

Fracking Just Caused Another 4.6-Magnitude Earthquake

Oklahoma now has more quakes than anywhere in the world.

AP/The Huffington Post

🕒 12/16/2015 12:03 am ET

Compra

Compra

Compra

Pantaloni elasticizza...

€ 29,99

Compra

AdChoices

Oil and gas regulators in British Columbia, Canada, [confirmed](#) this week that a 4.6-magnitude earthquake earlier this year was caused by fluid injection from hydraulic fracturing, also known as fracking.

The quake is the largest of its kind in the province to be linked to the process, whereby fluid is injected into the ground at high-pressure to release natural gas stored inside shale rocks.

Oklahoma's energy regulator declared last month that the state now has [more earthquakes than anywhere else in the world](#), which scientists have also linked to wastewater injections, a long-used method to dispose of the chemical-laced byproduct of oil and gas production.

A recent study by the U.S. Geological Survey traced wastewater injection methods to the 1920s in Oklahoma and tied the rise in quakes in the past 100 years to industrial activities, such as oil and natural gas production. About 1.5 billion barrels of wastewater was disposed underground in Oklahoma last year, according to statistics released by the governor's office.

FOLLOW HUFFPOST

f

▼

HuffPost

Like **5.6m**

Green

Like **288k**

HUFFPOST NEWSLETTERS

Get top stories and blog posts emailed to me each day.
Newsletters may offer personalized content or advertisements. [Learn More.](#)

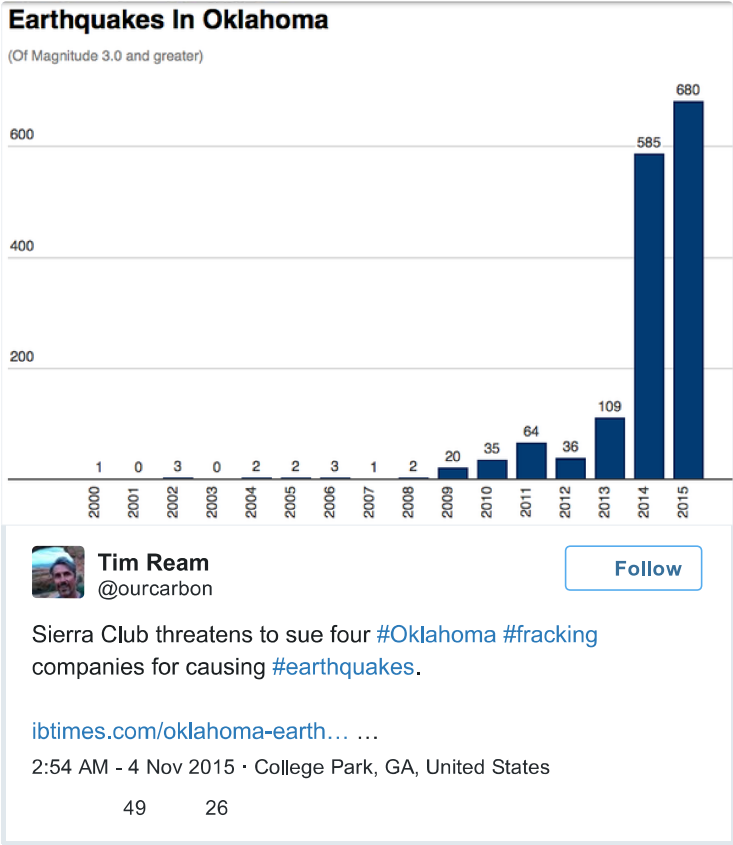
address@email.com

Subscribe!

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/fracking-earthquakes_5670e6f0e4b0648fe30188c6

1/4

SUGGESTED FOR YOU



On Wednesday, two energy companies asked a judge to throw out a lawsuit by an Oklahoma woman who claims she was injured in an earthquake caused by the wastewater injections.

The lawsuit by Prague resident Sandra Ladra alleges the companies are liable because they operated wastewater disposal wells that triggered the largest earthquake in state history, a 5.6-magnitude temblor that hit in 2011. Ladra, who claims the quake crumbled her two-story fireplace and caused rocks to fall on her legs and gash her knee, is among others who have similar lawsuits pending elsewhere in the country.

Ladra is suing Oklahoma-based Spess Oil Co. and New Dominion LLC, as well as 25 unidentified parties. Her case was given new life in June when the Oklahoma Supreme Court overturned a decision by Lincoln County District Judge Cynthia Ferrell Ashwood, who had dismissed the suit on the grounds that the court didn't have jurisdiction in the matter.

Ashwood, who also presided over Wednesday's hearing, took the matter under advisement and did not issue an immediate ruling.

The companies want the lawsuit dismissed because they say Ladra waited too long to file it.

Energy companies claim the litigation could cripple oil and gas production in Oklahoma, where the economy is tied to the industry. Regulation proponents say the lawsuits could result in safer drilling practices.

A swarm of earthquakes has recently rumbled through the north-central swath of the state, one with a 4.7 magnitude. In response, the Oklahoma Corporation Commission's oil and gas division has proposed ways for wastewater disposal well operators in that area to halt or reduce volume.

Scott E. Poynter, Ladra's lead attorney, said the scientific studies linking injection wells to earthquakes — and a state agency that recently said it's "very likely" the cause — bolsters her claim.

"When you look at the actual science and you look at the data, you can't help but go, 'It's the injection wells, stupid.' It's just that obvious," Poynter said. "Oklahoma shouldn't have more earthquakes than anywhere on the planet, but it does."

Bob Gum, an attorney for New Dominion, said current wastewater disposal methods are the most modern and efficient as possible. A lawyer for Spess Oil didn't return a message seeking comment.

Some industry representatives and oil and gas producers acknowledge that some of the earthquakes in Oklahoma are caused by human action, but warn against generalizing that all of them have been triggered by their practices.

Chad Warmington, president of the Oklahoma Oil & Gas Association, which represents many of the larger companies exploring in the state, said the correlation needs further study and a way to strike "a balance of injecting and producing without an increase in seismic activity."

Kim Hatfield, president of Crawley Petroleum, which operates in Oklahoma and Texas, said the ramifications of lawsuits such as Ladra's could weaken the energy industry in Oklahoma and have devastating economic consequences.

"Are you familiar with 'The Grapes of Wrath'? This would make that look like a comedy," Hatfield said. "That would be a self-inflicted wound of tremendous magnitude for the state, and oil companies will say, 'We're not going to drill in Oklahoma.'"

"It would be a tragedy of just monumental proportions," he said.

Also on HuffPost:

 Climate change seen from aroun...

MORE: [Fracking](#), [Natural Gas](#), [Fracking Earthquakes](#)

FOLLOW GREEN

[Suggest a correction](#)



GET THE NEWSLETTER

Subscribe!

- 1. [Why Actor Henry Rollins Thinks Donald Trump 'Is A Lot Like Bernie Sanders'](#)



- 15 hours ago [live.huffingtonpost.com The Huffington Post HuffingtonPost.com \(AOL\)](#) black flag
- 2. [Planned Parenthood Sues Ohio In Dispute Over Fetal Tissue](#)



a day ago [live.huffingtonpost.com HuffingtonPost.com \(AOL\)](#) planned parenthood

- 3. [Bella Thorne Expounds On Her 'Mean Girls' Comment To Seventeen Mag](#)



18 hours ago [live.huffingtonpost.com The Huffington Post HuffingtonPost.com \(AOL\)](#) women

- 4. [What Behind New Zealand's Flag Referendum?](#)



a day ago [live.huffingtonpost.com The Huffington Post HuffingtonPost.com \(AOL\)](#) flags

- 5. [5 Things You Need To Know This](#)

YOU MAY LIKE

Around The Web



- 1. [This Is What Will Happen When You Eat Avocados Every Day](#) 2 months ago [awesometips.pw](#) [Awesome Tips](#) [AwesomeTips.pw](#) (sponsored)



- 2. [8 Amazing Things That Will Happen When You Do Bridges Every Day](#) 2 months ago [awesometips.pw](#) [Awesome Tips](#) [AwesomeTips.pw](#) (sponsored)



Recommended For You



- 1. [14 Bathroom Inventions You Didn't Realize You Needed](#) 5 months ago [huffingtonpost.com](#) [Huffington Post](#) [HuffingtonPost.com](#) (AOL) [The Huffington Post News Team](#) The Huffington Post News Team (sponsored) Most Popular on HuffPost



CONVERSATIONS

- 3. [5 Things You Need to Know This Morning](#)



47 minutes ago [huffingtonpost.com](#) [The Huffington Post](#) [AOL](#) [Forex](#) [Jade Walker](#) [Jade Walker](#) [huffpost](#) [rise](#)

- 6. [6 Surprising Ways To Ward Off Heart Attacks](#)



54 minutes ago [huffingtonpost.com](#) [The Huffington Post](#) [Wow.com](#) [Yagana Shah](#) [Yagana Shah](#) [heart disease](#)

- 7. [Mom 'Shaves Daughter's Head, Tells Her She's Dying In Cancer Con'](#)



an hour ago [huffingtonpost.com](#) [The Huffington Post](#) [Breakout Pitch](#) [Nina Golgowski](#) [Nina Golgowski](#) [Juanita Garcia](#)

- 8. [Matt Drudge Makes Rare Appearance At GOP Debate](#)

