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AMY SANCETTA/AP

OHIO GEOLOGISTS LINK LOCAL EARTHQUAKES DIRECTLY TO FRACKING

For the first time, a state study links Ohio's recent seismic events to hydraulic fracturing, not just water disposal

April 12, 2014 9:14PM ET

Geologists in Ohio have for the first time linked earthquakes in a geologic formation deep under the Appalachians to hydraulic fracturing, leading the state to issue new permit conditions Friday (<http://www2.ohiodnr.gov/news/post/ohio-announces-tougher-permit-conditions-for-drilling-activities-near-faults-and-areas-of-seismic-activity>) in certain areas that are among the nation's strictest.

A state investigation of five small tremors last month (<http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2014/3/10/ohio-earthquakeslinkedtofracking.html>) in the Youngstown area, in the Appalachian foothills, found the injection of sand and water that accompanies hydraulic fracturing, or fracking

A U.S. government-funded report released in 2012 found that two worldwide instances of shaking can be attributed to actual extraction of oil and gas, as opposed to wastewater disposal in the ground — a magnitude-2.8 quake in Oklahoma and a magnitude-2.3 quake in England, both in 2011.

Later, the Canadian government tied quakes in British Columbia's Horn River Basin between 2009 and 2011 to fracking. Those led to stricter regulations, which news reports indicated had little effect on the pace or volume of drilling.

But for the region encompassing Ohio, Pennsylvania and West Virginia, where energy companies have drilled thousands of unconventional gas wells in recent years, it's a first. The Utica Shale lies beneath the better-known Marcellus Shale, which is more easily accessible and is considered one of the world's richest gas reserves.

Glenda Besana-Ostman, a former seismologist with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, confirmed the finding is the first in the area to suggest a connection between the quakes and fracking. A deep-injection wastewater well in the same region of Ohio was found to be the likely cause of a series of quakes in 2012.

"While we can never be 100 percent sure that drilling activities are connected to a seismic event, caution dictates that we take these new steps to protect human health, safety and the environment," said James Zehringer, director of Ohio's natural resources department.

Ohio has also imposed an indefinite drilling moratorium at the site of the March quakes. The state is allowing oil and gas extraction to continue at five existing wells at the site.

Such events linked to fracking are "extremely rare," said Shawn Bennett, a spokesman for the industry group Energy In Depth, who described the new rules as safeguards that will prevent similar future quakes in Ohio.

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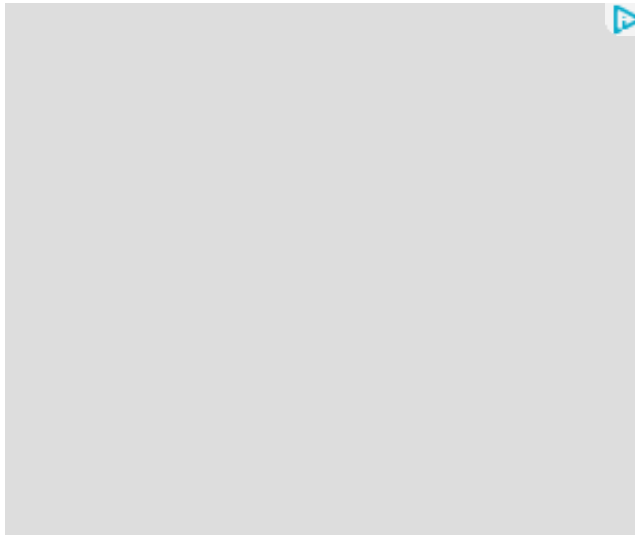
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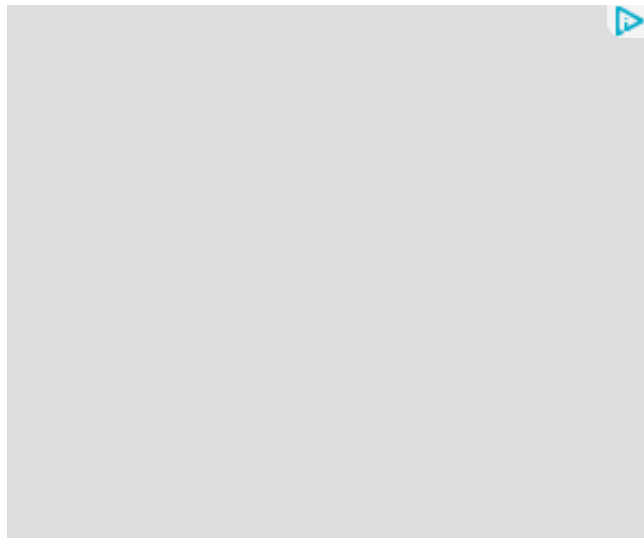
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11 Comments



vince_dc

3 hours ago

The big question is can we live with a series of 1 and 2 magnitude earthquakes. We have a couple of mines a few miles from my house. Those explosions shake every now and then, but don't do any damage. If we were talking 5s and 6s, I could understand the concern. But we are pretty arrogant if we think we have the power to know the San Andreas loose. I saw that movie and it stay in the realm of science fiction.

↳

REPLY

0



Brian Ansley

3 hours ago

It's hard for me to understand how we can link earthquakes and fracking together, yet we just place a moratorium on those specific sites and keep doing it at others. I understand that areas located on faults are more susceptible to quakes, but the ground water contamination issues are present at all sites. Why aren't we investigating the ground water contamination thoroughly before we continue with fracking operations? We absolutely cannot live without clean water.

↳

REPLY

+1



john nugent

4 hours ago

We are not good stewards of the planet, and we will pay dearly.

↳

REPLY

+1



claude9

5 hours ago

Duh now.

↳

REPLY

0



Laurel McMahon

5 hours ago

The most powerful and dangerous nation on earth is run by serial killers. Fracking is a painful, lingering death of land, water and people and the Republicans laugh themselves breathless.

Ω

REPLY

+1



Khagaraj Sommu

5 hours ago

Geologists in Ohio ? All of them ? Such unanimous opinion is rare indeed.

Ω

REPLY

0



Ingeborg Hanson

5 hours ago

So a geological study finds a correlation between fracking and earthquakes and the frackers do not believe it. What else is new? It actually should be common sense that if one pounds, hammers, drills, and beats mother earth to death - that mother earth will retaliate.

Ω

REPLY

+1



Tom886

9 hours ago

Oh! What will the Koch Brothers say?

Ω

REPLY

-1



Gregg Boyer

10 hours ago

They've been pumping oil out of Oklahoma since the early 1900's . 300 earthquakes there, already this year . 200 plus last year was a record number . Now Ohio has data backing one down side of fracking . When earthquakes appear everywhere they're pumping and fracking, will we face the reality ????

Ω

REPLY

0



davekotinsley

10 hours ago

Can we agree that earthquakes caused by the human energy crisis are bad? And that a "permit" (government jargon for extortion) won't mitigate their existence? Can we just abort this mission before things get truly horrible? As if poison in drinking water wasn't bad enough...

⤵

REPLY

+1



grtinventor

10 hours ago

Fracking is a byproduct of a failed energy policy . We "mostly all" know carbon based fuels are a world wide problem . Being able to get at more carbon based fuels dose nothing to fix the problem of climate change . These same investments could be directed to renewable power . Come-pair . Cost of a well OR cost of a wind mill . Power available at well "limited . Power from windmill = forever without damage to the climate .do the math ; both moral and financial , the windmill wins .

⤵

REPLY

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