



EARTHWORKS

March 23, 2015

Earthworks' comments against H.B. 539

Dear Energy Resources Committee:

On behalf of Earthworks' Texas members and myself, I would like to make the following comments opposing H.B. 539.

This is another bill written in retaliation for Denton's local vote to ban fracking. This bill levies a punishment tax on cities that dare to protect their citizens from fracking impacts. Any city with oil and gas regulations must pay the state a state-calculated amount to compensate for the regulation's impact on state coffers. And as if that weren't punitive enough, they are forced to pay the state for doing the calculation.

Texas is a big state. Based on size alone, municipalities' oversight can't significantly affect the oil and gas industry. Texas covers 261,000 square miles. Denton covers 87, or 3/100ths of 1 percent. All Texas cities combined account for less than 5 percent of Texas' area.

There is a better way to recover lost oil and gas royalties for the state that doesn't involve forcing fracking in families' backyards.

This release of marketable natural gas lasted for over 24 hours and caused a spike on the state's air monitor 20 miles away. Do you know how concerned the state was about these wasted royalties? Zero concern. I called them twice and they refused to even investigate.

Wells in the Eagle Ford flared 34 billion cubic feet of gas in 2013. That is, oil and gas companies in the Eagle Ford wasted 34 billion cubic feet of gas in 2013. How much did the state charge those companies for this wasted gas? Zero.

The state should tax the industry for the wasted product they spew and flame into our air. That's a win for the state, royalty owners and our air quality and everyone would be a lot happier.

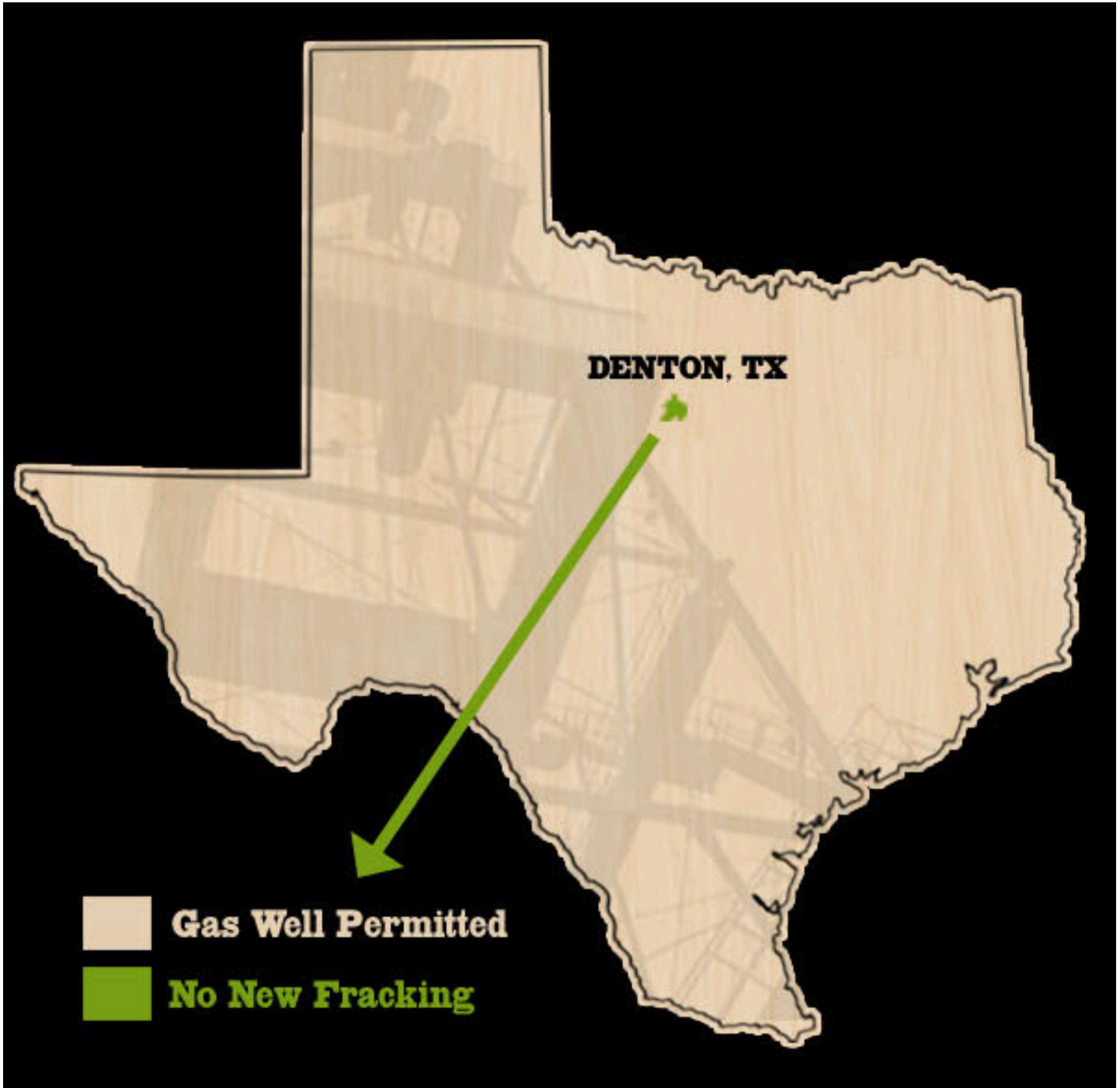
H.B. 539 isn't about compensating the state for lost production; it's a political power grab. It's the oil and gas industry, through the state legislature, trying to show cities who is in control in Texas. If H.B. 539 passes, it'll show ordinary Texans who's in charge, that's for sure.

Sincerely,

Sharon Wilson

Sharon Wilson
Earthworks

Texas covers 261,000 square miles. Denton covers 87, or 3/100ths or 1 percent. All Texas cities combined account for less than 5 percent of Texas' area.



FLIR™

HI OFF

MANUAL

WH

3/ 7/14 6.04.3...

02:00 -00:12

