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NEWSLETTER

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Lifang & Partners Scores Another Win for EPC as Beijing IP Court Upholds GaN Core Patent Validity

Lifang & Partners is delighted to announce that our firm client Efficient Power Conversion Corporation ("EPC") has recently achieved another vital triumph against Innoscience (Suzhou) Technology Holding Co., Ltd. ("Innoscience"), obtaining a favorable decision from the Beijing Intellectual Property Court (Beijing IP Court) (Case No.: (2024) Jing 73 Xing Chu No. 15061), which denies Innoscience's appeal and upholds the Decision made by the China National Intellectual Property Administration (CNIPA) on the validity of EPC's core Gallium nitride (GaN) patent ZL201080015425.X.

EPC's GaN patent ZL201080015425.X titled "COMPENSATED GATE MISFET AND METHOD FOR FABRICATING THE SAME" ("Compensated Gate Patent") had been challenged by Innoscience in China, but was upheld in its entirety by the CNIPA in April, 2024 (No. 567338 Decision). Thereafter, Innoscience took an appeal to the Beijing IP Court and requested the court to overturn the CNIPA's decision. During the judicial review, the Beijing IP Court specifically looked into the matters on whether the challenged claims comply with the Patent Law on the enablement issue, as well as whether they are obvious over the prior art, and ultimately issued judgement on August 19, 2025, upholding the CNIPA's decision. This is the 1st instance judgement and can be appealed to the Supreme People's Court according to the current patent laws and regulations.

Gallium nitride (GaN) is a new generation of semiconductor. As compared with products using silicon-based devices, transistors and integrated circuits using GaN-based devices are superior in terms of higher efficiency, reduced weight and lower cost, thus playing critical roles in modern industries, especially in the energy-thirsty technologies such as artificial intelligence and electric vehicles.

EPC is a California-based GaN power device company and pioneered in the GaN technology. By virtue of multiple innovations including the aforesaid Compensated Gate Patent, EPC has successfully brought GaN-based power devices from laboratory to market. EPC's victories at the CNIPA and the Beijing IP Court, reaffirm EPC's strength of intellectual property and its leading position in the research and development of the GaN technology.

These Chinese patent proceedings concerning EPC's GaN patents in fact resulted from EPC's global patent enforcement actions. In May 2023, EPC launched lawsuits against Innoscience at the U.S. International Trade Commission (ITC) and the U.S. District Court in the Central District of California, alleging infringements of several EPC patents, including the US counterpart of the aforesaid Compensated Gate Patent. The California case had then been stayed whereas the ITC case was pushed through, and in last November, the ITC issued a final decision confirming the validity of the Compensated Gate Patent and ruling that Innoscience infringed this patent.

Innoscience, among taking other defensive actions including parallelly challenging EPC's GaN patents in China, chose to file inter partes reviews ("IPR") at the Patent Trial and Appeal Board (PTAB). On March 18, 2025, the PTAB issued an appealable decision finding that all challenged claims of the Compensated Gate Patent (including all those asserted in the ITC litigation) were invalid, thus creating uncertainty concerning the validity of this Compensated Gate Patent as well as the infringement of Innoscience.

Notably, the PTAB in the U.S. and the CNIPA in China — alongside the Beijing IP Court — issued conflicting rulings on the validity of this same Compensated Gate Patent (considering the claims in the Chinese patent ZL201080015425.X all appear in the US counterpart patent and were held invalid in the PTAB decision). Setting aside the understandable nuances in the patent law standards in these two different jurisdictions, which shall be further questioned and reviewed in the subsequent appeals projected to take place in both China and the U.S., this divergence may also reflect distinct policy priorities of these two jurisdictions: whereas the PTAB in the U.S. has been focused more on prioritizing patent quality and curbing litigation abuse through rigorous invalidation proceedings in the past decade, the CNIPA as well as the Chinese courts recently have particularly emphasized safeguarding innovations to foster the momentum in the industries that thrive on all kinds of technological breakthroughs.

For enterprises, we think, this example thus vividly underscores the necessities for the enterprises to develop robust mechanisms in their global IP protection strategy, so that they can timely monitor policy shifts in different jurisdictions, efficiently navigate such jurisdictional disparities, thus preempting systemic risks in protecting and enforcing its patent portfolios and avoiding patent failures or enforcement gaps.

Lifang & Partners exclusively represented EPC in the related patent invalidation proceeding and administrative litigation in China. Throughout the proceedings, Lifang's team collaborated closely with EPC's scientists and engineers, conducting in-depth analysis of the complex technology, crafting precise yet flexible litigation strategies, and ultimately securing complete victory for EPC in both administrative and judicial proceedings through meticulous evidence preparation and rigorous legal analysis.

Lifang & Partners remains committed to providing robust protection for our clients' intellectual property in China.

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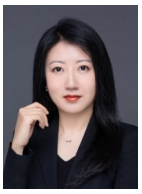

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