



**Texas
Independent
Producers and
Royalty Owners
Association**

TIPRO TESTIFIES BEFORE LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE ON IMPACT OF EPA REGULATIONS

On Wednesday, September 28, 2016, Ed Longanecker, president of the Texas Independent Producers & Royalty Owners Association (TIPRO), testified before the Texas Senate Committee on Natural Resources & Economic Development on the excessive regulatory overreach of federal agencies and the impact on the oil and natural gas industry, economy and consumers.

The interim legislative hearing addressed the potential challenges Texas faces implementing federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulations, including, but not limited to, the Clean Power Plan, the reduction of methane and Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) from oil and gas facilities, updated ozone standards, Regional Haze policy, and other federal rules.

Longanecker's testimony focused on the broad overreach of federal agencies and dozens of new and proposed regulations facing the oil and gas industry, including the EPA's new methane regulations seeking to reduce emissions from new and modified oil and gas wells.

"The U.S. oil and natural gas industry is already one of the most heavily regulated sectors in the United States, yet in recent years our industry has been inundated with a multitude of new and proposed regulations at the federal level, many of which have been a result of efforts by the White House to push their Climate Action Plan," said Longanecker.

Meanwhile, a recent report from ICF International (ICF), which reviewed 75 pieces of scientific literature on U.S. methane emissions published over the past five years, concluded that methane emissions from the natural gas industry are sharply decreasing. This decline is primarily related to voluntary actions from operators, including investment of more than \$217 billion in greenhouse gas mitigating technologies by U.S. oil and natural gas companies between 2000-2014.

Despite this information and the significant progress made by industry in reducing emissions, the EPA has moved forward with comprehensive methane regulations for the oil and gas sector. According to the EPA, the cost of its final methane rule seeking to reduce emissions from new and modified oil and gas wells is expected to exceed \$530 million per year by the year 2025, which is a conservative projection according to calculations showing the total cost to be nearly five times the original estimate.

"With study after study, including EPA's own data, finding low and declining emissions, it becomes evident that these regulations are a solution in search of a problem, and in my opinion, represent an effort to control, tax and regulate more areas of the private economy, and more directly to slow or stop the development of hydrocarbons in our country. These regulations will be devastating to an industry that supports all aspects of our local, state and national economy, leading to further job losses, lower tax revenue and higher energy costs for consumers," added Longanecker.

As a result of the consistent overreach from the federal government, TIPRO has expanded its focus in the judicial arena to challenge the growing list of unnecessary regulations facing the oil and gas industry, as well as some of the many frivolous lawsuits targeting the sector.

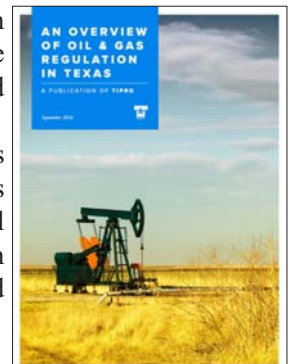
"The state of Texas has the right model in place. State regulators and policymakers, not the federal government, have far more experience and expertise with oil and natural gas activities in Texas, and are much better equipped to adopt progressive, impactful, yet sensible regulations for the protection of our environment and benefit of Texas citizens," concluded Longanecker.

TIPRO PUBLISHES COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE ON OIL AND GAS REGULATION IN TEXAS

The Texas Independent Producers & Royalty Owners Association (TIPRO) has released a new publication entitled, "An Overview of Oil and Gas Regulation in Texas," which provides a comprehensive overview of the history and function of state agencies that regulate the oil and gas industry in Texas, including the Railroad Commission of Texas and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality.

"TIPRO's new publication was developed to better explain the regulation of oil and natural gas in Texas as the legislature prepares for the third full Sunset Review of the Texas Railroad Commission in the past six years and the upcoming 85th Texas Legislative Session," said Ed Longanecker, president of TIPRO. "The Texas oil and gas industry is a cornerstone of our state economy. Effective regulatory oversight of the industry is critical in supporting responsible exploration and production activities and the many associated benefits for our state and fellow Texas citizens."

A full copy of the publication can be found at www.tipro.org.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

TIPRO Members-

These days, it feels as though a week doesn't pass without the announcement of new federal regulations or executive orders from the White House relating to energy and environment matters. In yet another example of federal overreach, President Obama recently signed a Presidential Memorandum (PM) on Climate Change and National Security, establishing a policy that the impacts of climate change must be considered in the development of national security-related doctrine, policies, and plans. To achieve this, the administration has called on federal departments, entities and agencies to perform certain functions to ensure that climate change-related impacts are fully taken into account during the development of national security plans.

Ironically, the same day this PM was signed by President Obama, Congress was holding an oversight hearing regarding a different White House directive on Climate Change, wherein all federal departments and agencies have been ordered to consider the effects of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and climate change when evaluating proposed federal actions.

The latest directive from the executive branch certainly represents the "next level" of action when it comes to the president's Climate Action Plan. And while this most recent PM will not necessarily have a direct impact on our association's membership and the Texas oil and gas industry, the newest policy by the federal government relating to climate change nevertheless is still concerning.

Members of Congress also have indicated apprehension over this policy measure from the White House. Accordingly, leadership of the U.S. House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology - which oversees climate change activities performed by the federal government - has already requested a bipartisan briefing by October 10th from National Security Advisor Susan Rice and Senior Advisor to the President Brian Deese to understand the administration's plans for integrating climate change into national security planning.

TIPRO will continue to keep membership advised of developments relating to excessive regulatory action taken by the federal government. Thank you.

Ed Longanecker



Ed Longanecker

EPA'S CLEAN POWER PLAN FACES MAJOR TEST IN COURT

The D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals heard oral arguments last Tuesday, September 27, 2016, over the Obama Administration's Clean Power Plan. Some have called it the biggest environmental and energy case in years.

The Clean Power Plan, developed by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), was finalized last August. The policy works to cut carbon pollution from new and existing power plants. The day the rule was published, Texas and the state of West Virginia immediately challenged the EPA's power plan. Other states and entities later joined the effort to halt implementation of the Administration's Clean Power Plan. Collectively, the coalition maintains that the EPA's rule fundamentally changes the nation's energy policy in violation of federal law. In the suit against the EPA, the group also argues that the Obama Administration exceeded its authority in imposing this plan, which would cost taxpayers and consumers alike hard-earned money in exchange for less-reliable service.

On February 9, 2016, the Supreme Court issued a stay of implementation against the Clean Power Plan pending judicial review.

Fast-forward to seven months later, on the eve of the high-profile legal showdown over the EPA's Clean Power Plan, Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton on Monday, September 26, accused the federal agency of trying to "force Texas to change how we regulate energy production," through what he called an "unprecedented expansion of federal authority." Paxton also warned that the measure "will inevitably raise rates and reduce reliability for everyone."

"What we need is more reliable energy — not less, and the EPA is trying to stop that," described Texas' attorney general while appearing on a panel last Monday in Washington, D.C. hosted by the Texas Public Policy Foundation and Americans for Tax Reform.

Following the September 27th hearing, reports indicated that the 10 judges - including six Democratic appointees and four Republican appointees - appeared skeptical of both sides debating over the Clean Power Plan.

A decision is not expected until early next year. Ultimately, an appeal before the U.S. Supreme Court over this controversial case will likely result.

TIPRO Calendar of Events

OCTOBER 12, 2016 HOUSTON — IPAA/TIPRO Leaders in Industry Luncheon, 11:30 a.m. Houston Petroleum Club. For info, call: (202) 857-4733.	NOVEMBER 9, 2016 HOUSTON — IPAA/TIPRO Leaders in Industry Luncheon, 11:30 a.m. Houston Petroleum Club. For info, call: (202) 857-4733.	DECEMBER 14, 2016 HOUSTON — IPAA/TIPRO Leaders in Industry Luncheon, 11:30 a.m. Houston Petroleum Club. For info, call: (202) 857-4733.	JANUARY 11, 2017 HOUSTON — IPAA/TIPRO Leaders in Industry Luncheon, 11:30 a.m. Houston Petroleum Club. For info, call: (202) 857-4733.
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EPA ISSUES SECOND INFORMATION COLLECTION REQUEST FOR OIL & GAS FACILITIES

On September 23, 2016, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued its second draft of an Information Collection Request (ICR) that seeks to require oil and natural gas companies to provide extensive information needed to develop additional government regulations to further reduce methane emissions from existing oil and gas sources.

Through the ICR, the agency would request a broad range of information such as how equipment and emissions controls are, or can be, configured, and what installing those controls entails, including associated costs. The EPA is also hoping to gather more information regarding natural gas venting that occurs as part of existing processes or maintenance activities, such as well and pipeline blowdowns, equipment malfunctions and flashing emissions from storage tanks, as well as information on existing low-producing wells and existing underground storage facilities. This information will supposedly help the EPA determine how best to address methane emissions from the oil and gas industry, including additional rulemakings or application of updated industry standards to further reduce emissions.

The EPA has called the initiative “a critical step towards meeting the Obama Administration’s commitment to reduce emissions from existing oil and gas sources as part of the President’s Climate Action Plan.”

The EPA issued its initial draft ICR this past May. Public comments were collected over the summer during a 60-day comment period. According to the agency, this updated second draft reflects a number of changes the EPA made based on comments received from the first draft ICR. The EPA reports that once the ICR is approved, under the Clean Air Act, the industry will have a legal obligation to respond.

Public comments regarding the EPA’s second draft ICR will be collected through October 31, 2016. TIPRO members interested in learning more are encouraged to visit: <https://www3.epa.gov/airquality/oilandgas/methane.html>.

BATTLE CONTINUES OVER BLM’S HYDRAULIC FRACTURING RULE

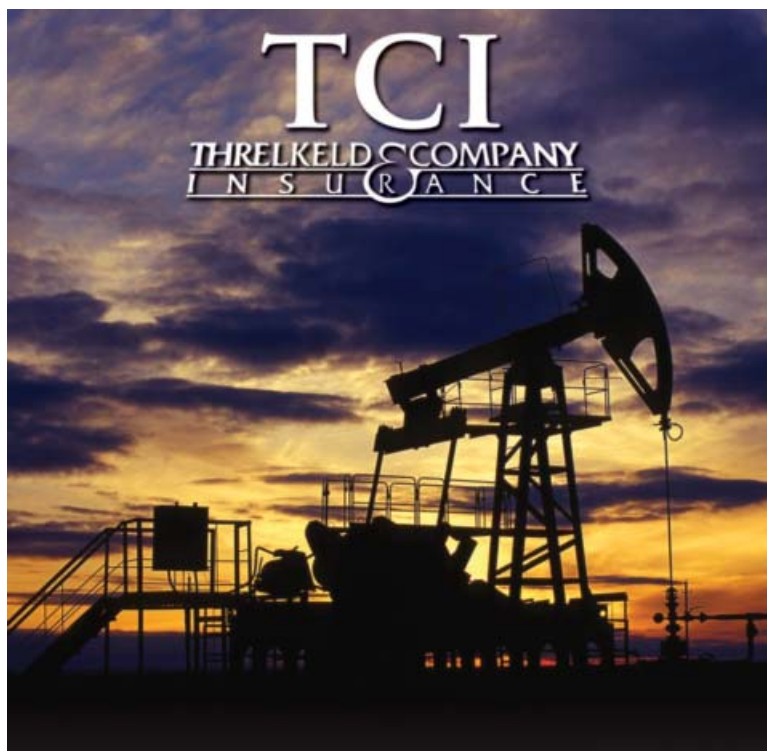
Although this past summer a federal judge deemed the Obama Administration’s regulations on hydraulic fracturing to be invalid, the fight continues over this contentious industry rule.

U.S. District Judge Scott Skavdahl ruled on June 21, 2016, that the U.S. Department of Interior’s Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lacked authority to establish such rules governing hydraulic fracturing on public lands. In reviewing the case, Judge Skavdahl found that Congress has not delegated authority to the Department of Interior to regulate hydraulic fracturing activities, and as such, the BLM’s effort to do so in recent years through its hydraulic fracturing rule, finalized in 2015, was in excess of its statutory authority and contrary to law.

The federal government filed an appeal of the case June 24th just days after the court’s decision was announced and has been pushing for the prior ruling to be overturned. “The court’s order misconstrues the broad delegations of rulemaking authority in the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920 (MLA) and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), and ignores a century of precedent and federal regulations promulgated under those statutes, as well as the Indian mineral statutes. All those sources confirm that BLM has the authority to oversee resource extraction on federal and Indian leases, including well-stimulation activities, to protect natural resources and the environment. BLM and its predecessors have been doing so for nearly 100 years, and modern hydraulic-fracturing operations simply are a new version of historically regulated well-stimulation techniques,” argues the federal agency in documents that were filed with the court. “The district court’s crabbed view of BLM’s authority is wholly unprecedented and manifestly incorrect. Rather than defer to BLM’s longstanding interpretation of its governing statutes, the district court substituted its preferred interpretation for that of the agency. That was legal error,” asserts the BLM.

Legal briefs pertaining to this case were also recently filed in response to the BLM’s appeal in mid-September by the Western Energy Alliance and the Independent Petroleum Association of America (IPAA). In the reply brief, the groups maintain that, “BLM’s regulatory authority is statutorily circumscribed and subject to obligations under administrative law. The district court correctly concluded that these limitations preclude BLM’s promulgation of the hydraulic fracturing rule and this court should affirm.”

A date for oral arguments regarding this appeals case has not yet been announced by the court.



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USFWS ANNOUNCES CHANGES TO PETITIONING PROCESS UNDER ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT

Final changes to government policies by which species may be petitioned for listing, delisting or reclassification under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) were announced on September 26, 2016, by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and NOAA Fisheries. The two federal agencies, which implement the ESA, say that revised ESA petition regulations seek to ensure submission of more complete and robust petitions in order to provide more effective conservation, greater involvement by state wildlife agencies, and better transparency to the public.

“The final revisions to the ESA petition regulations reflect the thoughtful feedback and concerns of many partners, while staying true to our goal of improving both the quality of petitions and the ESA’s effectiveness,” said USFWS Director Dan Ashe. “State wildlife agencies are critical partners in conserving wildlife in America and often possess the most up-to-date and relevant information on imperiled species, so making better use of their expertise makes good conservation sense.”

The final revisions to ESA listing petition regulations include:

- *Improved engagement with state wildlife agencies:* Petitioners will be required to notify each state wildlife agency in which the species occurs at least 30 days before submitting the petition to the Services. This change will provide states an opportunity to submit pertinent information on petitioned species in time to inform our review.
- *Limitation on number of species per petition:* Petitions will be limited to only one species per petition. A petition may still address any members of a single species as defined by the ESA, including the full species and one or more subspecies or varieties. For vertebrate species, this includes one or more distinct population segment (DPS).

Some officials have warned that despite adjustments to the ESA petition regulations, there will be little improvement to the process. Congressman Rob Bishop (R-UT), chairman of the U.S. House Natural Resources Committee, commented, “These revisions give the appearance that state input will improve and that closed-door settlements will no longer drive petition and listing decisions. Unfortunately, serial environmental litigation will continue to drive ESA policy, and there is nothing the agencies can do about it unless we reform the underlying statute... the law’s failings necessitate reform.”

The updated ESA policies will go into effect on October 27, 2016.

BOEM RELEASES DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT ON SEISMIC TESTING IN GULF OF MEXICO

In late September, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) published the Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) recommending strong regulatory measures be adopted in order to protect marine mammals and coastal environments in the Gulf of Mexico from potential impacts by geological and geophysical (G&G) surveys for oil, gas and minerals.

The G&G activities assessed in the BOEM’s new draft PEIS include deep-penetration and high-resolution seismic surveys, electromagnetic surveys, magnetic surveys, gravity surveys, remote-sensing surveys and geological and geochemical sampling. These surveys are conducted to help uncover new oil and natural gas resources in the Gulf and to allow companies to consider opportunities for offshore energy production.

“BOEM’s approach offers the strongest practicable safeguards in an effort to eliminate or reduce impacts to marine mammals and the environment,” said BOEM Director Abigail Ross Hopper of updating government standards for seismic testing. “We continue to conduct research and monitor the science of this field and work with other agencies and stakeholders to create and maintain the protection of these resources.”

Completion of the draft PEIS was a condition of a federal court settlement between BOEM and the Natural Resources Defense Council and other co-plaintiffs announced earlier this year. BOEM is the lead agency on this draft PEIS, with the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement (BSEE) and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) serving as cooperating agencies on the initiative. The PEIS will be used to support both BOEM’s G&G permitting and NMFS’s Marine Mammal Protection Act decision-making for oil- and gas-related G&G.

According to the BOEM, the target date for completion of the PEIS is September 2017.

Oil and gas producers operating offshore have remained committed to safely conducting G&G surveys in order locate potential new sources of energy. For decades, the industry has utilized seismic surveys in the Gulf of Mexico without a single case of harm to animals. During this time, marine life and commercial fishing have thrived.

Moreover, there is no evidence that the sound produced by exploring for oil and gas through use of seismic surveys has resulted in any physical or auditory injury to a marine mammal. G&G surveys are also used by other entities, like the U.S. Geological Survey, the National Science Foundation and the offshore wind industry.

The BOEM’s draft PEIS will be open for public comment for 60 days, following publication of the Notice of Availability in the Federal Register on September 30, 2016.

The BOEM will also hold five public meetings in the Gulf area to solicit input and answer questions on the Draft PEIS, including a public meeting that has been scheduled for Thursday, November 17, 2016, at the Houston Marriott North, located at 255 North Sam Houston Pkwy East, Houston, Texas 77060.

Public comment and feedback received will help the BOEM and other cooperating agencies to further refine the draft PEIS prior to publication of the Final PEIS next year.

For additional information, please visit www.boem.gov/GOM-G-G-PEIS/.

NEW EPA DATA SHOWS DECREASE IN INDUSTRY EMISSIONS

New data released this week by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) confirms that emissions from large oil and natural gas facilities continue to decline. On Wednesday, October 4, 2016, the EPA released its sixth year of Greenhouse Gas Reporting Program data, detailing greenhouse gas pollution trends and emissions broken down by industrial sector, geographic region and individual facilities.

The EPA reports that in 2015 emissions from large industrial sources, representing approximately 50 percent of total U.S. greenhouse gas emissions, were 4.9 percent lower than 2014, and 8.2 percent lower than 2011. Meanwhile, for petroleum and natural gas systems specifically, reported emissions for 2015 were down roughly 1.6 percent (231.4 million metric tons CO₂e, from 235.1) from 2014 levels.

Interestingly, the new EPA data also shows that methane emissions from reporting oil and gas facilities declined 3.7 percent from 2014 levels and have fallen as much as 16 percent from 2011 levels. Despite this trend, earlier this year, the EPA adopted additional onerous regulations for new and modified oil and natural gas wells in efforts to reduce methane emissions.

“Under the President’s Climate Action Plan, EPA is taking steps to ensure a safer future for our children and grandchildren,” said Janet McCabe, acting assistant administrator for EPA’s Office of Air and Radiation. “The Greenhouse Gas Reporting Program is supporting this by providing high-quality, long-term data for the largest emitters, and contributing important details on greenhouse gas emissions trends. The program is showing us that the trend is moving in the right direction.”

Collectively, more than 8,000 large facilities reported their direct greenhouse gas emissions from 2015 to the EPA under the program, including power plants, oil and gas production and refining companies, iron and steel mills and landfills.

According to the EPA, the data presented from this program may be used to develop common-sense climate policies.

REPORT EXAMINES WHAT AMERICA WOULD LOOK LIKE TODAY WITHOUT THE SHALE REVOLUTION

If the U.S. energy renaissance had never happened, what might America look like today? In a new report, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce’s Institute for 21st Century Energy asks that very important question and analyzes the impact to the nation’s economy if certain politicians and special interest groups had gotten their way and oil and natural gas resources had not been developed. The report also quantifies the real world consequences that would have been created had the U.S. kept its energy resource base locked in the ground.

“The ‘Keep it in the Ground’ movement completely ignores the vast benefits to our nation’s economy that the energy renaissance has brought to us,” said Karen Harbert, president and CEO of the U.S. Chamber’s Institute for 21st Century Energy. “For instance, lower electricity and fuel prices spurred a comeback in manufacturing that alone is responsible for nearly 400,000 jobs. It costs consumers less to drive a car and heat their homes today. And all the while, our nation has been decreasing its energy imports and lowering emissions.”

Key findings from the report include:

- Nearly 4.3 million jobs — generated both as a direct result of energy development and because of the indirect gains realized by the broader economy thanks to the renaissance — may not have been created.
- The U.S. economy would be a half-trillion dollars smaller today.
- American households would be paying 31 percent more for their electricity today and 43 percent more for motor fuels.
- Residential natural gas prices would be 28 percent higher, while industrial natural gas prices would be 94 percent higher.
- Without the lower energy prices made possible by the energy renaissance, analysis shows that the industrial sector would have lost almost \$47 billion in economic opportunity, nearly \$25 billion in labor income, and the equivalent of 387,500 jobs in 2015, according to the Institute for 21st Century Energy. Within the industrial sector, impacts to energy-intensive manufacturers would have been especially pronounced.
- The state of Texas, the nation’s leading producer of oil and natural gas, might have lost over 675,000 jobs and billions of dollars in GDP loss without the shale revolution.



“From Pennsylvania’s paper industry, to iron and steel in Ohio, to petrochemicals in Texas, to cheese manufacturing in Wisconsin, the energy renaissance has been responsible for the preservation and growth of industries across America,” Harbert emphasized. “This is not just about the oil and gas industry—this is about the investment that has taken place and would continue to take place in virtually every sector of the economy if we are able to take advantage of our abundant, inexpensive energy supplies.”

Publicly available data on jobs and production levels in addition to the IMPLAN macro-economic model were utilized to compile information for this analysis.

Download a copy of the complete report by visiting <http://bit.ly/2dpdggK>.

OPEC AGREES TO CUT PRODUCTION; DEAL WON'T BE FINALIZED UNTIL NOVEMBER

In a major development, last week, some of the world's largest producers announced they'll scale back their oil production. On September 28, 2016, members of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) reached an "understanding" to finally commit to cutting the group's production output. Talks surrounding an OPEC production cap have swirled for months, though leaders of the organization to-date have not been successful in adopting a plan. However, during a meeting of OPEC members in late September, a deal was finally struck to reduce OPEC's oil production quota and keep production at a range of 32.5 to 33 million barrels of oil per day. Currently, OPEC produces an estimated 33.24 million barrels of oil per day.

The agreement won't be finalized until the cartel's formal meeting in Vienna at the end of November. Still, oil markets reacted positively to the news, sending oil prices and several oil company stock prices higher as a result.

Nonetheless, some analysts have expressed hesitation that OPEC's commitment to curtail oil production will lead to a true recovery. Others have questioned if the deal will fall through.

Just days after the OPEC agreement was reached, Iran moved ahead with plans to boost its oil production. Media reports indicate that the Iranian oil ministry hopes to boost production from the current 3.6 million barrels a day to 5.7 million by 2020. While Iran—along with Nigeria and Libya—would allegedly be exempted from making a reduction as part of OPEC's commitment, it still could spell trouble for efforts to reduce the world's supply glut. Meanwhile, on Wednesday, October 6, Saudi Arabia - the largest OPEC producer - said it was lowering the cost of Arab Light and other crude products for November delivery to Asian customers. Its decision to cut prices for some of its oil exports have since raised serious questions about the kingdom's commitment to limiting future oil production as part of the OPEC agreement.

With nearly two months until the OPEC pact is expected to be signed, clearly challenges to the deal exist and threaten the likelihood of the commitment becoming a reality.

TEXAS WILL RECEIVE FEDERAL GRANT TO ASSIST WORKERS AFFECTED BY OIL & GAS DOWNTURN



The U.S. Department of Labor has approved a National Dislocated Worker Grant award for Texas with an initial release of more than \$13 million – of a total approved amount of \$16,309,807 – the government agency announced on Tuesday, October 4, 2016. The funds will be distributed to the Texas Workforce Commission, and will provide re-employment services for dislocated workers who have been impacted by the downturn in the state's oil and gas industry. The Labor Department notes that one specific area of focus for this project will be assist small rural communities whose economies rely heavily on income of oil and gas industry workers.

The federal grant is supported by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014, and helps to extend resources to states and local workforce investment boards to re-employ laid-off workers quickly by offering training to increase occupational skills. This award to the Texas Workforce Commission is expected to serve approximately 4,191 workers in Texas.

TxDOT TO HOST ENERGY SECTOR WORKSHOP IN THE PANHANDLE ON OCTOBER 18TH

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) is planning to host another workshop for energy-impacted areas in the state of Texas. The agency's next seminar will be held in the town of Canadian, located in the Texas Panhandle, on October 18, and is intended to update local leaders from counties and cities, regional authorities, energy industry representatives, state/congressional officials, and other interested stakeholders who are impacted by the Anadarko shale. TxDOT has been hosting workshops throughout Texas to discuss and receive feedback on the Energy Sector Corridor Improvement Program. TxDOT has identified \$1.8 billion in the priority funding needs within the state's energy area and has prioritized projects on major corridors.

The October 18th workshop will last from 1:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Hemphill County Library, located at 500 Main Street in Canadian, Texas. If you would like to attend, please RSVP before October 13th by contacting trent.thomas@txdot.gov or please call (512) 463-6397.

TEXAS COMPTROLLER LAUNCHES REVAMPED WEBSITE

The Texas Comptroller's office recently unveiled its new website delivering more intuitive and customer service-focused design; a powerful, enhanced search function that offers faster and more accurate results; and an all-new responsive framework that creates a rich mobile experience for phone and tablet users. "The new Comptroller.Texas.Gov demonstrates our ongoing commitment to providing taxpayers with government that is efficient and responsive," commented Comptroller Glenn Hegar. "I'm particularly proud of our new business center that puts our most common agency functions front and center, allowing Texans to file and pay taxes, search for unclaimed property, explore state spending and much more. The tools taxpayers use most are now just a click away."

The Comptroller's updated website also will serve as a one-stop shop for nearly all agency needs, as the website now houses the former sites TexasTransparency.org, TexasAhead.org, KeepingTexasFirst.org, TheTexasEconomy.org, MatchthePromise.org and EveryChanceEveryTexan.org.

NOAA: FOSSIL FUEL DEVELOPMENT “NOT RESPONSIBLE” FOR RISE IN GLOBAL METHANE EMISSIONS

New research from scientists at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the Cooperative Institute for Research in Environmental Sciences (CIRES) shows that fossil fuel development is not responsible for an uptick in global methane emissions. A new study was released by NOAA and CIRES on Wednesday, October 5, which estimates fossil fuel activities contribute 20 to 25 percent of total global methane emissions. And though the latest data suggests higher emissions than previously estimated from energy development, researchers were clear that the industry is not responsible for the increased rate of global atmospheric methane emissions measured. “We recognize the findings might seem counterintuitive – methane emissions from fossil fuel development have been dramatically underestimated – but they’re not directly responsible for the increase in total methane emissions observed since 2007,” said lead author Stefan Schwietzke, a scientist with CIRES at the University of Colorado Boulder, working in NOAA’s Earth System Research Laboratory.

In fact, Schwietzke and his team, which also included scientists from the University of Colorado and other universities, believe that natural or human-caused microbial sources are the reason for rising global methane emissions. “We believe methane produced by microbial sources – cows, agriculture, landfills, wetlands, and fresh waters – are responsible for the increase, but we cannot yet pinpoint which are the primary drivers,” he said. “If the methane is mainly coming from cows or ag, then we could potentially do something about it. If it’s coming from decaying vegetation in wetlands or fresh waters, then a warming climate could be the culprit, which means that it could be part of a self-reinforcing feedback loop leading to more climate change. Those are big ifs, and we need to figure them out.”

NEW INNOVATIONS SHOWCASED AT GRAND OPENING OF GE’S OIL & GAS TECHNOLOGY CENTER

This week, GE opened its new Oil & Gas Technology Center in Oklahoma City. The center will serve as a hub for the development of exciting industrial technologies to advance oil and gas operations. “We believe a strong commitment to R&D will help our oil and gas customers find new efficiencies to work through tough market conditions and lead to transformational opportunities for the industry to thrive long-term. The new technology center in Oklahoma City will accelerate innovation; it’s where we can bring the full power of digital solutions and technology from across GE’s industrial businesses to advance the oil and gas industry,” said Lorenzo Simonelli, president and CEO of GE Oil & Gas.

During the grand opening of the company’s new technology center on Wednesday, October 5, 2016, GE unveiled its drone prototype, nicknamed “Raven,” which has been engineered to detect emissions precisely and cost-effectively, to help customers further reduce their environmental impact and improve operational efficiency. The device is capable of autonomous remote flight paths to detect emissions in the field. GE notes that this summer Southwestern Energy Company successfully piloted the technology to detect emissions from oilfield equipment at well sites in Arkansas.

Other future innovations will be developed at the new GE technology center to assist all areas of oil and gas development, from production solutions and well construction systems to oilfield facilities and systems and reservoir performance.

GE reports that although the new center just recently opened, temporary offices were established more than two years ago in the City Place Tower in downtown Oklahoma City. Already there are 120 employees, although the Oil & Gas Technology Center can accommodate as many as 230 people. GE’s new Oil & Gas Technology Center is five stories, with 125,000 sq. ft. of lab and office space that includes:

- 400-foot and 60-foot deep test wells
- Two 30-ton overhead cranes for moving large testing equipment
- An entire floor dedicated to customer collaboration with embassy offices

In addition, GE’s new Oil & Gas Technology Center has established several programs and partnerships with industry and academia, including Oklahoma State University and the University of Oklahoma and has R&D agreements in place with many of the leading operators in North America, according to the company.

YPE AUSTIN TO HOST RAILROAD COMMISSIONER RYAN SITTON AT OCTOBER LUNCHEON

The Austin chapter of Young Professionals in Energy (YPE) is excited to announce the fourth installment to its quarterly Lunch and Learn series. Texas Railroad Commissioner Ryan Sitton will speak to luncheon guests on Tuesday, October 11th from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Malverde in downtown Austin. Past speakers of the series have included Allen Gilmer, CEO of Drillinginfo, Parker Reese, CEO of Ameredeve, and Bryan Sheffield, CEO of Parsley Energy.

YPE is a non-profit collaborative of young professionals working within the energy sector. With 40 chapters worldwide, YPE connects members with a central focus of unity, education, and community enrichment. The Austin chapter of YPE has a unique advantage of proximity to elected officials and the Texas state capitol; quarterly luncheons offer members an opportunity to connect with and learn from these industry leaders. YPE exists to foster an environment where members can learn from each other’s experiences, share industry knowledge and discuss energy issues.

Tickets for the October 11th luncheon are \$35, which includes lunch and admittance. Limited quantities are still available and can be purchased online, through Eventbrite at the following link: www.tinyurl.com/ypeoctoberlunch. Event sponsors include TIPRO & Rash Chapman, LLP.

For more information on YPE Austin or scheduled events, please visit www.ypenenergy.org/Austin.

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