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(54) **PROCESS FOR RECOVERING AND
RECYCLING AN ACID CATALYST**

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(58) **Field of Classification Search**

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See application file for complete search history.

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

Disclosed is a process for the extractive recovery of an acid catalyst from an aqueous mixture of glycolic acid with an extraction solvent comprising a tertiary amine or an onium carboxylate compound, a modifier, and a diluent. The acid catalyst, which can comprise strong acids such as sulfuric acid, alkyl sulfonic acids, and fluoroalkyl sulfonic acids, can be recovered by back extraction with aqueous formaldehyde and recycled to a process for the preparation of glycolic acid by the acid-catalyzed carbonylation of formaldehyde.

18 Claims, No Drawings