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[Your Name]

[Your Title]

[Your Company]

[Street Address, City, State ZIP]

May 14, 2026

[Opposing Counsel Name]

[Firm Name]

[Address]

Re: U.S. Patent No. 9524974 — Response to Assertion of Infringement

Dear Counsel,

We acknowledge receipt of your correspondence asserting infringement of U.S. Patent No. 9524974 (the "9524974 Patent"). After preliminary review, we have substantial concerns about the validity, enforceability, and scope of the asserted claims, summarized below. We reserve all rights and defenses.

1. Subject Patent — Summary

Summary of U.S. Patent 9524974: Alternating Sidewall Assisted Patterning

This report provides a concise summary of United States Patent 9,524,974, including its key bibliographic details and an overview of its independent claims. The patent is currently the subject of federal court litigation.

Key Patent Details:

- Title: Alternating sidewall assisted patterning
- Assignee: The current assignee of record is Palisade Technologies, LLP. The original assignee was SanDisk Technologies LLC.
- Inventors: Erika Kanazaki, Ryo Nakamura, Kotaro Jinnouchi, Satoshi Kamata
- Filing Date: July 22, 2015
- Issue Date: December 20, 2016
- Abstract: The patent describes a method for creating trenches with...

2. Validity Concerns under 35 U.S.C. § 102 — Prior Art

We have identified prior-art references that, in our preliminary view, anticipate one or more asserted claims of the 9524974 Patent:

Analysis of Prior Art for U.S. Patent 9,524,974: A Review of Examiner-Cited References

Washington D.C. - April 26, 2026 - A detailed analysis of the prosecution history of U.S. Patent No. 9,524,974, titled "Alternating sidewall assisted patterning," reveals several key prior art references cited by the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) examiner during its examination. This report outlines the most relevant of these references and their potential impact on the patent's claims under 35 U.S.C. § 102 for anticipation.

The patent, issued on December 20, 2016, to inventors Erika Kanazaki, et al., and originally assigned to SanDisk Technologies LLC, describes a method for forming alternating trench profiles in a dielectric layer for semiconductor devices, particularly for creating bit lines in NAND flash memory. The core of the invention lies in a sidewall-assisted patterning process that results in two distinct trench shapes arranged in an alternating pattern.

A thorough review of the patent's file wrapper, obtained through the USPTO's Patent Center, indicates that the...

3. Obviousness under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Independent of § 102, we believe the asserted claims are obvious in view of combinations of prior art that a person having ordinary skill in the art would have been motivated to combine:

Based on an analysis of the prior art cited in US patent 9524974, several strong arguments for obviousness under 35 U.S.C. § 103 can be made against its claims. A person having ordinary skill in the art (POSITA) in semiconductor fabrication as of the priority date of July 22, 2015, would have been motivated to combine existing techniques to arrive at the claimed invention for predictable reasons.

The core of the invention in US 9,524,974 is the use of a modified sidewall assisted patterning (SAP) process to create an alternating pattern of two different trench shapes. This is achieved by introducing a "liner layer" between the mandrels and the sidewall spacers. During the subsequent etch, this liner layer erodes, widening the top portion of the trenches formed where the mandrels once were (the "first trenches"), while the trenches formed between spacers of adjacent mandrels (the "second trenches") remain narrow and uniform.

Obviousness Combination for Independent Method Claims 12 and 17

Independent claims 12 and 17, which describe the method of forming the alternating trench...

4. Litigation History of the Patent

Public records reflect that the 9524974 Patent has been the subject of the following litigation, which informs our view of the asserted claims and your client's enforcement posture:

- Palisade Technologies, LLP v. Yangtze Memory Technologies Co., Ltd. — 2:25-cv-01170 · U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Texas · filed 2025-11-26 · Ongoing

5. Request

In light of the foregoing, we request that your client (i) provide a detailed claim chart identifying each accused product or service and mapping every limitation of each asserted claim, (ii) identify any prior art known to your client, including any references cited during prosecution or reexamination, and (iii) substantiate the basis for any damages or licensing demand. We are prepared to discuss the matter further once we have received and reviewed the foregoing.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

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