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Williams et al.

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(54) **ELECTRICAL LOAD SWITCH**

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(52) U.S. Cl. **323/237**

(58) Field of Search 323/237, 239, 323/241, 320, 322, 325

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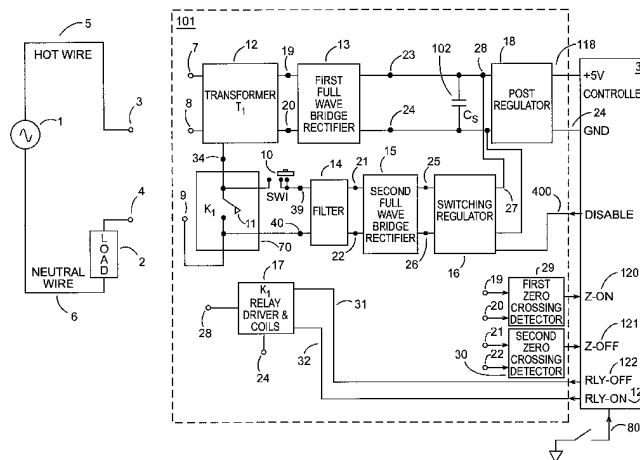
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A controllable electrical switch having a power system and switching device for connecting a source voltage to a load. The power system includes a switching regulator to extract energy directly off the non filtered full wave rectified input voltage to minimize the average magnitude of the current when the switching device is in the off-state. For on-state power the controllable electrical switch may include a transformer connected in series with the switching device. The controllable electrical switch and power system may be used to replace a standard two-wire or three-wire wall switch, and may be used over a wide voltage and load power range in a low cost, small package with low power dissipation.

52 Claims, 20 Drawing Sheets



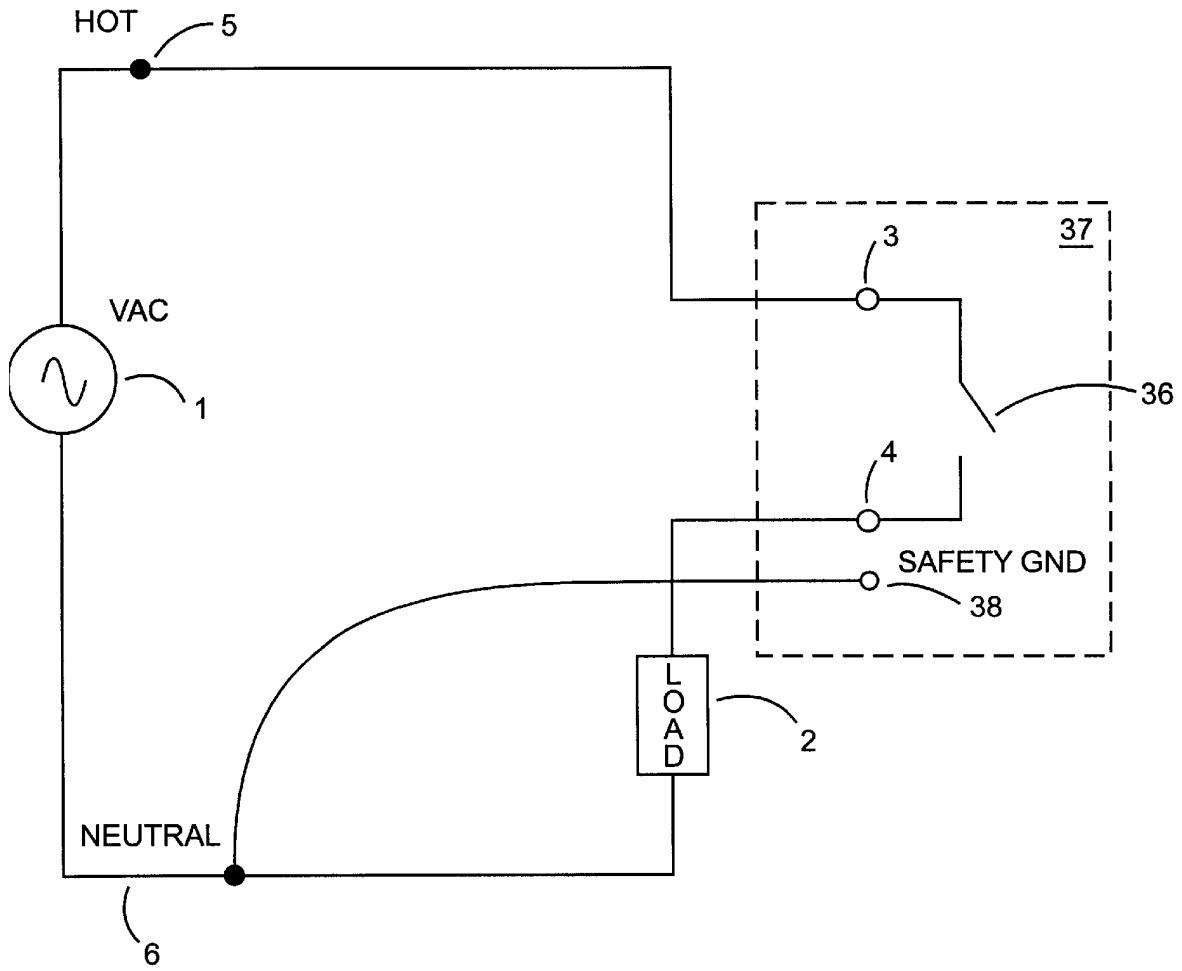


FIGURE 1

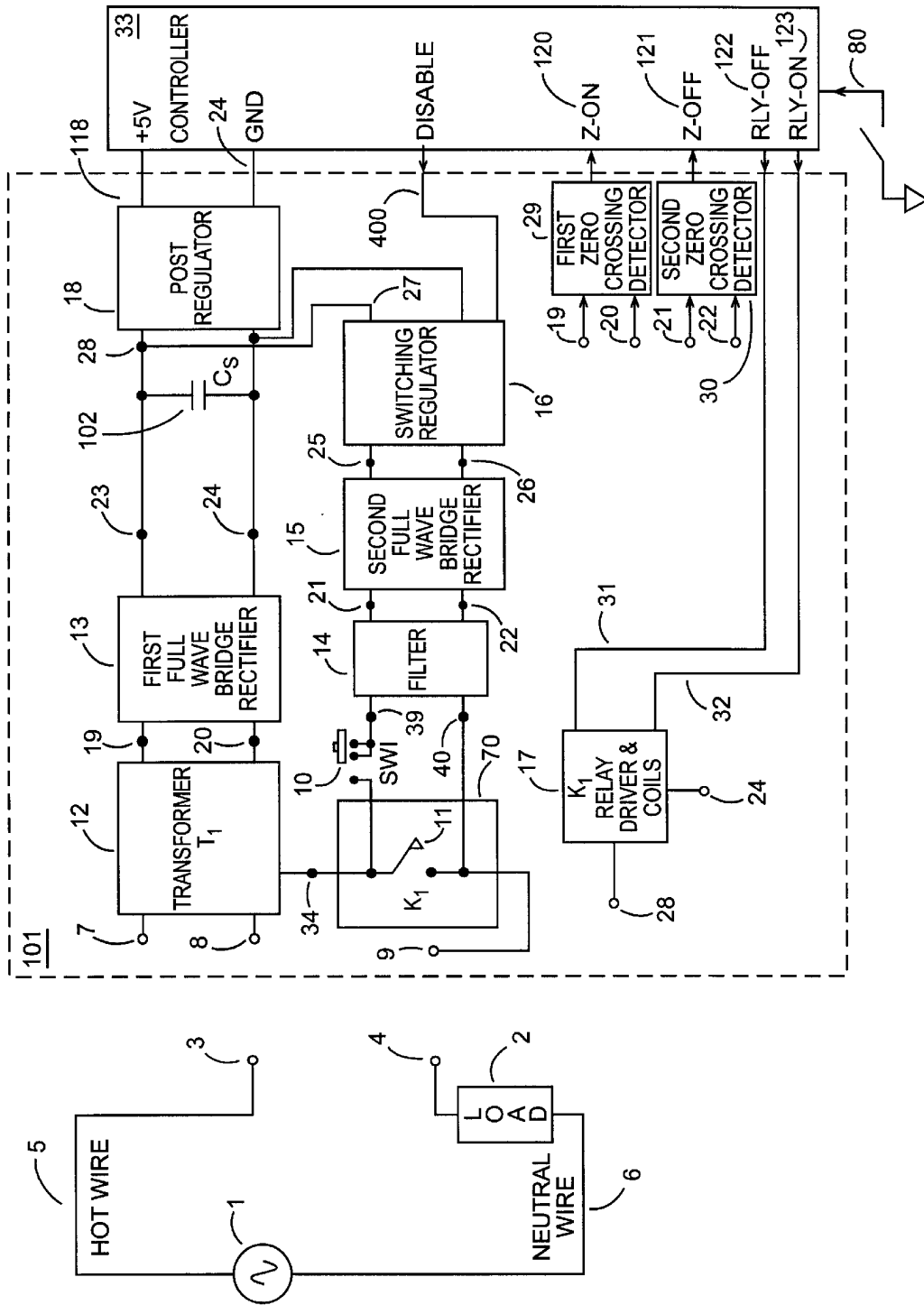


FIGURE 2

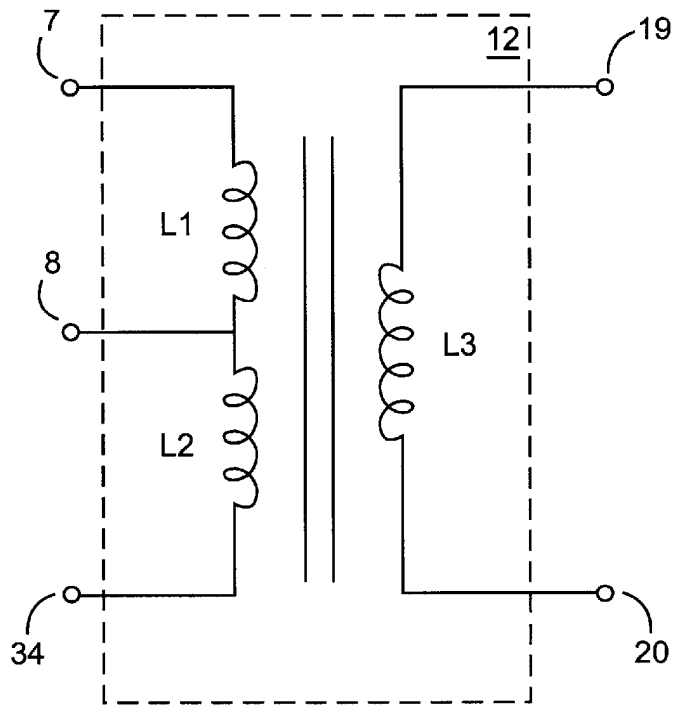


FIGURE 3a

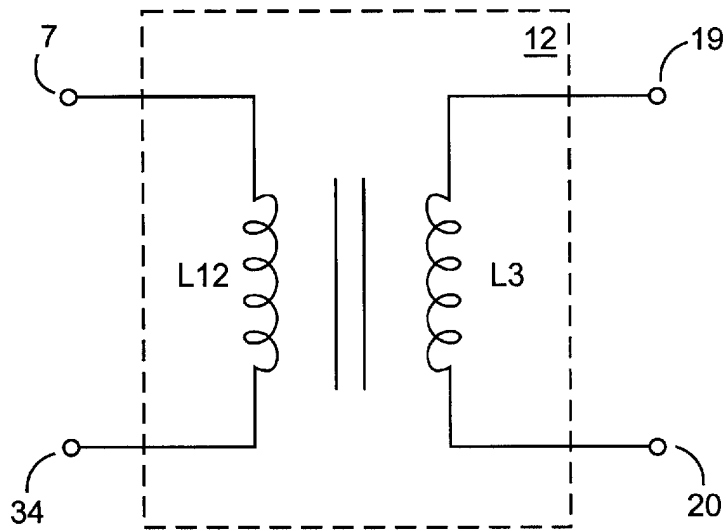


FIGURE 3b

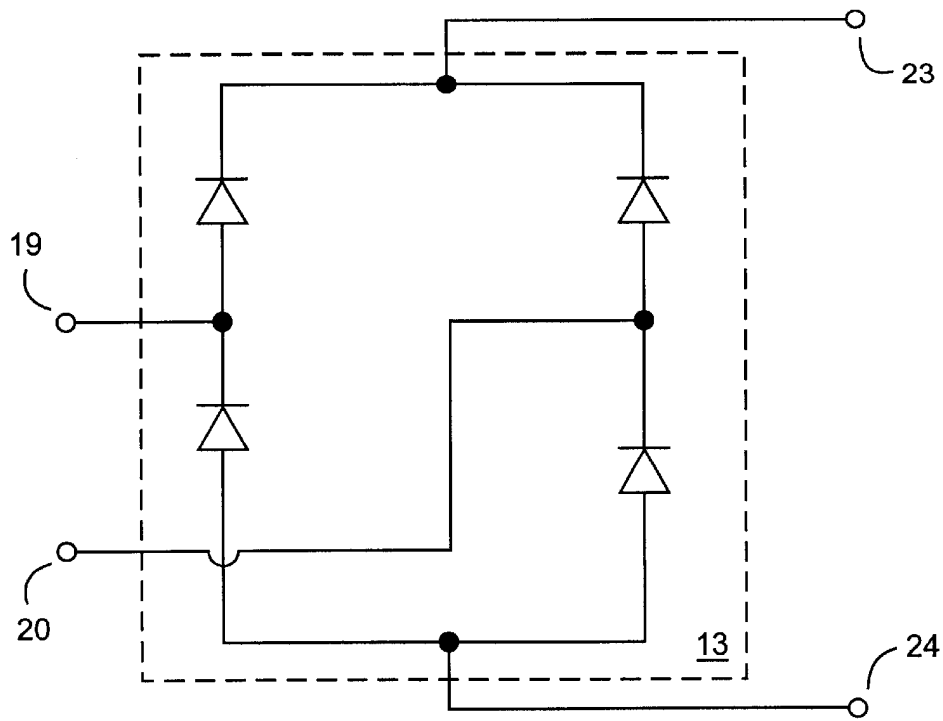


FIGURE 4a

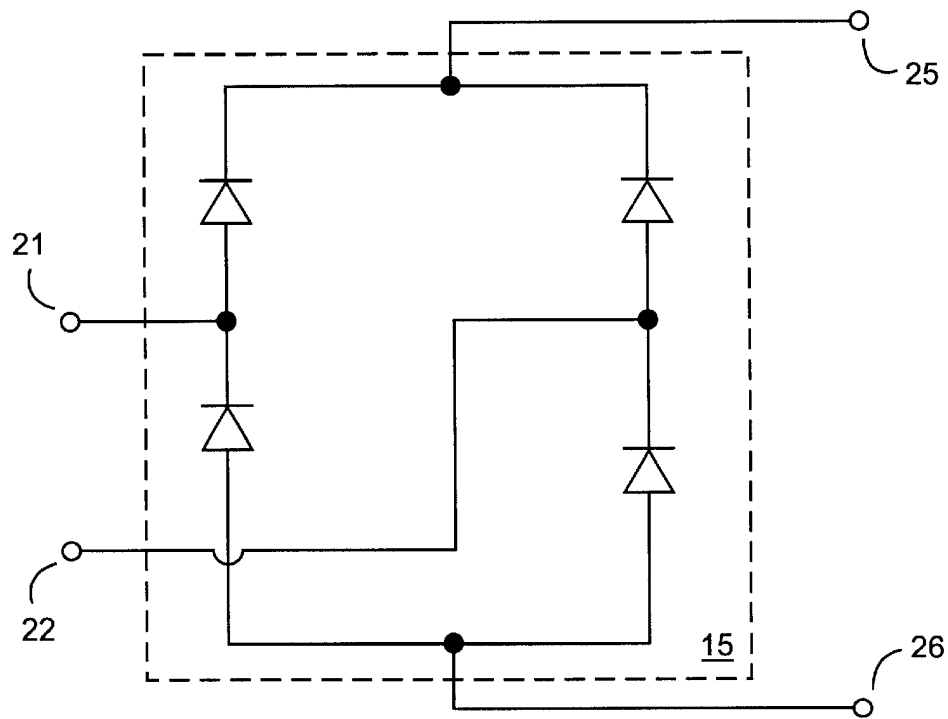


FIGURE 4b

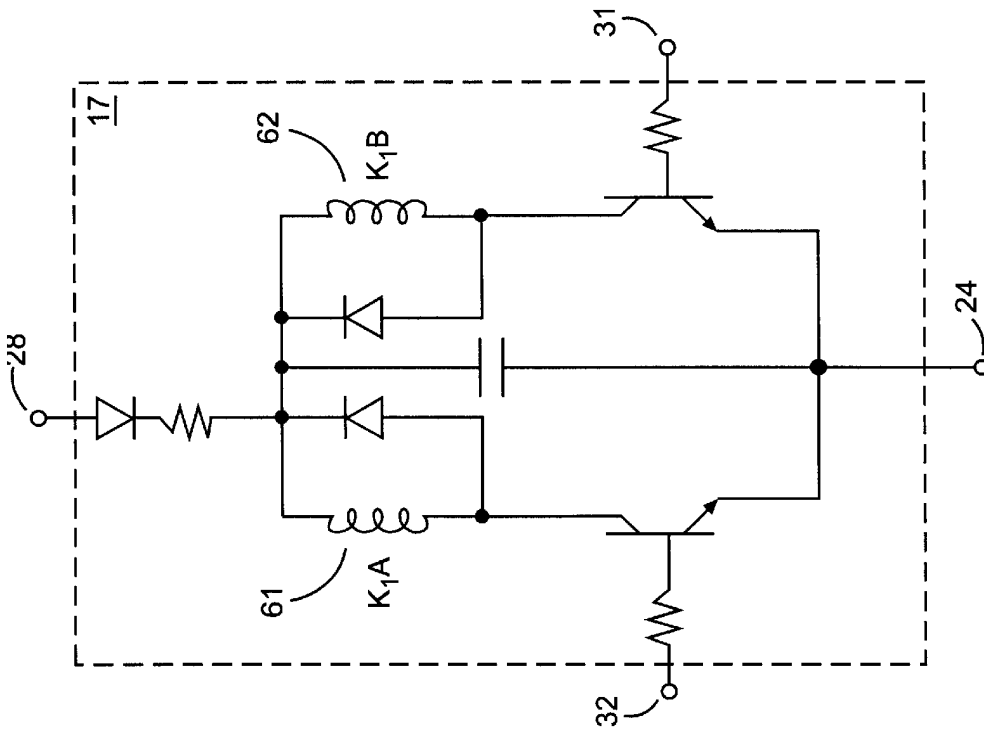


FIGURE 5a

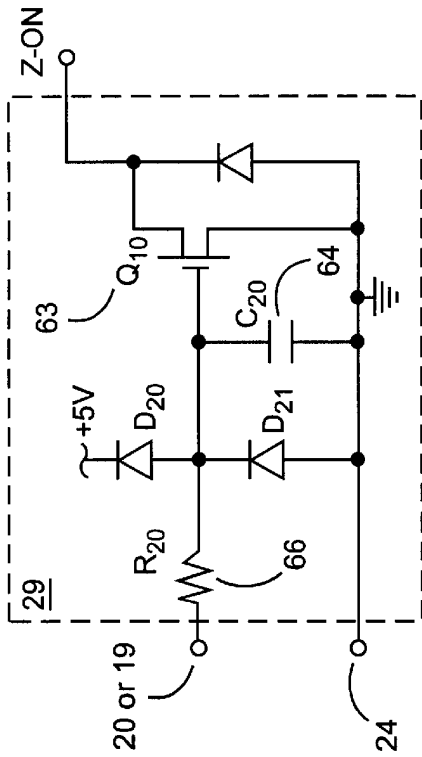


FIGURE 5b

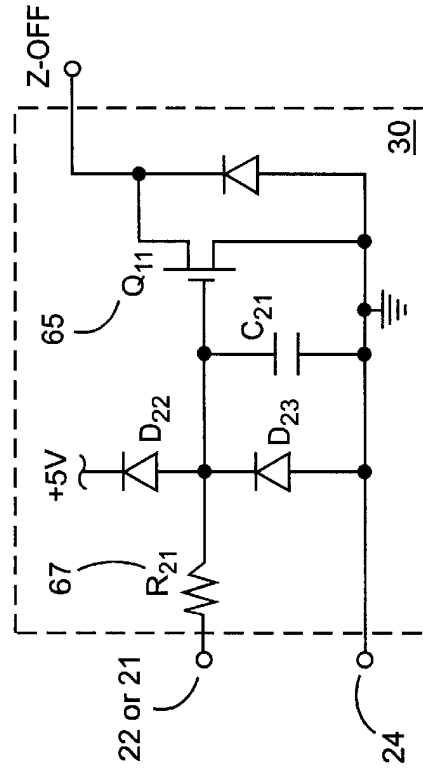


FIGURE 5c

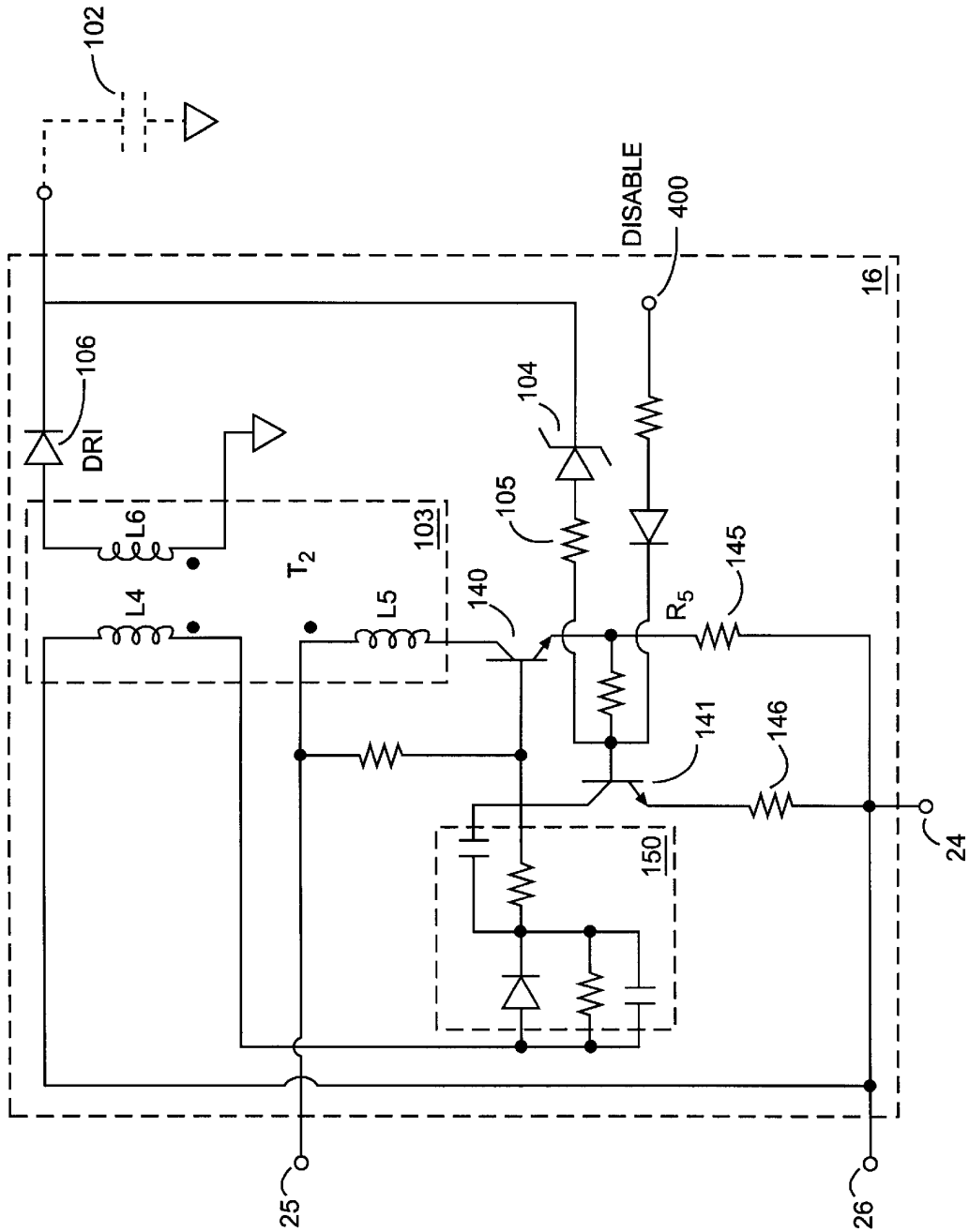


FIGURE 6

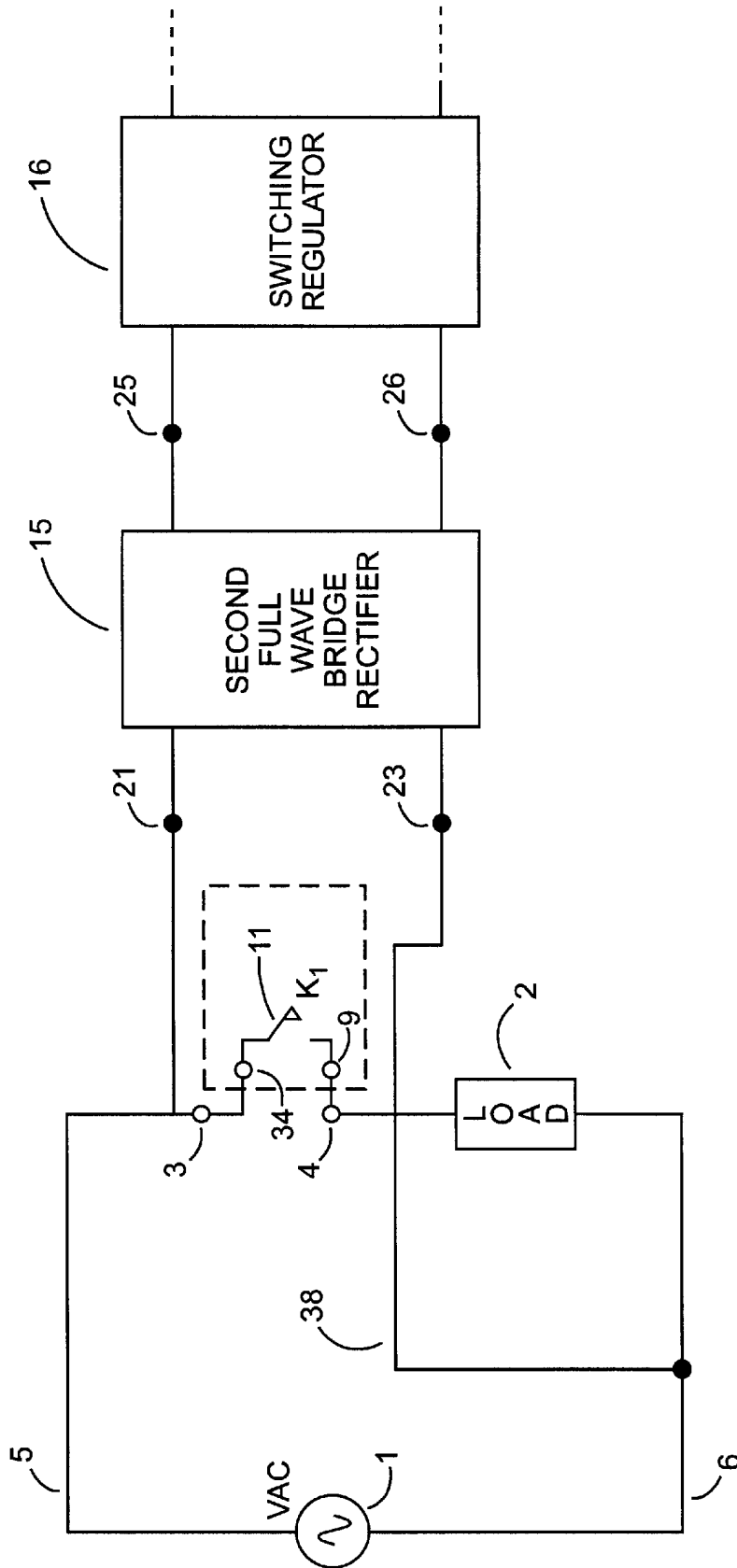


FIGURE 7

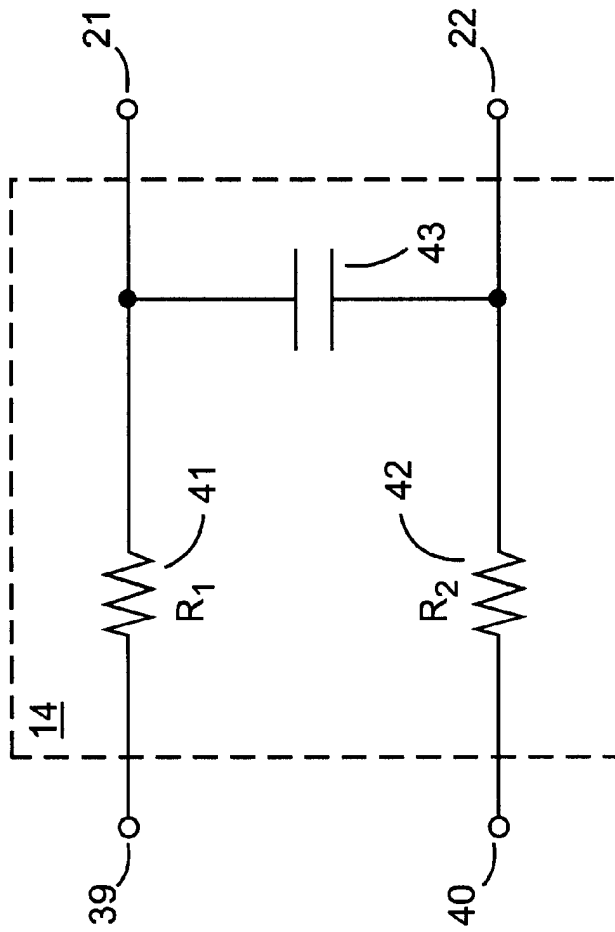


FIGURE 8

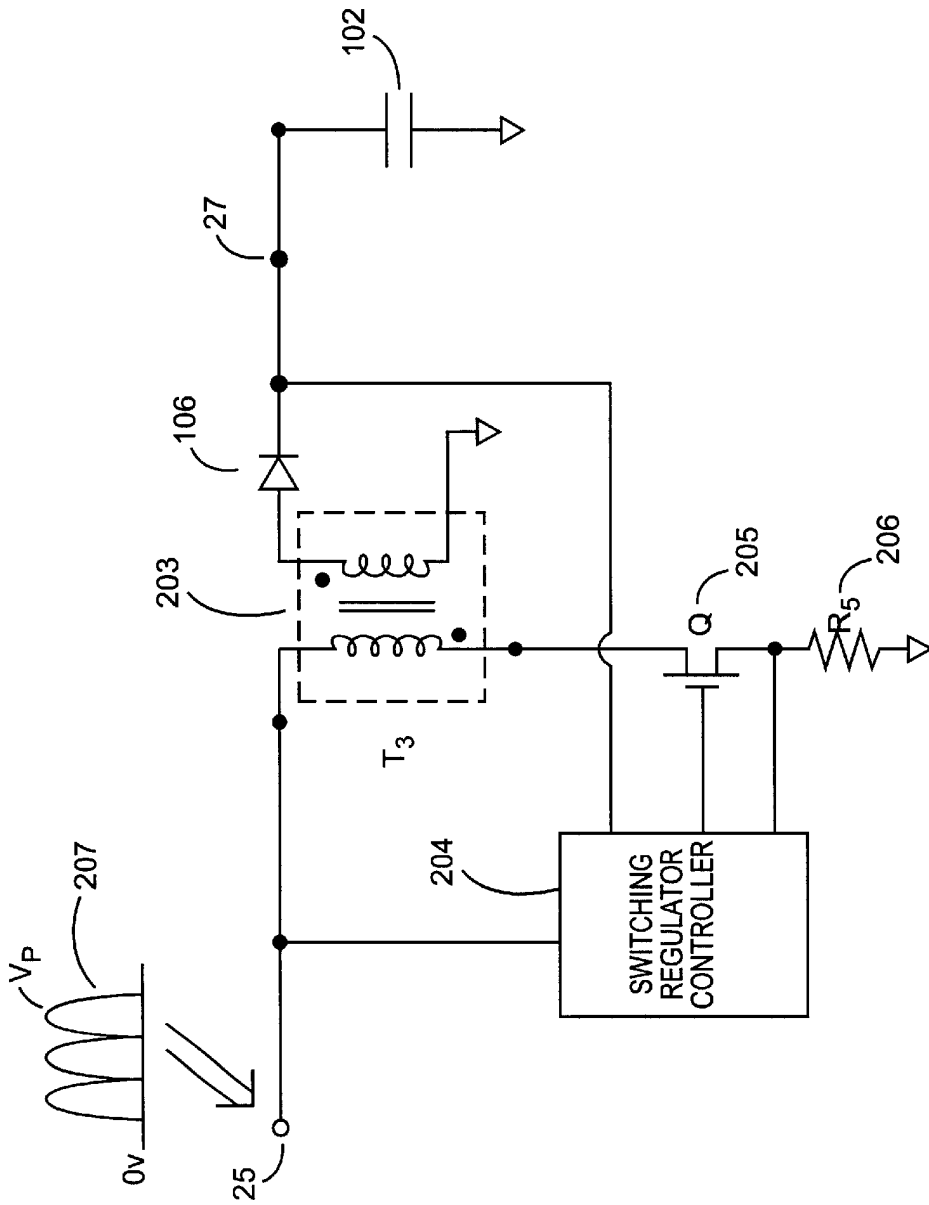


FIGURE 9

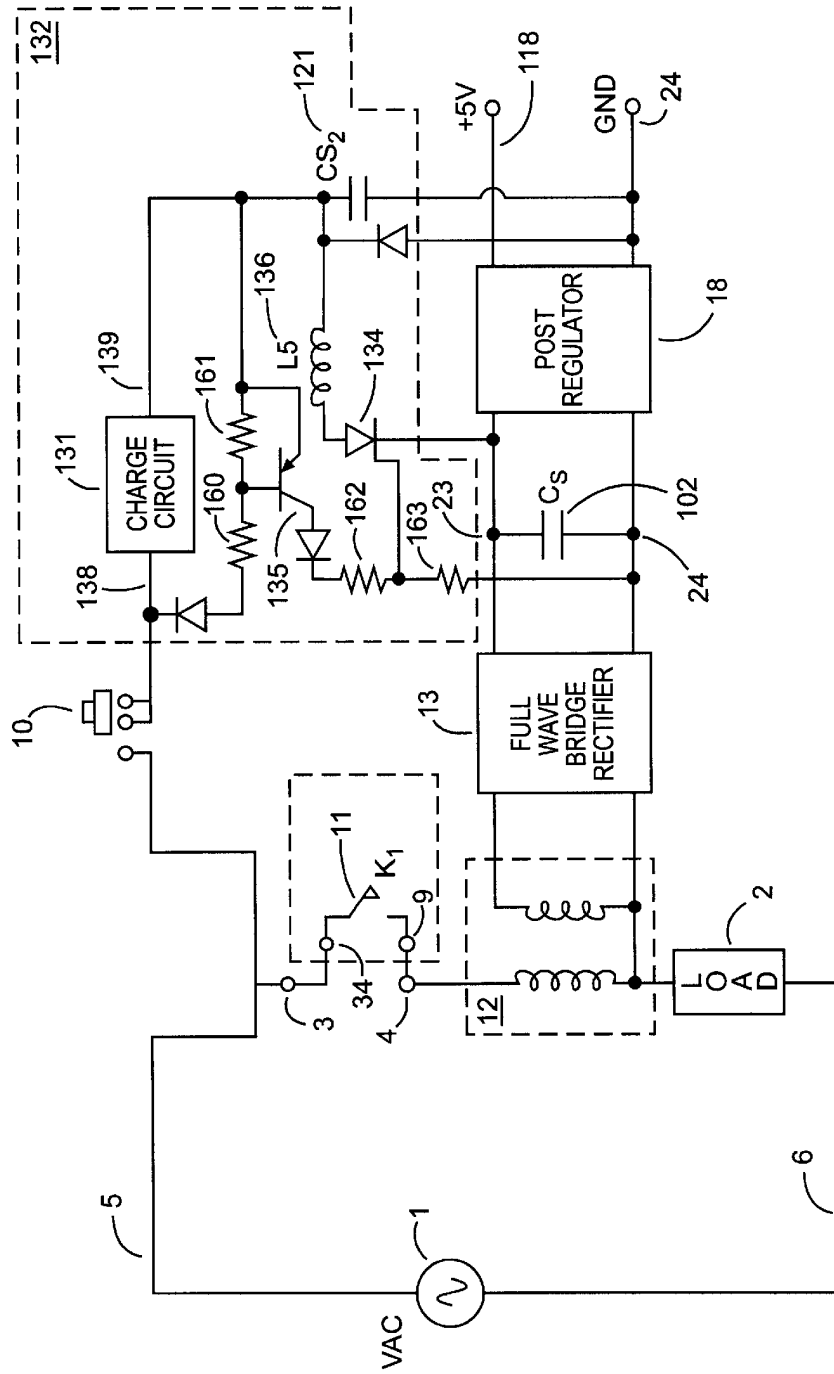


FIGURE 10

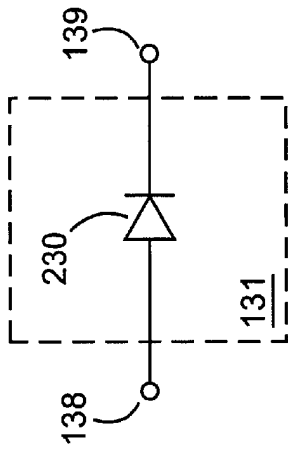


FIGURE 11a

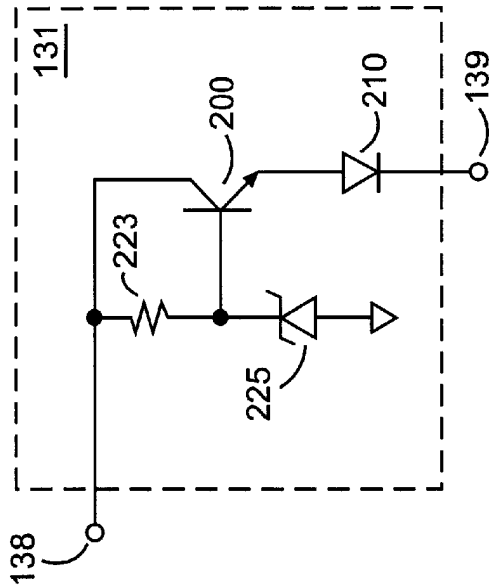


FIGURE 11b

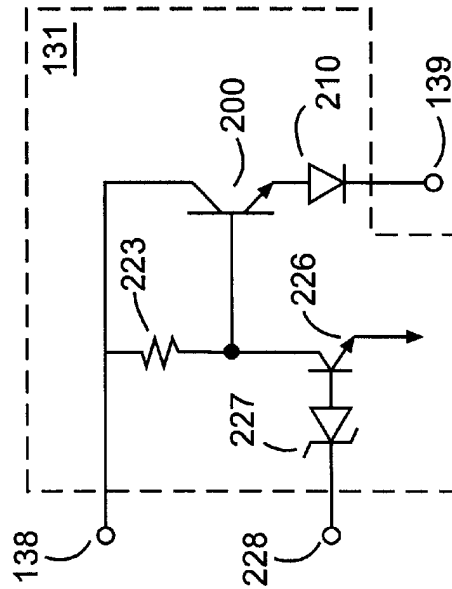


FIGURE 11c

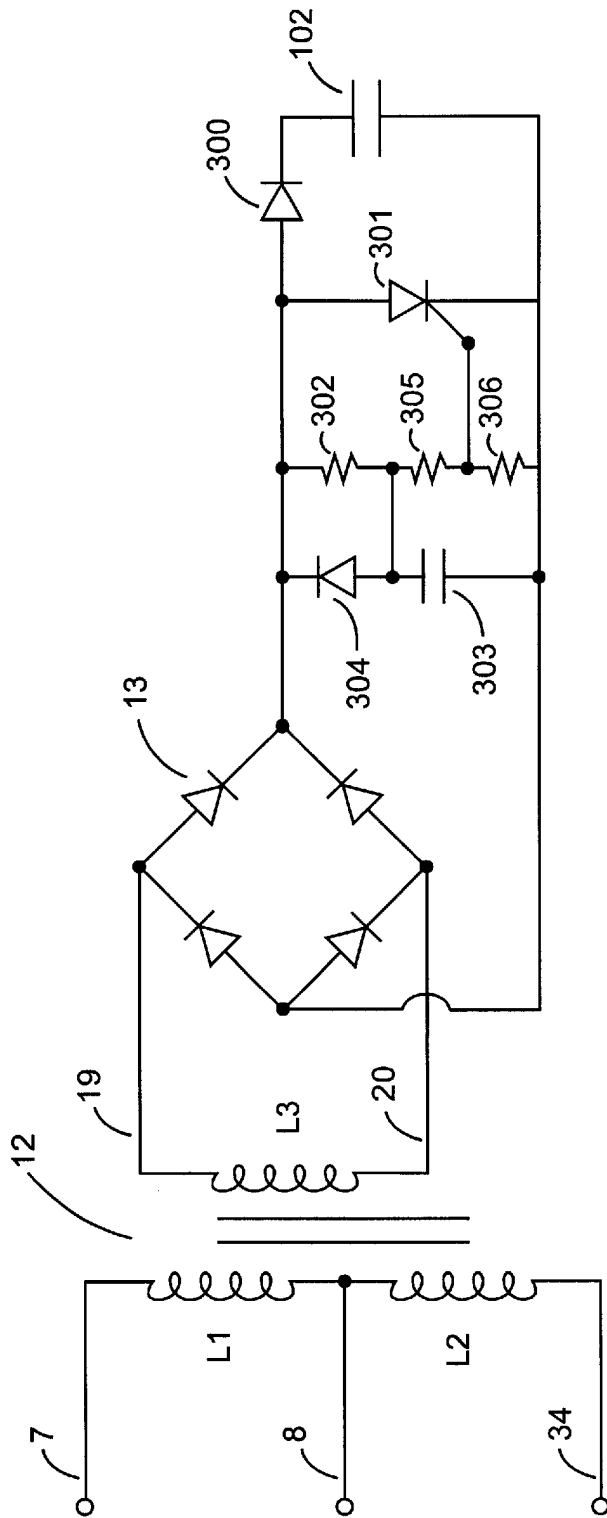


FIGURE 12

FIGURE 13a

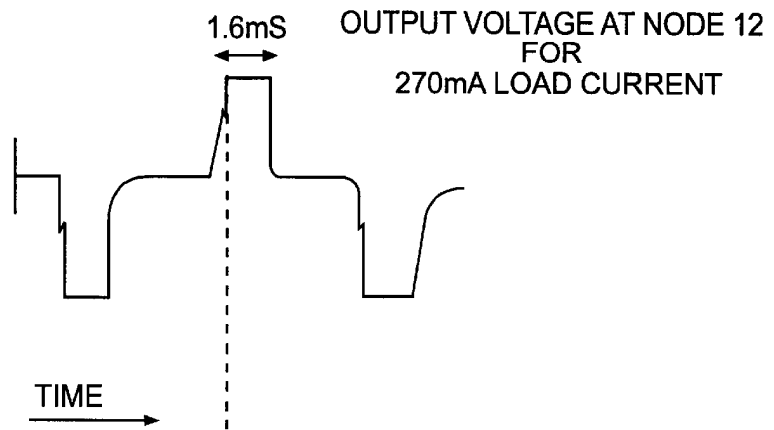


FIGURE 13b

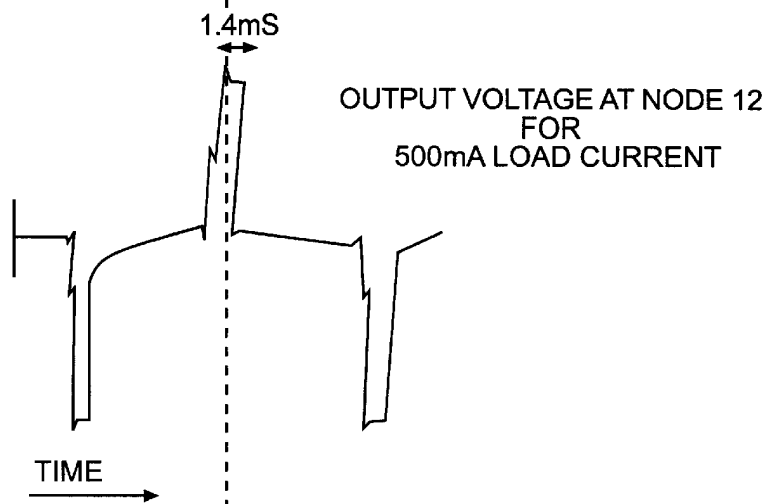
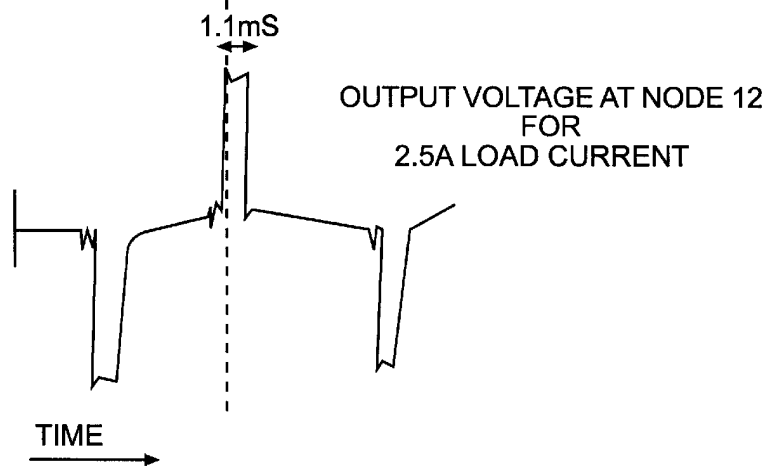


FIGURE 13c



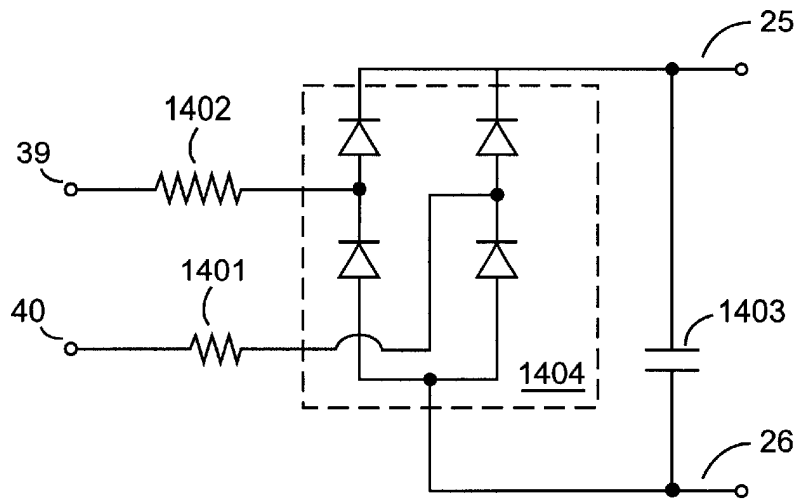


FIGURE 14a

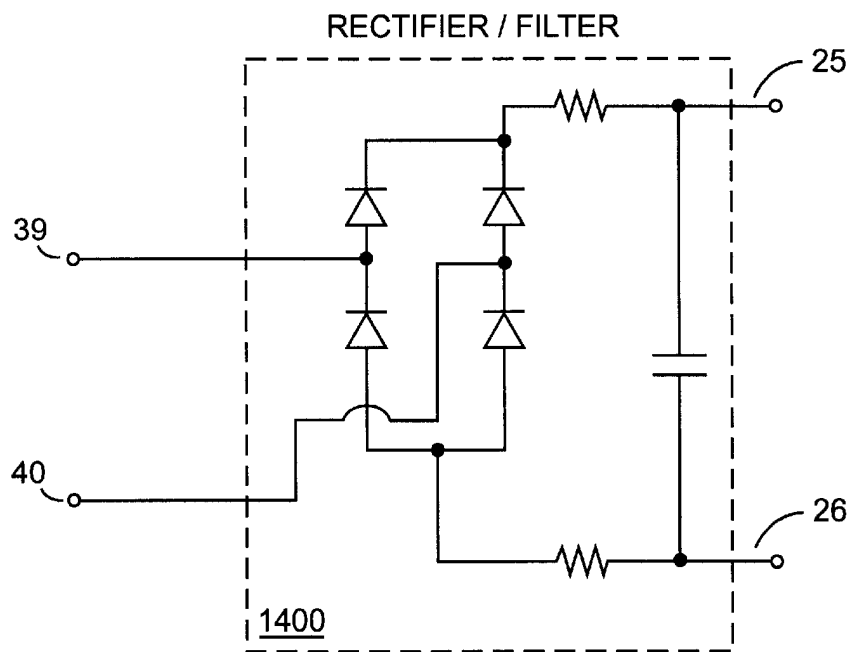


FIGURE 14b

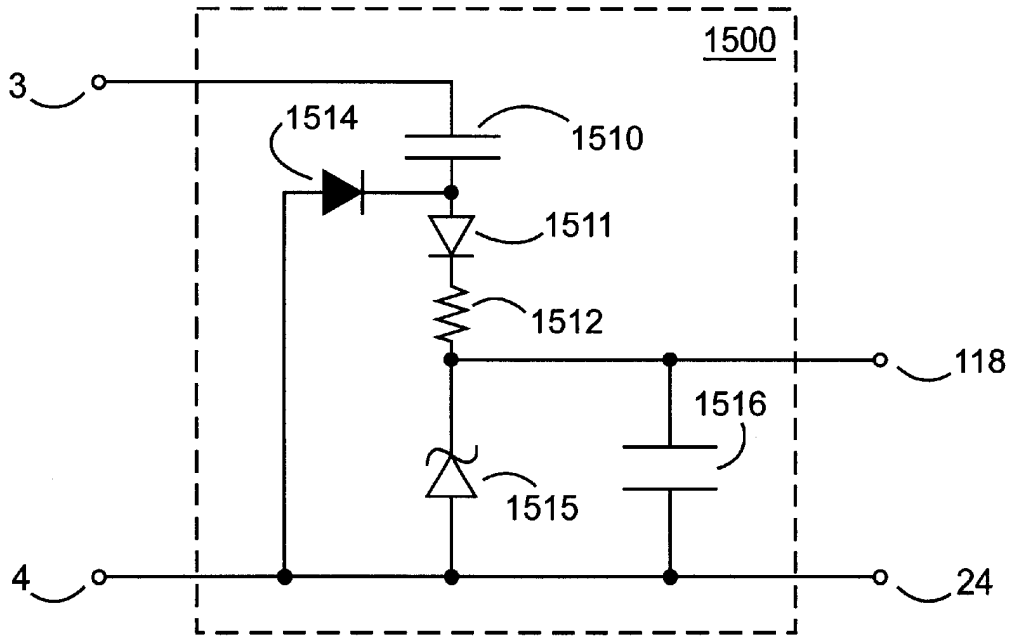


FIGURE 15a (PRIOR ART)

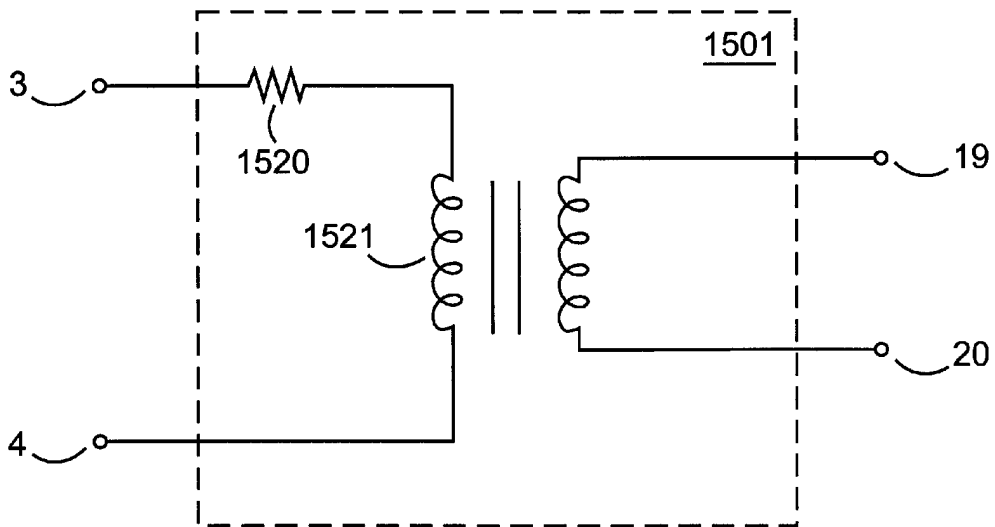
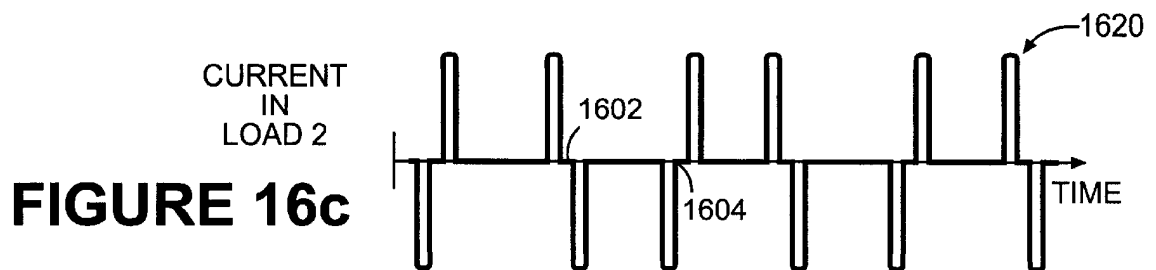
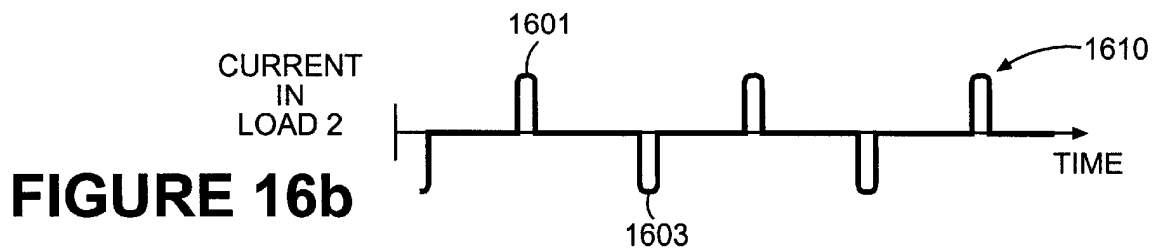
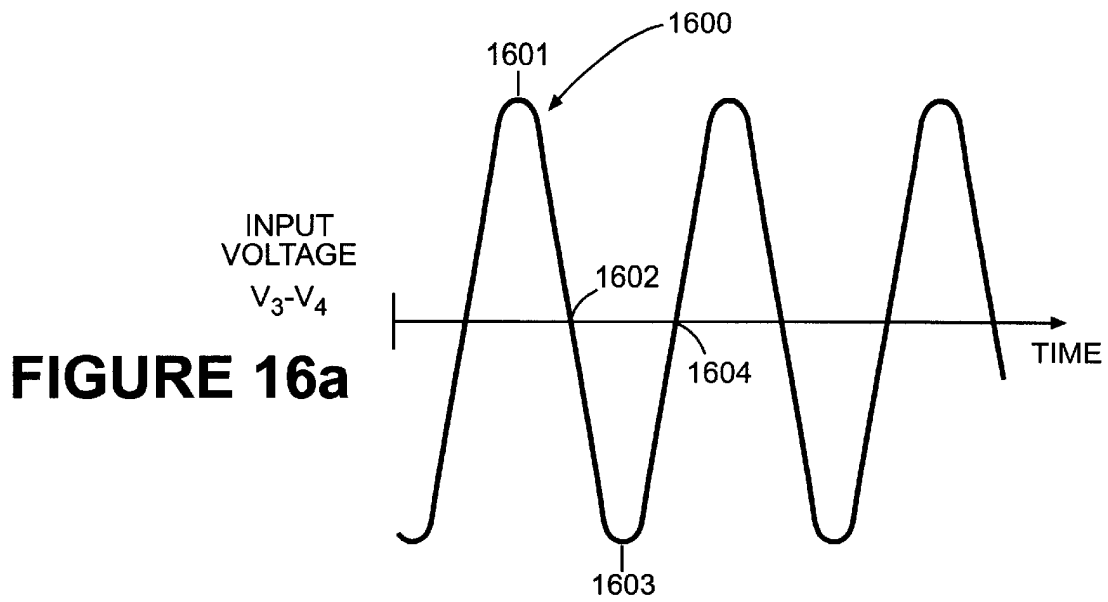
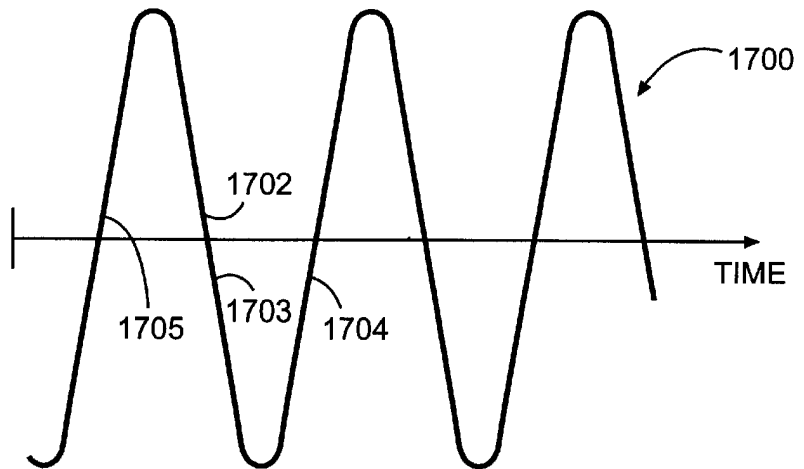


FIGURE 15b (PRIOR ART)



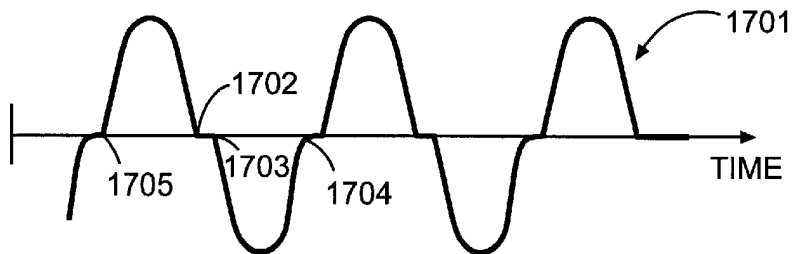
WAVEFORM
OF VOLTAGE
FROM
NODE 3 TO
NODE 4

FIGURE 17a



WAVEFORM
OF
CURRENT
INTO
LOAD 2

FIGURE 17b



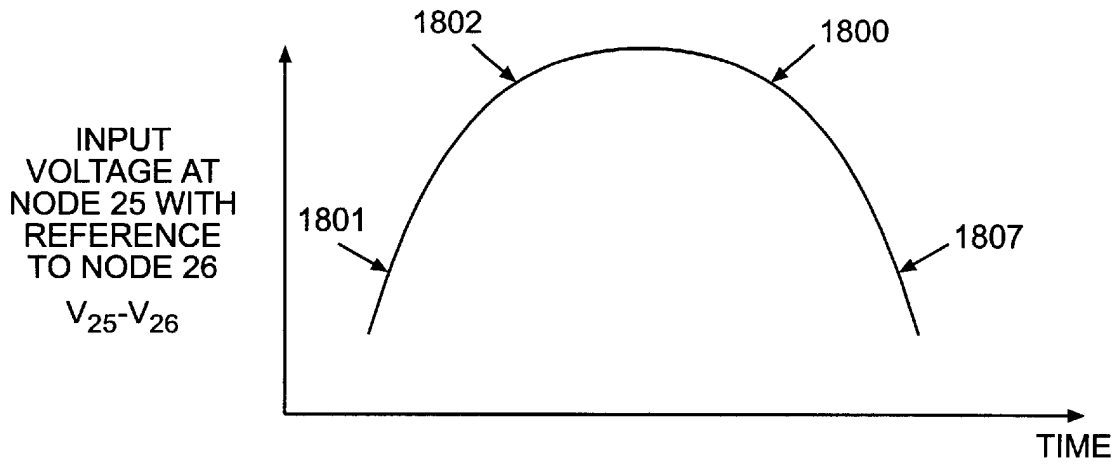


FIGURE 18a

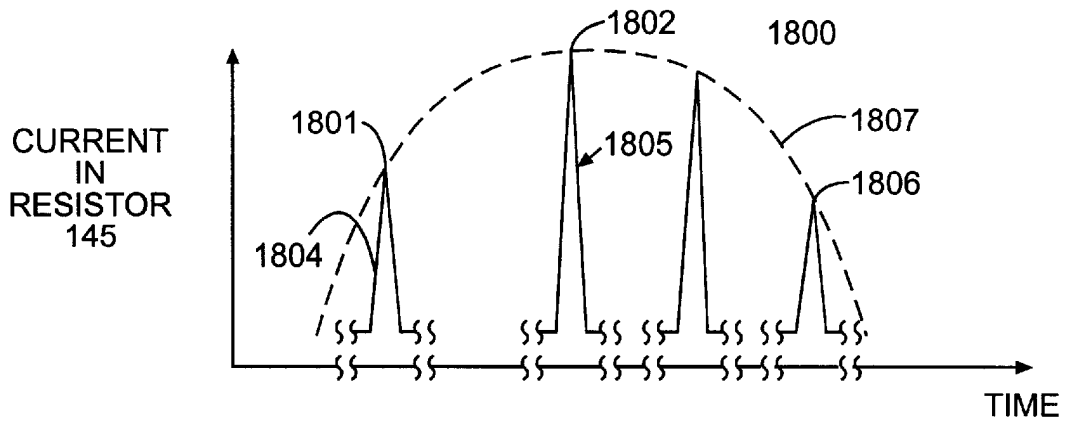


FIGURE 18b

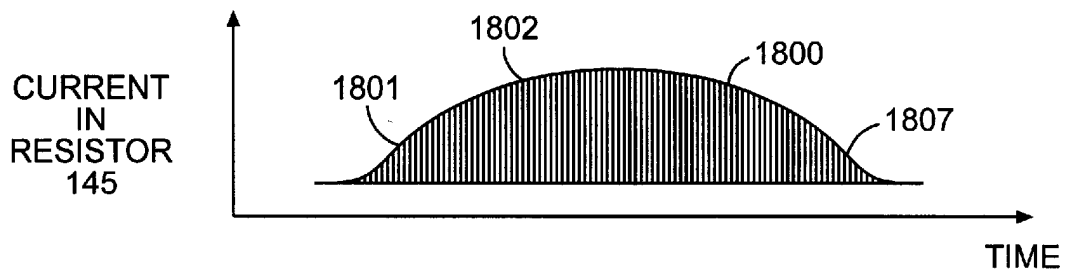


FIGURE 18c

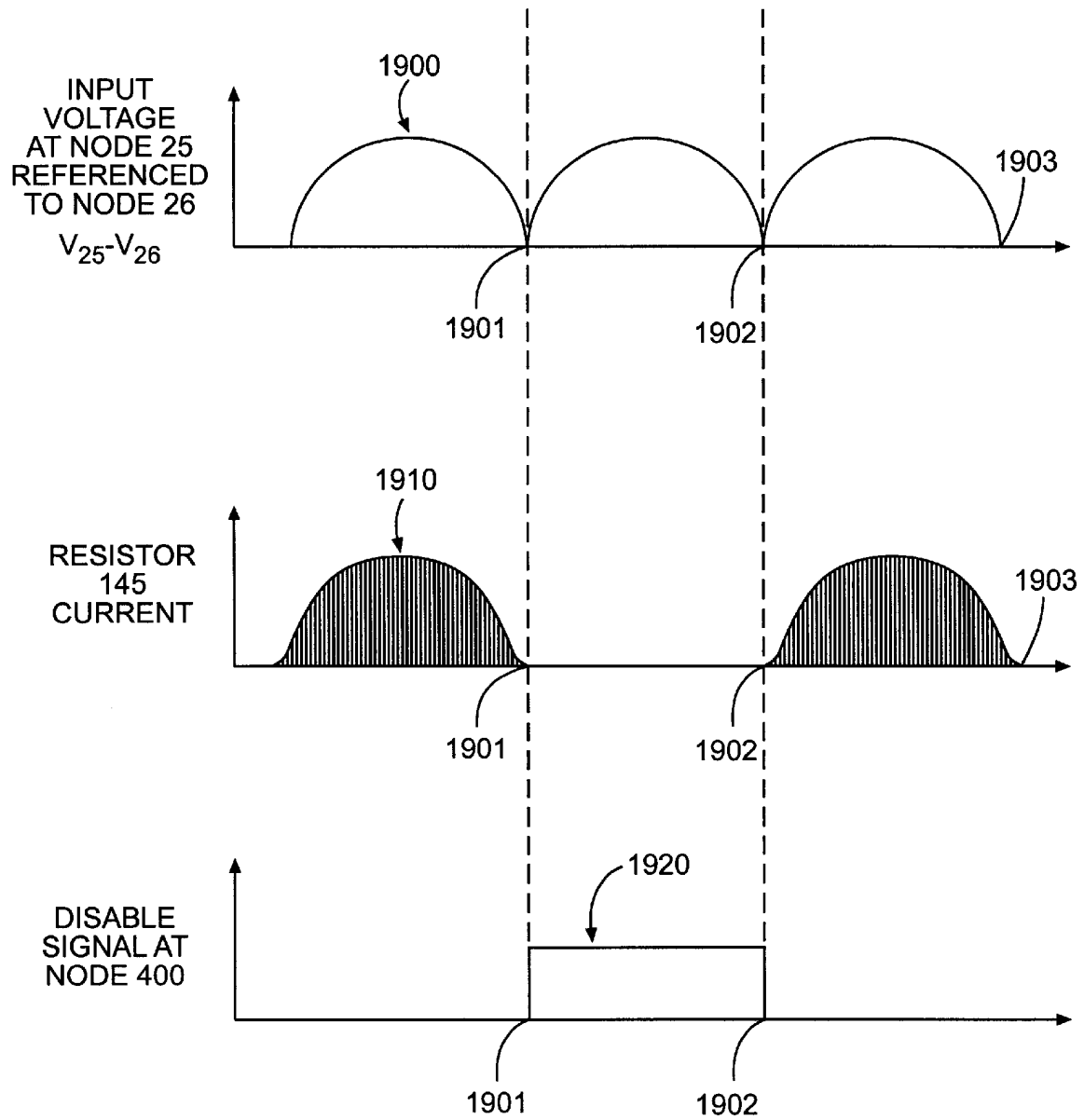


FIGURE 19

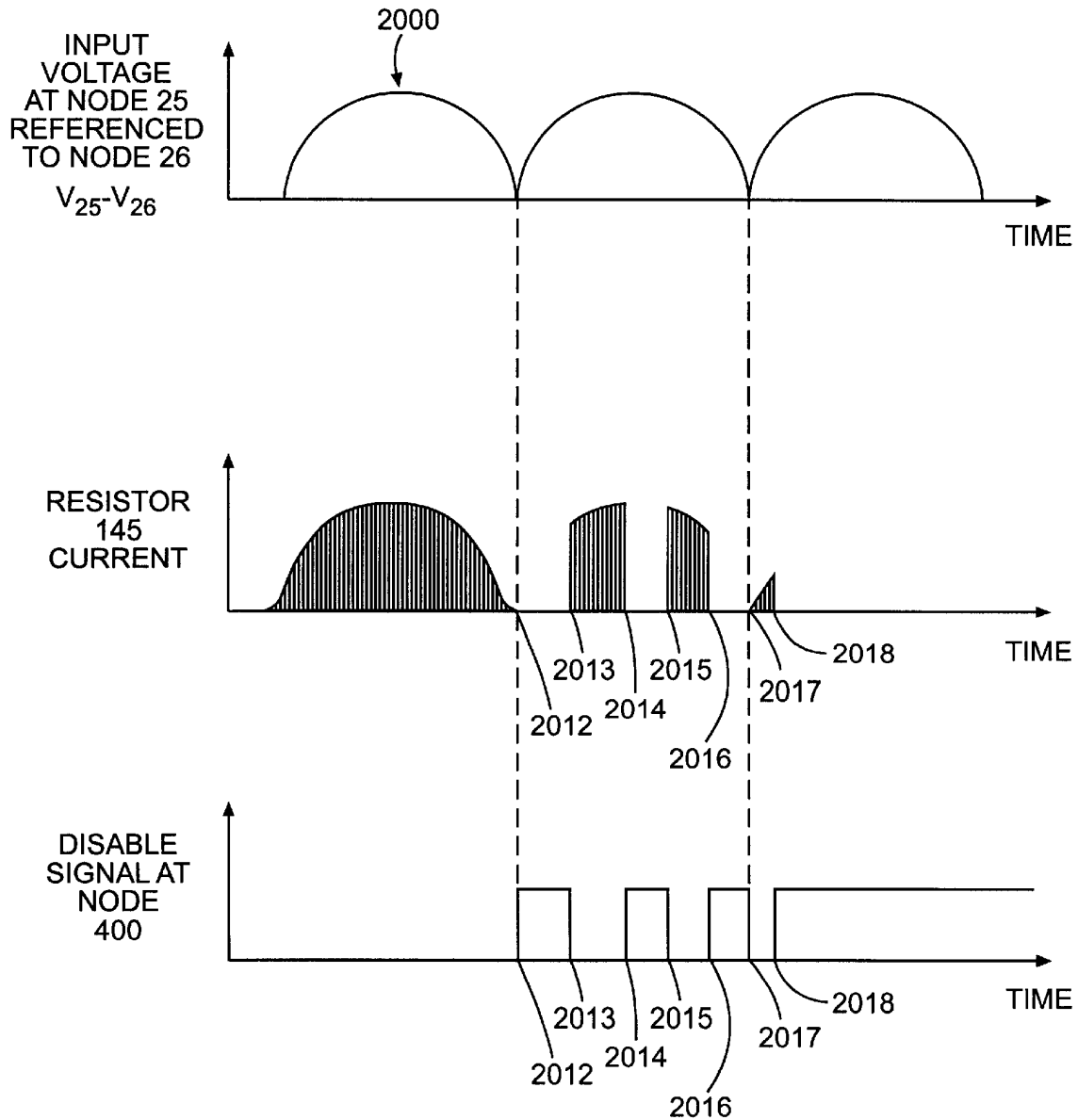


FIGURE 20

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ELECTRICAL LOAD SWITCH

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to power systems and more particularly to power systems that generate regulated power for use in electrical load switches including, for example, lighting system switches.

Commercially available units have been designed to replace existing wall switches in commercial and private applications. These units typically include load switching devices that replace the existing mechanical switch contacts that are used to switch the electrical load. These load switching devices may include relays, SCRs Triacs, transistors, or other electrical load switching devices that may be controlled by power control circuitry including, for example, a programmable controller, or the like. Many of these replacement units require a power supply for the power control circuitry that must supply power to the control circuitry whether or not the load switching device is in the on-state or the off-state. The wiring that exists in the existing switch enclosures, the mechanical constraints imposed by the existing switch enclosures, and the constraints presented by the existing loads cannot be easily altered and must be tolerated by the unit that is replacing the existing switch.

Units that have been designed as replacement devices for existing switches range from simple dimmer switches to intelligent lighting systems with microprocessor control. Viable commercial products that may be used around the world in business, as well as in private locations, require replacement units that are low cost, robust, meet stringent safety considerations, are small in size, have low loss and have attractive physical features.

Existing load switches are either three-wire, or two-wire systems. Three-wire systems require hot, load and safety ground wires, whereas two-wire systems require only hot and load wires. In three-wire systems, although not required for proper operation, a line voltage potential is present within the switch enclosure whether the contacts of the switch are open or closed, while in a two-wire system, voltage is present within the switch enclosure when the contacts of the switch are open, but no voltage or a very reduced voltage is present when the contacts of the switch are closed. In addition, three-wire systems usually place constraints on the amount of current that may flow in the safety ground. For two-wire systems, the safety ground is not required for operation but there are constraints on the amount of current carried by the load wire when the contacts of the switch are open. It is desirable to provide a power system useable in either a two-wire or three-wire system, with little if any circuit changes.

With two and three-wire systems, supplying more than 15 mA to the switch control electronics when the switch contacts are open while at the same time limiting current to the load to less than 3mA has been difficult to achieve in a very small package size.

FIG. 1 is a simple illustration of prior art two-wire and three-wire systems and a wall switch enclosure through which a source AC voltage 1 and a load 2 have been wired.

In a two-wire system, the wall switch enclosure 37 has only the two wires hot conductor 3 and load conductor 4, while in a three-wire system, safety ground 38 also appears within enclosure 37.

There presently exist many two-wire load switch replacement units. Most of these units add a transformer primary winding in series with the relay contacts so a portion of the

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input power may be extracted by magnetic coupling to a secondary winding. The inserted winding adds a voltage insertion drop in series with the load whenever it is conducting load current. Since it is undesirable to reduce the voltage available to a load in most instances, designs in this class try to keep the insertion voltage drop to a minimum. If the voltage drop is small with respect to the line voltage, and thus the current that flows in the primary winding of the inserted transformer is not dependent to a large extent on the inductance of the primary nor the reflected impedance from the secondary when loaded, the primary may be said to be driven by the load current.

The transformers used to derive power while the load is energized have a low insertion voltage requirement for the primary dictated by $L di/dt$; where L is the inductance of the primary and di/dt is the time rate of change of the input current. $L di/dt$ is insertion voltage and as such should be low enough when di/dt is large to not appreciably affect the operation of the load and large enough when di/dt is small to provide adequate power transfer to the secondary. Therefore, limiting the inductance L of the primary and providing adequate turns ratio so the secondary voltage is compatible with the selected regulator type is what dictates the transformer constraints. The di/dt term is determined by the frequency of the source line voltage and the load current. Prior art has been directed to a transformer that does not appreciably affect the current to the load. Among other disadvantages of these prior approaches, these devices have typically been too large to fit the strict size requirements for replacement switches.

It would be preferable for the replacement device's contacts to emulate the simple mechanical air gap switch it replaced. The replacement device should also have a similar voltage drop when the contacts are closed, essentially no leakage current when the contacts are open, and a guarantee of safety from hazardous voltages when the contacts are open. Prior devices do not provide all of these desirable advantages.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention solves the above-noted failings of the prior art by providing a power system for an electrical load switch, and an electrical load switch incorporating the power system, which replaces the simple mechanical contacts of a wall switch with those elements necessary to power control circuitry, provide controllable contacts, ensure thermal stability in a wall switch enclosure, control the off-state leakage current to ensure safe and robust operation of sensitive loads, and provide a safety device to guarantee that a no leakage off-state exists that protects a maintenance person from voltage potential with respect to neutral during load replacement.

The present invention provides an improved power system for a two-wire or three-wire wall switch replacement unit that handles high current loads, operates over a wide input voltage range, is compatible with most lighting systems, is robust, and safe. The power system of the present invention also has a good power factor, low EMI, and low losses, when the load switch is in the off-state.

More specifically, the invention contemplates a controllable electrical switch for selectively connecting a load to a source of electrical current, the switch including a controllable switching device having a conducting state and a non-conducting state, that operates to selectively connect the source of electrical current to the load, a switching regulator having an input connected to said switching device and

having an output providing a regulated voltage supply, and a switch controller. connected to and powered by the regulated voltage supply output of the switching regulator, for controlling the controllable switching device. In a two-wire circuit, the switching regulator is connected across the switching device to the hot and load conductors. In a three-wire system, the switching regulator is connected between the hot conductor and safety ground.

The invention may also include a transformer having a primary winding and a secondary winding, the primary winding being connected in series with the controllable switching device and the secondary being connected to supply the regulated output voltage when the switching device is in the conducting state.

The output of the switching regulator may have an energy storage capacitor for filtering the regulated output voltage, and a post regulator may be connected to the output of the energy storage capacitor, to provide the regulated output voltage.

The present invention may also include first and second zero crossing detection circuits for detecting when the source of electrical current through the switching device crosses zero when the controllable switching device is in the conducting state, and for detecting when the voltage across the switching device crosses zero when the controllable switching device is in the non-conducting state, respectively. Then the switch controller controls the controllable switching device based upon zero crossings detected by said first and second zero crossing detection circuits.

The switching regulator used in the present invention preferably has an input power factor of at least 0.6, and most preferably at least 0.9. Further, the switching regulator used in the present invention may take many forms, including, for example, a step down switching regulator circuit, a buck regulator or a flyback regulator. In addition, the switching regulator preferably accepts input voltages in the range of 8 volts to 440 volts.

These and other features and advantages of the present invention will become apparent to those of ordinary skill in this art with reference to the drawings and following detailed description.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a prior art AC voltage source and load.

FIG. 2 is a block diagram of an exemplary embodiment of the power system and electrical load switch of the present invention.

FIGS. 3a-3b are schematics of the input transformer used in the embodiment of FIG. 2.

FIGS. 4a-4b are schematics of the first and second full wave bridge rectifiers used in the embodiment of FIG. 2.

FIG. 5a is a schematic of the relay driver used in the embodiment of FIG. 2.

FIGS. 5b and 5c are schematics of the zero crossing detectors used in the embodiment of FIG. 2.

FIG. 6 is a schematic of an exemplary embodiment of a switching regulator circuit useable in the embodiment of FIG. 2.

FIG. 7 is a schematic of an alternate embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 8 is a schematic of the common mode filter on the input of the second fullwave bridge rectifier useable in the present invention.

FIG. 9 is a schematic of a generalized buck switching regulator with transformer output coupling useable in the embodiment of FIG. 2.

FIG. 10 is an alternate switching regulator embodiment of the present invention.

FIGS. 11a-11c are various charge circuits for the switching regulator in FIG. 10.

FIG. 12 is a transformer saturation limiting circuit useable in the present invention.

FIGS. 13a-c are waveforms of the transformer 12 output voltages under various loads.

FIGS. 14a and 14b are examples of combination rectifier/filters that are useable in the present invention.

FIGS. 15a and 15b are examples of off-state power circuits

FIGS. 16a-c are graphs illustrating a poor power factor lights-off supply.

FIGS. 17a and 17b are graphs illustrating the desirable power of the present invention.

FIGS. 18a-c are graphs of the input current of an embodiment of the present invention.

FIGS. 19 and 20 are graphs illustrating the disable feature of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

The present invention is directed to power systems for electrical load switches including devices that may be inserted in place of a common mechanical wall switch which is used to control the flow of current to a load from an AC line voltage source.

The present invention may be used to replace the contacts of switch 36 (FIG. 1) with electrical circuit components that include a switching device for connecting the load 2 to the input line voltage 1, as well as circuits for generating regulated power to operate a controller for the switching device. The replacement switching device has two operating states; it is either on and conducting (on-state) or off and not conducting (off-state). The device for generating regulated power must operate in these two states of the switching device. In the present disclosure, power derived when the load is energized is called on-state power and power derived when the load is de-energized is called off-state power. The replacement switching device for connecting an AC load may be either a relay or one of many solid state switching devices. A latching relay will be used as the replacement switching device for the remainder of this disclosure with the understanding that other switching devices such as SCRs, triacs, FETs and transistors could be used with corresponding compatible driver circuitry, without departing from the scope of the invention.

The power system 101 of the present invention is illustrated in FIG. 2 and includes power inputs 7, 8, and 9 which may be connected to the two hot conductor 3 and load conductor 4 depending on the operating power level. Power inputs 7, 8 and 9 may be used to connect to the load in a pre-existing wall switch, or may be used to connect into a newly constructed circuit. Power system 101 produces a low power output 118 (illustrated as +5V) referenced to a circuit ground 24. The power system 101 receives or sends logic signals used to control the selective energization and de-energization of a load. In the illustrative embodiment, these logic signals are: 120 (Z-on), 121 (Z-off), 122 (Rly-off), 123 (Rly-on), and 400 (Disable). The logic signals are sent to and received from power control circuitry 33 used, in a known manner, to control the replacement contacts 11 of latching relay 70. Power control circuitry 33 may be of any known type and may include a microprocessor or micro-controller. Power control circuitry 33 may operate to selec-

tively control the activation of contacts **11** by use of any known motion sensing technology including, for example, passive infrared (PIR), ultrasonic, microwave and acoustic, to name but a few, or combinations of two or more of these technologies. Controller **33** may also activate LED's (not shown) to indicate motion detection, and may also have mechanical switches used to initiate controller operation for example to over ride the sensing technology in order to power or unpower the load, to reset the controller, or the like.

Different embodiments of transformer **12** are shown in FIGS. **3a** and **3b**. FIG. **3a** is a tapped transformer primary. The single primary winding transformer of FIG. **3b** may be used if care is exercised in providing a single winding with the characteristics of the tapped primary of FIG. **3a**.

The tapped transformer primary windings shown in FIG. **2** and the contacts **11** of latching relay **70** replace the mechanical contacts of a pre-existing switch (for example, **36**, FIG. **1**). One side of the load is connected to load conductor **4** and conductor **4** is connected to one side of the replacement contacts **11** via terminal **9**. The hot conductor **3** is connected to the hot wire **5** of the input voltage **1**. During installation, hot conductor **3** is connected to either terminal **7** or terminal **8** depending on the load current range.

The power system **101** has two modes of operation, a first mode when contacts **11** are open and a second mode when contacts **11** are closed. When input voltage **1** is activated after the replacement unit is installed, the latching relay **70** is either on or off. If the contacts **11** are closed then current will flow through the primary windings of **T1** and the load **2**. The magnitude of the current will depend on the impedance of the load and the voltage of the input voltage **1**.

The transformer **12** is effective only when the contacts **11** are closed, and power system **101** operates in the first mode. The primary winding of transformer **12** is in series with the contacts **11** and should have a low resistive voltage drop to keep the insertion losses low and a minimum reactive voltage drop to least affect the voltage at the load. Because of the limited ability of a typical wall switch enclosure to dissipate heat, it is desirable to keep the losses low. The insertion losses are maximum at maximum current. The reactive voltage drop is dictated by how many primary turns of transformer **12** are required so that at minimum current the transformer **12**, secondary power is enough to power the power control circuitry **33**. In accordance with one exemplary embodiment of the present invention it is desired that the secondary of the transformer produce about 150 mW. In wall switch replacement power systems there are opposing requirements for keeping the number of input transformer primary turns low to limit resistive losses and for keeping the number of turns high enough to generate on-state power while also not producing too much reactive voltage drop to affect the load voltage. These opposing requirements for the transformer **12** are met by carefully designing the transformer windings, core cross-section and core material.

One illustrative embodiment of the transformer **12** has a primary with two windings labeled **L1** and **L2** as shown in FIG. **3a**. The winding **L2** is the high power winding and the series combination of **L1** and **L2** is the low power winding. The appropriate connection to **7** or **8** is made at installation time. In the illustrative embodiment, the transformer winding **L2** is designed to have **21** turns of six strands of **28** gauge wire connected in parallel. Foil windings may be used to achieve the low resistance of this primary winding but cost may dictate the use of parallel wires. In the low current range, winding **L1** adds **43** turns of single strand **28** gauge

wire in series with winding **L2**. Wire resistance, which affects the insertion loss, is low for winding **L2** and higher for the combination of **L1** and **L2** in series. There may be additional losses that are attributable to core losses. The two primary winding configurations in the exemplary embodiment are designed for current ranges of 0.2A rms. to 2.0A rms. with **L1** and **L2** connected in series and 1.6A rms. to 5A rms. with **L2** alone. The range that is connected at installation depends on the maximum current, power or variability of the load. For example, when powering a lighting system, one may have several fixtures in parallel that determines the entire load and one of these loads may be lost because of failure. The number of turns in the primary determines how low the load current may go while still permitting the power supply to power the control circuitry **33**. If the range is selected without consideration, then the loss of a fixture in the high current range may drop the load current such that transformer **12** may not have enough turns to generate adequate on-state power. In the illustrative embodiment, transformer **12** has a secondary winding of 325 turns of 36 gauge wire.

A transformer **12** that provides adequate output voltage and current at the lowest possible input conditions would naturally generate significantly higher output voltage when the input current is high. This high output voltage may create difficult output regulator design problems. In the illustrative embodiment, the cross-section of the magnetic transformer core and the magnetic material for transformer **12** have been selected to give a high non-saturating flux level consistent with keeping the transformer a small size and low cost. In this way the smallest number of turns may be used to give the maximum output at minimum input. As the current through the transformer increases above the minimum necessary for low input current operation the transformer may saturate. Since the transformer **12** may be designed to give the desired output at the minimum input current, higher current will also deliver adequate power. However when the current during a half cycle exceeds the minimum saturation of magnetic core of transformer **12**, saturation causes transformer action to collapse and thus limits the power output. The only insertion loss under these conditions is the result of the resistance of the primary wire, to a minor extent the resistance of the secondary wire, and magnetostrictive losses. The inductance of the primary is in fact maximized for the minimum current case and the wire resistance is minimized for the high input current range. Over an input range the transformer **12** may saturate and if so losses are minimized to manage the heat generated in the wall switch enclosure over the wide load power range. In an exemplary embodiment of the present invention the magnetic core material is M6 silicon steel. The transformer **12** of the present invention may handle a current range of 0.2 to 5 Amperes rms while minimizing thermal losses and guaranteeing 100 mW regulated low voltage output of the post regulator **18**.

A problem that can occur when a 50/60 Hz transformer is allowed to saturate is the development of audible noise created by magnetostrictive forces causing motion of the transformer laminates. This is especially true when the transformer is inexpensive and the laminations are magnetic steel plates. Because a system incorporating the present invention may be used in quiet environments such as offices, libraries, or study areas, the production of audible noise may be considered a distraction or annoyance and therefore unacceptable. To solve this problem the transformer cores are usually vacuum impregnated with a polymeric material to dampen and cushion the mechanical motion of the laminates.

FIG. 12 shows a circuit for reducing the audible noise in transformer 12 by preventing the core of transformer 12 from saturating. When a load current flows through at least one of the primary windings L1 and L2 of transformer 12, a voltage is developed across winding L3 that is rectified by full-wave rectifier bridge 13. Other known full-wave rectifier circuits could also be used. Transformer 12 operates as a current transformer, so the rectified voltage increases until diode 300 begins conducting. At this point, energy storage capacitor 102 is charged by the energy delivered through transformer 12. Large values of load currents can cause the core of transformer 12 to reach a flux density level sufficient to cause saturation. This is undesirable, because reaching core saturation causes audible noise and increases core losses. The peak-to-peak flux excursion in a transformer core is proportional to the value of the time integral of the voltage present across any transformer winding integrated over one half-cycle of the winding voltage. The value of this time integral is measured in volt-seconds. The circuit of FIG. 12 is designed to trigger SCR 301 before the volt-seconds reach the point where the core of transformer 12 saturates. The voltage across winding L3 is shorted out when SCR 301 is triggered, and this limits the volt-seconds across that winding in order to prevent core saturation. SCR 301 could be replaced by other types of controlled switches provided that appropriate drive circuitry is included so that the action of SCR 301 is emulated.

Capacitor 303 and resistors 302, 305, and 306 form a simple integrator circuit in which the voltage across resistor 306 is approximately proportional to the peak flux density in the core of transformer 12. By properly selecting the values of the components in the integrator circuit, SCR 301 will be triggered before the core of transformer 12 is saturated. The effective RC time constant of the integrator circuit is typically designed to have a value that is greater than the duration of one half-cycle of the AC line voltage.

Diode 304 discharges capacitor 303 when SCR 301 is triggered, thereby resetting the integrator circuit for the next half cycle of the AC line voltage. Blocking diode 300 prevents energy storage capacitor 102 from being discharged when SCR 301 fires. Diode 300 could be replaced by a transistor or other switched device that accomplishes the blocking function.

When the contacts 11 are open most of the input AC voltage 1 will be present across the open contacts, and power system 101 operates in the second mode (off-state). To extract power from the input source voltage 1 when the contacts are open requires current to flow and thus a "leakage current" is generated. Two conditions result from the addition of parallel circuitry around the open contacts 11. First, a voltage with respect to neutral is present at terminal 9 or load conductor 4 when the replacement unit is installed and the contacts 11 that replaced the switch are open, and second, some amount of current now flows through the load that would usually experience zero current when the contacts 11 are open.

In the first condition, voltage potential across the load may be eliminated by inserting a mechanical contact in series with the off-state power circuit. The mechanical switch 10 disconnects the off-state power circuitry and eliminates the parallel path around the main power contacts 11. The mechanical switch 10 has the only off-state indication on the wall unit and this enables the maintenance person to service the load when relay 70 has contacts 11 open. The second condition creates a potential problem with solid state, high efficiency electronic ballasts. These loads are sensitive to current flow during the off-state. Large leakage

currents cause ballast circuitry to slowly charge and eventually trigger a turn-on cycle. This charged energy is quickly discharged in lamps causing lamps to flicker and then the cycle is repeated. Minimizing the off-state current to ensure the largest range of usable loads may require the off-state circuitry to have the following characteristics: first, high efficiency to reduce the average off-state current, and second, conversion circuitry that controls the peak amplitude of the off-state current.

The off-state voltage is high, therefore most of the input AC voltage will appear across the open contacts 11. The off state supply of the present invention is able to supply substantially more rms current to controller 33 than rms current through load 2.

In contrast, prior approaches to supply off-state power are shown in FIGS. 15a and 15b. In FIG. 15a, 1500 is a circuit that generates off-state power using a halfwave rectified capacitor charging circuit. In FIG. 15a, off-state rms current supplied to controller 33 is approximately equal to the rms current supplied to load 2. In FIG. 15b, 1501 is another circuit that generates off-state power using a 60 Hz step down transformer 1521. In FIG. 15b, off state rms current supplied to the controller in this instance can be substantially greater than the rms current supplied to load 2.

The circuits of FIGS. 15a and 15b may only have good power factor and low peak currents only if their efficiencies are low. Resistors 1512 should be large and capacitor 1510 should be small to keep the power factor high. Either the value of resistor 1520 or the winding resistance of 1521 should be high to keep the power factor of FIG. 15b high. These high resistance values will result in undesirably poor efficiency. In addition, the line frequency transformer 1521 of circuit 1501 may be too large to meet packaging requirements.

The switching regulator design of the present invention meets the design requirements in a smaller package size than is possible with the line frequency transformer off-state design. This is primarily due to the smaller transformer possible with operation at the higher frequency. Further, a switching regulator will provide a higher ratio of controller current to load current.

The off-state power conversion circuitry needs to convert from a high voltage/low current to a low voltage/higher current dictated by the low voltage output power requirement. When the input voltage 1 is at its lowest operational level the off-state power regulator requires the highest input current for a given efficiency and output power delivered. The off-state circuitry typically operates over 80 to 310 volts rms range. There will be some voltage drop across the load in the off state. This embodiment of the off-state power regulator is intended for use in 120V to 277V rms line voltage applications. The illustrated embodiment allows for a 40V rms drop across the load in the off state by operating down to an input voltage of 80V rms and a maximum of 310V rms.

The off-state circuitry of the present invention is shown in FIG. 2 and comprises filter 14, full wave rectifier 15 and switching regulator 16. To minimize the reactance seen across the open contacts 11, the input circuitry to the switching regulator 16 has limited input capacitance and extracts energy from the input voltage 1 so the input voltage 1 and input current to switching regulator 16 exhibit a desirable power factor. Power factor is defined as (rms Volts)*(rms Amperes)/Watts. For a given rms input voltage to the switching power supply, and a given input power, having a high power factor minimizes the rms value of the

input current to the power supply. Having a high power factor also implies that the current waveform is not excessively peaky, since having a peaky input current waveform, and holding input watts and input voltage constant would increase the rms current in comparison with an input current having the same shape as the input voltage. In the exemplary embodiment, switching regulator **16** has a large input power factor, for example, at least 0.6, and preferably at least 0.9.

To minimize the input capacitance of the full wave rectifier **15**, no large output filter is used on its output and only a small capacitance, for example, 0.022 uf, is used on the input to the bridge circuit. This capacitor **43** is shown in FIG. **8** as the differential mode filter capacitor. Resistors **41** and **42** act in conjunction with capacitor **43** to provide both common mode and differential mode filtering. Capacitor **43** is in FIG. **8** as a differential mode capacitor. Resistors **41** and **42** provide common mode filtering function. Because the input current is small, these resistors may be sized large enough to provide significant attenuation without a large loss of efficiency. If the resistors are each sized at 1K ohm, this provides a 20 to 1 attenuation. If the input current is 3 mA rms, the sum of the losses in resistors **41** and **42** is 18 mW. The resistors provide a lower cost solution for common mode filtering than inductors, and may be purchased in a flame proof package to also act as an overload protection. To minimize the reactance of the input to the switching regulator **16** the regulator circuit must start to draw current early in the voltage cycle. Typically, the switching regulator should start when the full wave rectified voltage reaches approximately **8** volts and continue to operate over the remainder of a half cycle.

An important advantage of the off-state supply is conversion efficiency. For proper operation of many lighting loads, a sinusoidal like input current with a high power factor and a low rms value is required for off-state power. FIGS. **17a** and **17b** are graphs showing the input voltage **1700** and filtered current **1701** through the load in the off state for proper operation. In Contrast, FIGS. **16a**, **16b** and **16c** are graphs showing two types of input current waveforms **1610** and **1620** possible for off-state power that can cause problems. FIG. **16b** is a graph of the input current **1610** for a bridge rectifier with a large filter capacitor on the output. Most of the current is near the peak of the input voltage waveform **1601** and **1603**. FIG. **16c** is a graph of the input current waveform **1620** where most of the input current is in spikes near the beginning and end of each half cycle of the input voltage waveform **1602** and **1604**. Although infrequent large current spikes as in **1610** and **1620** could provide equivalent power, this type of current can cause improper load operation. One example of improper load operation is tube flicker in the off-state with electronic ballasts.

The present invention has high power factor combined with low total harmonic distortion and very low peak input current. High power factor is achieved by low input capacitance and a low start-up voltage. These two factors require the switching regulator current to track the input voltage as shown in FIG. **17b**. Small input capacitance allows filtering of high frequency with only a small leading contribution to the power factor. As the input voltage rises (**1705**), following a zero crossing the switching regulator starts operating in the range of from 8 to 22V. The switching regulator operates through the half cycle until the input voltage drops to 8 to 22V at time **1702**. The switching regulator does not operate again until the negative half-cycle voltage reaches -8 to -22V at time **1703**. The low turn on and off levels cause the switching regulator to draw current over most of each half cycle of the input voltage. This is important for achieving a

good power factor. The switching regulator provides the advantages of variable input voltage and frequency in a smaller package than possible for the conventional line frequency design (shown in FIG. **15b**).

Switching regulator **16** may be of any type of power circuitry that includes a controllable switching device used to switch current (for example a transistor, SCR, Triac, or the like) used in combination with one or more energy storage elements (an inductor or capacitor).

The filter **14** of FIG. **8** and the second full wave rectifier **15** of FIG. **4b** may be combined as shown in FIG. **14a**. If the rectifiers in the bridge and the capacitor **43** are chosen carefully, this has the benefit of allowing tighter layout of high frequency networks. In FIG. **14a**, the resistors **1402** and **1401** connect points **39** and **40** to full wave rectifier bridge **1404**. The output of full wave rectifier bridge **1404** is connected to capacitor **1403** and to points **25** and **26**.

Alternatively, rectifier **15** and filter **14** may be transposed as in FIG. **14b**. This results in the configuration of rectifier/filter functional block **1400**.

FIG. **6** is an embodiment of switching regulator **16** useable in the present invention. The circuit for switching regulator **16** shown in FIG. **6** is of a fly back oscillator circuit topology. When transistor **140** is conducting, current builds up in transformer **103** primary winding **L5**. The coupling of the winding **L6** is such that diode **106** is back biased the coupling of winding **L4** via feedback network **150** further turns on transistor **140**. When current in resistor **145** creates enough voltage to begin to reduce the base emitter voltage on transistor **140** a regenerative cycle starts. The transformer action of windings **L4**, **L5**, and **L6** transfers energy to output **27** and **L4** further turns off transistor **140**. Transistor **140** remains off until the stored energy in the transformer **103** is transferred to the output **27**. Output **27** is connected to a storage capacitor, in this disclosure it is capacitor **102**. Zener diode **104** and resistor **105** form a series feedback that will conduct current when the output **27** exceeds the Zener voltage of diode **104**. This current will turn on transistor **141** and limit the turn on of transistor **140** and thus causing less energy storage during a cycle of the regulator. The feedback path of diode **104** and resistor **105** produces a voltage regulation on output **27**. In this embodiment, the pulse width and frequency of the switching regulator **16** change with input voltage.

In operation, as the voltage increases each half cycle when transistor **140** is on, the voltage across the winding **L5** of **T2** also increases. This has two main effects. The first is that the rate of change of the current in the fixed inductance primary winding **L5** of **T2** increases. This causes a more rapid rise of the voltage on resistor **145**, which is in series with **L5**. The second effect is that the voltage on winding **L4** of transformer **T2** increases proportionally with voltage across **L5**. This raises the voltage at the base of transistor **140** higher through network **150**. As the base voltage of transistor **140** increases, it takes more current through resistor **145** to turn off transistor **140**. As current through resistor **145** increases, more energy is transferred to the output.

The graphs of FIGS. **18a**, **18b** and **18c** respectively show the voltage of the output of full wave bridge rectifier **15** (**25** with reference to **26**), the filtered current into the supply during the same time, and expanded waveshapes of the current through resistor **145** of FIG. **6** at the points in time labeled on the bridge output. At point **1801**, the current pulse, **1804**, through resistor **145** is small because the voltage **1800** applied to the switching regulator, is small. As the voltage increases at **1802**, the current pulse, **1805**, has

also increased. The current pulse magnitude continues to track the input voltage magnitude and decreases by point **1807** as seen by the magnitude of current pulse **1806**. The averaging of these pulses by capacitor **43** of FIG. **8** produces the smooth sinusoidal like current waveshape shown in FIG. **18a**, **1807**. The present embodiment works well with 60 and 50 Hz line frequencies and DC input. Further, it is not limited to a narrow input voltage frequency range. It requires instead an input voltage within a rms voltage range and below a peak voltage limit. The input current is dependent on the input voltage and feedback from the filter cap **102** through Zener diode **104** and resistor **105**. The input voltage frequency range that the converter will operate with is bounded on the high end by the one half of the switching converter operating frequency and on the low end by the load voltage hold up time provided by capacitor **102**.

Continuing with the operation of the circuit of FIG. **6**, the current feedback path through Zener diode **104** raises the bias point on transistor **141** when the voltage on capacitor **102** rises above the Zener turn-on voltage. This is either due to a reduction in the load power consumption or an increase of the rms input voltage, which causes more energy transfer to the load. Transistor **140** turns off quicker shortening the pulse of current through winding **L5**. If the load is very small, the current through diode **104** can be sufficient to lengthen the off time of transistor **140**. Current into the base of transistor **141** either through Zener diode **104** and resistor **105**, through a resistor and diode from an Output of controller **33**, or some other current supply can be used to enable or disable the controller of FIG. **6**.

As can be seen with reference to the input current graph, FIG. **18b**, the switching regulator of FIG. **6** is a discontinuous current mode flyback converter. A discontinuous mode flyback converter is a good way to achieve a high power factor. As seen in FIGS. **18a**, **b** and **c**, this topology causes the input current to track the input voltage and results in a good power factor.

Referring once again to FIG. **6**, as long as the base of transistor **141** is sufficiently biased, transistor **140** is prevented from turning on and in this manner the switching regulator may be turned off for a time period dictated by the controller. This disable function could be used to hold the converter off for low power operating modes or modulate the operation of the converter on and off at a frequency other than that of the supply voltage. This could be useful for shaping the input current or avoiding an operating frequency that could be a noise source for circuits used by controller **33**. If for instance the 120 Hz of the bridge rectifier was an undesirable frequency or it was desired to not operate the switching regulator during part of the line cycle when power line communications took place, the Disable signal **400** could be used to change the operating times of the switching regulator. FIG. **19** and FIG. **20** show the Disable signal **400** from the controller, the output of the second full wave bridge rectifier **15** and the current through resistor **145**. When the current through resistor **145** is essentially zero, the switching regulator is off. This is shown between times **1901** and **1902** in the graphs of FIG. **19**. When the current through resistor **145** rises and falls within an envelope relative to the input voltage the switching regulator is operating. This is shown between times **1902** and **1903** of FIG. **19**.

FIG. **20** is a collection of graphs showing the Disable signal switched high and low faster than the input voltage frequency. The switching regulator turns off at **2012** and back on at **2013**. The turn off is repeated at points in time **2014**, and **2016**. The turn on is repeated at points in time **2015**, and **2017**.

By allowing both frequency and pulse width to vary the regulator operates over a wide input voltage range high efficiency. A more conventional switching regulator may also achieve the wide input voltage range with a fixed frequency and variable pulse width.

FIG. **9** is a schematic of an alternate switching regulator **16** that may be used in the present invention. This particular switching regulator should except a full wave rectified voltage **207** as the input. Transformer **203** is a flyback transformer with only primary and secondary windings with proper coupling as shown. Diode **106** couples the high frequency current to the energy storage capacitor **102**. FET transistor **205** is the main switching device and resistor **206** provides current feedback to the regulator controller **204**. The output voltage **27** is fed back for voltage regulation. Although the details of regulator controller **204** are not included, single chip controllers for this topology commercially exist, including, for example, a type UCC 1804 available from Unitrode.

Other switching regulators **16** would also be useful in the present invention and could be used to replace the circuit of FIG. **6** or FIG. **9** without deviating from the concept, spirit and scope of the present invention. Alternate switching regulator circuits for the present invention would be satisfactory as long as the power factor is high, for example at least 0.6 and preferably 0.9, the rms. input current is low, for example, less than 5 mA, the input capacitance is low, for example, less than 0.022 uf, and the input voltage range is large, for example, 8 to 440 Vrms. The flyback blocking oscillator switching regulator topology shown in FIG. **6** achieves all the requirements for the off-state regulator necessary for the power system of the present invention, however, other configurations are also satisfactory.

Another feature of an illustrative embodiment of the present invention is the coupling of two energy sources into one common energy storage capacitor **102** on the input of a post regulator circuit **18**. The on-state circuit uses the energy storage capacitor to filter 50/60 Hz current pulses of the first full wave rectifying circuit **13**. The switching regulator diode **106** couples the high frequency current pulses from its output transformer **103** into the same energy storage capacitor **102**. A post regulator **18**, such as a known three terminal linear regulator, may provide the final regulation of the voltage on the common energy storage capacitor **102**. The post regulator **18** may also be a switching regulator design without departing from the scope of the present invention.

The energy storage capacitor **102** by the action of the off-state or the on-state power circuitry stores a partially regulated supply voltage. This voltage is used as the input to a post regulator **18** and as the supply voltage **28** for the relay **70**'s coils **61** and **62** shown in FIG. **5a**.

When the contacts **11** are open, the output voltage of transformer **12** goes to zero and the diodes in its bridge circuit **13** shown in FIG. **4a** block any conduction back to the transformer **12** secondary when capacitor **102** charges via the output of the switching regulator **16**. Likewise when the switch contacts **11** are closed, the input to the full wave rectifier **15** is shorted, the output of the switching regulator **16** goes to zero volts and diode **106** blocks conduction terminal **28** back to the output winding **L6** of transformer **103**.

Since the off-state and the on-state circuits are isolated by the action of the relay contacts **11** and the diodes in their respective full wave bridge circuits, two separate circuits **29** and **30** shown in FIG. **5b** and **5c** may be used to function as zero crossing detection circuits that are fed by the inputs to

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the full wave rectifiers **13** and **15** respectively. FIG. 2 shows these two circuits with their connection to the controller **33**. Circuit **29** detects when the current passing through contacts **11** of relay **70** in the on-state is close to zero, and circuit **30** detects when the voltage across contacts **11** of relay **70** in the off-state is close to zero. Circuits **29** and **30** generate outputs **120** and **121** as Z-on an Z-off. In circuit **29** the FET transistor **63** will be on and in the low impedance state whenever its input capacitor **64** is charged above its gate threshold voltage. A transition from the off to the on-state of FET **63** will indicate when the input of circuit **29** transitions through or near zero volts. Circuit **30** operates in a similar fashion on the off-state input voltage. The size of the resistors **66** and **67** in their respective circuits are set based on the magnitude of the expected input voltages. The two diodes on the gates of FET **63** and FET **65** clamp the gate voltages 1 diode drop above the regulated output voltage (+5V shown) and 1 diode drop below ground.

The output voltage of transformer **12** may change dramatically when transformer **12** has extreme input conditions of very high or very low current. FIGS. **13a** through **13c** show typical transformer **12** output voltages for various load currents. The pulse width produced when the output voltage from transformer **12** is the input to circuit **29** or **30** is an indication of the magnitude of the load current. The pulse width information is available on the zero crossing signal for the controller **33** to use. In cases where the load current is insufficient for normal operation, the controller **33** may enter a low power mode of operation and signal the user about the condition. The load current to a lighting system may drop as lamps enter end of life. If the controller **33** sensed a low power mode of operation where sufficient power may not be present to operate all of its sensors, it may disable its highest power sensor say the ultrasonic transmitter. Controller **33** would then use only the PIR or other low power sensor to determine occupancy until the condition is remedied. In cases where the load current is too large, the controller **33** may switch the load off and signal the user about the high current condition.

Calculated delay times are used when generating logic signals **122** and **123** to control relay driver coil **61** and **62** shown in FIG. 2. Having independent circuits to detect when the input voltage crosses zero allows these signals to be fed to control circuitry in the controller **33**, typically a microprocessor, that may calculate independent turn on and turn off delays for the relay contacts **11** of latching relay **70**. These delay times are fed back into the power system as logic signals **122** and **123** as shown in FIG. 2. Since the relay contacts **11** normally are used to control current to complex loads, this allows the power control circuitry **33** to open the contacts at near zero current and close the contacts at near zero voltage, and to prevent noise, current stress to the relay contacts **11** or for other functions. The controller **33** may also calculate a factor to account for the response time of the relay **70**.

The input to the off-state full wave rectifier **15** is fed by a RC filter **14** configured as a common mode noise filter. Filter **14** reduces the amount of switching noise fed back onto the AC line. By keeping the capacitance **43** low, the filter **14** does not detract from the circuit function while reducing noise injected back on the line.

The input to full wave rectifier **15** is also connected via a mechanical air gap switch **10**. Because the power supply draws current and provides a shunt path around contacts **11** that are open, the mechanical air gap eliminates leakage current when contacts **11** are open completely disconnecting the load. This is normally accomplished by separate high

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current contacts in series with the relay contacts **11** that must be sized to carry the maximum load current. The advantage of having the mechanical air gap switch only in series with the off-state power supply is that it enables using a small switch. The traditional air gap switches are in series with relay contacts **11** and are physically large to handle high load currents and line voltages up to 277 VAC.

Opening mechanical switch **10** does not immediately turn off or disconnect the load because the on-state power supply circuits may still be supplying voltage to post regulator **18** if a load is present. A separate, manual, open relay signal **80** is sent to the controller **33** which in turn sends a logic signal **31** to open relay contacts **11**. With the mechanical air gap switch **10** open, the off-state power supply is now disconnected and voltage potential across the load is removed. If the separate, manual, open relay signal **80** is not sent to the controller, then it is possible for the relay **70** to be have closed contacts **11** and the load to itself be an open circuit. An example is a case of closed relay contacts where a lighting load burns out. The wall switch unit would have no power and no active indication would exist of the relays latched condition. A maintenance person would have to measure the voltage at the load to determine that the load was safe. If the relay was latched with closed contacts the hot wire to the load would have to be disabled at the breaker box. One feature of the present invention is a controller **33** that when operating with an on-state relay and having a load that burns out, the controller will execute a relay off command via signal **31** when the supply voltage drops below a set condition.

FIG. 7 is another embodiment of the invention employing the 3-wire system discussed earlier. In this embodiment, the transformer **12** in series with the switching device that connects the load is eliminated because it is not necessary. The safety ground or possibly the load conductor may be present to provide a current return path for the power system when the switching device is open or closed. The most important and frequently encountered case is the one where the safety ground is present inside the wall switch enclosure. The current returned through this wire is preferably low, for example, below 0.5 mA rms. to meet Underwriter's Laboratory requirements. The input to the full wave bridge rectifier **15** and the switching regulator **16** previously used across the open contacts **11** are now used across the hot wire **3** to the safety ground **38**. Applications for the power system in this configuration normally requires less regulated power than the 2-wire case. The minimum value of input voltage **1** for the wall replacement unit product and the 0.5 mA of allowed current in the ground will limit the maximum possible output power. Switching regulator **16** and the design of the bridge rectifier circuit **15** with no large AC filter capacitor on the output of the bridge rectifier ensures that the current returned to the safety ground may be designed to meet the 0.5 mA rms requirement by limiting the output power and also ensures that large spikes of current are not present when the diodes of bridge rectifier **15** conduct.

FIG. 10 is yet another embodiment of a switching regulator used to generate off-state power in accordance with the present invention. Circuit **132** is a buck-type switching regulator and operates at a switching frequency of 60 Hz. and has low losses normally associated with high frequency switching regulators. The active devices are either on in saturation or off. The main elements of this circuit are the charge circuit **131** and the energy transfer circuit composed of SCR **134** and inductor **136**. The on-state circuitry with the transformer **12** primary winding in series with the load remains the same as discussed above with reference to FIG.

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2. Transformer **12** shown in FIG. **10** with a single primary may also have a tapped primary as discussed in other embodiments. Also as in previous embodiments the off-state and on-state circuits use a common energy storage capacitor **102** on the input to the post regulator **18**.

Referring to FIG. **10**, when relay contacts **11** are open and voltage supply **1** has a positive potential from line **5** to line **6** and the mechanical air gap switch **10** is closed the charge circuit **131** will charge the small high voltage capacitor **121**. In the simplest implementation the charge circuit **131** may be a diode **230** shown in FIG. **11a**. On the positive half cycle of voltage **1** the diode is conducting and capacitor **121** has a voltage that tracks voltage **1** to its peak value. As the voltage **1** starts dropping from its peak the diode **230** reverse biases and capacitor **121** holds the peak of voltage **1**. As the input **138** to the charge circuit **131** approaches 0 volts, the voltage divider formed by resistors **160** and **161** are such that transistor **135** turns on. A voltage pulse is generated on the gate of SCR **134** by the current from transistor **135** and resistors **162** and **163**. SCR **134** fires and the capacitor **121** discharges through inductor **136** and transfers its energy by charging capacitor **102**. During the transfer cycle SCR **134** is on and has a low voltage drop. The inductor **136** and the capacitor **121** form a resonant circuit and will attempt a sinusoidal cycle. When the inductor current in **136** tries to reverse, the SCR **134** will turn off, preventing capacitor **102** from discharging back through inductor **136**. Since the active devices in the charge and energy transfer circuits are either on or off and never in a linear state this circuit is a switching regulator whose switching frequency is dictated by the frequency of the line voltage. Capacitors **121** is sized relative to capacitor **102** to guarantee adequate energy transfer during each half cycle of the line voltage.

FIG. **11b** is another embodiment of the charging circuit **131** which may be used when the input voltage **1** has wide variations. The simple diode circuit **131** in FIG. **11a** will charge the capacitor **121** to the peak of input voltage **1** and as voltage **1** varies the energy stored on capacitor **121** will vary altering the energy transferred to capacitor **102**. If the energy taken by post regulator **18** is not high enough, the voltage on capacitor **102** will increase and a way to dissipate the excess energy would be needed across capacitor **102**, for example a Zener diode clamp.

Another embodiment of charging circuit **131** is shown in FIG. **11b** and includes a charge clamp circuit using transistor **200**, resistor **223** and Zener diode **225**. In this embodiment, as the input **138** goes positive the transistor **200** turns on to saturation and the capacitor **121** charges toward the peak of input voltage **1**. However, when the input voltage **1** reaches the breakdown voltage of Zener diode **225** the base of transistor **200** is clamped and the voltage rise on capacitor **121** stops at a known fixed value. FIG. **11c** is yet another embodiment of a charge circuit **131** where transistor **226** and Zener **227** form a feedback circuit to node **23** on capacitor **102**. In this embodiment, if the voltage on capacitor **102** exceeds the breakdown voltage of Zener diode **227** transistor **226** will turn on limiting the voltage to which capacitor **121** can charge. The circuit of FIG. **11c** forms a dynamic clamp that will track the requirements of the post regulator **18**. Other circuits for the charge path of capacitor **121** can be designed without departing from the scope of the present disclosure. Other semiconductor devices, for example an FET, may be substituted for transistors **200**, **226** or **135** without departing from the scope of the low frequency switching regulator **132** of FIG. **10**.

The present invention has been described with reference to specific exemplary embodiments which have been offered

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as illustrative, and should not be considered to limit the invention. It will be understood by those of skill in this art that deletions, additions and changes may be made to these exemplary embodiments without departing from the spirit or scope of the invention.

What is claimed is:

1. A controllable electrical switch for selectively connecting a load to a source of electrical current, comprising:
 a controllable switching device having a conducting state and a non-conducting state, for selectively connecting the source of electrical current to the load;
 a switching regulator having an input connected to said switching device and having an output providing a regulated voltage supply, the switching regulator drawing a current proportional to a voltage applied thereto; and
 a switch controllers, connected to and powered by said output of said switching regulator, for controlling said controllable switching device.

2. The controllable electrical switch of claim 1, further comprising:

a transformer having a primary winding and a secondary winding, said primary winding being connected in series with said controllable switching device, said switching regulator being connected to supply said regulated output voltage when said switching device is in the non-conducting state, and said secondary winding being connected to supply said regulated output voltage when said switching device is in the conducting state.

3. The controllable electrical switch of claim 2, further comprising:

a rectifier circuit connected to said secondary of said transformer, and having a rectifier output;
 an integrator for providing a voltage substantially proportional to a time integral of a voltage at said rectifier output; and
 a controllable switch operable to selectively short-circuit said rectifier output when said voltage substantially proportional to said time integral exceeds a predetermined maximum.

4. The controllable electrical switch of claim 2, said transformer having a split primary including a plurality of primary windings.

5. The controllable electrical switch of claim 2, further comprising a first rectifying device connected across said secondary winding of the transformer, the output of the first rectifying device being connected to an energy storage capacitor.

6. The controllable electrical switch of claim 5, further comprising a second rectifying device connected between said switching device and said input to said switching regulator.

7. The controllable electrical switch of claim 1, further comprising an energy storage capacitor connected across said output of said switching regulator for filtering said regulated output voltage.

8. The controllable electrical switch of claim 7, further comprising a post regulator connected to said output of said energy storage capacitor, to further regulate said regulated output voltage.

9. The controllable electrical switch of claim 1, further comprising a post regulator connected to said output of said switching regulator, to further regulate said regulated output voltage.

10. The controllable electrical switch of claim 1, further comprising:

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a first zero crossing detection circuit for detecting when a current passing through said controllable switching device crosses zero when the controllable switching device is in the conducting state;

a second zero crossing detection circuit for detecting when a voltage across said controllable switching device crosses zero when the controllable switching device is in the non-conducting state; and

said switch controller controlling said controllable switching device based upon zero crossings detected by said first and second zero crossing detection circuits.

11. The controllable electrical switch of claim 10, said switch controller changing said controllable switching device from said conducting state to said non-conducting state substantially simultaneously with detection of zero crossing by said first zero crossing detector.

12. The controllable electrical switch of claim 10, said switch controller changing said controllable switching device from said non-conducting state to said conducting state substantially simultaneously with detection of zero crossing by said second zero crossing detector.

13. The controllable electrical switch of claim 1, said switching regulator comprising a step down switching regulator circuit.

14. The controllable electrical switch of claim 13, said switching regulator having a switching frequency above 20 KHz.

15. The controllable electrical switch of claim 13, wherein the step down switching regulator circuit is a flyback converter.

16. The controllable electrical switch of claim 15, wherein the step down switching regulator circuit is a discontinuous current mode flyback converter.

17. The controllable electrical switch of claim 1, wherein the switching regulator has an input power factor of at least 0.6.

18. The controllable electrical switch of claim 17, wherein the switching regulator has an input power factor of at least 0.9.

19. The controllable electrical switch of claim 1, wherein the switching regulator accepts input voltages in the range of 8 volts to 440 volts rms.

20. The controllable electrical switch of claim 1, further comprising:

an energy storage capacitor coupled to the output of said switching regulator; and

a post regulator coupled to said energy storage capacitor.

21. The controllable electrical switch of claim 1, wherein the controllable switching device is a single pole single throw latching relay that has at least one pair of contacts connected in series with the source of electrical current and the load.

22. The controllable electrical switch of claim 1, wherein the controllable switching device comprises at least one FET connected singly or in parallel.

23. The controllable electrical switch of claim 1, wherein the controllable switching device comprises at least one SCR connected singly or in parallel.

24. The controllable electrical switch of claim 1, wherein the controllable switching device comprises at least one Triac connected singly or in parallel.

25. The controllable electrical switch of claim 1, wherein the controllable switching device comprises at least one transistor connected singly or in parallel.

26. The controllable electrical switch of claim 20, wherein the post regulator is a low drop out linear regulator.

27. The controllable electrical switch of claim 20, wherein the post regulator is a switching regulator.

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28. The controllable electrical switch of claim 10, further comprising:

a transformer having a primary winding and a secondary winding, said primary winding being connected in series with said controllable switching device, said switching regulator being connected to supply said regulated output voltage when said switching device is in the non-conducting state, and said secondary winding being connected to supply said regulated output voltage when said switching device is in the conducting state;

wherein the input to said first zero crossing detection circuit is connected to the secondary of the transformer.

29. The controllable electrical switch of claim 10, wherein the input to said second zero crossing detection circuit is connected to the input of said switching regulator.

30. The controllable electrical switch of claim 10, said switch controller detecting under-load and over-load conditions based upon outputs of said first and second zero crossing detection circuits.

31. The controllable electrical switch of claim 1, further comprising:

a manual over-ride switch, connected between said controllable switching device and said switching regulator, and operable to disable said switching regulator.

32. The controllable electrical switch of claim 1, said switch controller selectively activating and deactivating said switching regulator.

33. The controllable electrical switch of claim 2, further comprising:

a transformer saturation detection circuit connected to said secondary of said transformer and operable to detect and minimize saturation of said transformer.

34. A power system for an electrical load switch having a controllable switching device for selectively connecting a load to a source of electrical current, and a switch controller, said power system comprising:

a switching regulator having an input connected across said controllable switching device and having an output, the switching regulator drawing a current proportional to a voltage applied thereto; and

a transformer having a primary winding and a secondary winding, said primary winding being connected in series with said controllable switching device;

said output of said switching regulator being connected to supply a regulated supply voltage when said controllable switching device is in a non-conducting state, and said secondary winding being connected to supply said regulated supply voltage when said switching device is in a conducting state, said supply voltage being used to power said controllable switch and said switch controller.

35. The power system of claim 34, said switching regulator comprising a step down switching regulator circuit.

36. The power system of claim 34, said switching regulator having a switching frequency above 20 KHz.

37. The power system of claim 35, wherein the step down switching regulator circuit is a flyback converter.

38. The power system of claim 37, wherein the step down switching regulator circuit is a discontinuous current mode flyback converter.

39. The controllable electrical switch of claim 34, wherein the switching regulator has an input power factor of at least 0.6.

40. The controllable electrical switch of claim 39, wherein the switching regulator has an input power factor of at least 0.9.

41. The power system of claim 34, wherein the switching regulator accepts input voltages in the range of 8 volts to 440 volts rms.

42. The power system of claim 34, further comprising an energy storage capacitor connected across said output of said switching regulator for filtering said regulated supply voltage.

43. The power system of claim 40, further comprising a post regulator connected to said output of said energy storage capacitor, to further regulate said regulated supply voltage.

44. The controllable electrical switch of claim 43, said secondary of said transformer also being connected to said energy storage capacitor.

45. A two-wire wall switch replacement electrical load switch for selectively connecting a load to a source of electrical current through hot and load conductors, said replacement electrical load switch comprising:

- a controllable switching device connected between said hot and load conductors;
- a switch controller;
- a switching regulator having an input connected across said controllable switching device and having an output, the switching regulator drawing a current proportional to a voltage applied thereto; and
- a transformer having a primary winding and a secondary winding, said primary winding being connected in series with said controllable switching device;

said output of said switching regulator being connected to supply a regulated supply voltage when said controllable switching device is in a non-conducting state, and said secondary winding being connected to supply said regulated supply voltage when said switching device is in a conducting state, said regulated supply voltage being used to power said controllable switching device and said switch controller.

46. A three-wire wall switch replacement electrical load switch for selectively connecting a load to a source of electrical current through hot and load conductors, and having a safety ground conductor, said replacement electrical load switch comprising:

- a controllable switching device connected between said hot and load conductors;
- a switch controller; and
- a switching regulator having an input connected between said hot and safety ground conductors, and having an output, the switching regulator drawing a current proportional to a voltage applied thereto;

said output of said switching regulator being connected to supply a regulated supply voltage when said controllable switching device is in a conducting or non-conducting state, said regulated supply voltage being used to power said controllable switching device and said switch controller.

47. The controllable electrical switch of claim 1, wherein the switching regulator supplies a first current to said switch

controller and a second current to said load, the first current being greater than the second current.

48. The controllable electrical switch of claim 1, wherein the switching regulator provides an input power factor of at least 0.6.

49. The controllable electrical switch of claim 48, a voltage applied to said input of said switching regulator having a positive half cycle and a negative half cycle, and the switching regulator drawing current over a plurality of discrete time periods in each of said negative and positive half cycles.

50. A controllable electrical switch for selectively collecting a load to a source of electrical current having a line frequency, comprising:

- a controllable switching device having a conducting state and a nonconducting state, for selectively connecting the source of electrical current to the load;
- a switching regulator including a high frequency transformer operating at a frequency higher than the line frequency, the switching regulator having an input connected to said switching device and having an output providing a regulated voltage supply; and
- a switch controller, connected to and powered by said output of said switching regulator, for controlling said controllable switching device.

51. A controllable electrical switch for selectively connecting a load to a source of electrical current, comprising:

- a controllable switching device having a conducting state and a non-conducting state, for selectively connecting the source of electrical current to the load;
- a switching regulator having an input connected to said switching device and having an output providing a regulated voltage supply, wherein the switching regulator includes:
 - a transformer having
 - (a) a primary winding connected in series with said controllable switching device and
 - (b) a secondary winding connected to supply said regulated output voltage when said controllable switching device is in the conducting state; and
- a switch controller, connected to and powered by said output of said switching regulator, for controlling said controllable switching device.

52. A controllable electrical switch for selectively connecting a load to a source of electrical current, comprising:

- a controllable switching device having a conducting state and a non-conducting state, for selectively connecting the source of electrical current to the load;
- a switching regulator having an input connected to said switching device and having an output providing a regulated voltage supply, wherein the switching regulator has an input power factor of at least 0.6; and
- a switch controller, connected to and powered by said output of said switching regulator, for controlling said controllable switching device.