable system voltage level, for example, otherwise one or more downstream loads may not be able to operate sufficiently. In some instances, there may be a requirement for a particular system to be able to operate without a battery

present.

[0031] In some instances, such as if a battery **202, 302** is below a certain system voltage level (e.g., below a minimum voltage level), for example, a corresponding CC-CV charging transistor **208, 308** may operate in linear or LDO mode and, thus, may absorb the voltage difference between $V_{sub.SYS}$ and the battery voltage $V_{sub.BAT}$. In other instances, such as if a battery voltage $V_{sub.BAT}$ rises above a certain system voltage level (e.g., above a minimum voltage level, etc.) during charging, for example, a corresponding CC-CV charging transistor **208, 308** may gradually turn ON until it is fully ON with a minimum $V_{sub.DS}$ of the CC-CV charging transistor. In some instances, a CC-CV charging transistor **208, 308** may also be OFF in one or more “sleep” states to reduce a current draw on battery. Also, a CC-CV charging transistor **208, 308** may be capable of at least partially controlling a charging current in one or more preconditioning stages (e.g., $I_{sub.TC}$ & $I_{sub.PC}$).

[0032] In an implementation, to further reduce this voltage drop, an optional low ON resistance (low $R_{sub.ON}$) switch may be placed in parallel with a CC-CV charging transistor (e.g., since the CC-CV charging transistor may act as a parasitic element). Thus, in some implementations, another switch (e.g., a lower resistance switch, etc.) may be placed in parallel with a CC-CV charging transistor and may be turned ON to mitigate unwanted parasitic effects. A variety of materials may be incorporated in a CC-CV charging transistor or like switches, such as, for example, GaN, silicon carbide (SiC), or any other suitable compounds.

[0033] Thus, in an implementation, it may be useful to couple a charging transistor, such as a CC-CV charging transistor **208, 308**, between $V_{sub.SYS}$ and a battery (e.g., **202, 302**, etc.) to allow for a voltage drop across $V_{sub.SYS}$ and the battery when the battery is fully discharged. In an embodiment of FIG. 2, the CP **214** of a charging circuit **216** may be coupled to $V_{sub.SYS}$, such as to provide power from CP **214** directly to $V_{sub.SYS}$. This may, for example, be useful if $V_{sub.SYS}$ is coupled to one or more systems that draw or require a significant amount of power (e.g., more than battery **202** can supply). In an embodiment of FIG. 3, the CP **314** of a charging circuit **316** may be directly coupled to battery **302**, for example, such as if battery **302** draws a significant amount of power (e.g., more power than $V_{sub.SYS}$). As a way of illustration, if a battery has a very high charging capability, like in a cell phone, then it may be useful to implement an embodiment of FIG. 3. In turn, if $V_{sub.SYS}$ is large, such as if $V_{sub.SYS}$ powers a larger microprocessor (e.g., in a laptop) and battery charging speed is of a lesser importance, then it may be useful to implement an embodiment of FIG. 2.

[0034] By way of example but not limitation, a particular implementation of a CC-CV charging transistor or charger is illustrated in FIG. 6. As seen here, a controller **600** for a battery **602** (which may include multiple cells) may, for example, obtain one or more measurements (e.g., temperature (TEMP), battery current $I_{sub.BAT}$, $V_{sub.REG}$, $V_{sub.SYS}$, one or more current points, voltage points, etc.), such as to facilitate and/or support one or more battery charging operations and/or techniques. For example, based, at least in part, on processing the obtained measurements (e.g., matching current, voltage, etc.), the controller **600** may apply an appropriate control voltage $V_{sub.C}$ to a CC-CV charging transistor or charger **608**, such as to manage one or more applicable and/or appropriate phases, such as those discussed above. FIG. 6 also shows an example of a low $R_{sub.ON}$ bypass switch **610** placed in parallel with the CC-CV charging transistor or charger **608**, as described above.

[0035] As illustrated in FIG. 7A, in an implementation, part of the CP/CHRG circuit **200** from FIG. 2 comprising CP **214** and BKBST converter **206** may be merged into a circuit **700**. For example, a boost mode may be achieved by closing switches **S61, S62** and opening switches **S63, S64**. A buck mode may be achieved, for example, by closing switches **S71** and opening switch **S72**. Capacitor **C71** provides output smoothing and charge storage.

[0036] In some instances, the $V_{sub.SYS}$ output voltage may be regulated by modulating the voltage at the input of an inductor **702**, shown in FIG. 7A as an adjustable inductance $L_{sub.V}$. This

may require a higher inductance value and/or higher switching frequency. At times, such as if voltage regulation is not required or otherwise useful, then a voltage at the input of the inductor **702** may not be modulated and this may require a lower inductance and/or lower switching frequency. [0037] In some instances, an adjustable inductance $L_{sub.V}$ may be achieved by opening and closing a switch, which adds or subtracts one or more additional inductors. For example, FIG. 7B shows a first embodiment of an adjustable version of the inductor **702** of FIG. 7A. Opening switch **S11** causes the inductance to be the series sum of inductors **L11** and **L12**, while closing switch **S11** causes the inductance to be just **L11**. As another example, FIG. 7C shows a second embodiment of an adjustable version of the inductor **702** of FIG. 7A. Opening switch **S21** causes the inductance to be just **L22**, while closing switch **S21** causes the inductance to be **L21** in parallel with **L22**.

[0038] In some instances, an adjustable inductor $L_{sub.V}$ may be achieved, for example, via changing the inductance of the inductor by forcing current into the inductor. For example, the adjustable inductor $L_{sub.V}$ may comprise three terminals, two being the standard terminals. The third terminal may be where a bias current is forced into the inductor, which may saturate parts of the inductor core which then may lower its inductance. As such, in some instances, no switches may be needed or otherwise useful, such as to regulate an output voltage.

[0039] According to an implementation, in a buck mode, there may be two modes of operation—a regulating buck mode or a non-regulating buck mode. A non-regulating mode may involve operating a charge pump (CP) and a regulating mode may involve operating a buck converter. For example, in a non-regulating mode, such as in a $2\times$ charge pump, **S61** and **S63** may be closed (turned ON) with **S62** and **S64** open, and that may charge a capacitor **C61** of the CP, and the output cycle may be when **S64** and **S62** are closed (turned ON) with **S61** and **S63** open, and so forth. Alternating these states may produce a $2\times$ voltage divider. However, to regulate, a third state may be added. For example, a ground state may be added to the input of inductor **702** by turning ON **S63** and **S64**, or a $V_{sub.IN}$ state may be added in which **S61** and **S62** may be turned ON to couple $V_{sub.IN}$ to the inductor **702**. Thus, an output voltage $V_{sub.SYS}$ may be regulated by modulating between $V_{sub.IN}/2$ and ground or $V_{sub.IN}/2$ and $V_{sub.IN}$ at the input of the inductor **702**, depending on the duty cycle.

[0040] By way of example but not limitation, an example operation of a merged CP and BKBST converter is illustrated in TABLE 1 below. It should be noted that, in some instances, dead time states may be added between States A-E.

TABLE-US-00001 TABLE 1 State S61 S62 S63 S64 S71 S72 A ON ON OFF OFF ON OFF B ON ON OFF OFF ON C ON OFF ON OFF ON OFF D OFF ON OFF ON ON OFF E OFF OFF ON ON ON OFF

[0041] TABLE 2 below shows different modes achievable by cycling among the States shown in TABLE 1.

TABLE-US-00002 TABLE 2 Mode State Sequence Boost A, B, A, B, . . . CP C, D, C, D, . . . Buck1 ($V_{sub.SYS} < V_{sub.IN}/2$) C, E, D, E, . . . Buck2 ($V_{sub.SYS} > V_{sub.IN}/2$) C, A, D, A, . . .

[0042] It should also be noted that, although not shown in FIG. 7A, a suitable controller may, for example, be used, at least in part, to facilitate and/or support operation of a merged CP and BKBST converter. For example, a controller may comprise level shifter circuitry, gate driver circuitry, control circuitry (e.g., to turn applicable switches ON and OFF, etc.), or the like.

[0043] FIG. 8 illustrates an implementation of an example merged buck converter topology **800** in which a CP and a buck-boost converter are merged into a buck-only design by removing switches **S71** and **S72** from the merged topology of FIG. 7. This implementation may have improved efficiency of a buck-boost due, at least in part, to removing one series switch (**S71**).

[0044] FIG. 9 illustrates an implementation of an example 2-phase merged buck converter topology **900** in which two instances (indicated by non-primed and primed reference labels) of a CP and buck converter (see, e.g., FIG. 8) are merged into a 2-phase buck-only design. A 2-phase design may be useful if there is a significant increase or jump in the input voltage. In some instances, a 2-

phase design may also reduce the noise of the input voltage. A 2-phase design may operate in a similar manner, such as discussed above (e.g., operate as a CP, buck, multilevel) and may also include a charging transistor **608**, such as a CC-CV charging transistor controlled by a V.sub.C control signal. The V.sub.C control signal may be provided via an applicable control circuitry, as also discussed above, that may communicate with a suitable controller (see, e.g., FIG. **6**) to facilitate and/or support proper charging a battery **602** (e.g., by sensing the current into the battery, measuring state of charge, etc.).

[0045] FIG. **10** is a schematic diagram illustrating an implementation of an example system bus converter **1000**. Here, a suitable charging circuit with a CP may generate V.sub.SYS, such as discussed and illustrated with reference to one or more above embodiments. In some instances, V.sub.SYS may be used, at least in part, as an input to various power converters in order to provide different power converter outputs. Thus, as illustrated, examples of power converter combinations may include those shown in TABLE 3:

TABLE-US-00003 TABLE 3 Power Converter Combination Output CP + LC Filter + multi-output bucks V01-V03 CP + Buck (BK) V04 Module 1 (CP + multi-phase buck) alone V05 Module 2 (CP + multi-phase buck) in V05 parallel with Module 1 Boost (BST) + CP V06 BK V07

[0046] In an implementation, Module 2 may be the same as or similar to Module 1, but may have switching frequencies phase shifted, which may enable higher output currents, for example.

[0047] FIGS. **11A-C** through **14** illustrate example implementations of various converter circuit topologies. FIG. **11A** shows a buck (BK) topology comprising, in this example, an inductance L, an input-side series switch S.sub.H1, and an input-side shunt switch S.sub.L1. FIG. **11B** shows a boost (BST) topology comprising, in this example, an inductance L, an output-side series switch S.sub.H2, and an output-side shunt switch S.sub.L2. FIG. **11C** shows a buck-boost (BK-BST) topology comprising, in this example, an inductance L, an input-side series switch S.sub.H3, an input-side shunt switch S.sub.U, an output-side series switch S.sub.H4, and an output-side shunt switch S.sub.L4. As should be clear from the other examples of this disclosure, a variable inductance L.sub.V may be used for the inductance L in FIGS. **11A-C**.

[0048] FIG. **12** shows an example of a charge pump (CP) topology that includes three capacitors C1, C2, C3 and associated sets of series switches and shunt switches marked by respective timing phases (**1** or **2**).

[0049] FIG. **13** shows a buck-only charger similar to the circuit of FIG. **8**, but including an additional capacitor C.sub.A, series switch S.sub.A, and shunt switch Ss. The operational states would be similar to the states set forth in TABLE 1 above.

[0050] FIG. **14** shows a buck-boost charger similar to the circuit of FIG. **7A**, but including an additional capacitor C.sub.B, series switch Sc, and shunt switch S.sub.D after the inductor **702**. This topology may facilitate and/or support operating the buck-boost charger as a CP or as a multi-level buck-boost. Again, the operational states would be similar to the states set forth in TABLE 1 above.

[0051] Depending on an implementation, the circuit topologies shown by way of example in FIGS. **11A-C** through **14** may, for example, be used, in whole or in part, to facilitate and/or support one or more battery management operations and/or techniques, such as discussed above.

[0052] FIG. **15** is a schematic diagram illustrating an example circuit topology **1500** that may, for example, be used, in whole or in part, to implement one or more load switches. Typically, a USB protocol may call for utilization of a load switch, which is the switch that breaks the voltage via opening a connector on a mobile device to disconnect the rest of the device (e.g., phone or laptop). In some instances, a load switch may be implemented as a bidirectional switch, for example, so that it may be capable of stopping power in the forward and/or reverse direction. A typical MOSFET may have a body diode in parallel with it. So, in order to prevent that body diode from conducting, it may be useful to put two switches connected in series with the body diode of the switches pointing at each other or away from each other (i.e., opposite directions). A control circuitry may

set voltages to turn ON one or more load switches associated with circuit topology **1500**, may sense the current I.sub.SEN1, I.sub.SEN2 going through a particular load switch (e.g., to detect overcurrent, etc.), or the like.

[0053] In an implementation, two load switches may be used. For example, as illustrated in FIG. **15**, a first load switch **1502** comprising a first pair of series-connected MOSFET switches Sw1, Sw2 is directly coupled between a USB Bus and a charge pump CP, and a second load switch **1504** comprising a second pair of series-connected MOSFET switches Sw3, Sw4 is connected between the USB Bus and around CP **1506** to function as a bypass path. For legacy applications (e.g., older, lower voltage, etc.), there may be input voltages of 5V, 9V, 15V, or 20V, in which case the CP **1506** may be bypassed. In higher voltage applications, such as where input voltages of about 28V, 36V, or 48V may be present, then the CP **1506** may be utilized to lower the output voltage to a charger system.

[0054] As also discussed, a controller may communicate with various elements to facilitate and/or support proper battery charging (e.g., may sense the input voltage, determine what load switch should we turn on, etc.). For example, FIG. **15** shows a control circuit CTRL coupled to the gates of first load switch **1502** switch pairs Sw1, Sw2 and second load switch **1504** switch pairs Sw3, Sw4 and configured to sense the current on the USB bus line, I.sub.SEN1 and I.sub.SEN2 so as to be able to select a current path (through or around CP **1506**) and open or close the switch pairs.

[0055] Further, because a particular load switch is placed before a charge pump, there may not be a need or use for a high-voltage disconnect switch in the charge pump, and the load switch may be used as a disconnect switch, if appropriate.

[0056] A load switch (e.g., load switches **1502**, **1504**) may also be capable of protecting one or more GaN devices that may be placed downstream. GaN devices may, for example, be built as normally-ON or normally-OFF devices, however, normally-OFF devices may typically be considered more superior than normally-ON devices. For example, utilization of normally-ON GaN devices may pose a safety issue. Thus, a load switch may be used to turn the power OFF, if needed, to protect GaN devices downstream. A load switch may be implemented with any suitable combination of one or more other protection circuits or elements (e.g., a disconnect switch, etc.), which may depend on a particular implementation. Also, a master controller **1508** may be capable of coordinating between a number of system or other elements so as to facilitate one or more suitable operations and/or processes, negotiate between a load switch, GaN devices, charge pumps, or the like. It should also be noted, in some implementations, a load switch may also be capable of controlling a slew rate of applicable voltage transitions (e.g., positive, negative), such as voltage transitions in a CP **1506**.

Example System Embodiment

[0057] In one example embodiment, as shown in FIG. **16**, a system embodiment may comprise a local network (e.g., second device **1604** and computer-readable medium **1640**) and/or another type of network, such as a computing and/or communications network. For purposes of illustration, therefore, FIG. **16** shows an embodiment **1600** of a system that may be employed to implement either type or both types of networks. Network **1608** may comprise one or more network connections, links, processes, services, applications, and/or resources to facilitate and/or support communications, such as an exchange of communication signals, for example, between, for example, a first computing device **1602** and a third computing device **1606**, which may, for example, comprise one or more client computing devices and/or one or more server computing devices. By way of example, but not limitation, network **1608** may comprise wireless and/or wired communication links, telephone and/or telecommunications systems, Wi-Fi networks, Wi-MAX networks, the Internet, a local area network (LAN), a wide area network (WAN), or any combinations thereof.

[0058] Referring now to FIG. **16**, in an embodiment, first and third devices **1602** and **1606** may be capable of rendering a graphical user interface (GUI) for a network device and/or a computing

device, for example, so that a user-operator may engage in system use. Second device **1604** may potentially serve a similar function in this illustration. Likewise, in FIG. **16**, first device **1602** may interface with second device **1604**, which may, for example, also comprise features of a client computing device and/or a server computing device, in an embodiment. Processor (e.g., processing device) **1620** and memory **1622**, which may comprise primary memory **1624** and secondary memory **1626**, may communicate by way of a communication bus **1615**, for example. The term “computing device,” in the context of the present patent application, refers to a system and/or a device, such as a computing apparatus, that includes a capability to process (e.g., perform computations) and/or store digital content, such as electronic files, electronic documents, measurements, text, images, video, audio, etc. in the form of signals and/or states. Thus, a computing device, in the context of the present patent application, may comprise hardware, software, firmware, or any combination thereof (other than software per se). Second device **1604**, as depicted in FIG. **16**, is merely one example, and claimed subject matter is not limited in scope to this particular example.

[0059] In FIG. **16**, first device **1602** may provide one or more sources of executable computer instructions in the form physical states and/or signals (e.g., stored in memory states), for example. First device **1602** may communicate with second device **1604** by way of a network connection, such as via network **1608**, for example. A connection, while physical, may not necessarily be tangible. Although second device **1604** of FIG. **16** shows various tangible, physical components, claimed subject matter is not limited to a computing devices having only these tangible components as other implementations and/or embodiments may include alternative arrangements that may comprise additional tangible components or fewer tangible components, for example, that function differently while achieving similar results. Rather, examples are provided merely as illustrations. It is not intended that claimed subject matter be limited in scope to illustrative examples.

[0060] In particular implementations, one or more of computing devices **1602**, **1604** and/or **1606** may include one or more power converter circuits, such as one or more example circuits described herein. In particular implementations, two-stage power converter circuits, such as one or more example circuits described herein, may be utilized to provide power to any of a wide range of circuit types, processors, memory devices, communication interfaces, etc. Further, in particular implementations, one or more of computing devices **1602**, **1604** and/or **1606** may include circuitry, processors, oscillators, etc., to control various functionalities and/or operations related to two-stage power converters.

[0061] Memory **1622** may comprise any non-transitory storage mechanism. Memory **1622** may comprise, for example, primary memory **1624** and secondary memory **1626**, additional memory circuits, mechanisms, or combinations thereof may be used. Memory **1622** may comprise, for example, random access memory, read only memory, etc., such as in the form of one or more storage devices and/or systems, such as, for example, a disk drive including an optical disc drive, a tape drive, a solid-state memory drive, etc., just to name a few examples.

[0062] Memory **1622** may be utilized to store a program of executable computer instructions. For example, processor **1620** may fetch executable instructions from memory and proceed to execute the fetched instructions. Memory **1622** may also comprise a memory controller for accessing the computer-readable medium **1640** that may carry and/or make accessible digital content, which may include code, and/or instructions, for example, executable by processor **1620** and/or some other device, such as a controller, as one example, capable of executing computer instructions, for example. Under direction of processor **1620**, a non-transitory memory, such as memory cells storing physical states (e.g., memory states), comprising, for example, a program of executable computer instructions, may be executed by processor **1620** and able to generate signals to be communicated via a network, for example, as previously described. Generated signals may also be stored in memory, also previously suggested.

[0063] Memory **1622** may store electronic files and/or electronic documents, such as relating to one or more users, and may also comprise a computer-readable medium that may carry and/or make accessible content, including code and/or instructions, for example, executable by processor **1620** and/or some other device, such as a controller, as one example, capable of executing computer instructions, for example. The term electronic file and/or the term electronic document are used throughout this document to refer to a set of stored memory states and/or a set of physical signals associated in a manner so as to thereby form an electronic file and/or an electronic document. That is, it is not meant to implicitly reference a particular syntax, format and/or approach used, for example, with respect to a set of associated memory states and/or a set of associated physical signals. It is further noted an association of memory states, for example, may be in a logical sense and not necessarily in a tangible, physical sense. Thus, although signal and/or state components of an electronic file and/or electronic document, are to be associated logically, storage thereof, for example, may reside in one or more different places in a tangible, physical memory, in an embodiment.

[0064] Referring again to FIG. **16**, processor **1620** may comprise one or more circuits, such as digital circuits, to perform at least a portion of a computing procedure and/or process. By way of example, but not limitation, processor **1620** may comprise one or more processors, such as controllers, microprocessors, microcontrollers, application specific integrated circuits, digital signal processors, programmable logic devices, field programmable gate arrays, the like, or any combination thereof. In various implementations and/or embodiments, processor **1620** may perform signal processing, typically substantially in accordance with fetched executable computer instructions, such as to manipulate signals and/or states, to construct signals and/or states, etc., with signals and/or states generated in such a manner to be communicated and/or stored in memory, for example.

[0065] FIG. **16** also illustrates second device **1604** as including an input/output component **1632** operable with input/output devices, for example, so that signals and/or states may be appropriately communicated between devices, such as second device **1604** and an input device and/or second device **1604** and an output device. A user may make use of an input device, such as a computer mouse, stylus, track ball, keyboard, and/or any other similar device capable of receiving user actions and/or motions as input signals. Likewise, for a device having speech to text capability, a user may speak to a device to generate input signals. A user may make use of an output device, such as a display, a printer, etc., and/or any other device capable of providing signals and/or generating stimuli for a user, such as visual stimuli, audio stimuli and/or other similar stimuli.

Words, Phrases, and Context

[0066] It will be appreciated that the figures have not necessarily been drawn to scale, such as for simplicity and/or clarity of illustration. For example, dimensions of some aspects may be exaggerated relative to others. Further, it is to be understood that other embodiments may be utilized. Furthermore, structural and/or other changes may be made without departing from claimed subject matter. References throughout this specification to “subject matter” refer to subject matter intended to be covered by one or more implementations, or any portion thereof, and are not necessarily intended to refer to a complete implementation, to a particular combination of implementation, or to any portion thereof. It should also be noted that directions and/or references, for example, such as up, down, top, bottom, and so on, may be used to facilitate discussion of drawings and are not intended to restrict application of particular subject matter. Therefore, the following detailed description is not to be taken to limit subject matter and/or equivalents thereof.

[0067] References throughout this specification to one implementation, an implementation, one embodiment, an embodiment, and/or the like means that a particular feature, structure, characteristic, and/or the like described in relation to a particular implementation and/or embodiment is included in at least one implementation and/or embodiment of subject matter. Thus, appearances of such phrases, for example, in various places throughout this specification are not

necessarily intended to refer to the same implementation and/or embodiment or to any one particular implementation and/or embodiment. Furthermore, it is to be understood that particular features, structures, characteristics, and/or the like described are capable of being combined in various ways in one or more implementations and/or embodiments and, therefore, are within intended scope. In general, of course, as has always been the case for the specification of a patent application, these and other issues have a potential to vary in a particular context of usage. In other words, throughout the disclosure, particular context of description and/or usage provides helpful guidance regarding reasonable inferences to be drawn; however, likewise, “in this context” in general without further qualification refers at least to the context of the present patent application. [0068] In the context of the present patent application, the term “connection,” the term “component” and/or similar terms are intended to be physical, but are not necessarily always tangible. Whether or not these terms refer to tangible subject matter, thus, may vary in a particular context of usage. As an example, a tangible connection and/or tangible connection path may be made, such as by a tangible, electrical connection, such as an electrically conductive path comprising metal or other conductor, that is able to conduct electrical current between two tangible components. Likewise, a tangible connection path may be at least partially affected and/or controlled, such that, as is typical, a tangible connection path may be open or closed, at times resulting from influence of one or more externally derived signals, such as external currents and/or voltages, such as for an electrical switch. Nonlimiting illustrations of an electrical switch include a transistor, a diode, etc. However, a “connection” and/or “component,” in a particular context of usage, likewise, although physical, can also be non-tangible, such as a connection between a client and a server over a network, particularly a wireless network, which generally refers to the ability for the client and server to transmit, receive, and/or exchange communications, as discussed in more detail later.

[0069] In a particular context of usage, such as a particular context in which tangible components are being discussed, therefore, the terms “coupled” and “connected” are used in a manner so that the terms are not synonymous. Similar terms may also be used in a manner in which a similar intention is exhibited. Thus, “connected” is used to indicate that two or more tangible components and/or the like, for example, are tangibly in direct physical contact. Thus, using the previous example, two tangible components that are electrically connected are physically connected via a tangible electrical connection, as previously discussed. However, “coupled,” is used to mean that potentially two or more tangible components are tangibly in direct physical contact. Nonetheless, “coupled” is also used to mean that two or more tangible components and/or the like are not necessarily tangibly in direct physical contact, but are able to co-operate, liaise, and/or interact, such as, for example, by being “optically coupled.” Likewise, the term “coupled” is also understood to mean indirectly connected. It is further noted, in the context of the present patent application, since memory, such as a memory component and/or memory states, is intended to be non-transitory, the term physical, at least if used in relation to memory necessarily implies that such memory components and/or memory states, continuing with the example, are tangible.

[0070] Additionally, in the present patent application, in a particular context of usage, such as a situation in which tangible components (and/or similarly, tangible materials) are being discussed, a distinction exists between being “on” and being “over.” As an example, deposition of a substance “on” a substrate refers to a deposition involving direct physical and tangible contact without an intermediary, such as an intermediary substance, between the substance deposited and the substrate in this latter example; nonetheless, deposition “over” a substrate, while understood to potentially include deposition “on” a substrate (since being “on” may also accurately be described as being “over”), is understood to include a situation in which one or more intermediaries, such as one or more intermediary substances, are present between the substance deposited and the substrate so that the substance deposited is not necessarily in direct physical and tangible contact with the substrate.

[0071] A similar distinction is made in an appropriate particular context of usage, such as in which

tangible materials and/or tangible components are discussed, between being “beneath” and being “under.” While “beneath,” in such a particular context of usage, is intended to necessarily imply physical and tangible contact (similar to “on,” as just described), “under” potentially includes a situation in which there is direct physical and tangible contact, but does not necessarily imply direct physical and tangible contact, such as if one or more intermediaries, such as one or more intermediary substances, are present. Thus, “on” is understood to mean “immediately over” and “beneath” is understood to mean “immediately under.”

[0072] Unless otherwise indicated, in the context of the present patent application, the term “or” if used to associate a list, such as A, B, or C, is intended to mean A, B, and C, here used in the inclusive sense, as well as A, B, or C, here used in the exclusive sense. With this understanding, “and” is used in the inclusive sense and intended to mean A, B, and C; whereas “and/or” can be used in an abundance of caution to make clear that all of the foregoing meanings are intended, although such usage is not required. Likewise, the term “based on” and/or similar terms are understood as not necessarily intending to convey an exhaustive list of factors, but to allow for existence of additional factors not necessarily expressly described.

[0073] In the preceding description, various aspects of claimed subject matter have been described. For purposes of explanation, specifics, such as amounts, systems and/or configurations, as examples, were set forth. In other instances, well-known features were omitted and/or simplified so as not to obscure claimed subject matter. While certain features have been illustrated and/or described herein, many modifications, substitutions, changes and/or equivalents will now occur to those skilled in the art. It is, therefore, to be understood that the appended claims are intended to cover all modifications and/or changes as fall within claimed subject matter.

[0074] It is to be understood that the foregoing description is intended to illustrate and not to limit the scope of the invention, which is defined by the scope of the following claims, and that other embodiments are within the scope of the claims. In particular, the scope of the invention includes any and all feasible combinations of one or more of the processes, machines, manufactures, or compositions of matter set forth in the claims below. Therefore, even if some or all of the dependent claims have been written with single dependency, it is to be understood that the present application provides full support for such claims to be multiply dependent on some or all of the other claims. (Note that the parenthetical labels for claim elements are for ease of referring to such elements, and do not in themselves indicate a particular required ordering or enumeration of elements; further, such labels may be reused in dependent claims as references to additional elements without being regarded as starting a conflicting labeling sequence).

Claims

1. A battery management system for use with a power converter, including: (a) a first load switch configured to be coupled to a power delivery path; (b) an initial charge pump having a first terminal coupled to the first load switch and configured to selectively receive a first voltage through the first load switch from the power delivery path, and a second terminal providing a second voltage different from the first voltage; (c) a charging circuit including: (1) a voltage terminal coupled to the second terminal of the initial charge pump; (2) a system voltage terminal; (3) a charging voltage terminal configured to be coupled to a battery; and (4) at least one additional charge pump coupled to the charging circuit voltage terminal and configured to receive the second voltage and provide a third voltage different from the second voltage, the third voltage being applied to the system voltage terminal and, directly or indirectly, to the battery through the charging voltage terminal.
