

Michael J. Teague
Secretary of Energy & Environment



Mary Fallin
Governor

STATE OF OKLAHOMA
OFFICE OF THE
SECRETARY OF ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

February 5, 2015

Dear Oklahoma Legislator:

In 2014, Oklahoma experienced 585 earthquakes of a magnitude 3.0 or greater, compared to the 109 events recorded in 2013. Although the science investigating the cause of these seismic events is at times conflicting and not yet settled, the rise in earthquake events in Oklahoma has drawn increased scrutiny from policymakers, constituents and the media.

In order to ensure a robust response to the rise in earthquakes around the state, Governor Fallin directed our office to assemble the Coordinating Council on Seismic Activity. The body's primary responsibility is to coordinate and share information across state agencies and the state's oil and gas industry, identify gaps in resources, and work cooperatively to develop solutions. Two of your colleagues, Senator Bryce Marlatt and Representative John Enns, are serving on the Coordinating Council to help ensure an efficient flow of information between state agencies and the legislature.

The Coordinating Council has now convened on three separate occasions. These meetings have been productive and meaningful so far. As we continue to carry out the work of the Coordinating Council, we are committed to ensuring that you remain apprised of our progress as a resource to your constituents. To date, numerous activities in response to the increased seismic activity are underway across Oklahoma, including:

- The Oklahoma Corporation Commission has adopted a "traffic light" system as recommended by the National Academy of Sciences, which directs staff to review disposal well permits for proximity to faults, seismicity in the area, and other factors. The Corporation Commission has, to date, shut in two disposal wells operating under "yellow light" permits. The Corporation Commission also adopted new rules last year, which Governor Fallin approved, to increase from monthly to daily the required recording of well pressure and volume of disposal wells that dispose into the Arbuckle formation.
- The Oklahoma Geological Survey, in coordination with the state's oil and gas operators and the Oklahoma Corporation Commission, is continuing work to update Oklahoma's fault map. Oklahoma maintains one of the nation's most robust seismic monitoring systems and oil and gas industry participants have been sharing their own seismic mapping data to support this effort. An updated map will enable regulators to make informed decisions about permit applications and responses to seismic events.
- Both the Oklahoma Corporation Commission and our office have been active participants in the Interstate Oil and Gas Compact Commission and Ground Water Protection Council workgroups on induced seismicity. These forums have improved our ability to learn from officials in other states and share information and data related to Oklahoma's response to seismicity.

- The Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management has incorporated earthquakes into their all-hazards contingency plans and recently briefed the Coordinating Council on the details of these plans. General information about Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management's recommendations for earthquake preparedness can be found on their home page at <http://www.ok.gov/oem/>.
- The Oklahoma Department of Transportation has enacted protocols to inspect state bridges after seismic events and has hired a consultant to develop permanent procedures in coordination with the California Department of Transportation, the U.S. Geological Survey and the Oklahoma Geological Survey. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Oklahoma Water Resources Board maintain similar inspection procedures for dams in our state.
- Governor Fallin recently approved an emergency rule adopted by the Oklahoma Insurance Department that requires insurance agents in Oklahoma to take continuing education courses in earthquake policy coverage for homeowners.

The Coordinating Council has determined that a fundamental challenge in the state's response to the increased seismicity is effectively communicating all of the work happening across the state to the general public. Our office will lead a part of that effort and will, in cooperation with the Coordinating Council participants, develop a website and other communications methods to make sure we are keeping the legislature and the general public informed of the comprehensive efforts occurring across state agencies.

The state's activity and response related to the recent rise in earthquakes is progressing and continuously evolving. Please contact our office with questions related to the work of the Coordinating Council on Seismic Activity or suggestions on how we might more effectively address the issues highlighted above.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael J. Teague', written in a cursive style.

Michael J. Teague
Oklahoma Secretary of Energy and Environment