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Ives

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(54) **DEPRESSED COLLECTOR FOR ELECTRON BEAMS**

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315/5.33, 5.38, 5.41; 330/43, 45, 46, 48,
56, 308, 309

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Primary Examiner—Don Wong

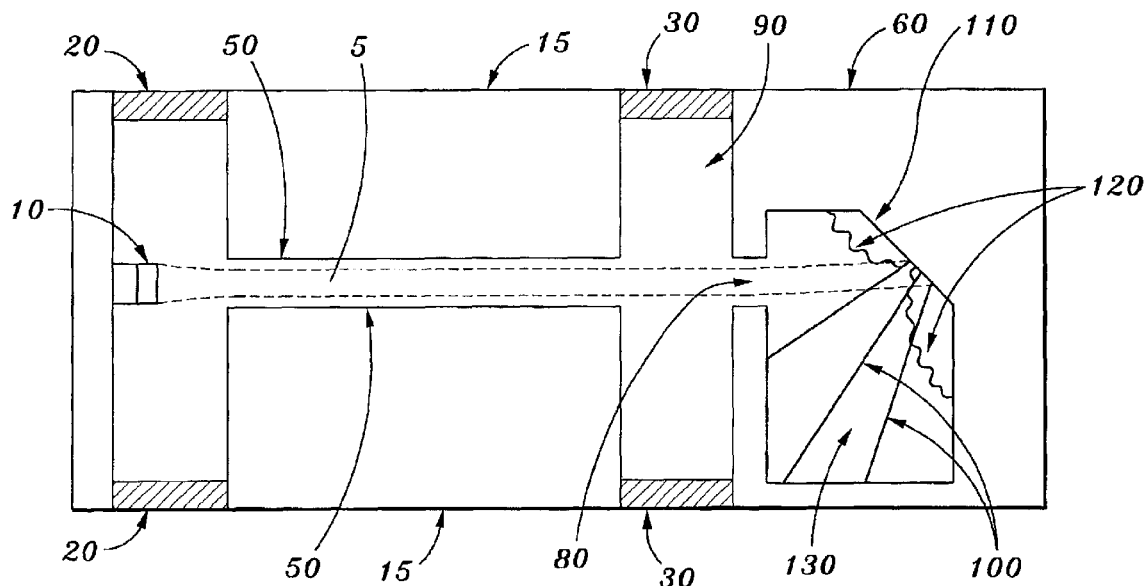
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A depressed collector for recovery of spent beam energy from electromagnetic sources emitting sheet or large aspect ratio annular electron beams operating over a broad range of beam voltages and currents. The collector incorporates a trap for capturing and preventing the return of reflected and secondary electrons.

29 Claims, 3 Drawing Sheets



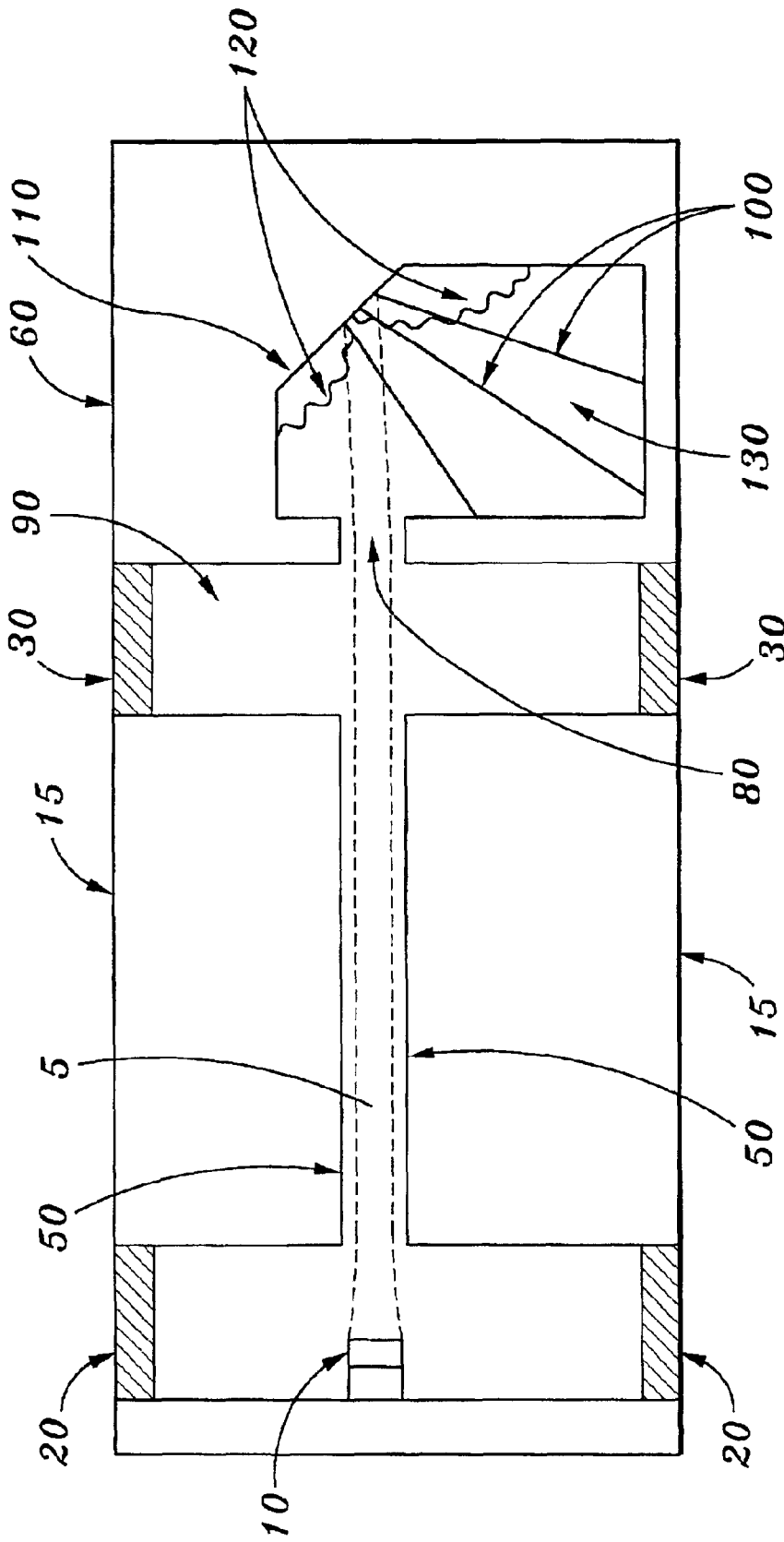


FIG. 1

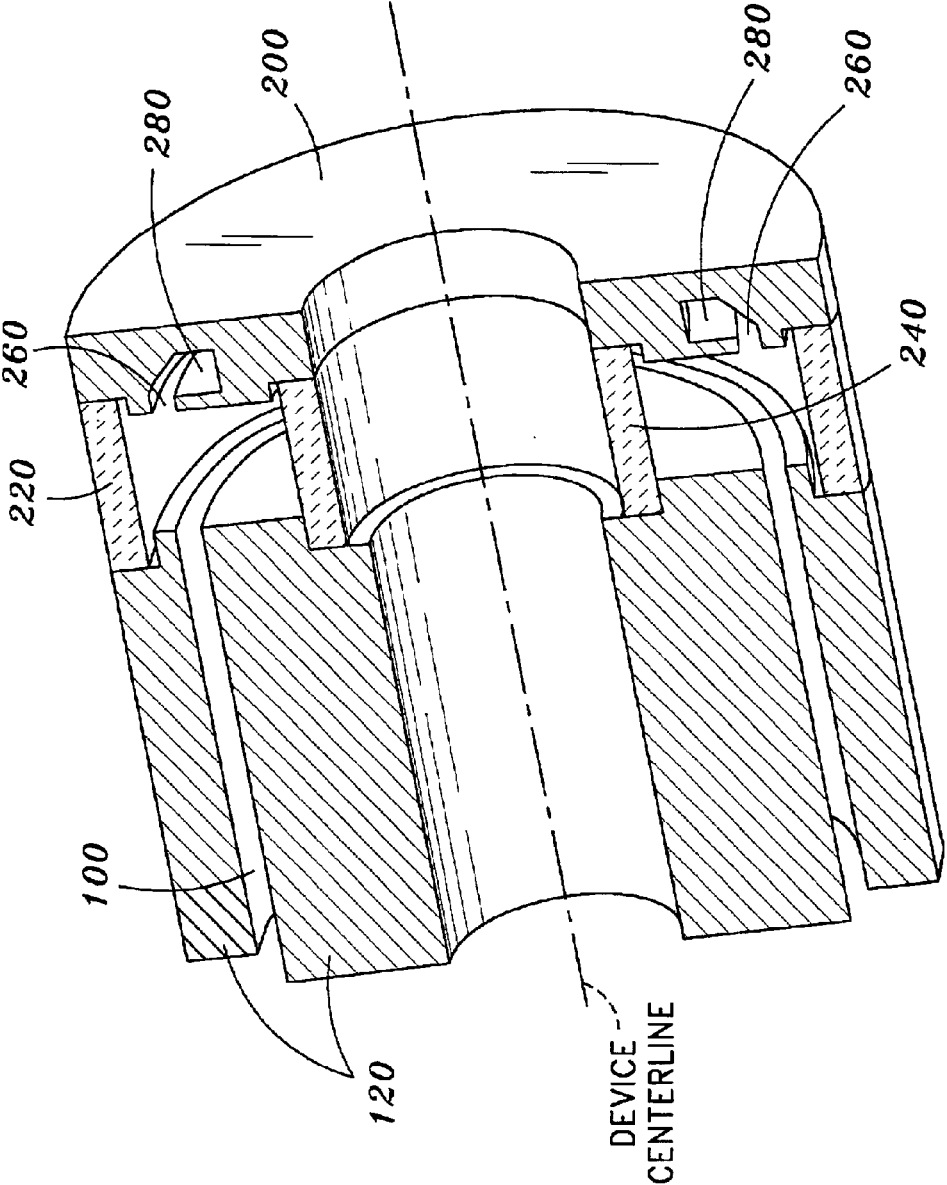


FIG. 2

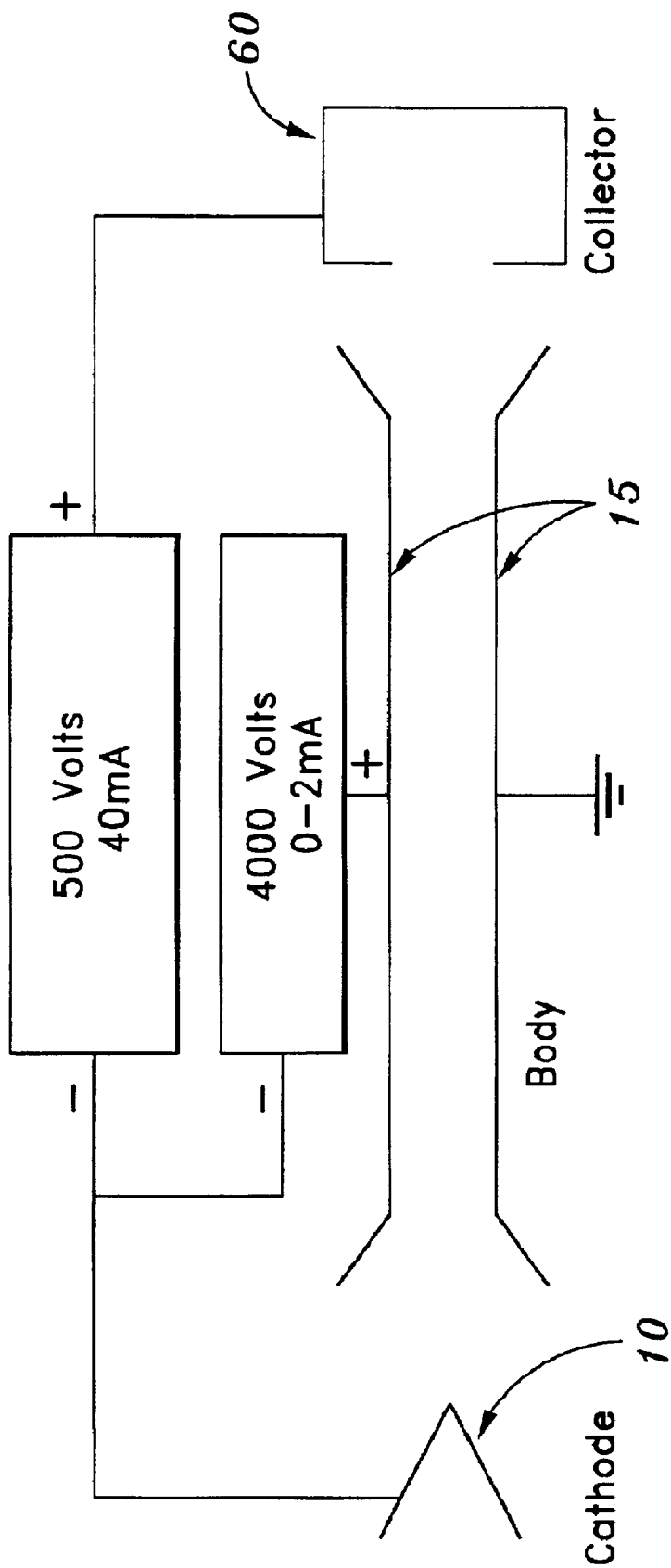


FIG. 3

DEPRESSED COLLECTOR FOR ELECTRON BEAMS

STATEMENT REGARDING FEDERALLY SPONSORED RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

This invention was made with government support under Grant NAS3-00079 awarded by NASA. The government has certain rights in this invention.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to electromagnetic wave sources utilizing rectangular sheet electron beams or annular electron beams, and more particularly, to an electron beam collector for such devices which allows for recovery of spent beam energy by the application of device geometry and voltage depression.

2. Background Art

Linear beam electron devices are used in molecular spectroscopy, surveillance devices and sophisticated communications and radar systems that require generation or amplification of radio frequency or microwave electromagnetic signals. In UHF transmitters, the klystron is the most common power output device. However, a klystron with no efficiency optimizing circuitry is typically only 40 to 50% efficient depending on the type of device used. One scheme devised to improve klystron efficiency is the depressed collector, which allows for the recovery of energy from the electron stream rather than dissipating the energy as heat.

Depressed collectors have routinely been incorporated in cylindrically symmetric vacuum tubes, such as traveling wave tubes and klystrons for more than 40 years. Depressed collectors for cylindrical devices are produced by many companies including Communications and Power Industries, Northrop-Grumman, Hughes and Teledyne.

Previous implementations of depressed collectors have utilized the space charge forces in the electron beam to expand the electrons radially where they can be collected on surfaces that are facing in a direction away from the main body of the device. Other implementations use variations of the magnetic field to prevent return of secondary electrons.

Despite the advantages of depressed collectors, no implementations of such devices have been reported for use with sheet electron beams, such as those which are utilized in submillimeter frequency Backward Wave Oscillators. The current generation of submillimeter frequency Backward Wave Oscillators typically operate with efficiencies of less than five percent. Consequently, most of the energy in the electron beam is deposited in the collector of the device where it must be dissipated as thermal power and typically requires cooling. The successful implementation of a depressed collector would allow for recovery of most of the electron beam energy, reducing the electrical power requirements for the device and reducing the thermal power that must be dissipated.

Unfortunately, many devices including the submillimeter frequency Backward Wave Oscillator are not amenable to the techniques utilized to implement depressed collectors in the prior art such as cylindrically symmetric vacuum tubes, traveling wave tubes and klystrons. Simple depression of the existing collector geometry results in excessive generation of backscattered electrons and true secondary electrons. At the voltages used in the submillimeter frequency Backward Wave Oscillator device, the secondary electron yield can

approach one, meaning that almost as many secondary electrons are generated as there are incoming primary electrons. The secondary electrons are accelerated at full voltage and impact on the main body of the device severely limiting the amount of energy that can be recovered from the electron beam.

An additional complication is the rectangular geometry of a device utilizing a rectangular sheet electron beam. The rectangular geometry is not amenable to the cylindrical geometrical configurations utilized in the prior art.

Finally, the Backward Wave Oscillator device operates at small currents (typically 30 to 40 milli-amperes) where space charge forces are small and techniques to control beam spread are limited by the presence of a strong, uniform magnetic field. Nor is the device amenable to the use of induced variations in the magnetic field to achieve beam spread because the distance between the body of the device and the collector is inadequate in that the distance is less than 100 microns. Variations of the magnetic field on this scale would be difficult to implement without adversely affecting beam transmission through the circuit.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The invention is a depressed collector for use with an electromagnetic wave device generating an electron beam. The collector incorporates an innovative electron trap to prevent the return of reflected electrons or true secondary electrons to the body or electron gun of the device. Spent beam energy is recovered by the use of voltage depression and electron trapping, thereby greatly increasing the efficiency of the device by recovering a significant amount of the spent beam energy and reducing or eliminating the need for cooling.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a side-sectional view of a depressed collector according to the invention.

FIG. 2 is a sectional view of a depressed collector applied to an annular beam device.

FIG. 3 is an electrical diagram of a typical power supply configuration as applied to the invention.

DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

The present invention provides a depressed collector capable of recovering energy from an electron beam emerging from the interaction region of a device producing electromagnetic wave radiation. The depressed collector incorporates an innovative electron trap and voltage depression to prevent the return of reflected electrons or true secondary electrons to the body or to the electron gun of the device.

The operation of a single stage depressed collector in accordance with an embodiment of the invention in conjunction with a submillimeter frequency Backward Wave Oscillator is schematically illustrated in FIG. 1. A rectangular, sheet electron beam **5** is emitted from cathode **10** and passes through a rectangular beam tunnel **50** through the body **15** of the RF (radio frequency) device. Cathode **10** is energized to a voltage below that of the body sufficient to provide the required electron energy for interaction with the circuit of the device. The voltage potential between cathode **10** and body **15** is determined by analyzing the interaction of the RF circuit with the electron beam generated by the cathode. Insulators **20** are interposed between the body and cathode structure to provide voltage insulation.

Following interaction with the circuit, the spent electron beam passes through spacing **90** and through rectangular aperture **80** into dissipation cavity **130** located in the electron beam collector **60**. The incoming electrons impact on surface **110**, a conductive reflector, whose normal direction is at an angle with respect to the direction of the incoming electron beam such that reflected primary electrons **100** and true secondary electrons **120** emitted from surface **110** are deflected into and captured by collector cavity **130**. Although surface **110** as presented in this embodiment is planar, it can be of any shape—planar, curved, and multi-faceted—such that electrons which strike it and secondary electrons are directed into cavity **130**.

Collector **60** is energized relative to cathode **10** such that the total voltage difference between collector **60** and cathode **10** is significantly less than the voltage difference between cathode **10** and body **15**. Typically cathode **10** is energized at a potential of negative 4000 volts relative to body **15** and collector **60** is energized at a potential of negative 500 volts relative to cathode **10**; body **15** may or may not be grounded. The voltage differentials between collector **60** and cathode **10** and between cathode **10** and body **15** are maintained by power supplies. A typical power supply configuration is shown in FIG. 3. Insulator **30** provides electrical isolation between collector **60** and body **15**. The voltage applied to the collector is a function of the remaining axial energy of the electrons in the beam following extraction of power for RF generation. This is typically computed using large signal RF design codes and beam optics simulation codes. The depression of the voltage of collector **60** relative to body **15** effectively slows or decelerates the electrons entering the collector **60**, reducing their interaction with surface **110** and allowing recovery of beam energy. The voltage applied to collector **60** must be such that the negative voltage applied to the collector does not reflect an unacceptable number of electrons with the lowest amount of axial energy (toward the collector). While some reflection may be acceptable, it becomes unacceptable when the overall efficiency of the device is reduced. The efficiency varies depending on the device type.

Because the device traps secondary and reflected electrons, more than 80% of the spent beam energy in a submillimeter-wave Backward Wave Oscillator can be recovered. As such, the device increases the efficiency of Backward Wave Oscillators by a factor of 4. This reduces the input power requirement for operation of such devices from approximately 300 watts to less than 80 watts. The efficiency improvement for other devices depends on the efficiency of the RF circuit. Sheet beam klystrons, for example, are predicted to operate with circuit efficiencies on the order of 50%. Therefore, a depressed collector based on the invention described here would be predicted to increase the operating efficiency by approximately 20%.

An alternative embodiment, the application of the invention to large aspect ratio annular electron beams where the thickness of the electron beam **5** is small with respect to the average radius of the electron beam is schematically illustrated in FIG. 2. The thickness of the electron beam in such devices is typically 10 percent or less than the radius of the electron beam. A thin, hollow electron beam, emitted from a cathode (not shown), traverses through annular beam tunnel **100** in the body of the device **120**. The cathode is energized at a voltage relative to the body sufficient to provide the required electron energy for interaction with the circuit of the device. The body **120** contains a circuit for converting electron beam power to RF power. Depressed collector **200** is separated from the body **120** by ceramic

insulators **220** and **240**. The electron beam passes through annular aperture **260** in collector **200** and enters cavity **280** where secondary and reflected primary electrons are trapped and prevented from returning to the body **120** of the device.

The cross sectional shape and function of the electron trap is similar to the electron trap described with respect to the sheet electron embodiment and as depicted in FIG. 1. The voltage applied to the collector **200** is reduced relative to body **120** such that energy in the electron beam is recovered, thereby increasing the total efficiency of the device. Collector **200** is energized relative to the cathode (not shown) such that the total voltage difference between collector **200** and the cathode is significantly less than the voltage difference between the cathode and body **120**. The voltage differentials between the collector **200** and the cathode and between the cathode and body **120** are maintained by power supplies. A typical power supply configuration is shown in FIG. 3.

Having described various embodiments of the depressed collector with secondary emission trapping for sheet beams and annular electron beams, it should be apparent to those skilled in the relevant art that the afore-stated objects and the advantages for the system have been achieved. The invention was described in connection with particular embodiments, but it is evident that numerous alternatives, variations, modifications and uses will be apparent to those skilled in the art in light of the foregoing description. For example, alternative deflection angles of incoming electron beams, alternative designs of aperture **80** to maximize secondary electron trapping while still providing the maximum possible transmission of the electron beam and alternative materials, voltages and spacings can be selected to vary the operating characteristics the depressed collector as contemplated by the invention. It will also be apparent to those skilled in the art that various other changes and modifications may be made therein without departing from the invention, and it is intended in the claims to cover such changes and modifications as fall within the spirit and scope of the invention.

I claim:

1. A depressed voltage collector for connection to a sub-millimeter electromagnetic wave device containing a cathode and a body generating a rectangular sheet electron beam of electrons traversing into the collector where energy is recovered from the electron beam, said collector comprising:

- an electrically conductive dissipation cavity;
- a front wall located on one side of said dissipation cavity having a rectangular aperture to allow passage of said rectangular sheet electron beam into said interior cavity;
- a conductive reflector electrically and mechanically attached to said interior cavity in said enclosure, opposite said rectangular aperture, positioned at an angle to said incident rectangular sheet electron beam to reflect the electrons into the interior cavity; and

means for electrically energizing said collector such that the total voltage difference between said collector and said cathode is significantly less than the voltage difference between said cathode and said device body

where said body includes a magnetic field oriented axially to said sheet electron beam, and the strength of said magnetic field is substantially the same in said body as in said collector.

2. A single stage depressed voltage collector for connection to a sub-millimeter electromagnetic wave device containing a cathode and a body generating a rectangular sheet

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electron beam of electrons traversing into a collector where energy is recovered from the electron beam, said collector comprising:

an electrically conductive dissipation cavity;
 a front wall located on one side of said dissipation cavity
 having a rectangular aperture to allow passage of said
 rectangular sheet electron beam into said interior cavity;

a conductive and substantially planar reflector electrically
 and mechanically attached to said interior cavity in said
 enclosure, opposite said rectangular aperture, positioned
 at an angle to said incident rectangular sheet electron beam
 to reflect the electrons into the interior cavity; and

means for electrically energizing said collector such that
 the total voltage difference between said collector and
 said cathode is significantly less than the voltage difference
 between said cathode and said device body.

3. An electrically conductive collector for an electron beam comprising primary electrons traveling from a cathode, said electron beam having an axis, said conductive collector including:

an entrance aperture for receiving said electron beam;
 a substantially planar impinging surface for interacting
 with said primary electrons, said interaction generating
 backscattered primary electrons from said electron beam
 and optionally secondary electrons from said impinging surface;

said impinging surface angled with respect to said axis,
 thereby directing said backscattered primary electrons
 away from said electron beam;

a dissipation cavity for receiving said backscattered primary
 electrons and said secondary electrons;

where said primary electrons and said backscattered primary
 electrons have substantially linear trajectories;

and a voltage potential is applied between said conductive
 collector and said cathode.

4. The collector of claim **3** where said electron beam and
 said entrance aperture have a cross section which is rectangular.

5. The collector of said claim **3** where said electron beam
 cross section is elliptical.

6. The collector of claim **3** where said electron beam has
 an aspect ratio of at least 10:1.

7. The collector of claim **3** where said beam collector is
 made from graphite.

8. The collector of claim **3** where said dissipation cavity
 is made from graphite.

9. The collector of claim **3** where said impinging surface
 is graphite.

10. The collector of claim **3** where said electron beam and
 said collector are in a uniform magnetic field having an
 orientation parallel to said axis.

11. The collector of claim **3** where said voltage potential
 results in a minimum number of said primary electrons
 reflecting to said entrance aperture.

12. The collector of claim **3** where said electron beam
 travels through a beam tunnel having an axial magnetic field,
 and said axial magnetic field is substantially uniform in said
 beam tunnel and said collector.

13. An electrically conductive collector for an electron
 beam traveling from a cathode through a beam tunnel to said

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collector, said beam tunnel and said collector having a
 common magnetic field parallel to said electron beam, said
 collector including:

a entrance aperture for receiving said electron beam;

a substantially planar impinging surface for interacting
 with said electron beam, said interaction generating
 backscattered primary electrons from said electron
 beam and optionally secondary electrons from said
 impinging surface;

a dissipation cavity for receiving said backscattered primary
 electrons and said secondary electrons;

where said backscattered primary electrons and said secondary
 electrons are directed away from said beam tunnel;

and a voltage potential is applied between said conductive
 collector and said cathode.

14. The collector of claim **13** where said electron beam
 and said entrance aperture have a cross section which is
 rectangular.

15. The collector of claim **13** where said electron beam
 cross section is elliptical.

16. The collector of claim **13** where said electron beam
 has an aspect ratio of at least 10:1.

17. The collector of claim **13** where said beam collector
 is made from graphite.

18. The collector of claim **13** where said dissipation cavity
 is made from graphite.

19. The collector of claim **13** where said impinging
 surface is graphite.

20. The collector of claim **13** where said primary electrons
 have trajectories which are substantially linear from said
 entrance aperture to said impinging surface.

21. The collector of claim **13** where said electron beam is
 formed from primary electrons and said voltage potential
 results in a minimum number of said primary electrons
 reflecting to said cathode.

22. The collector of claim **13** where said backscattered
 primary electrons have trajectories which are substantially
 linear.

23. An electrically conductive collector for a large aspect
 ratio annular electron beam traveling from a cathode,
 through a beam tunnel, and to said collector;

said annular electron beam having an axis and an annular
 electron density beam profile perpendicular to said axis
 including said electron density from a first radius to a
 second radius, said conductive collector including:

an annular entrance aperture for receiving said electron
 beam;

an impinging surface which is circularly symmetric about
 said axis, said impinging surface for interacting with
 said electron beam, said interaction generating backscattered
 primary electrons from said electron beam and optionally
 secondary electrons from said impinging surface;

a dissipation cavity for receiving said backscattered primary
 electrons and said secondary electrons;

said backscattered primary electrons and said secondary
 electrons directed away from said beam tunnel;

and a voltage potential is applied between said conductive
 collector and said cathode.

24. The collector of claim **23** where said beam collector
 is made from graphite.

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25. The collector of claim 23 where said dissipation cavity is made from graphite.

26. The collector of claim 23 where said impinging surface is graphite.

27. The collector of claim 23 where said electron beam and said collector are in a uniform magnetic field having an orientation parallel to said axis. 5

28. The collector of claim 23 where said electron beam is formed from primary electrons and said voltage potential

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results in a minimum number of said primary electrons reflecting to said cathode.

29. The collector of claim 23 where said electron beam travels through a beam tunnel having an axial magnetic field, and said axial magnetic field is substantially uniform in said beam tunnel and said collector.

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