



**Texas  
Independent  
Producers and  
Royalty Owners  
Association**

## EPA PURSUES EXCESSIVE REGULATIONS AGAINST OIL & NATURAL GAS INDUSTRY

The Obama administration soon will propose additional regulatory restrictions for the oil and natural gas industry, the White House revealed on March 10, 2016. The measure comes as part of a joint initiative launched between the United States and Canada, aimed at building on the agreement made by nearly 200 nations last December in Paris to combat climate change.

Already, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is working to develop regulations that would reduce methane emissions by 40-45 percent below 2012 levels from the oil and gas sector before 2025. Nonetheless, the White House has made it known that in the coming months, the Administration intends on exploring new opportunities for additional methane reductions for the U.S. oil and gas sector.

“The EPA will begin developing regulations for methane emissions from existing oil and gas sources immediately and will move as expeditiously as possible to complete this process. Next month, the EPA will start a formal process to require companies operating existing methane emissions sources to provide information to assist in development of comprehensive standards to decrease methane emissions,” U.S. and Canadian leadership said in a joint statement released last Thursday. “Building on the U.S.-Canada Air Quality Agreement, both countries will work collaboratively on programs, policies, and strategies, and share experiences on reducing oil and gas methane emissions as they implement their respective federal regulations, beginning this year.”

Last summer, the EPA proposed harsh standards to directly address methane emissions from new and modified sources in the oil and gas industry -- regulations that are still being finalized by the federal agency. Now, the EPA is hoping to aggressively expand its methane regulations to also cover existing oil and gas sources. If the policy is ultimately adopted by U.S. regulators, such action could hurt America’s independent oil and gas producers, threatening to deter domestic oil and gas activity, which in turn could lead to increased energy costs and job loss.

“These proposed rules will place unnecessary burdens on a sector that is already struggling, and could actually slow progress on reducing methane emissions by adding yet another layer of requirements. According to EPA data, methane emissions from oil and natural gas production represent a diminutive 1.07 percent of its own Greenhouse Gas Inventory. Emissions from oil and natural gas development have fallen 35 percent since 2007, even as natural gas production increased by 22 percent. EPA data also shows methane emissions from hydraulically fractured gas wells fell 73 percent between 2011 and 2013. Total methane emissions from production, processing and transmission have already dropped from 170 million metric tons in 1990 to 148 million metric tons in 2013,” commented Ed Longanecker, president of the Texas Independent Producers & Royalty Owners Association (TIPRO).

“New domestic drilling activity in the United States has decreased more than 50 percent this year due to continued volatility in commodity prices. Despite the downturn in exploration and production activity, and clear decline in methane emissions from industry operations, the EPA projects—without explaining the basis—an increase in emissions from the oil and natural gas sector of 25 percent over the next decade. The EPA’s flawed assumptions and projections call into question the necessity of the proposed rules, along with their ultimate validity and enforceability,” Longanecker added.

“It is important to keep in mind that oil and natural gas producers already have a significant incentive to prevent methane emissions. Methane is a valuable commodity that, when not lost to the atmosphere, generates revenue,” emphasized the association’s president. “On behalf of our organization’s 3,000 members, which include many of the state’s oil and gas producers, TIPRO will continue to closely monitor developments relating to this proposal by the EPA, as it could have a substantial impact on operators in the state of Texas and across our nation.”



## CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

### TIPRO Members-

On behalf of the association's membership, leaders of TIPRO recently submitted an amicus curiae letter to weigh in on a current case under review by the Supreme Court of Texas that is of particular interest to TIPRO members, and depending on the outcome, could impede future development of oil and natural gas resources in the state of Texas.

The initial dispute surrounding this case involved two principles of Huff Energy Fund LP, who also were shareholders and active board members of Longview Energy Co. Allegedly the directors seized plans by Longview Energy and cheated the company out of an opportunity to invest in a 21,000-acre tract of land in the Eagle Ford Shale. In September 2012, a Texas jury ruled in favor of Longview Energy, agreeing that the Huff parties were guilty of usurping Longview's plans, though an appeals court later overturned that judgement.

In the case of *Longview Energy Co. v. The Huff Energy Fund LP, et al., No. 15-0968*, TIPRO believes that the opinion from the 4<sup>th</sup> Court of Appeals relative to fiduciary duties is legally and fundamentally incorrect and, if upheld by the Texas Supreme Court, could have far-reaching adverse consequences on oil and gas operations.

As explained in TIPRO's amicus letter, submitted for the record on March 7, 2016, an individual with unique knowledge of an oil and gas company, such as an officer or director of a corporation engaged in exploration and production, should not be able to take advantage of information that became available to him or her in the course of such work and use that information to compete with the company.

Critical information, such as drilling opportunities and prospects (both near and long-term), must be shared with an entity's officers and directors so that the entity can plan for the future and manage its expenditures and development. The management of a company must be able to present and discuss potential future prospects and activities in an environment where their respective individual pecuniary interests are taken out of the equation, so that they can act together to provide both short and long-term direction and growth for their company. The Longview decision makes it very difficult for potential corporate opportunities to be shared, as it has the potential to turn an officer or director into a competitor of the very entity whose financial well-being he or she is charged with safeguarding. Consequently, TIPRO maintains that the Supreme Court should overturn this decision and reinstate the district court's decision in this case.

For additional details, please contact TIPRO's President Ed Longanecker by calling (512) 477-4452.

Regards,

Raymond James Welder III



Raymond James Welder III

## OBAMA REMOVES ATLANTIC FROM OFFSHORE DRILLING PLAN

The Obama administration announced this week that it will remove the Atlantic Ocean from its proposed five-year offshore drilling plan, dealing another blow to the U.S. oil and gas industry. On Tuesday, March 15, Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell and Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) Director Abigail Ross Hopper announced the federal agency's proposal for the nation's Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Oil and Gas Leasing Program for 2017-2022.

The proposed offshore oil and gas leasing program reverses the administration's initial plan to auction off drilling rights on millions of acres of the mid-and south-Atlantic in 2021. This follows an announcement from President Barack Obama and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau last week that the government will also seek additional regulations for the oil and natural gas sector to further reduce methane emission by the industry.

"This is all par for the course as President Obama seeks to solidify his climate change legacy and appease environmental activists during the last year of his presidency," said Ed Longanecker, president of TIPRO. "We can unfortunately expect to see an increase in onerous and unnecessary proposals from this administration in the coming months. The president's flawed climate change ideology will only hurt American jobs and our economy, while providing little or no benefit to our environment."

The U.S. Interior Department estimates there are approximately 3.3 billion barrels of recoverable oil on the Atlantic's outer continental shelf and 31.3 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, though some energy industry experts say true reserves could in fact be far higher.

### TIPRO Calendar of Events

APRIL 7, 2016	MAY 11, 2016	JUNE 8, 2016	JULY 13, 2016
HOUSTON — IPAA/TIPRO Leaders in Industry Luncheon, 11:30 a.m. Houston Petroleum Club. For info, call: (202) 857-4733.	HOUSTON — IPAA/TIPRO Leaders in Industry Luncheon, 11:30 a.m. Houston Petroleum Club. For info, call: (202) 857-4733.	HOUSTON — IPAA/TIPRO Leaders in Industry Luncheon, 11:30 a.m. Houston Petroleum Club. For info, call: (202) 857-4733.	HOUSTON — IPAA/TIPRO Leaders in Industry Luncheon, 11:30 a.m. Houston Petroleum Club. For info, call: (202) 857-4733.

# U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE REVIEWS STATE PERSPECTIVE ON EPA REGULATORY ACTIONS

As the United States government tries to pursue added barriers to domestic energy development, Congress is taking another look at regulatory excesses by federal entities such as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Department of Interior (DOI).

On Wednesday, March 9, 2016, members of the U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works (EPW) hosted a special hearing to listen to state perspectives regarding EPA regulatory actions and the role of states as co-regulators. Invited testimony was shared by regulators from the states of South Dakota, Arkansas, West Virginia, Vermont and Delaware, who offered feedback on whether the current regulatory framework between states and the EPA is working and upholding the principle of cooperative federalism.



“It’s critical to the EPW committee’s understanding of federal environmental policies to not just hear from the EPA, but the states on the ground implementing these policies,” said Senator James M. Inhofe (R-OK), chairman of the committee. “I am pleased to receive robust feedback from state regulators and look forward to receiving additional responses.”

This past January, Chairman Inhofe also sent letters to EPW member states requesting commentary on state implementation of EPA regulatory programs, in efforts to allow the EPW committee to better understand the impacts of recent EPA actions against states. In addition to witness testimony, during the Marth 9<sup>th</sup> hearing, state responses and concerns submitted via letters were also shared with committee members for consideration. “As the letters and today’s hearing highlight, there are many areas where states report that the EPA is not upholding the principle of cooperative federalism. In a majority of the letters, states reported that the EPA is deviating from its core functions and imposing mandates on states driven by a political agenda. This results in years of litigation, regulatory uncertainty, and costly inefficiencies while failing to produce meaningful environmental benefits. The testimony and feedback from states will aid my committee as we continue to identify ways to enhance the co-regulatory role of states and the EPA in achieving environmental goals.”

Meanwhile, on March 2<sup>nd</sup>, members of the U.S. House Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources questioned witnesses from three major federal agencies on the Administration’s overly-prescriptive federal regulations. The panel included representatives from the DOI’s Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM), the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement (BSEE) and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

“According to recent data, leased onshore and offshore acreage have hit record lows on your watch,” Subcommittee Chairman Doug Lamborn (R-CO) stated. “It seems that not a Friday afternoon has gone by without receiving a new notice of proposed rulemaking from one of the agencies,” Lamborn added in reference to the onslaught of recent regulations implemented by the three agencies.

U.S. oil and gas regulations promulgated by BOEM, BSEE and the BLM (well-control, venting and flaring, hydraulic fracturing, onshore orders 3, 4, 5, offshore air regulations, offshore bonding, Arctic rule, to name a few examples) when compiled with the current price environment are preventing private investment in leasing and development on federal lands, describes a hearing memorandum distributed to subcommittee members. “Increasingly, companies look to state and private lands for energy development due to the federal government’s choice to lease less acreage for energy development and further restrict that development with increased regulatory red tape. This Administration’s actions have done little to reinvigorate investment in federal leasing.”

Data compiled by the Congressional Research Service shows that since 2010, oil and natural gas production on state and private lands has grown by 114 percent, while production on federal lands has decreased by 0.1 percent (reference chart below):

U.S. CRUDE OIL PRODUCTION: FEDERAL AND NON-FEDERAL AREAS FY2010-FY2014 (BARRELS PER DAY)					
Fiscal Year	U.S. Total	Non-Federal	Total Federal	Federal Offshore	Federal Onshore
2015	9,415,000	7,437,000	1,978,000	1,485,000	493,000
2014	8,324,000	6,545,000	1,779,000	1,372,400	406,200
2013	7,261,200	5,583,300	1,677,900	1,303,300	374,600
2012	6,249,000	4,603,500	1,645,500	1,302,800	342,700
2011	5,550,200	3,775,700	1,774,400	1,454,300	320,100
2010	5,446,500	3,466,300	1,980,200	1,685,200	295,000

*Data compiled by the Congressional Research Service*

In the meantime, leasing on federal lands is at an all-time low – a trend which many expect to continue through the rest of the president’s term. This will only lead to additional production shortfalls and lost revenue for the federal government in the future. “In the current price environment, vast regulatory uncertainty can make or break future energy development on public lands and threatens to pull back the great strides made towards an energy independent future,” underscored members of the U.S. House Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources.



## LOW-PRODUCING WELL TAX EXEMPTION KICKS IN FOR SMALL TEXAS PRODUCERS



Until last month, oil prices were too high during the past 10 years to allow marginal well operators to apply for the tax exemption. However, according to the Comptroller's office, as of February 2016, the three month average for oil prices dropped to \$28.48 per barrel -- coming in below the \$30 threshold as required for a credit and low enough to shave 25 percent off a small producer's severance tax bill.

Ed Longanecker, president of TIPRO, spoke recently with *The Texas Tribune* and the *San Antonio Business Journal* about the tax provision, praising state leaders for adopting policies that provide relief to Texas producers in times of challenging market conditions, such as what operators are now experiencing with sustained low commodity prices. "Marginal and stripper wells collectively provide nearly 20 percent of total production in Texas and the United States as a whole. These wells are a critical component of our industry and economy, providing an important source of tax revenue, employment and income for small businesses and royalty owners. These wells become unprofitable to operate whenever oil and gas prices drop below its critical profit point, so programs like the marginal well exception could mean the difference of keeping a well online or not," explained Longanecker.

TIPRO members interested in learning more details about the Texas Marginal Well Exception are encouraged to visit the following website by the Comptroller's office: [http://comptroller.texas.gov/taxinfo/crude/low\\_prod\\_well.html](http://comptroller.texas.gov/taxinfo/crude/low_prod_well.html)

## RRC CHAIRMAN APPLAUDS TEXAS OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY FOR RESILIENCE

This week, the state's leading energy regulator offered praise for members of the Texas oil and gas industry, commending Texas producers for maintaining strong production levels even as oil and gas activity has slowed nationwide. David Porter, the current chairman of the Texas Railroad Commission (RRC), made his comments during a luncheon on Tuesday, March 15, hosted by the Dallas-Fort Worth Association of Lease and Title Analysts (DFW-ALTA).

"In 2014, we saw historic amounts of oil and gas production, and we've sustained these record levels during 2015," Chairman Porter said. "Because of Texas producers' innovation and efficiency, our state's energy industry still employs tens of thousands of people in virtually every corner of the state, providing jobs and income to countless families."

"We rely on stable, free-market policies in Texas that encourage innovation and competition, and prevent over regulation from hindering job creation and economic growth, as we've unfortunately seen in other states, like New York and California," added Chairman Porter. "The Railroad Commission has safely and efficiently regulated Texas's oil and gas industry for almost a hundred years protecting public safety and the environment. As a result, our state's economy has flourished, even during times of national economic hardship."

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## REMINDER: UPCOMING IPAA/TIPRO LEADERS LUNCHEON SCHEDULED FOR THURSDAY 4/7

TIPRO members are reminded that next month's Leaders in Industry Luncheon, hosted in partnership with the Independent Petroleum Association of America (IPAA), will be held on Thursday, April 7, at the Petroleum Club of Houston. Guest speakers will include Dr. Mark Schwartz, president and managing director of Scenario Planning, and James Feaster, senior adviser of PIRA Energy Group. For more information or to register to attend, please contact IPAA's Meetings Manager Brittany Green at (202) 857-4733.

## ICYMI: RRC ISSUES NOTICE ON UFT RULES

In March, the Texas Railroad Commission's Oil & Gas Division notified operators of regulatory changes adopted to Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §3.86 (Statewide Rule 86), regarding Horizontal Drainhole Wells, as well as conforming amendments to other statewide rules (5, 31, 38, 40, 45, 51 and 52). Effective February 1, 2016, these updated rules establish a procedure for designating certain fields as unconventional fracture treated fields ("UFT Fields").

The commission defines a UFT Field as a field in which horizontal drilling and hydraulic fracturing must be used in order to recover resources from all or part of the field and which is developed using either vertical or horizontal drilling techniques. This designation would include Texas' shale formations, such as the Eagle Ford and Barnett Shale, in which the drainage of a wellbore is based upon the area reached by the hydraulic fracturing treatments rather than conventional flow patterns. Designation of a field as a UFT Field is governed by 16 TAC §3.86 (i), and may be initiated by industry or by commission staff.

The agency notes that regulatory amendments will reduce and simplify field rule hearings, resulting in a more efficient regulatory process.

For further information regarding the Railroad Commission's recent adoption of the UFT Field rules, contact Tim Poe at [tim.poe@rrc.texas.gov](mailto:tim.poe@rrc.texas.gov).

## TWDB RELEASES DRAFT OF 'MOST COMPREHENSIVE STATE WATER PLAN EVER PRODUCED'



Texas officials have released the Draft 2017 State Water Plan, as the state continues to plan for how to address future water needs.

On March 8<sup>th</sup>, leaders of the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) published the next version of the state's water plan, a 161-page guide that will serve as state water policy and includes the TWDB's policy recommendations to the Texas Legislature. The TWDB is the state's leading water planning and infrastructure financing agency and is statutorily responsible for administering the regional water planning process and preparing and adopting the state water plan every five years.

"Years of hard work by hundreds of regional water planning group members and TWDB staff have led to the Board's publication of the Draft 2017 State Water Plan for public comment," said TWDB Board Chairman Bech Bruun. "Texans will now have their first look at the

newest, most comprehensive state water plan ever produced. We look forward to receiving and incorporating public comments on the draft plan so that we can proceed with final adoption this summer."

"For the first time, the Draft 2017 State Water Plan includes an online, interactive website as an integral component of the plan," added TWDB Board member Kathleen Jackson. "This addition is a significant achievement for the state, as it allows the public to take an up-close look at water planning data specific to their county or city. Technology is a key part of the plan and by engaging the public through the interactive website, we have the ability to broaden our reach when it comes to educating Texans on the future of water in our state."

Texas government officials, water experts and citizens all collaborate throughout this comprehensive process and engage in the management of the state's water resources. The State Water Plan is critical in helping to ensure that Texas will have adequate water supplies in times of drought. The State Water Plan is also increasingly essential as the Lone Star State experiences continued growth in population. The TWDB reports that in 1950, only 8 million people lived in Texas. In the year 2010, approximately 25 million people called Texas home. By 2070, 51 million people are expected to live in the Lone Star State, all of whom will need affordable and available supplies of water resources in order to work and live.

TWDB Board member Peter Lake explains that the Draft 2017 State Water Plan "spells out approximately 5,500 strategies Texas communities will use to meet their water needs over the next 50 years, at a total capital cost of \$62.6 billion." Lake also noted that the plan underscores the importance of implementing the projects in the state water plan. "Without those projects in place, Texas will face an 8.9 million acre-foot shortage of water in 2070 in a drought and economic losses of approximately \$151 billion by 2070."

The TWDB will hold a hearing to discuss the proposed 2017 State Water Plan on Monday, April 18, 2016, at 6:00 p.m. The hearing will be held in Austin at the Stephen F. Austin Building, located at 1700 North Congress Avenue, Room 170.

Otherwise, public comments on the Draft 2017 State Water Plan must be submitted to the TWDB before 5:00 p.m. on Monday, April 25, 2016.

Interested stakeholders may download a copy of the Draft State Water Plan by visiting the link below:

[http://www.twdb.texas.gov/waterplanning/swp/2017/doc/DRAFT\\_2017SWP.pdf](http://www.twdb.texas.gov/waterplanning/swp/2017/doc/DRAFT_2017SWP.pdf)



## TCEQ SEEKS COMMENTS REGARDING OZONE STANDARDS

The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality's (TCEQ) Air Quality Division is seeking input on the potential area designations and boundaries under the 2015 Ozone Standards. The comments would help TCEQ develop recommendations on which counties should be designated as non-attainment.

Comments are due to the TCEQ by April 15, 2016. TCEQ will use data from ozone monitors installed throughout the state to help with the designations.

## TEXAS RAILROAD COMMISSIONERS TESTIFY BEFORE HOUSE ENERGY RESOURCES COMMITTEE



Photo Credit: Texas Railroad Commission

On Monday, March 7, 2016, all three Texas Railroad Commissioners, in addition to the agency's new Executive Director Kimberly Corley, testified before members of the House Energy Resources Committee, providing an update to legislators on the agency's activities, as well as offering insight on current levels of drilling and permitting in Texas.

"Over the last few dynamic years for Texas energy production, we have adjusted our processes to stay ahead of our state's fast-paced energy industry. The commission continues to function under the mission of providing thorough, business-minded regulation and real-time response to issues surrounding public safety and the protection of our natural resources, and we become more efficient in this effort every day," said Commissioner Christi Craddick.

With a slowdown in E&P operations across the state, Railroad Commission Chairman David Porter did express apprehension during the March 7<sup>th</sup> hearing over the current funding structure of the agency. Right now, the Railroad Commission gets 75 percent of its budget from fees and taxes related to oil production and drilling. Chairman Porter said, "While we remain firmly committed to protecting the people of Texas and our natural resources, I am deeply concerned current price and activity levels in the energy industry could hurt the long-term sustainability of the commission under our current funding structure."

Since oil prices have fallen over the last 18 months, there has been a decrease in drilling permits issued in Texas by the Railroad Commission, corresponding to a drop in drilling fees collected by the agency, from \$14.2 million in fiscal year 2014 to \$8.6 million in fiscal 2015. "We must have a serious conversation with the legislature about how the Railroad Commission is going to be funded moving forward if we're going to continue to have the financial resources we need to do our job here in Texas and not let the federal government takeover by default," stated Chairman Porter.

During last week's legislative hearing, the House Energy Resources Committee also focused attention on enforcement policies maintained by the state agency, in addition to inactive well status and prioritization as well as Railroad Commission bonding requirements. As the state experiences a slump in drilling activity, legislators wondered if there could be a rise in abandoned wells, as seen during previous busts. If so, officials considered whether or not more funding would ultimately be necessary to help the state handle abandoned wells. Currently, the Railroad Commission reports there are 9,500 inactive wells needing to be plugged, a number that has actually gone down in recent years.

"I'm excited to continue working with the legislature to ensure the Railroad Commission is doing the best job possible for the people of Texas," said Railroad Commissioner Ryan Sitton. "Our agency is committed to giving Texans confidence in the way our natural resources are produced. I know that the legislature shares our commitment to protecting the environment and public while responsibly producing our natural resources, and that we will move forward together to ensure the Railroad Commission remains a high-caliber and high-performing state agency."

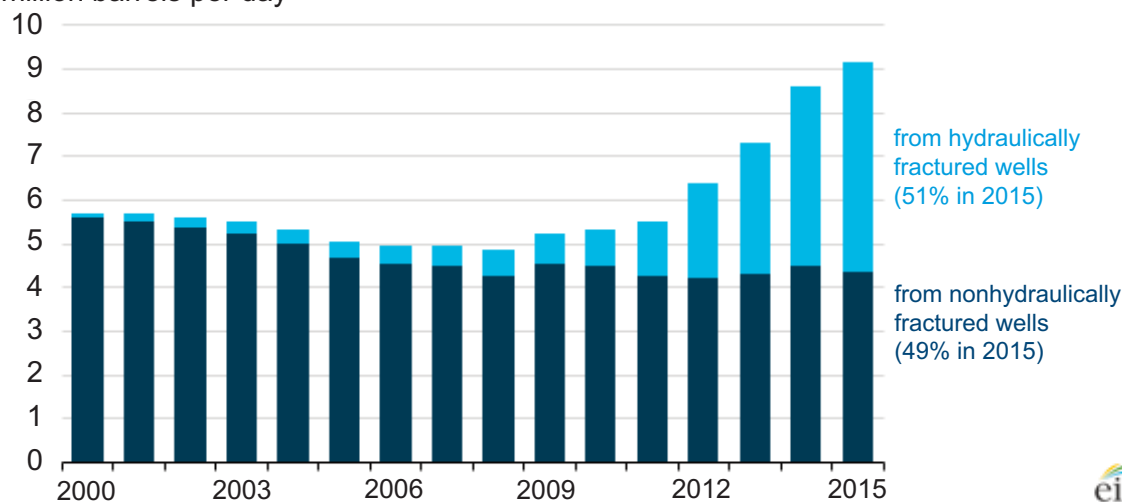
## NOTICE: TEXAS SENATE NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE WILL MEET APRIL 1<sup>ST</sup>

The Texas Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Economic Development will meet on April 1<sup>st</sup> in Austin to consider interim charges pertaining to the state's oil and natural gas industry. Committee members will evaluate the permitting process in Texas and neighboring states and make recommendations for eliminating unnecessary barriers and expediting the process to ensure that the regulatory process is consistent and predictable. Additionally, lawmakers will also review the effectiveness and necessity of programs and resources currently used to support economic development in Texas. During the hearing, legislators will consider recommendations regarding continuation of effective strategies, modification of existing administrative or regulatory barriers, and the reduction or elimination of ineffective programs. On behalf of the association's membership, TIPRO will participate in the April 1<sup>st</sup> legislative hearing.

## HYDRAULIC FRACTURING ACCOUNTS FOR HALF OF U.S. OIL PRODUCTION

### Oil production in the United States (2000-2015)

million barrels per day



Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration, IHS Global Insight, and DrillingInfo

New data released by the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) shows that over the past five years, the use of hydraulic fracturing has increasingly contributed to the nation's production of crude oil.

The EIA explains, "Even though hydraulic fracturing has been in use for more than six decades, it has only recently been used to produce a significant portion of crude oil in the United States. This technique, often used in combination with horizontal drilling, has allowed the United States to increase its oil production faster than at any time in its history."

According to well completion and production data from DrillingInfo and IHS Global Insight, the EIA reports that in 2000, approximately 23,000 hydraulically fractured wells produced 102,000 barrels per day (b/d) of oil in the United States, making up less than 2 percent of the national total. By 2015, the number of hydraulically fractured wells grew to an estimated 300,000, and production from those wells had grown to more than 4.3 million b/d, making up about 50 percent of the total oil output of the United States.

## OPEC TO MEET IN APRIL TO DISCUSS POTENTIAL OIL PRODUCTION FREEZE

Next month, members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries - known as OPEC - plan to meet to continue conversations surrounding a potential freeze on crude production output, reports the Associated Press. The meetings will take place on April 17<sup>th</sup> in Qatar's capital city of Doha.

In February, leaders from Saudi Arabia, Russia, Venezuela and Qatar reached a tentative agreement to freeze oil output at January's levels in order to ease pressure on oil prices, which have fallen drastically since Summer 2014. However, the deal, referred to as the "Doha Accord," to cap oil output was contingent upon other OPEC producers making similar freezes as well, though some OPEC members have since pushed back against the proposal. Iran, for instance, has vocalized its intent to continue increasing its own crude oil output, as the country tries to recover from previous international sanctions imposed on Tehran over its nuclear program. Still, energy ministers from some of the world's largest producing nations believe a deal can eventually be reached to cap OPEC's oil output levels and bolster the price of oil. "The continuous efforts of the Qatari government have been instrumental in promoting dialogue among all oil producers to support the Doha initiative, helping the stabilization of (the) oil market to the interest of all," Mohammed bin Saleh al-Sada, Qatar's energy and industry minister, said in the statement.

## GOVERNOR ABBOTT LAUNCHES NEW INITIATIVE TO HELP TEXAS MEET WORKFORCE GOALS

The Governor of Texas, Greg Abbott, has established a new Tri-Agency Workforce Initiative to aid in the advancement of job creation and economic expansion in the Lone Star State. The initiative, publicly unveiled by the governor on Monday, March 7, will be spearheaded by Texas Education Agency Commissioner Mike Morath, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board Commissioner Raymond Paredes and Texas Workforce Commissioner Andres Alcantar.

"Understanding the needs of job creators is paramount to ensuring that Texas remains the top state for business expansion and relocation," said Governor Abbott. "This past session, we made economic strides by investing in our workforce and further reducing taxes and regulations. By establishing this initiative, the state of Texas now seeks to ensure that the needs of both its growing workforce as well as new and existing businesses are met and each are prepared to successfully operate in an ever-changing 21<sup>st</sup> century economy."

Amongst several charges, Governor Abbott has directed the commissioners to work with industry and local stakeholders to assess workforce needs and identify innovative workforce development models that directly coordinate with industry partners and promote post-secondary success. The commissioners should include career and technical education (CTE) and science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education models in their assessment. The commissioners involved with the initiative will embark on a series of statewide meetings over the coming months, after which they will offer a report to the governor with their findings and recommendations.



# THE CHALLENGE OF CHANGE 2016 Convention

June 29-July 1

The Renaissance  
Worthington Hotel  
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For more event information and to view/print the sponsor exhibitor package for this event visit [www.naro-us.org/texas](http://www.naro-us.org/texas) or contact Cynthia Simonds **800-558-0557**



**Texas Independent  
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Association**

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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