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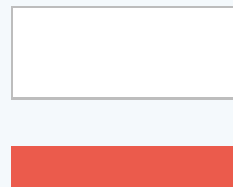
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production combined with wastewater disposal represented the “most likely cause of recent seismicity near Azle.”

The RRC responded by hiring a seismologist, who began his investigation into these events.



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The RRC also modified its injection and disposal well regulations by requiring more information from companies seeking a permit.

In June, the RRC conducted hearings and the two companies that have operations in the area, XTO Energy headquartered in Fort Worth and EnerVest in Houston, presented detailed scientific data about their operations and the geology in the area.

The hearing examiners issued two lengthy reports which concluded that “the evidence in the record is insufficient to conclude that injection fluids are escaping from the permitted disposal zones” and that the injection wells caused or contributed to the seismic activity.

On Nov. 1, the three RRC commissioners unanimously voted to agree with the hearing examiners in both cases.

Commissioner Ryan Sitton thanked the examiners for doing a “really good job of digging into the technical meat of this issue,” saying he supports their effort and agrees with their findings.

The search for the cause of the seismic activity continues. The Texas Legislature passed legislation this year that allocates \$4.5 million to fund a study of seismic activity led by the University of Texas Bureau of Economic Geology.

With the ruling by the RRC it appears that the case in Azle is closed, but the search for answers remains active.

Alex Mills is President of the Texas Alliance of Energy Producers.

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