



Cabela's Save on your favorite fishing gear! **OPEN SEASON ON SAVINGS** FIND DEALS

95°F Partly sunny

Monday, August 8, 2016

About | Contact | Subscribe

Herald Democrat.com



Search this site

- Home
 - News
 - Sports
 - Opinion
 - Obituaries
 - Living
 - Religion
 - Blogs
 - Classifieds
 - Galleries
 - e-Edition
 - Jobs
 - Autos
- Letters to the Editor
 - Local Commentary
 - National Commentary
 - Good Morning

Home » Opinion » National Commentary

- Tweet 1
- Share 0
- Share 0
- Pinterest 0
- Share 0
- share 1

< LANDGREN CARTOON: Cape Cod...

Final grade for the... >

Posted July 23, 2016 - 8:53pm

SCOTT W. TINKER: Road to green is not always a federal highway



Cabela's Save on your favorite fishing gear! **OPEN SEASON ON SAVINGS** FIND DEALS

Most Popular Top Commented

[Longtime Bearcat Tommy Hudspeth dies at 82](#)

[DONNA HUNT: Volunteers needed for brick street project](#)

[Small explosion reported at Bonham fertilizer plant](#)

[Woman finds glass pipe in Walmart's lost and found; more police reports](#)

[Early voting starts this week for Sherman ISD's tax ratification election](#)

Scott W. Tinker

By Scott W. Tinker
Special to the Herald Democrat

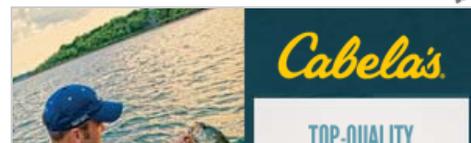
In striking down the Obama administration's hydraulic fracturing rule that would have put more regulations on "fracking" on federal lands, Judge Scott Skavdahl in the U.S. District Court of Wyoming got it right for the environment.

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



EARN THE SEAL OF APPROVAL

Cabela's TOP-QUALITY

TOP WORK PLACES

T.G.I. MONDAY
9:00

Sign up today >

knowledge than the federal government does. 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 frack 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, 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 today 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, roads 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 occasion, 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 backyard, any more than would occurrences of 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. Thermodynamics are less definitive. To replace 50 percent of baseload coal, natural gas and nuclear-generated electricity with intermittent solar and wind power is a massive undertaking, because these alternatives are very low-density sources of energy.

Collecting and converting them into dense, useful energy will result in environmental impacts on a major scale, including construction, mining, land use, power lines, shipping and transport, chemical-battery manufacturing, waste disposal, bird kills, and other forms of heavy industry. Unfortunately, scale matters. No form of energy is environmentally perfect.

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. Balanced research funding — from government, nongovernment, and, yes, industry sources — helps to ensure that the most complete data are used, that the results do not stray too deeply into the potentially biased worlds of any particular group, and that rigorous and thoughtful exchange and peer review among experts goes on throughout the process.

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.

< [LANDGREN CARTOON: Cape Cod...](#)

[Final grade for the...](#) >

GEAR AND TACKLE

For all of your Fishing adventures.

SHOP NOW

AdChoices | Time Remaining: 29 seconds

Cabela's

TOP-QUALITY GEAR AND TACKLE

For all of your Fishing adventures.

SHOP NOW

From the Web

Sponsored Links by Taboola



This Service in Austin is Changing the Way People Cook at Home



Pay No Interest Until 2018
CreditCards.com



Austin: This Meal Service is Cheaper Than Your Local Store

GET FREE DIGITAL ACCESS!

If You're Already A Member to the Herald Democrat, Go To **HeraldDemocrat.com** and Activate your Digital Access Today!

If You're NOT A Member Call Today!

903-893-8181

HelloFresh



Sheets That Always Feel Like The Cool Side Of The Pillow

Business Insider | Brooklinen

Home Chef



This Article Will Change The Way You Buy Glasses Forever

GlassesUSA.com



I bet you're gonna love this game :) Play with your friends!

Elvenar - Free Online Game

Rules for posting comments

Comments posted below are from readers. In no way do they represent the view of GateHouse Media, Inc. or this newspaper. This is a public forum.

Comments may be monitored for inappropriate content but the newspaper is under no obligation to do so. Comment posters are solely responsible under the Communications Decency Act for comments posted on this Web site. GateHouse Media, Inc. is not liable for messages from third parties.

IP and email addresses of persons who post are not treated as confidential records and will be disclosed in response to valid legal process.

Do not post:

- Potentially libelous statements or damaging innuendo.
- Obscene, explicit, or racist language.
- Copyrighted materials of any sort without the express permission of the copyright holder.
- Personal attacks, insults or threats.
- The use of another person's real name to disguise your identity.
- Comments unrelated to the story.

If you believe that a commenter has not followed these guidelines, please click the FLAG icon below the comment.

Comments for this thread are now closed. [X]

0 Comments Herald Democrat [Login]

[Recommend] [Share] Sort by Newest

This discussion has been closed.

ALSO ON HERALD DEMOCRAT

[Sherman resident finds car covered in urine](#)

2 comments • 5 days ago

Jeronimo Dan — DNA ?

[Local hospitals rated by federal government](#)

3 comments • 8 days ago

TexasBlonde51 — In my overrated opinion, TMC is excellent in terms of quality of care and staff. I especially valued

[New home construction building momentum in Van Alstyne](#)

1 comment • 3 days ago

Ronny Crouse — It doesn't help the local economy when most of the labor is illegal.

[Man accused of hitting lawn-mowing man asks for new attorney](#)

1 comment • 4 days ago

Robert — He was driving the truck and if his blood alcohol level says he was drunk, then it is really a slam dunk and Mr. ...

Do you think it is important to have public notices in newspapers?
KEEP TEXAS NOTIFIED



Affiliates

- CarsTexoma.com
- Van Alstyne Leader
- Anna Melissa Tribune
- Prosper Press
- Texas Newspapers

Best of Texoma



You like this Be the first of your friends to like this



From the Web

Sponsored Links by Taboola



This Service in Austin is Changing the Way People Cook at Home

HelloFresh



Pay No Interest Until 2018
CreditCards.com



The Hearing Aid of the Future is Here

hear.com

SPECIAL OFFER
EARN UP TO \$200 PA
AMERICAN EXPRESS
CASH
cash Every Day Card
 American Express
 Terms apply.

Connect

- About us
- Contacts
- Feedback
- Submit story
- Letter to the Editor
- FAQs
- Submit Engagement / Wedding

Services

- Subscribe
- Manage subscription
- All-Digital Access
- E-edition
- NIE
- eNewsletter Sign Up

Solutions

- Advertise with us
- Legal Notices
- Online rates

Follow Us

- Facebook
- Twitter
- RSS

Copyright ©GateHouse Media, Inc. 2016. All rights reserved. • Privacy Policy