

# RAILROAD COMMISSION OF TEXAS

## Oil and Gas Division



### **NOTICE TO OIL AND GAS OPERATORS**

#### *Gardendale Seismic Response Action*

Since February 2020, six felt earthquakes of magnitude (M) 3.5 or greater have occurred in an area of the Midland Basin from northeast Ector County to southwest Martin County known as the Gardendale Seismic Response Area (SRA). These included a M 3.7 earthquake in southwestern Martin County, about eight miles northwest of Midland, on September 7, 2021, and two M 3.6 earthquakes northeast of Odessa in February 2020 and May 2021.

The Railroad Commission of Texas (RRC) has authority to regulate Saltwater Disposal (SWD) well activity and may exercise that authority to address seismic activity [see 16 Texas Administrative Code §3.9 (6)(A)(vi) and §3.46 (d)(1)(f)]. The RRC staff's analysis of available information has determined that SWD injection likely contributes to seismic activity in the Gardendale SRA. Therefore, the RRC has requested that operators in the Gardendale SRA reduce SWD activity as a means of altering conditions likely contributing to seismic activity. The RRC anticipates these procedures to be in place for at least a year from initiation. The RRC has identified 76 permitted SWD wells in the Gardendale SRA and the operators of those wells are being notified in writing of this request.

Operators of SWD wells in the Gardendale SRA are requested to implement the following until further notice:

- Reduce the permitted maximum daily injection rate to 10,000 barrels per day (bpd) per well;
- Measure the daily injection volumes and pressures and report those to the RRC monthly, including historical daily injection data since November 1, 2019, if available; and
- For SWD wells that have been permitted but are not in service (not drilled, or not completed for or currently capable of injection), do not begin or return to fluid injection.

Also, until further notice, RRC staff will not administratively issue any new SWD permits in the Gardendale SRA. This will be communicated to individual applicants.

Commission staff has created a webpage that contains a map of the Gardendale SRA, a list of SWD wells in the area, and other information. This webpage is available on the RRC website at <https://www.rrc.texas.gov/oil-and-gas/publications-and-notices/manuals/injection-disposal-well-manual/summary-of-standards-and-procedures/seismicity-review/seismicity-response/>.

If you are an operator and have questions about this notice, contact the Injection-Storage Permits Unit of the RRC's Oil and Gas Division at 512-463-6792 or [UIC@rrc.texas.gov](mailto:UIC@rrc.texas.gov).

*Please Forward to the Appropriate Section of Your Company*