



**Texas
Independent
Producers and
Royalty Owners
Association**

HISTORIC GLOBAL EXPORT OF TEXAS CRUDE BEGINS, FOLLOWING REPEAL OF THE GOVERNMENT'S 40-YEAR BAN

Less than two weeks after the federal government lifted the ban on exports of U.S. crude, upstream oil and gas companies have loaded the first cargo barges to ship American oil to other nations around the world. At the end of December, ConocoPhillips and NuStar Energy announced that tankers carrying what's believed to be the nation's first crude export shipment had set sail from Texas.

In a joint statement released last week, the companies explained that ConocoPhillips had committed to sell Eagle Ford light crude oil/condensate to international trading company Vitol. The cargo was loaded at NuStar's North Beach Terminal located in the Port of Corpus Christi. "Based on our investments in Corpus Christi and our South Texas pipeline system, NuStar was well-positioned, equipped and staffed to immediately begin loading cargoes for export," explained NuStar President and CEO Brad Barron. "And we plan on further expanding our Corpus Christi operations to provide more options to our customers to move Eagle Ford Shale crude oil, whether it is being moved domestically or internationally."

John LaRue, executive director of the Corpus Christi Port, praised the recent oil export by ConocoPhillips, emphasizing the port's prime position to send Texas crude overseas. The Port of Corpus Christi is well connected via an intricate pipeline systems to the Eagle Ford Shale and the Permian Basin. "Infrastructure improvements at Port Corpus Christi have placed our port in a unique position as a critical component in the export of U.S. crude and condensate. Port Corpus Christi's deep draft ship channel and strategic location to some of the largest production areas in the U.S. provides a secure and competitive supply chain to markets worldwide. Future capital improvements including deepening the ship channel will accommodate larger vessels that are required to cost effectively supply U.S. crude oil to global markets," said LaRue.

In related news, production also began last week at Cheniere's much anticipated natural gas liquefaction facility in Louisiana, setting the stage for global LNG exports in the near future. With Cheniere's LNG facility now online, the terminal is scheduled to become the first in the country to export natural gas produced from U.S. shale formations. Cheniere's first export of LNG is expected to depart later this month.



TEXAS SUES THE EPA, AGAIN, OVER EXTREME FEDERAL OZONE REGULATIONS

On behalf of the state of Texas and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), on December 23, 2015, the office of Attorney General Ken Paxton filed a lawsuit against the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), fighting the agency's new federal ozone standards. Last year, the EPA adopted new rules that lower the ozone standard required of states, enforcing changes to the National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) that could impose a serious financial burden on the Texas economy for dubious public health benefit, contends the attorney general in the lawsuit. In fact, analysis from the TCEQ, and even the EPA itself, shows that the rule could have minimal, if any, health benefits.

"The EPA's new ozone rule is not supported by scientific data," argued Attorney General Paxton. "Areas of the country that fail to comply with these impossible standards will be subject to costly new regulations that will harm our economy and kill jobs. Texas has proven that we can reduce ambient ozone concentrations without stifling growth, and my office will continue to defend our state from the EPA's harmful and overreaching regulations."

Paxton maintains that Texas has demonstrated it can clean its air without destroying the energy sector. "Even as the state's economy and population has grown steadily for decades, nitrogen oxide and ozone levels are down over the past 15 years and Texans are breathing cleaner air."

The attorney general's office reports that the following states have also filed separate lawsuits against the EPA's new ozone rule: Arizona, Arkansas, Kentucky, New Mexico, Oklahoma, North Dakota, Utah and Wisconsin.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

TIPRO Members -

As we kick off 2016, this year TIPRO is looking forward to celebrating the 70th anniversary of our association. Originally founded in 1946 by true Texas wildcatters, our group was formed to represent the interests of independent oil and gas producers and royalty owners, and protect the ability to explore and produce in the Lone Star State. Today we are one of the nation's largest statewide associations representing both independent producers and royalty owners, serving a membership base that has grown to more than 3,000. Members of our association include small family-owned companies, the largest publicly-traded independents, and large and small mineral estates and trusts.

TIPRO is proud of the legacy that we've established through the years, and we remain dedicated to fulfilling our mission of working with leaders in the Texas Legislature, Congress and regulatory agencies to share the story on the importance of American oil and gas development.

We are excited to mark this important milestone for the association and commemorate our 70th anniversary during TIPRO's upcoming convention, which will be held at the Grand Hyatt Hotel in San Antonio next month. A few highlights of the conference include: remarks from Speaker Joe Straus, leader of the Texas House of Representatives; federal perspective by Congressman Mike Conaway; economic update from Texas Comptroller Glenn Hegar; forum to meet some of the candidates running for Railroad Commissioner; overview of the 2016 Elections from political analyst Matthew Dowd; and the presentation of TIPRO's Hat's Off Award to State Representative Drew Darby for his work during the 84th Legislative Session, amongst other notable presentations to be offered at the 2016 TIPRO meeting. To review the complete line-up of speakers, please see the convention agenda featured on page 4 of this newsletter.

During the 70th Annual Convention, we will also be hosting several networking receptions that will allow attendees the chance to form new connections with business associates in the Texas E&P sector, and time to visit with fellow TIPRO members.

For those of you who have not yet registered, we hope you will consider attending our 2016 annual convention. As always, your participation remains critical, as we gather together to review and discuss future opportunities and challenges facing the oil and gas industry.

Thank you,



Ed Longanecker



Ed Longanecker

EPA VIOLATED GOVERNMENT'S PROPAGANDA RESTRICTIONS IN ITS PROMOTION OF WATER RULES

In late December, the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) resolved that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) did in fact violate publicity or propaganda and anti-lobbying provisions during Fiscal Years 2014-15 through the agency's use of social media channels in association with its rulemaking efforts to define "Waters of the United States" under the Clean Water Act (CWA). Because the EPA used appropriated funds in violation of statutory prohibitions, the GAO also concluded that the EPA had violated the Anti-deficiency Act, 31 U.S.C. § 1341(a)(1)(A), as the agency's appropriations were not available for these prohibited purposes.

"Section 718 of the Financial Services and General Government Appropriations Act, 2014, prohibited the use of EPA's appropriations for unauthorized publicity or propaganda purposes. Section 715 of the act prohibited the use of EPA's appropriations for indirect or grassroots lobbying in support of or opposition to pending legislation. These same restrictions applied to EPA's FY 2015 appropriations. Section 401 of the Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2015, similarly prohibited the use of EPA's appropriations for grassroots lobbying," according to the GAO's report, which was released on December 14, 2015.

Though the EPA did not quantify an exact cost associated with its use of any particular social media platform, the agency reported to the GAO that it had spent an estimated \$64,610 to develop video and graphic assets to raise public awareness surrounding its proposed federal water regulations. The EPA maintains that through social media it sought to clarify the issues concerning the WOTUS proposed rule, provide background information and demonstrate the rule's relevance, provide opportunities for public engagement, and to correct what it viewed as misinformation concerning the rule.

TIPRO Calendar of Events

<p>JANUARY 13, 2016 HOUSTON — IPAA/TIPRO Leaders in Industry Luncheon, 11:30 a.m. Houston Petroleum Club. For info, call: (202) 293-0681.</p>	<p>FEBRUARY 10, 2016 HOUSTON — IPAA/TIPRO Leaders in Industry Luncheon, 11:30 a.m. Houston Petroleum Club. For info, call: (202) 293-0681.</p>	<p>FEBRUARY 10-12, 2016 HOUSTON — Annual NAPE Summit, George R. Brown Convention Center. For info, call: (817) 847-7700.</p>	<p>FEBRUARY 22-23, 2016 SAN ANTONIO — TIPRO's 70th Annual Convention, Grand Hyatt Hotel. For info, call: (512) 477-4452.</p>
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TEXAS LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR ANNOUNCES KEY APPOINTMENTS FOR THE SENATE

Before the holidays, Texas Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick announced a new wave of noteworthy appointments for the Senate chamber. Due to the retirement of Senator Troy Fraser and Senator Kevin Eltife, Lieutenant Governor Patrick has named Senator Craig Estes as the next chair of the Senate Natural Resources & Economic Development Committee, while Senator Kelly Hancock will serve as the new chairman of the Senate Business and Commerce.

“Senator Estes has served as vice chairman of the Senate Natural Resources and Economic Development Committee for the last eight years. He has the ability to lead this important committee by protecting our most important natural resources while preserving the free market principles that make Texas great,” remarked Patrick.

“Senator Hancock has served as a strong conservative leader in both the Texas House of Representatives and the Texas Senate,” continued the lieutenant governor. “I am certain he will continue his track record of reducing regulatory burdens on Texas businesses while ensuring businesses continue to grow and create jobs. [He] will remain chairman of the Senate Administration Committee until comprehensive committee assignments are announced for the 85th Legislative Session.”

In addition, the lieutenant governor has selected Senator Brian Birdwell to fill the seat formerly held by Senator Kevin Eltife on the Senate Finance Committee.

As a result of the retirement of Senator Eltife and the new chairmanship of Senator Estes, other changes are required on the Legislative Budget Board. Accordingly, the following have been appointed to the Legislative Budget Board:

Senator Jane Nelson
 Senator Larry Taylor
 Senator Carlos Uresti
 Senator Joan Huffman

Last month, the lieutenant governor also announced the following new Sunset Commission members:

Senator Van Taylor, vice chairman
 Senator Robert Nichols (fulfilling the unexpired term of Senator Jane Nelson)
 Senator Kirk Watson
 Senator Juan “Chuy” Hinojosa
 Senator Charles Schwertner
 Public Member: Lt. Colonel Allen B. West (ret.), president and CEO of the National Center for Policy Analysis

All appointments went into effect on January 1, 2016.

RRC, TCEQ LOOK BACK AT AGENCY ACCOMPLISHMENTS FROM 2015

The past year proved to be busy, though successful, for chief oil and gas regulatory agencies in Texas. Both the Railroad Commission (RRC) and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) report progress in continuing to enhance the oversight and management of oil and gas activities in the Lone Star State over 2015. With the start of a new year, the two agencies looked back at some of the work completed in 2015 through the release of their annual ‘Year in Review’ reports -- offering a reflective list of highlights, noteworthy events and other accomplishments achieved by the RRC and TCEQ in the last 12 months.

A few notable 2015 milestones from the Railroad Commission include:

- RRC regulatory specialists managed the organization reports and financial assurance instruments in 2015 for 8,724 regulated companies and processed 21,245 drilling permit applications, 29,878 well completion reports, and over 2.98 million production reports.
- In 2015, the commission issued over 2,000 injection well permits and 5,300 other environmental permits, including permits for recycling, reclamation plants and landfarms.
- Commission inspectors conducted over 134,000 inspections last year, including the investigation of 680 complaints and response to 535 emergencies.
- RRC educational events in Austin and Midland attracted more than 650 industry workers from across the state.
- This past fall, the communications division launched several initiatives to improve the agency’s outreach and communication with the public, industry and stakeholders on the activities and responsibilities of the agency. For the first time, the commission established a robust presence on social media through the launch of several channels in 2015. Today the public and stakeholders can connect with the RRC on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, and YouTube. In 2015, the agency also unveiled a new RRC Online System homepage featuring personalized interface, improved accessibility and a standards driven global template. More than 2 million page views were logged for the RRC homepage in 2015.
- The commission also adopted several new rule amendments in 2015, as part of the agency’s ongoing effort to improve the efficiency and effectiveness in energy regulation.

Meanwhile, during 2015, the TCEQ also continued to serve its mission of protecting the state’s public health and natural resources consistent with sustainable economic development. The state’s top environmental agency remained engaged in new rulemakings by the federal government that will impact Texans in the future, including new ozone standards, added emission controls, and the approved expansion of federal jurisdiction under the ‘Waters of the U.S.’ rule. In 2015, the state legislature also passed a number of bills relating to the TCEQ, including reform of the Contested Case Hearing Process (SB 709).

TIPRO'S 70TH ANNUAL CONVENTION AGENDA

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2016

- 10:00 A.M. REGISTRATION OPENS
EXHIBIT HALL OPENS
- 1:00 P.M. WELCOME ADDRESS
RAYMOND JAMES WELDER, III,
CHAIRMAN, TIPRO
- 1:15 OPENING REMARKS
JOE STRAUS,
TEXAS SPEAKER THE HOUSE
- 2:00 "OIL MARKETS OUT OF BALANCE: THE HOW
AND WHEN OF THE RETURN TO NORMALCY"
BOB BRACKETT, PH.D.,
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT & SENIOR ANALYST,
SANFORD BERNSTEIN
- 3:00 FEDERAL PERSPECTIVE ON OIL & GAS
CONGRESSMAN MIKE CONAWAY,
11TH DISTRICT OF TEXAS
- 3:30 BREAK
- 3:45 "CHANGES AT THE RAILROAD COMMISSION:
MEET THE CANDIDATES FORUM"
JOHN GREYTOK
RON HALE
- 5:00 WELCOME TO SAN ANTONIO
NETWORKING RECEPTION
- 7:00 DINNER ON YOUR OWN

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2016

- 8:00 A.M. REGISTRATION OPENS
EXHIBIT HALL OPENS
- MEMBERSHIP BREAKFAST
- REMARKS FROM PAT MCKINNON,
SENIOR DIRECTOR, EULER HERMES
- 8:45 MEMBERSHIP MEETING
- 9:00 "AMERICA AND TEXAS: AN ERA OF GREAT
POLITICAL DISRUPTION"
MATTHEW DOWD,
POLITICAL ANALYST
- 10:00 CISR/SEISMIC DISCUSSION
PETER HENNINGS,
BUREAU OF ECONOMIC GEOLOGY
- 11:00 TBA
- 12:30 P.M. KEYNOTE LUNCHEON
- 2:00 WM. STACEY LOCKE,
CEO, PIONEER ENERGY SERVICES CORP.
- 3:00 GLENN HEGAR,
TEXAS COMPTROLLER
- 4:00 END OF GENERAL SESSION
- 5:30 PRESIDENT'S RECEPTION
- 7:00 CHAIRMAN'S DINNER
- 2016 HAT'S OFF! AWARD PRESENTATION
TO REPRESENTATIVE DREW DARBY



WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2016

- 8:00 A.M. AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING
- 10:00 BOARD MEETING



TIPRO'S 70TH ANNUAL CONVENTION REGISTRATION FORM

MEMBER REGISTRATION FEES:

INCLUDES ALL AGENDA EVENTS & MEALS

MEMBER - FULL REGISTRATION: \$495

SPOUSE - FULL REGISTRATION: \$325

EVENT-SPECIFIC TICKETS:

TUESDAY-ONLY BADGE: \$395

NON-MEMBER REGISTRATION FEES:

INCLUDES ALL AGENDA EVENTS & MEALS

NON-MEMBER - FULL REGISTRATION: \$695
(REGISTRATION INCLUDES 1 YEAR REGULAR TIPRO MEMBERSHIP)

NON-MEMBER SPOUSE - FULL REGISTRATION: \$475

EVENT-SPECIFIC, NON-MEMBER TICKETS:

TUESDAY-ONLY BADGE: \$595



HAVE SPECIAL DIETARY NEEDS OR
OTHER CONSIDERATIONS?
PLEASE CONTACT TIPRO STAFF
AT (512) 477-4452.

ONLINE REGISTRATION
IS ALSO AVAILABLE AT
[WWW.TIPRO.ORG!](http://WWW.TIPRO.ORG)

ATTENDEE INFORMATION

NAME OF ATTENDEE: _____

COMPANY: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP CODE: _____

PHONE: _____ FAX: _____

E-MAIL: _____

REGISTERED SPOUSE: _____



PAYMENT INFORMATION

TOTAL: _____ PAYMENT METHOD: VISA MASTERCARD AMEX CHECK NO: _____

PRINT NAME: _____ COMPANY: _____

BILLING ADDRESS: _____

CREDIT CARD NO.: _____ EXP. DATE: _____

SIGNATURE: _____ CID: _____

CANCELLATION POLICY

IN ORDER TO RECEIVE A REFUND, TIPRO MUST BE NOTIFIED OF YOUR CANCELLATION NO LATER THAN
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2016.

RETURN REGISTRATION FORM TO TIPRO AT: 919 CONGRESS AVENUE, SUITE 1000, AUSTIN, TEXAS, 78701, OR FAX TO (512) 476-8070.

REGISTRATION FORMS MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY PAYMENT.

CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS PUSH BACK ON EPA'S USE OF ILLEGAL PROPAGANDA

Leaders of the U.S. House Committee on Energy & Commerce are reviewing legal evasions by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), after a recent government investigation found the federal agency had utilized illegal propaganda efforts to promote its proposed regulations. On December 14, 2015, the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) determined the EPA had engaged in “covert” propaganda and illegal grassroots lobbying through its social media campaign seeking to increase support of the “Waters of the United States” (WOTUS) Rule, which was finalized last year.

Consequently, in a letter directed to EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy on December 17, 2015, a group of congressmen asked the EPA to provide additional information regarding its use of social media platforms to endorse the WOTUS Rule and the Clean Power Plan. The letter reads, “EPA’s actions potentially undermined the integrity of the rulemaking process concerning WOTUS and call into question the use of social media to promote other rulemaking activity. For example, EPA undertook an extensive social media messaging campaign in support of its Clean Power Plan, authoring blog posts, and posting messages on Facebook and Twitter. The agency also used one of its primary Clean Power Plan hashtags (#ActionClimate) in another Thunderclap campaign that potentially reached over 2.6 million individuals.”

So the committee may now establish if the EPA similarly abused government restrictions on propaganda and grassroots lobbying by promoting its latest rules to address climate change, pursuant to Rules X and XI of the U.S. House of Representatives, the EPA was directed to submit:

1. All social media and web postings referring or relating to the Clean Power Plan, including but not limited to any edits or other changes made to social media or web postings;
2. All communication between or among EPA, other federal agencies or third parties referring or relating to the Clean Power Plan, and;
3. An accounting of the federal funds spent by EPA on soliciting comments in support of the Clean Power Plan, including through social media and web postings.

All documentation was to be submitted to leaders of the U.S. House Energy & Commerce Committee no later than Tuesday, December 29, 2015.

RRC CHAIR VISITS THE BORDER TO ASSESS ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE SECURITY

Meeting with the U.S. Border Patrol and Texas Homeland Security officials, Railroad Commission Chairman David Porter visited the Rio Grande Valley on Wednesday, January 6, to review ongoing concerns over the protection of Texas’ energy infrastructure network near the border.

“We know that nefarious groups and individuals engaging in illegal and dangerous activities use Texas’ border with Mexico as a gateway into the United States, and that some of these entities intend to harm Texans and Americans. I want to make certain we are doing everything we can at the commission to help law enforcement protect our people and our critical energy infrastructure,” assured Chairman Porter.

Porter added, “With the unprecedented growth of oil and gas production in South Texas over the past several years, and in light of the tragic terrorist attacks we’ve recently seen worldwide, it is especially important that we build relationships and work together to protect our state and nation from any potential threats to public safety and prevent any disruption of energy production, which is the backbone of our economy.”

Statewide, Texas holds more than 425,000 miles of pipeline. A significant portion of this pipeline infrastructure is located in the Eagle Ford Shale spanning across South Texas, which remains vulnerable due to its proximity to the unsecured border.

Chairman Porter first registered his concerns over border security to the federal government in 2014, and subsequently visited several oil and gas facilities in South Texas to examine the potential vulnerabilities of the state’s existing energy infrastructure. Later, in November 2015, following terrorist events abroad, he reached out to U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security Jeh Johnson, and warned that radical groups could next target one of Texas’ most abundant and valuable economic resources - the state’s oil and gas pipelines and facilities. “In light of the Paris attacks, I am compelled to reiterate concerns I have vocalized about the security of our energy industry, which is the backbone of the Texas economy,” Porter said. He called for a stronger commitment from the Obama Administration and Department of Homeland Security to protect Texas’ critical infrastructure by securing the border.

“Border security is a team sport, and that team is comprised of federal, state and local agencies as well as the areas we all serve. Our partnerships with these agencies will ensure that our priority is to keep our communities safe and secure,” commented U.S. Customs and Border Protection Chief Patrol Agent Manuel Padilla Jr.



PETROLEUM INDUSTRY PREPARES FOR A TOUGH YEAR AHEAD

Oil prices continued to struggle the first week of 2016, hitting multi-year lows on Wednesday, January 6. Benchmark Brent crude futures were at the lowest prices seen since early June 2004, bottoming out at \$34.26 a barrel this week—down a reported 5.93 percent. Low crude prices are in part a result of the sustained excess oil supply coupled with sluggish demand worldwide. And though depressed market conditions persist, OPEC (the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries) still refuses to lower its production output, prompting ongoing growth in global oil inventory. In the meantime, geopolitical tensions in the Middle East, particularly in wake of OPEC members Saudi Arabia and Iran severing diplomatic relations last week, have prompted additional concerns of potential volatile market conditions in the future.

The sustained low-price environment has forced the American E&P sector to react, with many companies streamlining their operations and reassessing expenditures as commodity prices hover near record lows. A new survey released in January by the financial consulting firm BDO confirmed the increasing pessimism of oil and gas leaders on their ability to access capital and credit in the months to come. BDO's *2016 Energy Outlook Survey* examined the opinions of 100 chief financial officers at U.S. oil and gas exploration and production companies regarding the current state of the industry.

"Throughout 2015, we saw many M&A players hesitant to engage in deal activity, likely because sellers hoped the bust cycle would balance out throughout the year and drive valuations up," said Charles Dewhurst, leader of the Natural Resources practice at BDO. "However, as we enter the new year, they are letting go of the idea of rapid recovery and may look to sell before valuations bottom out further."

"Executives must balance the need to bring costs down with the very real risk that a large reduction in labor force may catch them on the back foot when prices begin to climb again," added Jim Willis, senior director of compensation consulting in the Global Employer Services group and a member of BDO's Natural Resources practice. "The industry is threading this needle for now by effectively implementing a hiring freeze, but if prices remain low for much longer, more companies may need to seriously evaluate reducing their headcount."

The BDO report concludes that many oil and gas CFOs will plan to be conservative in spending this coming year and limit their capital investments for 2016, as well as scrutinize their labor costs. Many energy companies could also sell off assets and shed distressed properties and business units.

Meanwhile, new reports warn that hundreds of thousands of U.S. stripper wells could be in peril if oil prices should remain below \$35/barrel for the long-term. Collectively, these wells account for a surprisingly large amount of domestic production -- as much as 1 million b/d of crude from about 410,000 oil wells, or about 11 percent of total U.S. oil production of 9.1 million b/d, according to the National Stripper Well Association (NSWA). Still, America's stripper well operators are doing their best to stay in business. "The small operators of the stripper wells are pretty resilient," Mike Cantrell, head of NSWA, recently said. "They've always made it through and will still make it through."

Economists continue to express uncertainty of when the industry can expect a recovery in oil and gas prices. Until a rebound occurs, producers will continue to adopt new strategies and reduce costs to keep afloat.



REGULATORS CONCLUDE FRACKING DID NOT CAUSE GROUNDWATER CONTAMINATION IN WYOMING

Hydraulic fracturing did not cause groundwater contamination in Pavillion, Wyoming, announced the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality (WDEQ) on December 18th through the release of its "Pavillion, Wyoming Area Domestic Water Wells Draft Final Report and Palatability Study." For years, the state has been conducting an ongoing investigation into drinking water quality concerns in the Pavillion area, after residents complained of smells, tastes and adverse changes in the water quality of their domestic wells.

Five years ago, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) notoriously intervened in this case, working with the State of Wyoming and the Northern Arapaho and Eastern Shoshone Tribes to identify the source and extent of impacts on domestic well water quality. In December 2011, the federal agency unveiled its own Pavillion groundwater report, erroneously claiming that hydraulic fracturing operations had caused groundwater contamination in nearby water wells. However, following five separate phases of water sampling, EPA efforts to evaluate any potential migration pathways from deeper gas production zones to shallower domestic water wells in the Pavillion gas field proved to be inconclusive. Later, in 2013, the EPA elected to drop its study of groundwater and turned the investigation over to Wyoming regulators.

Fast-forward to December 2015, and scientists still are unable to support claims of groundwater contamination as a result of hydraulic fracturing. "Evidence does not indicate that hydraulic fracturing fluids have risen to shallow depths intersected by water supply wells. Also, based on an evaluation of hydraulic fracturing history, and methods used in the Pavillion Gas Field, it is unlikely that fracturing has caused any impacts to the water-supply wells," summarizes the new WDEQ analysis.

"This draft report is part of an extensive scientific investigation to better understand what may be contributing to private water well concerns," said WDEQ Director Todd Parfitt. Public input will be accepted on the WDEQ's draft report through March 18, 2016.

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With more than 3,000 members, TIPRO is the nation's largest statewide association representing both independent producers and royalty owners. Our members include small family-owned companies, the largest publicly traded independents and large and small mineral estates and trusts.

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