

They're Going to Be Fracking the Barnett Shale for a Long Time to Come

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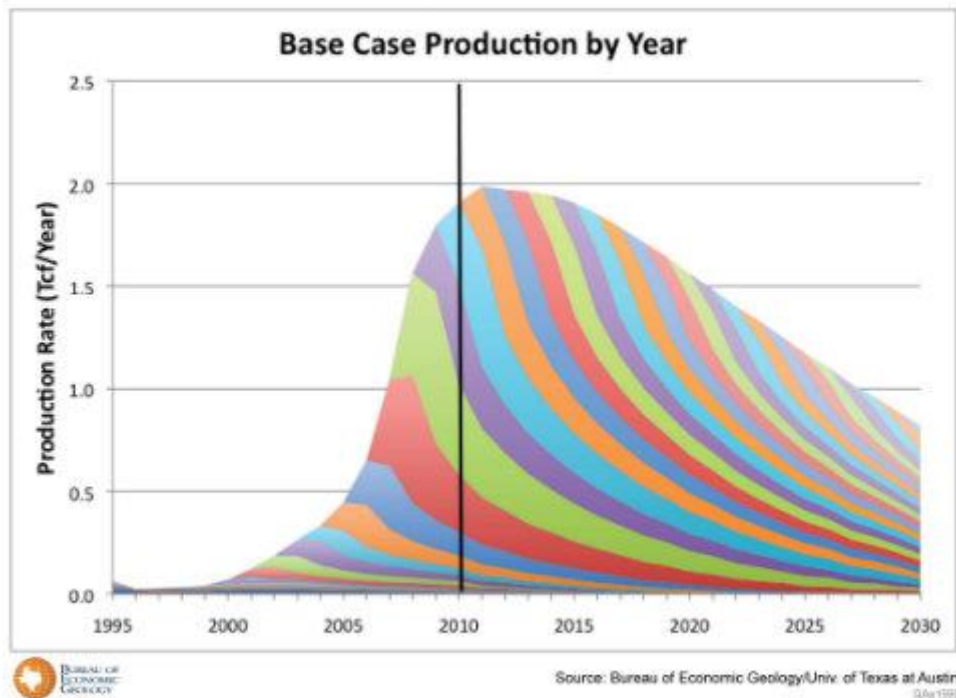
Last week, the number of drilling rigs operating in the Barnett Shale, the massive natural gas reservoir that underlies much of North Texas, [dropped to 27](#), the lowest figure in a decade.

But the boom's not over quite yet. There may be less drilling going on at the moment, but that's more a function of natural gas prices that remain stuck in the basement than a sign that the Barnett is tapped out. Quite the opposite, as a matter of fact.

According to [a study by the the University of Texas at Austin's Bureau of Economic Geology](#), drillers have so far tapped less than quarter of the recoverable gas in the Barnett. Still there for the taking is some 44 trillion cubic feet.

Most of that gas will be pumped out over the next 17 years, albeit in steadily decreasing quantities. According to the study, Barnett production peaked in 2012 at two trillion cubic feet of gas per year. (The United States consumes more than 24 trillion cubic feet of gas annually.) By 2030, that number will be 900 billion. A graph is helpful here:

Production Outlook for the Barnett Shale through 2030



The forecast comes from crunching production data from more than 16,000 wells drilled in the Barnett. The researchers say this means their study offers a "more accurate and comprehensive view of the basin" than there has previously been.

There's a lot more technical data to wade through, but we'll just stick with the big picture: there's still a shit-ton of gas under our feet, and drillers will be going after it, at least for the next couple of decades.

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