

## News Release

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### **After Earthquake Study, Texas Railroad Commission Takes Second Look at Disposal Wells** *Access to Resources, Technologies Crucial for Understanding Link between Earthquakes and Drilling*

(AUSTIN — April 27, 2015) Today, Environmental Defense Fund commended a decision by the Texas Railroad Commission to reassess permits for two disposal wells thought to be responsible for increased seismic activity in a portion of the North Texas area.

“We are glad to see the Commission is taking a proactive approach to the important but complicated problem of earthquakes linked to oil and gas development,” said Scott Anderson, Senior Policy Director at Environmental Defense Fund. “We couldn’t agree more with Commissioner Christi Craddick’s statement that it is incumbent on the Commission to apply its rules where and when appropriate to protect public health and the environment.”

The Commission’s decision to schedule hearings on two disposal wells came days after researchers at Southern Methodist University concluded that disposal wells near the North Texas town of Azle were most likely the cause of earthquakes in the area.

“There is no doubt hydraulic fracturing and disposal wells can cause earthquakes, but it can be difficult to determine whether a particular earthquake is caused by oil and gas development or some other factor,” Anderson said. “Even if the recent earthquakes in Azle were caused solely by oil and gas activity, it leaves questions about the cause of other quakes in Irving and elsewhere. It’s important that each case be reviewed individually.”

Before individual reviews can be conducted, the state must have adequate technologies and resources at its disposal, including the ability to deploy mobile seismometer arrays.

“Fortunately, Drew Darby, Chairman of the Texas House Energy Committee, and other House leaders are supporting a budget appropriation of at least \$2.5 million for this purpose.” Anderson said. “We hope the Legislature will make this appropriation and provide at least another \$1 million per year for maintenance and ongoing research.”

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