

OTHER VOICES

JUNE 30, 2016 5:58 PM

# Federal judge was right to strike down Obama fracking rules

## HIGHLIGHTS

Federal judge strikes down fracking regulations on federal land

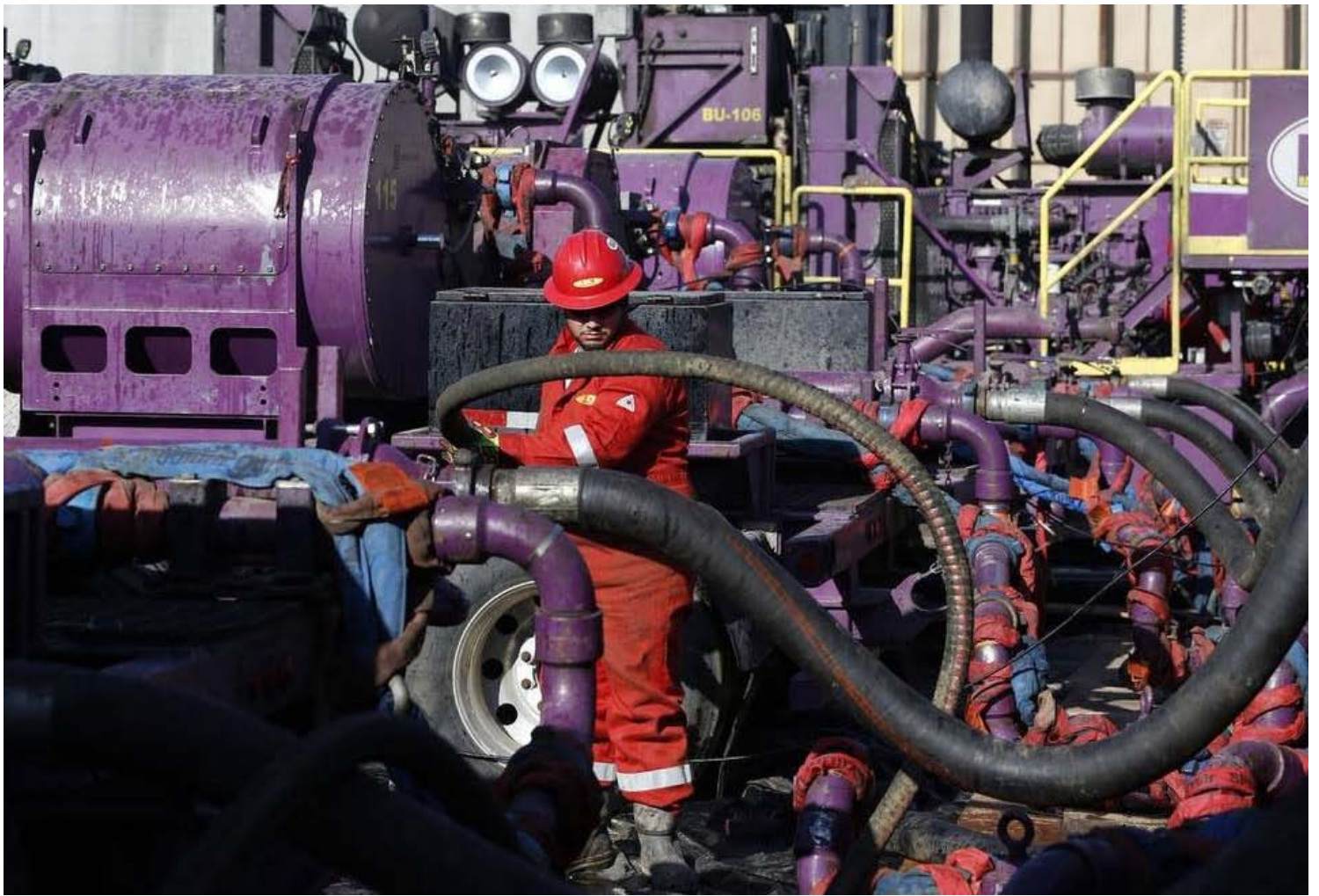
State primacy is best solution for environmental regulation

Industry must continue to improve its environmental impact

**FIND AND HIRE  
HELP FOR ANY PROJECT**

  
Opportunity. Everywhere.

FREE S



A worker adjusts hoses during a hydraulic fracturing operation at a oil and gas well near Mead, Colo. Brennan Linsley - AP

By Scott W. Tinker  
Special to the Star-Telegram



In striking down the Obama administration's hydraulic fracturing rule that would have put more regulations on "fracking" on federal lands, Judge Scott Skavdahl in the U.S. District Court of Wyoming [got it right](#) for the environment.

When it comes to oil and gas production, each state is different because the geology, regulatory frameworks, infrastructure, economics, industries, tax laws and political climate are different. One size does not fit all.

State regulators and policymakers have more experience, expertise and local knowledge than the federal government.

Thus, states are better at ensuring that industry, government and other stakeholders work together to produce oil and gas; protect the land, water and air; disclose the composition of fracking fluids; and provide a local tax base that allows for further environmental protection in the state.

State primacy is the best solution for the environment in this case and other issues as well.

Should agricultural practices in Florida follow the exact standards as those in Oregon? Should Colorado be told it cannot sell marijuana? Should New York be required to allow fracking in the Marcellus Shale?

Are there cases where federal regulation makes sense? Of course. For example, particulate pollution or safety standards for food, both of which cross state boundaries.

Is the state oil and gas regulatory process perfect? Of course not. That is why state regulators share best practices and experiences and are always improving.

Are all states prepared to regulate oil and gas? No.

But does that justify the [Interior Department's statement](#) that Judge Skavdahl's ruling "prevents regulators from using 21st century standards to ensure that oil and gas operations are conducted safely and responsibly on public and tribal lands"?

No, it does not.

There are local, and mostly temporary, effects of drilling, such as increased noise, dust, road damage and lights.

On rare occasion, wells can leak methane through surface casing designed to protect groundwater; valves can leak methane; and surface storage pits can leak water.

Also on rare occasions, pressure from disposal of produced water deep in the earth can cause a natural fault to shift sooner than it would have on its own, creating a low-magnitude earthquake.

Are these environmental impacts acceptable? No. The industry must continue to improve, and it does.

Are the impacts large-scale and systemic? No. They are local, and they are the exception.

Of course, understanding the rarity doesn't help if such an event happens in your back yard, any more than would contamination from an industrial-scale chicken farm or a chemical battery, fertilizer or solar-panel manufacturing plant.

Do we have energy options better than oil and natural gas that can be deployed immediately? Some say yes, but that is mostly a political answer.

As we consider energy, the economy and the environment, and how to improve all three, it is best to remain objective, fact-based and educated.

When dealing with topics that we are passionate about, we *all* migrate toward results and outcomes that confirm our biases, even when faced with objective, measurable, repeatable results that may not agree.

In environmental regulation, the road to green is not always a federal highway.

*Scott W. Tinker is the state geologist of Texas, the director of the Bureau of Economic Geology, and the Allday Endowed Chair in the Jackson School of Geosciences at The University of Texas at Austin.*

MORE OTHER VOICES

YOU MAY LIKE

Sponsored Links by Taboola



How Much Money Do You Really Get from a Reverse Mortgage?

NewRetirement



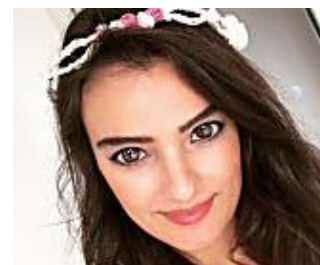
Athletes show off bodies in ESPN's 2016 'Body Issue'

SportsChatter



Woman says she was bullied for being 'too sexy' at a wedding

OddChatter



Former Miss Turkey sentenced to 14 months in prison for

OddChatter

US Cities With the Highest % of Male Residents

#1

NO IMAGE

**Sumner, IL**  
Population 5,073  
**92.4%**  
of Residents are Male

SEE THE FULL LIST

COMMENTS

2 Comments

Sort by



Add a comment...



Gene Campbell

Elvis is still dead, there are no green space aliens hidden in Roswell NM, there was no JFK "miricle bullet," etc. Likewise, fracking does NOT cause earthquakes. You 'Henny-Pennys" just gotta have a conspriacy, don't you?

Like · Reply · 1 · Jul 1, 2016 1:39pm



Jack Wolf · Cornell University

How anyone can think that evermore fossil fuels is ok when greenhouse gas concentrations are already close to 500ppm, is beyond me - especially when we are now seeing the impacts that were predicted over 100 years ago using relatively simple high school level physics, and we know it will get much worse. Gez, we don't need more scientists on this issue in Texas and other states (particularly in DC), we need friggin shrinks.

Like · Reply · Jul 3, 2016 9:41am



Gene Campbell

Nonsense; the only "impacts" we're seeing are caused by nature! The highest concentration of a so-called 'greenhouse' gas by far is harmless WATER VAPOR. Before attributing 'climate change' to fossil fuels, consider that one major volcanic eruption spewed more of those gasses into the atmosphere than the combined total of all combustion engines ever built. Until you can plug them, stop massive emmissions from forests, oceans, etc, you would merely inconveniencing mankind. So-called 'alternative energy' sources are highly unreliable - especially when needed most. Replacing conventional and nuclear generators with wind, solar, etc, will GUARANTEE widespread and frequent BLACKOUTS. Think a little harder. Rather than scientific fact, you've bought into another, ever-changing political myth.

Like · Reply · 1 · Jul 5, 2016 6:46pm · Edited



Gene Campbell

Incidentally, today I heard that the 'climate change group' was considering a switch BACK to global COOLING. Hillarious; they were pushing man-made cooling, an imminent ice age, back in the 1980s!

Like · Reply · 1 · Jul 6, 2016 2:33pm

Facebook Comments Plugin





**HONDA**

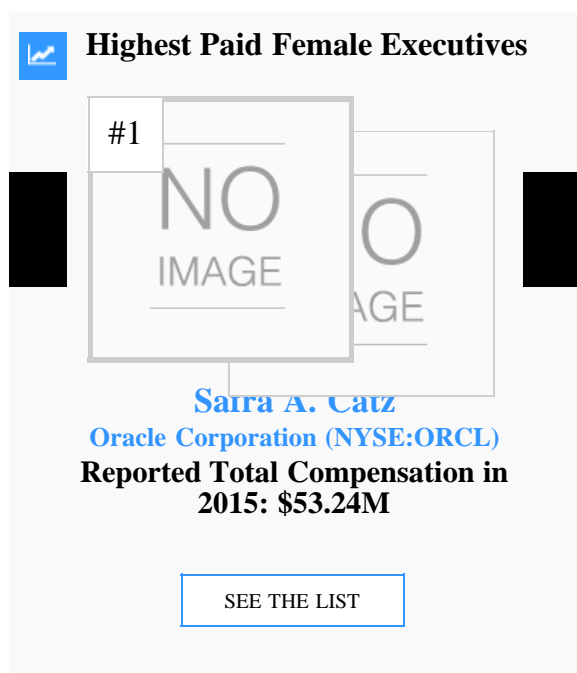
**Honda**  
summer  
clearance  
event

Visit Your Central Texas Honda  
Dealers Before It's Too Late!

**0.9% APR**  
For well-qualified buyers

**SEE OFFERS**

Honda Summer Clearance Event



**Highest Paid Female Executives**

#1

**NO IMAGE**

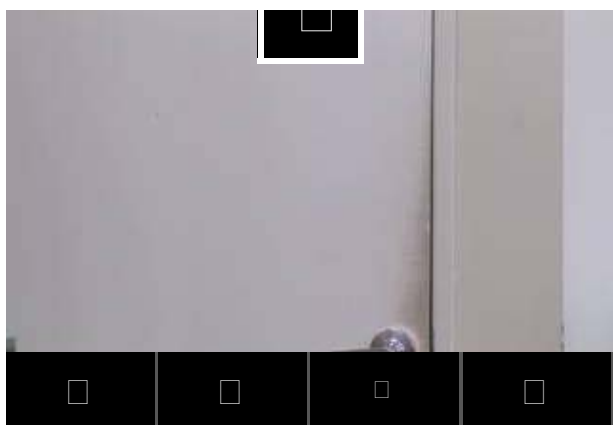
**Sarra A. Catz**  
Oracle Corporation (NYSE:ORCL)  
Reported Total Compensation in  
2015: \$53.24M

[SEE THE LIST](#)

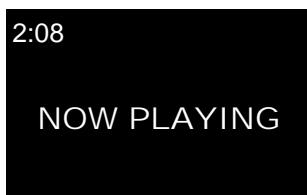




VIDEOS



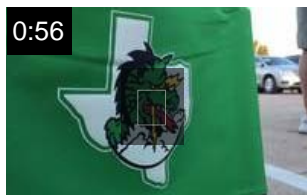
Sex offender who fled Wednesday was captured Friday



Sex offender who fled Wednesday was captured Friday

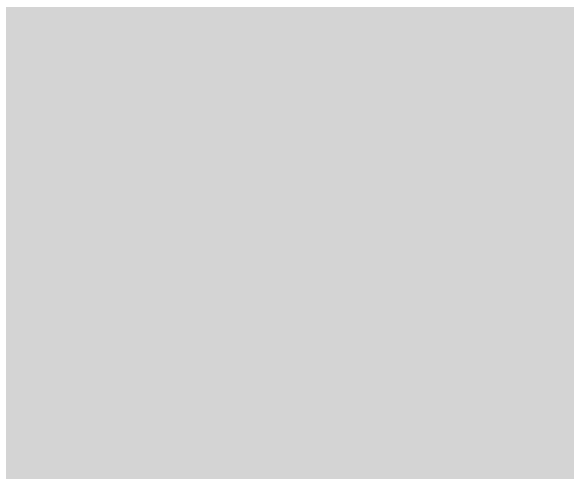


10-year-old boy dies on Schlitterbahn waterslide



Go time: Texas high school football is in full swing

VIEW MORE VIDEO



## Local Spotlight

Fencing

**Honest FENCING! Inexpensive installation repairs or just posts also. 682-597-1031, 817-572-5534.**

**Fences**

---

Gutters

**AGREENERDIFFERENCE.COM  
Summer Specials 10% Off! Sen/Mil  
Disc. LL8855 817-703-5296**

**Drainage**

---

Cement & Concrete

**\$100 off All types concrete. Free estimates, Lic & bond 817-293-9483  
Cement Work**

---

Building Contractors

**30x40x10 Metal Bldg 1 walk door & slab \$15,900 Family owned &**



[operated since 1972 millersmetal buildings.com 817-295-6022](#)  
**Buildings**

---

WILSONS Gutter SERVI

**WILSONS Gutter SERVICE 42 yrs**  
**exp. Free est 817-237-5950 Gutters**

---

## MORE OTHER VOICES

We should be expanding voting, not suppressing it

---

Despite debate about banning it, fracking is essential in today's world

---

Low minimum wage means taxes subsidize wealthy corporations

---

Study confirms freight rail backbone of U.S. economy

---

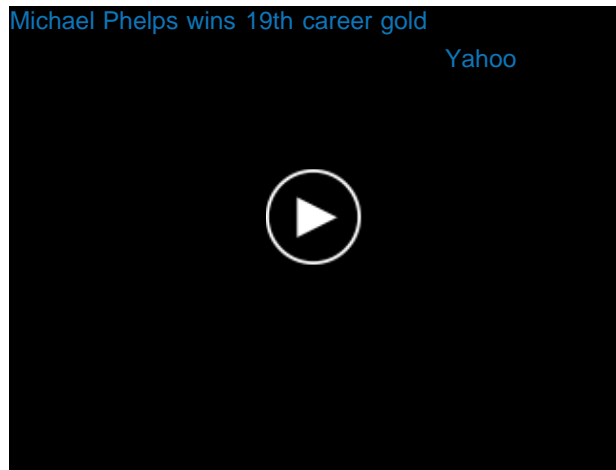
Texas voters take hit while judges ponder election laws

---



## EDITOR'S CHOICE VIDEOS

Sportsflash -



More videos:





## Star-Telegram

### SUBSCRIPTIONS

[Digital Subscriptions](#)

[Home Delivery](#)

[Digital Replica Edition](#)

[Vacation Hold](#)

[Pay Your Bill](#)

[Press Pass](#)

### SITE INFORMATION

[Customer Service](#)

[About Us](#)

[Contact Us](#)

[RSS Feeds](#)

## SOCIAL, MOBILE & MORE

[Mobile Options](#)

[Facebook](#)

[Twitter](#)

[YouTube](#)

[Google+](#)

[Newsletters](#)

## ADVERTISING

[Information](#)

[Place a Classified](#)

[Find&Save Local Shopping](#)

[Copyright](#)

[Commenting Policy](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)

[Terms of Service](#)