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## UT research shows link between oil and gas water disposal and earthquakes

Rye Druzin, Staff writer Updated 9:52 am CST, Tuesday, November 6, 2018



IMAGE 1 OF 37

A wastewater holding tank on a drill site in Prague, Okla., is shown. A new University of Texas at Austin study linked oil and gas wastewater disposal with earthquakes.

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A new study says there is a link between the disposal of water used in the oil and gas industry underground and increased earthquake activity.

The study, led by the University of Texas at Austin, says the increased pressure created by pumping used water from oil and gas operations underground raises the risk of earthquakes. The risk is both site specific and regional, and the rate of injection can also be a factor.

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Oil and gas production brings up with it large amounts of water in addition to the water used to

hydraulic fracture or frack wells, the process that allows oil and gas companies to tap unconventional shale resources. One of the ways that oil and gas companies have dealt with such large volumes of wastewater is by pumping it back underground for permanent storage.

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The areas the study looked at included West Texas' Permian Basin oil field, South Texas' Eagle Ford Shale, the Bakken in North Dakota, and Oklahoma.

Oklahoma had the highest rate of potential association, with 56 percent of water disposal wells potentially associated with earthquakes.

The Eagle Ford Shale was second highest, with 20 percent of its water disposal wells potentially associated with earthquakes.

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