

**HYDRAULIC FRACTURING TORT LITIGATION SUMMARY
(APRIL 28, 2025)**

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Selected Books and Articles on Fracking Contamination and Trespass Litigation

**Summary of Tort Litigation Involving Hydraulic Fracturing
(and Some Related Cases)**

Selected Articles and Cases Involving “Lone Pine” Orders

Selected Books and Internet Resources

COMPENDIUM OF SCIENTIFIC, MEDICAL, AND MEDIA FINDINGS DEMONSTRATING RISKS AND HARMS OF FRACKING (5th ed. 2018) (a compilation of evidence outlining risks and harms of fracking housed on the websites of Concerned Health Professionals of New York (www.concernedhealthny.org) and Physicians for Social Responsibility (www.psr.org))

Kathryn Miles, QUAKELAND: ON THE ROAD TO AMERICA’S NEXT DEVASTATING EARTHQUAKE (2017)

Daniel Raimi, THE FRACKING DEBATE: THE RISKS, BENEFITS, AND UNCERTAINTIES OF THE SHALE REVOLUTION (2017)

Eliza Griswold, AMITY AND PROSPERITY: ONE FAMILY AND THE FRACTURING OF AMERICA (2018)

Mark S. Guralnick, FRACKING: LAW AND POLICY (2016)

Keith B. Hall and Hannah J. Wiseman, HYDRAULIC FRACTURING: A GUIDE TO ENVIRONMENTAL AND REAL PROPERTY ISSUES (2016)

Jenny Lisak, LIST OF THE HARMED, Pennsylvania Alliance for Clean Water and Air, at <http://pennsylvaniaallianceforcleanwaterandair.wordpress.com/the-list/>

Selected Articles

Brent Allen and Lesley Lawrence-Hammer, *Hydraulic Fracking and Marcellus Shale: Drilling for Mass Torts?*, 13 No. 1 ABA Environmental Litigation and Toxic Torts Committee Newsletter 3 (Dec. 2011)

Owen L. Anderson, *Subsurface "Trespass": A Man's Subsurface Is Not His Castle*, 49 Washburn Law Journal 247 (Winter 2010)

Owen L. Anderson, *Lord Coke, The Restatement, and Modern Subsurface Trespass Law*, 6 Texas Journal of Oil, Gas, and Energy Law 203 (2010-2011)

Casey Ball, *An Analysis of Strict Liability as Applied to Hydraulic Fracturing*, 28 BYU Prelaw Review 17 (2014), at <https://journals.lib.byu.edu/spc/index.php/PrelawReview/article/viewFile/34165/32003>

Andrew Belack, Comment, *A Big Fracking Deal: Pennsylvania's Departure from Traditional Rule of Capture Interpretation Paves Way for Fracking Trespass Claims*, 10 Wash. J. Envtl. L. & Pol'y 1 (2020), available at: <https://digitalcommons.law.uw.edu/wjelp/vol10/iss1/2>

Joseph Belza, Note, *Inverse Condemnation and Fracking Disasters: Government Liability for the Environmental Consequences of Hydraulic Fracturing under a Constitutional Takings Theory*, 44 Boston College Environmental Affairs Law Review 55 (2017)

Jason B. Binimow, *Liability for Trespass or Nuisance in Hydraulic Fracturing, Hydro-fracturing, or Hydro-fracking*, 41 A.L.R. 7th Art. 1, § 2 (2019).

William S. Blocker, Note, *Trespassing under the Surface: Does Hydraulically Fracturing Across Boundaries Constitute Actionable Trespass?*, 44 Oklahoma City University Law Review 83 (2019)

Jacob Booher, Comment, *Fracking-Caused Earthquakes: How Alleged Threats Could Trigger the Corps of Engineers' Section 10 Jurisdiction*, 45 Environmental Law 235 (2015)

Brent Chicken, *Subsurface Trespass and Pore Space in Colorado*, Rocky Mountain Landman (Sep. 2011)

Hannah Coman, Note, *Balancing the Need for Energy and Clean Water: The Case for Applying Strict Liability in Hydraulic Fracturing Suits*, 39 Boston College Environmental Affairs Law Review 131 (2012)

Róisín Áine Costello, *Reviving Rylands: How the Doctrine Could Be Used to Claim Compensation for Environmental Damage Caused by Fracking*, 23 Review of European, Comparative and International Environmental Law Review 134 (2014)

Matt Douglas and Jamen Tyler, *Shaking it Up: Sierra Club Brings Novel RCRA Claim in an Attempt to Tighten Regulation of Fracking-Related Activities*, in Trends, ABA Section of Environment, Energy, and Resources Newsletter, Vol. 47 No. 6 (July/August 2016), available at http://www.americanbar.org/publications/trends/2015-2016/july-august-2016/shaking_it_up.html

Monika U. Ehrman, *Earthquakes in The Oilpatch: The Regulatory and Legal Issues Arising Out of Oil And Gas Operation Induced Seismicity*, 33 Georgia State University Law Review 609 (2017)

Victoria N. Georgevich, Comment, *Tapping into Trespass: Fracking, the Rule of Capture, and Landowner Protection*, 69 DePaul Law Review 793 (2020)

Hilary M. Goldberg, Melanie Stallings Williams, and Deborah Cours, *It's a Nuisance: The Future of Fracking Litigation in the Wake of Parr v. Aruba Petroleum, Inc.*, 33 Virginia Environmental Law Journal 1 (2015)

Michael Goldman, *A Survey of Typical Claims and Key Defenses Asserted in Recent Hydraulic Fracturing Litigation*, 1 Texas A&M Law Review 305 (Fall 2013)

Francis Gradijan, *State Regulations, Litigation, and Hydraulic Fracturing*, 7 Environmental & Energy Law & Policy Journal 47 (2012)

Megan S. Haines, *Hydraulic Fracturing and Related Activities as Giving Rise to Classic Tort Claims in Pennsylvania*, 87 Pennsylvania Bar Association Quarterly 103 (2016) [available on internet]

Keith B. Hall, *All Shook Up: Induced Seismicity*, in Trends, ABA Section of Environment, Energy, and Resources Newsletter, Vol. 47 No. 6 (July/August 2016), available at http://www.americanbar.org/publications/trends/2015-2016/july-august-2016/all_shook_up_induced_seismicity.html

Keith B. Hall, *Hydraulic Fracturing: If Fractures Cross Property Lines, is There an Actionable Subsurface Trespass?*, 54 Natural Resources Journal 361 (2014)

Keith B. Hall, *Hydraulic Fracturing and the Baseline Testing of Groundwater*, 48 University of Richmond Law Review 857 (2014)

Keith B. Hall, *Hydraulic Fracturing Contamination Claims: Problems of Proof*, 74 Ohio State Law Journal Furthermore 71 (2013), at http://moritzlaw.osu.edu/students/groups/oslj/files/2013/06/Furthermore.Hall_.pdf

Keith B. Hall, *Hydraulic Fracturing Litigation*, For the Defense 66 (January 2012)

Alia Y. Heintz, Note, *What's the Harm in a Subsurface Trespass?*, 51 Tulsa Law Review 777 (Spring 2016)

Oliver Hutchison, *Hydraulic Fracturing Litigation: The Case of Jessica Ernst & the Problem of Factual Causation*, 42 Canada-United States Law Journal 184 (2018)

Jeffrey C. King, Jamie Lavergne Bryan, and Meredith Clark, *Factual Causation: The Missing Link in Hydraulic Fracture-Groundwater Contamination Litigation*, 22 Duke Environmental Law and Policy Forum 341 (2012)

Bruce M. Kramer, *Horizontal Drilling and Trespass: A Challenge to the Norms of Property and Tort Law*, 25 Colorado Natural Resources, Energy & Environmental Law Review 291 (2014)

Christopher S. Kulander & R. Jordan Shaw, *Comparing Subsurface Trespass Jurisprudence - Geophysical Surveying and Hydraulic Fracturing*, 46 New Mexico Law Review 67 (2016)

Colleen E. Lamarre, Note, *Owning the Center of the Earth: Hydraulic Fracturing and Subsurface Trespass in the Marcellus Shale Region*, 21 Cornell Journal of Law & Public Policy 457 (Winter 2011)

Zachary Lees, Note, *Anticipated Harm, Precautionary Regulation and Hydraulic Fracturing*, 13 Vermont Journal of Environmental Law 575 (2012)

Michael R. Lieberman, *Evaluating Hydraulic Fracturing Regulation under a Theory of Strict Liability*, 22 Buffalo Environmental Law Journal 37 (2014-2015)

James Patrick Logan, *What's Shakin'? Ladra v. New Dominion, LLC: A Case of Consequence for the Hydraulic Fracturing Industry and Those Affected by Induced Seismicity*, 34 Pace Environmental Law Review 207 (2016), available at: <http://digitalcommons.pace.edu/pelr/vol34/iss1/5>

Caleb Madere, Comment, *Covert Capture: Hydraulic Fracturing and Subsurface Trespass in Louisiana*, 75 Louisiana Law Review 865 (2015)

David G. Mandelbaum, *Regulation of Unconventional Natural Gas Development*, 25 Probate and Property 44 (September/October, 2011)

Neal J. Manor, Note, *"What the Frack?" Why Hydraulic Fracturing Is Abnormally Dangerous and Whether Courts Should Allow Strict Liability Causes of Action*, 4 Kentucky Journal of Equine, Agriculture, and Natural Resources Law 459 (2011-2012)

Nick A. Marr, Comment, *Shook: Litigation, Regulation, and Legislation Strategies to Better Protect Oklahoma's Earthquake Insurance Policyholders*, 72 Oklahoma Law Review 963 (Summer, 2020)

Barclay Nicholson and Kadian Blanson, *Tracking Fracking Case Law: Hydraulic Fracturing Litigation*, 26 Natural Resources & Environment No. 2 (Fall 2011)

Barclay Nicholson and Brian Albrecht, *Hydraulic Fracturing as a Subsurface Trespass*, ABA Energy Committees Newsletter, Vol. 9, No. 2 (May 2012)

Charles Nixon, *The Continuing Saga of FPL Farming v. Environmental Processing Systems: Will the Texas Supreme Court Set New Rules of Liability for Underground Trespass?*, 8 Texas Journal of Oil, Gas, and Energy Law 428 (2012-2013)

James T. O'Reilly, *The Liquid Left Behind: Uncertainty about the Cleanup Costs and Liability for Water Used in Fracking*, 34 Natural Resources & Environment 42 (Fall 2019)

David E. Pierce, *Carol Rose Comes to the Oil Patch: Modern Property Analysis Applied to Modern Reservoir Problems*, 19 Penn State Environmental Law Review 241 (2011)

David E. Pierce, *Developing a Common Law of Hydraulic Fracturing*, 72 University of Pittsburgh Law Review 685 (2011)

Jason A. Proctor, Comment, *The Legality of Drilling Sideways: Horizontal Drilling and Its Future in West Virginia*, 115 West Virginia Law Review 491 (2012)

Danielle Quinn, *A Fracking Fragile Issue: Courts Continue to Tiptoe Around Subsurface Trespass Claims*, 27 Villanova Environmental Law Journal 1 (2016)

Emery Gullickson Richards, *Finding Fault: Induced Earthquake Liability and Regulation*, Columbia Journal of Environmental Law (April 2015), at <http://www.columbiaenvironmentallaw.org/articles/2015/04>

Terry W. Roberson, *Environmental Concerns of Hydraulically Fracturing a Natural Gas Well*, 32 Utah Environmental Law Review 67 (2012)

Leonard S. Rubin, Note, *Frack to the Future: Considering a Strict Liability Standard for Hydraulic Fracturing Activities*, 3 George Washington Journal of Energy & Environmental Law 117 (2012)

Lucas Satterleea, *Shattered Nerves: Addressing Induced Seismicity Through the Law of Nuisance*, 46 Environmental Law Reporter News & Analysis 10326 (April 2016)

Joe Schremmer, Comment, *Avoidable "Fraccident": An Argument Against Strict Liability for Hydraulic Fracturing*, 60 University of Kansas Law Review 1215 (2012)

Joseph A. Schremmer, *Getting Past Possession: Subsurface Property Disputes as Nuisances*, 95 Wash. L. Rev. 315 (2020), available at: <https://digitalcommons.law.uw.edu/wlr/vol95/iss1/10>

Aaron Stemplewicz, *The Known "Unknowns" of Hydraulic Fracturing: A Case for a Traditional Subsurface Trespass Regime in Pennsylvania*, 13 Duquesne Business Law Journal 219 (Summer 2011)

Kaoru Suzuki, Note, *The Role of Nuisance in the Developing Common Law of Hydraulic Fracturing*, 41 Boston College Environmental Affairs Law Review 265 (2014)

Blake A. Watson, *Fracking and Cracking: Strict Liability for Earthquake Damage Due to Wastewater Injection and Hydraulic Fracturing*, 11 Texas Journal of Oil, Gas, and Energy Law 1 (2016)

Blake Watson, *Hydraulic Fracturing and Tort Litigation: A Survey of Landowner Lawsuits*, 31 Probate and Property Magazine, Issue 5 (Sept./Oct. 2017)

Meredith A. Wegener, *Shake, Rattle, and Palsgraf: Whether an Actionable Negligence Claim Can Be Established in Earthquake Damage Litigation*, 11 Texas Journal of Oil, Gas, and Energy Law 115 (2016)

Hannah Wiseman, *Beyond Coastal Oil v. Garza: Nuisance and Trespass in Hydraulic Fracturing Litigation*, The Advocate (Texas State Bar Litigation Section Report), Vol. 57 (Winter 2011)

Travis Zeik, *Hydraulic Fracturing Goes to Court: How Texas Jurisprudence on Subsurface Trespass Will Influence West Virginia Oil and Gas Law*, 112 West Virginia Law Review 599 (2010)

**TORT LITIGATION INVOLVING HYDRAULIC FRACTURING
(AND RELATED CASES)**

<u>Filed</u>		<u>Case</u>		<u>Status</u>	<u>State</u>
2011	03-23	Sheatsley v. Chesapeake Operating, Inc.	dismissed	earthquake	AR
2011	05-17	Tucker v. Southwestern Energy Co.	settled		AR
2011	05-17	Berry v. Southwestern Energy Co.	settled		AR
2011	05-17	Ginardi v. Frontier Gas Services	settled		AR
2011	05-20	Lane v. BHP Billiton Petroleum (Arkansas) Inc.	dismissed	earthquake	AR
2011	05-23	Frey v. BHP Billiton Petroleum (Arkansas) Inc.	dismissed	earthquake	AR
2011	05-24	Palmer v. BHP Billiton Petroleum (Arkansas) Inc.	dismissed	earthquake	AR
2011	05-24	Hearn v. BHP Billiton Petroleum (Arkansas) Inc.	dismissed	earthquake	AR
2011	06-07	Hiser v. XTO Energy Inc.	decided, affirmed		AR
2011	09-12	Scoggin v. Cudd Pumping Services, Inc.	dismissed		AR
2011	12-23	Bartlett v. Frontier Gas Services, LLC	dismissed		AR
2012	07-11	Smith v. Southwestern Energy Co.	dismissed		AR
2012	08-10	Hill v. Southwestern Energy Co.	settled		AR
2012	11-02	Pruitt v. Southwestern Energy Co.	dismissed		AR
2012	12-07	Scoggin v. Southwestern Energy Co.	dismissed		AR
2013	01-31	Yanke v. Fayetteville Gathering	settled		AR
2013	03-11	Miller v. Chesapeake Operating, Inc.	dismissed	earthquake	AR
2013	04-01	Sutterfield v. Chesapeake Operating, Inc.	dismissed	earthquake	AR
2013	04-01	Mahan v. Chesapeake Operating, Inc.	dismissed	earthquake	AR
2013	04-01	Thomas v. Chesapeake Operating, Inc.	dismissed	earthquake	AR
2013	08-12	Ramsey v. DeSoto Gathering Co., LLC	settled		AR
2013	08-23	Kay v. Peak Water Systems, LLC	settled		AR
2014	02-11	2010-11 Guy-Greenbrier Earthquake Victims	dismissed	earthquake	AR
2014	02-12	Davis v. Chesapeake Operating, Inc.	dismissed	earthquake	AR
2014	04-24	Ramsey v. DeSoto Gathering Co., LLC	pending		AR
2014	11-14	Stratton v. Kinder Morgan Treating	closed		AR
2015	05-15	Gardiner Family LLC v. Crimson Resource Mngt.	settled		CA
2016	06-03	Gus Who v. US Government	closed	earthquake	CA
2011	03-23	Strudley v. Antero Resources Corp.	pending		CO
2011	07-20	Evenson v. Antero Resources Corp.	dismissed		CO
2011	04-15	Andre v. EXCO Resources, Inc.	settled		LA
2011	04-18	Beckman v. EXCO Resources, Inc.	settled/dismissed		LA
2012	01-12	Teekell v. Chesapeake Operating, Inc.	settled/dismissed		LA
2020	04-30	Walsh v. Comstock Oil and Gas-Louisiana LLC	settled		LA
2009	08-27	Maring v. Nalbone	pending		NY
2011	03-09	Baker v. Anschutz Exploration Corp.	closed		NY
2009	08-13	Kartch v. EOG Resources	settled		ND
2010	10-22	Armes v. Petro-Hunt LLC	dismissed/settled		ND

Filed		Case	Status		State
2008	07-22	Siers v. John D. Oil and Gas Co.	settled		OH
2009	01-30	Payne v. Ohio Valley Energy Systems Corp.	settled		OH
2010	10-22	Alford v. East Gas Ohio Co.	jury verdict affirmed		OH
2012	03-12	Boggs v. Landmark 4 LLC	settled		OH
2012	03-12	Mangan v. Landmark 4, LLC	settled		OH
2016	03-18	Crothers v. Statoil USA Onshore Properties	settled		OH
2018	10-05	Rohn v. Precision Pipeline LLC	settled		OH
2018	11-29	Kiefer v. Chesapeake Exploration	closed		OH
2018	12-06	J&R Passmore LLC v. Rice Drilling D LLC	pending		OH
2019	04-24	TERA II LLC v. Rice Drilling D LLC	pending		OH
2022	05-05	Golden Eagle Resources v. Rice Drilling D LLC	closed		OH
2022	05-25	Bethel Oil and Gas v. Redbird Development	pending		OH
2011	10-06	Reece v. AES Corporation	dismissal affirmed		OK
2014	08-04	Ladra v. New Dominion LLC	settled	earthquake	OK
2015	02-10	Cooper v. New Dominion LLC	settled	earthquake	OK
2016	01-11	Felts v. Devon Energy Corp.	pending	earthquake	OK
2016	01-12	Griggs v. Devon Energy Corp.	dismissed	earthquake	OK
2016	02-12	Lene v. Chesapeake Operating LLC	closed	earthquake	OK
2016	02-16	Sierra Club v. Chesapeake Operating LLC	dismissed	quake/RCRA	OK
2016	02-18	West v. ABC Oil Company, Inc.	settled	earthquake	OK
2016	04-22	Almont Energy v. Newfield Exploration	closed		OK
2016	09-16	National American Insurance v. New Dominion	pending	earthquake	OK
2016	11-17	Adams v. Eagle Road Oil, LLC	settled	earthquake	OK
2016	12-05	Reid v. White Star Petroleum, LLC	settled	earthquake	OK
2017	03-03	Pawnee Nation v. Eagle Road Oil LLC	settled (tribal ct)	earthquake	OK
2017	03-08	Bryant v. Eagle Road Oil LLC	settled?/closed	earthquake	OK
2017	06-13	Meier v. Chesapeake Operating LLC	closed	earthquake	OK
2017	07-21	Griggs v. New Dominion LLC	pending	earthquake	OK
2017	12-28	Chacko v. Sundance Energy Oklahoma LLC	dismissed	earthquake	OK
2017	12-29	Felts v. Grayhorse Operating Corp.	closed	earthquake	OK
2018	03-26	Bennett v. Chapparral Energy LLC	closed	earthquake	OK
2018	05-17	Pawnee Nation v. Eagle Road Oil LLC	settled	earthquake	OK
2018	08-28	Mercer v. Eagle Oil LLC	settled	earthquake	OK
2018	08-31	Steadfast Insurance Co. v. Eagle Oil LLC	closed	earthquake	OK
2018	09-19	Harvey v. Cher Oil Co.	closed	earthquake	OK
2018	09-19	James v. Berexco LLC	closed/settled?	earthquake	OK
2018	09-19	Nelson v. Berexco LLC	closed/settled?	earthquake	OK
2018	09-19	Steele v. Berexco LLC	closed/settled?	earthquake	OK
2018	09-19	Oravetz v. Berexco LLC	closed/settled?	earthquake	OK
2018	09-19	Jones v. Berexco Oil Co.	closed	earthquake	OK
2018	09-19	Bonar v. Cher Oil Co.	settled	earthquake	OK
2019	08-14	Depew v. Sundance Energy Oklahoma LLC	closed	earthquake	OK
2019	09-13	Newby v. Farmers Insurance Co.	closed	earthquake	OK
2020	09-09	Barton v. Oviniv Mid-Continent Inc.	settled		OK
2020	11-19	Dooley v. Cher Oil LTD	settled	earthquake	OK
2021	04-01	Oklahoma v. Farmers Insurance Exchange	settled	earthquake	OK
2021	05-16	National Union Fire Ins. v. New Dominion LLC	settled	earthquake	OK
2021	07-14	Donehue v. Apache Corporation	settled		OK
2024		Kingfisher Resources v. Mewbourne Oil	pending		OK

Filed		Case	Status	State
2009	09-21	Zimmermann v. Atlas America, LLC	settled	PA
2009	11-19	Fiorentino (Ely) v. Cabot Oil and Gas Corp.	jury verdict/settled	PA
2010	05-27	Hallowich v. Range Resources Corp.	settled	PA
2010	09-14	Berish v. Southwestern Energy Production Co.	closed	PA
2010	10-27	Armstrong v. Chesapeake Appalachia, LLC	pending	PA
2010	12-17	Bidlack v. Chesapeake Appalachia, LLC	closed	PA
2010	12-17	Otis v. Chesapeake Appalachia, LLC	closed	PA
2011	02-25	Burnett v. Chesapeake Appalachia, LLC	dismissed	PA
2011	04-25	Phillips v. Chesapeake Appalachia, LLC	settled	PA
2011	07-18	Becka v. Antero Resources	settled	PA
2011	07-18	Dillon v. Antero Resources	settled	PA
2011	08-03	Kamuck v. Shell Energy Holdings GP, LLC	decided	PA
2012	03-12	Roth v. Cabot Oil & Gas Corporation	settled	PA
2012	04-09	Manning v. WPX Energy Inc.	settled	PA
2012	04-20	Kalp v. WPX Energy Appalachia, LLC	settled	PA
2012	05-25	Haney v. Range Resources	pending?	PA
2012	07-10	Butts v. Southwestern Energy Production Co.	settled	PA
2013	06-18	Bezjak v. Chevron Appalachia LLC	settled	PA
2013	06-19	Leighton v. Chesapeake Appalachia, LLC	settled	PA
2013	09-13	Brown v. WPX Appalachia LLC	settled	PA
2013	12-27	Russell v. Chesapeake Appalachia	closed / time-barred	PA
2014	01-22	Arbitration between J. Place and Chesapeake	decided	PA
2014	04-09	Chaffee v. Talisman Energy USA Inc.	decided	PA
2014	07-21	Tiongco v. Southwestern Energy Production Co.	pending	PA
2014	10-07	Lauff v. Range Resources - Appalachia LLC	pending	PA
2014	10-28	Chito v. Hilcorp Energy Company	dismissed	PA
2015	04-21	Dubraskey v. Hilcorp Energy Company	closed/settled?	PA
2015	03-29	Baumgardner v. Chesapeake Appalachia	pending	PA
2015	11-05	Briggs v. Southwestern Energy Production	closed (but see Briggs 2021)	PA
2017	04-13	Kemble v. Cabot Oil & Gas Corporation	dismissed	PA
2017	08-07	Cabot Oil & Gas Corporation v. Speer	pending	PA
2018	03-15	March v. Sunoco Pipeline LP	closed	PA
2018	12-25	Zandarski v. Penn Energy Resources	pendings	PA
2020	02-04	Range Resources-Appalachia v. Pennsylvania	settled (administrative appeal)	PA
2021	02-15	Stanley v. Pennsylvania DEP	open (administrative appeal)	PA
2021	05-10	Glahn v. Pennsylvania DEP	open (administrative appeal)	PA
2021	03-02	Briggs v. Southwestern Energy Production	pending	PA
2021	03-09	Waller v. Cabot Oil and Gas Corp.	settled?/closed	PA
2022	04-22	Teorsky v. Penneco Environmental Solutions	dismissed	PA
2024	06-20	Hice v. EQT Corporation		PA
1997	-----	Coastal Oil and Gas Corp. v. Garza Energy Trust	decided	TX
2006	-----	Environmental Processing Sys v. FPL Farming	decided	TX
2008	05-08	Gardiner v. Crosstex North Texas Pipeline LP	dismissed	TX
2010	07-15	Scoma v. Chesapeake Energy Corp.	settled	TX
2010	10-18	Ruggiero v. Aruba Petroleum, Inc.	settled	TX
2010	10-22	Knoll v. Gultex Operating, Inc.	settled	TX
2010	11-03	Heinkel-Wolfe v. Williams Production Co., LLC	settled	TX
2010	11-03	Sizelove v. Williams Production Co., LLC	settled	TX

Filed		Case	Status	State
2010	12-15	Mitchell v. Encana Oil & Gas (USA)	settled	TX
2010	12-22	Harris v. Devon Energy Production Co., L.P.	dismissed	TX
2011	01-31	Smith v. Devon Energy Production Co., LP	dismissed	TX
2011	02-28	Eric Dow v. Atmos Energy Corp.	pending	TX
2011	02-28	Town of Dish v. Atmos Energy Corp.	dismissed	TX
2011	02-28	William Sciscoe v. Atmos Energy Corp.	pending	TX
2011	03-08	Parr v. Aruba Petroleum, Inc.	Plaintiff verdict appealed; affirmed	TX
2011	06-20	Lipsky v. Range Resources Corp.	settled	TX
2011	06-27	Marsden v. Titan Operating Corp.	Plaintiff judgment; reversed	TX
2011	11-07	Crowder v. Chesapeake Operating, Inc.	jury verdict; settled	TX
2011	11-08	Mann v. Chesapeake Operating, Inc.	dismissed	TX
2011	11-09	Anglim v. Chesapeake Operating, Inc.	settled	TX
2011	11-10	Gutierrez v. Chesapeake Operating, Inc.	settled	TX
2011	12-01	Beck v. ConocoPhillips Company	dismissed	TX
2011	12-02	Strong v. ConocoPhillips Company	dismissed	TX
2013	05-21	Cerny v. Marathon Oil Corp.	dismissed/ affirmed	TX
2013	07-30	Finn v. EOG Resources, Inc.	dismissed earthquake	TX
2013	10-10	Dueling v. Devon Energy Corp.	settled	TX
2013	11-06	Nicholson v. XTO/Exxon Energy	dismissed	TX
2014	02-28	Alexander v. Eagleridge Operating, LLC	dismissed	TX
2015	08-06	Murray v. EOG Resources, Inc.	settled	TX
2017	10-31	Berlanga v. Barnett Gathering LLC	settled	TX
2018	03-16	Amador v. Barnett Gathering LLC	closed	TX
2010	02-24	Magers v. Chesapeake Appalachia, LLC	settled	WV
2010	10-26	Hagy v. Equitable Production Co.	dismissed; affirmed	WV
2010	12-08	Teel v. Chesapeake Appalachia, LLC	dismissed; affirmed	WV
2011	02-07	Whiteman v. Chesapeake Appalachia, LLC	decided; affirmed	WV
2011	04-10	Rine v. Chesapeake Appalachia, LLC	settled	WV
2011	04-14	Bombardiere v. Schlumberger Technology Corp.	dismissed	WV
2011	06-21	Cain v. XTO Energy Inc.	settled	WV
2011	12-21	Perna v. Reserve Oil & Gas, Inc.	dismissed	WV
2012	02-27	Dent v. Chesapeake Appalachia, LLC	settled	WV
2013	????	Dytko v. Chesapeake Appalachia, LLC	dismissed	WV
2014	09-30	Bertrand v. Gastar Exploration	pending	WV
2014	11-26	Crowder v. EQT Production	decided; affirmed	WV
2014	-----	In Re: Marcellus Shale Litigation	completed	WV
2016	02-29	Easthom v. EQT Production Co.	settled	WV
2017	09-25	Adams v. Chesapeake Corp.	dismissed/settled	WV
2019	03-01	Haywood v. Caretta Minerals	dismissed	WV
2019	08-23	American Petroleum Partners v. Schaber	settled	WV
2019	09-24	Pike v. Antero Resources Corp.	dismissed	WV
2021	11-24	Scott v. SWN Production Co. LLC	settled	WV
2014	05-21	Locker v. Encana Oil and Gas (USA) Inc.	settled	WY

Filed		Case	Status		State
-----	-----	Ernst v. EnCana Corporation, et al.	pending		Canada
2013	-----	Daunheimer v. Angle Energy (2013)	settled		Canada
-----	-----	earthquake suit against Netherlands Petro. Co.	pending	earthquake	Netherlands

ARKANSAS

***Sheatsley v. Chesapeake Operating, Inc. and Clarita Operating, LLC*, No. 2011-28 (Perry County Circuit Ct., Ark., Mar. 23, 2011), removed, No. 4:11-cv-353 (E.D. Ark., Apr. 4, 2011)**

On March 23, 2011, Jacob Sheatsley filed a class action lawsuit, alleging causes of action for public nuisance, private nuisance, absolute liability, negligence, and trespass. The claims were based on an alleged connection between earthquakes and other seismic activity and the disposal of hydraulic fracturing wastes at injection wells. The suit was dismissed on July 13, 2011, in light of the *Hearn* class actions (see below). Nicholson, *Analysis of Litigation Involving Shale & Hydraulic Fracturing* (June 1, 2014).

***Tucker v. Southwestern Energy Co., et al.*, No 1:11-cv-0044-DPM (E.D. Ark., May 17, 2011). See 2012 WL 528253 (E.D. Ark., Feb. 17, 2012) (order on motion to dismiss). See pleadings at 2011 WL 1980530 and 2011 WL 2148645.**

***Berry v. Southwestern Energy Co.*, No 1:11-cv-0045-DPM (E.D. Ark., May 17, 2011). See pleadings at 2011 WL 2198667.**

On May 17, 2011, three class actions were filed alleging that hydraulic fracturing operations polluted the atmosphere, groundwater, and soil. *Tucker v. Southwestern Energy Co.*; *Berry v. Southwestern Energy Co.*, and *Ginardi v. Frontier Gas Services, LLC*. (see below). The *Tucker* and *Berry* cases were consolidated on July 22, 2011. Plaintiffs alleged strict liability, nuisance, trespass, and negligence. On February 17, 2012, the district court ruled on the motion to dismiss some of the claims in the consolidated *Tucker* and *Berry* cases. The court held that the plaintiffs have not yet pled enough facts to state a nuisance claim, noting that “[g]eneral statements about dangerous substances used in fracking, and conclusory statements about the migration of those substances, will not suffice.” With regard to strict liability, the court followed *Fiorentino* and *Berish* and held that the claim should not be decided on a motion to dismiss. The defendants next argued that allegations about air contamination cannot support a trespass claim, but can only support a nuisance claim. Although other states favor this view, the court did not dismiss the trespass claim, stating that “Arkansas law has not answered whether a trespass occurs when a thing passes unwanted through the air above a person's property.” The district court on July 24, 2012, granted a joint motion to dismiss all claims against one defendant, BHP Billiton Petroleum (Fayetteville) LLC, pursuant to a confidential settlement. Thereafter, the parties settled and the cases were dismissed on August 29, 2012. Nicholson, *Analysis of Litigation Involving Shale & Hydraulic Fracturing* (June 1, 2014).

***Ginardi v. Frontier Gas Services*, No 4:11-cv-0420 BRW (E.D. Ark., May 17, 2011). See pleadings at 2011 WL 2198664.**

On May 17, 2011, a class action suit was filed on behalf of Arkansas residents who live or own property within one mile of any natural gas compressor or transmission station. Defendants use hydraulic fracturing

to produce gas from the Fayetteville Shale, and plaintiffs allege such operations pollute the atmosphere, groundwater, and soil. The causes of actions alleged are strict liability, nuisance, trespass, and negligence. An order denying class certification was issued on April 19, 2012. Thereafter, the parties settled all their claims and cross-claims, and the district court dismissed the case on July 11, 2012. Nicholson, *Analysis of Litigation Involving Shale & Hydraulic Fracturing* (June 1, 2014).

***Lane v. BHP Billiton Petroleum (Arkansas) Inc.*, No. 23CV-11-482 (Faulkner County Circuit Ct., Ark., May 20, 2011), removed, No. 4:11-cv-477 (E.D. Ark., June 9, 2011); *Frey v. BHP Billiton Petroleum (Arkansas) Inc.*, No. 23CV-11-488 (Faulkner County Circuit Ct., Ark., May 23, 2011), removed, No. 4:11-cv-475 (E.D. Ark., June 9, 2011); *Hearn v. BHP Billiton Petroleum (Arkansas) Inc.*, No. 23CV-11-492 (Faulkner County Circuit Ct., Ark., May 24, 2011), removed, No. 4:11-cv-474 (E.D. Ark., June 9, 2011); and *Palmer v. BHP Billiton Petroleum (Arkansas) Inc.*, No. 23CV-11-491 (Faulkner County Circuit Ct., Ark., May 24, 2011), removed, No. 4:11-cv-476 (E.D. Ark., June 9, 2011). Consolidated under *Hearn v. BHP Billiton Petroleum (Arkansas) Inc.*, No. 4:11-cv-00474 (E.D. Ark., Aug. 31, 2011)**

Plaintiffs assert hydraulic fracturing damaged their land by causing earthquakes and claim public nuisance, private nuisance, strict liability for ultra-hazardous activities, negligence, and trespass. An amended complaint was filed on April 9, 2013. See Nicholson, *Analysis of Litigation Involving Shale & Hydraulic Fracturing* (June 1, 2014). On August 20, 2013, the *Frey* case was severed and consolidated with *Mahan v. Chesapeake Operating, Inc.* (No. 4:13-cv-184). On August 29, 2013, the court granted the joint motion to dismiss the consolidated *Hearn*, *Palmer*, and *Lane* cases. On March 20, 2014, the consolidated *Mahan* and *Frey* cases were dismissed with prejudice (see below).

***Hiser v. XTO Energy Inc.*, No. CV-11-112-1 (White County Circuit Court, Jun. 7, 2011), removed, No. 4:11-cv-517 (E.D. Ark., June 24, 2011), affirmed, 768 F.3d 773 (8th Circuit, Oct. 3, 2014.). See 2012 WL 3542009 (denying summary judgment to defendant); 2013 WL 1749731 (interim order on motion for new trial); 2013 WL 5467186 (order denying motion for new trial)**

Plaintiff Ruby Hiser alleged her home was damaged by vibrations resulting from nearby drilling activity conducted by defendant XTO Energy Inc. Ms. Hiser filed her action in Arkansas state court, and XTO removed it to federal court. XTO moved for summary judgment on Hiser's claims of negligence, nuisance, and trespass, but the court denied the motion. 2012 WL 3542009 (Aug. 14, 2012). A trial was held in September 2012 and the jury found in favor of plaintiff on her claims of negligence, private nuisance, and trespass, and awarded \$100,000 in compensatory damages and \$200,000 in punitive damages. On October 8, 2012, XTO filed a motion for judgment as a matter of law and for a new trial. XTO submitted an affidavit from a juror who stated that a fellow juror asked during deliberation whether fracking had been used, and then explained what fracking is. XTO contended it was prejudiced by the discussion of fracking because fracking has received negative attention in the press. On April 23, 2013, the district court took the motion under advisement, and stated that it would conduct hearings to determine whether the jury may have been exposed to extraneous prejudicial information. 2013 WL 1749731. On September 30, 2013, the court denied XTO's motion for judgment as a matter of law. The court rejected XTO's contention that (1) Hiser did not present any testimony that XTO breached a duty of reasonable care in support of

her negligence claim; (2) there was no proof at trial that XTO's drilling operation caused vibrations that entered onto Hiser's property and proximately caused damage to her home; (3) Hiser offered no proof from which a reasonable jury could determine the reasonable expense of necessary repairs to her home and the loss of usable value during the time she was deprived of its use; and (4) there was not sufficient evidence to submit the issue of punitive damages to the jury. 2013 WL 5467186. The court also rejected the argument that the jury improperly considered extra-record evidence during deliberations, holding that the jury's verdict was not influenced by extraneous, prejudicial information. 2013 WL 5467186. On October 3, 2014, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit **affirmed**, holding that XTO did not show a reasonable possibility that any fracking and earthquake discussions by the jury prejudiced it or altered the verdict. 768 F.3d 773.

***Scoggin v. Cudd Pumping Services, Inc.*, No. 4:11-cv-00678-JMM (E.D. Ark., Sept. 12, 2011).**

Suit on behalf of two children for personal injury resulting from exposure to chemicals released during fracking operations conducted 250 feet from children's residence. Plaintiffs, who assert claims based on strict liability, nuisance, trespass, and gross negligence, seek \$20 million in compensatory damages, \$50 million in punitive damages; the establishment of a monitoring fund to pay for monitoring of the plaintiffs; attorney fees; and prejudgment interest. Causes of action include strict liability, nuisance, trespass, and negligence. On June 10, 2013, the case was **dismissed** by stipulation without prejudice. Nicholson, *Analysis of Litigation Involving Shale & Hydraulic Fracturing* (June 1, 2014).

***Bartlett v. Frontier Gas Services, LLC*, No 4:11-cv-0910 (E.D. Ark., Dec. 23, 2011)**

This class action is brought on behalf of all citizens, residents, and property owners who live or own property within a one mile radius of defendants' Point Remove Compressor Station near Solgohacia, Arkansas. Plaintiffs seek injunctive relief to stop defendants' operation of the station and assert causes of action for strict liability, nuisance, trespass, and negligence. After class certification was denied on April 19, 2012, in *Ginardi v. Frontier Gas Services* (see *supra*), the court granted the joint motion for voluntary **dismissal** in this case on September 17, 2012. Nicholson, *Analysis of Litigation Involving Involving Shale & Hydraulic Fracturing* (June 1, 2014).

***Smith v. Southwestern Energy Company*, No. 4:12-cv-00423 (E.D. Ark., July 11, 2012).**

William and Margaret Smith allege that the defendant's compressor station causes noise, vibration and emissions. They assert causes of action for strict liability, nuisance, trespass, and negligence, and seek damages for property, soil, and groundwater contamination, vibration damages, diminution in property values, personal injuries, and mental distress. On May 14, 2013, the court **dismissed** the case for lack of subject matter because the joinder of a necessary party would destroy diversity jurisdiction. Nicholson, *Analysis of Litigation Involving Involving Shale & Hydraulic Fracturing* (June 1, 2014).

Hill v. Southwestern Energy Company, No. 4:12-cv-00500-DPM (E.D. Ark., Aug. 10, 2012). See 2013 WL 5423847 (Sep. 26, 2013) (order dismissing certain claims), 2015 WL 5679744 (Sept. 25, 2015) (order granting judgment to defendants on remaining claims); reversed and remanded, 858 F.3d 481 (Eighth Cir., May 22, 2017)

Plaintiffs, Robbie and Gwenna Hill and 16 other plaintiffs, own land near Class II disposal wells and claim that injection of oilfield waste has exceeded the storage capacity of subsurface strata beneath the wells and migrated to their land. On September 26, 2013, the district court dismissed the civil RICO claim; the Arkansas Deceptive Trade Practices Act claim; the fraud claims; the civil conspiracy claim; the contract-based claims for violations of the implied lease covenants of good faith and fair dealing; and the conversion claim. The strict liability claims also failed because the injury alleged—wrongful *occupation of* (as opposed to damage to) the subsurface “makes this case primarily, if not exclusively, a matter of trespass.” Plaintiffs stated claims for trespass and unjust enrichment. See Amended Class Action Complaint, 2014 WL 12866057 (Jan. 10, 2014). On February 14, 2014, the court dismissed the claim for intentional and reckless conduct.

On November 6, 2014, all plaintiffs were dismissed except for Dale and Kari Stroud. According to the Strouds, they were asked in 2009 to lease the right to inject fracking waste water into a plugged production well on their land. After negotiations failed, the Strouds were allegedly told that Southwestern was going to use the well on the neighbor's property “to fill up the empty gas space under [the Strouds'] property since it was all connected.” However, on September 25, 2015, the court granted the defendants' motion for judgment. The court acknowledged it was “certainly possible that some of the injected waste migrated into the Strouds' subsurface property. But a jury would be speculating to return a verdict that a trespass did or did not occur.” The court said “expert testimony was crucial” in determining how fluid moves underground. The plaintiffs were unable to offer “a methodologically sound expert opinion that marries geology and waste flow” and “[w]ithout that opinion, in the absence of some proof of actual contamination, a person could not reasonably decide one way or the other about this alleged underground trespass without some guesswork.” 2015 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 129609.

The Strouds appealed, and the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals reversed and remanded on May 22, 2017. The court held that the district court abused its discretion by excluding the report of Walter Dowdle, the plaintiffs' expert. 858 F.3d 481. According to the court, although Dowdle's equation and report imperfectly described where the fracking waste spread, the methodology was scientifically valid, could properly be applied to the facts, and was reliable enough to assist the trier of fact. The court of appeals also held that -- even without Dowdle's expert opinion -- the Strouds submitted evidence that could enable a jury to draw a reasonable inference that 7.6 million barrels of waste, poured into an area capable of holding no more than 1.1 million barrels, migrated 180 feet to cross the property line.

On November 13, 2018, a judgment was entered dismissing all claims against Chesapeake Energy with prejudice. All claims against XTO Energy Inc., were dismissed without prejudice. All claims against Southwestern Energy Company and Seeco, Inc., by Robbie and Gwenna Hill, Joseph and Catherine Smith, Kathy Hamilton, and Larry and Margaret King were dismissed with prejudice. All of Dale and Kari Stroud's claims against Southwestern Energy Company and Seeco, Inc., were dismissed with prejudice based on the remaining parties' stipulation. **The case is closed.**

***Pruitt v. Southwestern Energy Company*, No. 4:12-cv-00690 (E.D. Ark., Nov. 2, 2012). See 2013 WL 588998 (order, dated Feb. 13, 2013, denying motion to dismiss).**

Plaintiffs alleged that defendant's compressor station produced noise, vibration, and emissions, and claimed damages for, *inter alia*, soil and groundwater contamination, diminution in property value, personal injuries, and severe mental distress. Claims asserted included strict liability, nuisance, trespass, and negligence. On February 13, 2013, the court denied Southwestern Energy's Motion for Partial Dismissal of Amended Complaint. With respect to Plaintiffs' claim that the compressor station activities are ultra-hazardous, the court held that dismissal of the strict liability claim was improper because the claim "may turn on evidence that has yet to be developed, such as expert testimony." 2013 WL 588998. On May 14, 2013, the court **dismissed** the case for lack of subject matter jurisdiction. The court held that the joinder of a necessary party would destroy diversity jurisdiction. See also Nicholson, *Analysis of Litigation Involving Shale & Hydraulic Fracturing* (June 1, 2014).

***Scoggin v. Southwestern Energy Company*, No. 4:12-cv-00763 (E.D. Ark., Dec. 7, 2012).**

This class action suit on behalf of residents and property owners within 500 feet of drilling and fracturing operations by the defendant claims that such operations cause a nuisance, contamination, trespass, physical harm and property damage. On March 15, 2013, the court denied the defendant's motion to dismiss, which in part argued that plaintiffs failed to plead the requisite elements of a strict liability claim. 2013 WL 11821470. However, on May 29, 2013, the court **dismissed** the case for lack of subject matter jurisdiction because joinder of a necessary party would destroy diversity jurisdiction. 2013 WL 12172041.

***Yanke v. Fayetteville Gathering*, No. 23CV-13-97 (Faulkner Cty. Cir. Ct., Ark., Jan. 31, 2013)**

Paul and Ashley Yanke sued for abatement of nuisance due to a natural gas compressor station approximately 1,650 feet from their residence. The parties **settled**, and the case was **dismissed** on December 2, 2015.

***Miller v. Chesapeake Operating, Inc.*, No. 4:13-cv-131 (E.D. Ark, Mar. 11, 2013); *Thomas v. Chesapeake Operating, Inc.*, No. 4:13-cv-182 (E.D. Ark., Apr. 1, 2013); *Sutterfield v. Chesapeake Operating, Inc.*, No. 4:13-cv-183 (E.D. Ark., Apr. 1, 2013); *Mahan v. Chesapeake Operating, Inc.*, No. 4:13-cv-184 (E.D. Ark., Apr. 1, 2013); *Frey v. BHP Billiton Petroleum (Arkansas) Inc.*, No. 23CV-11-488 (Faulkner County Circuit Ct., Ark., May 23, 2011), removed, No. 4:11-cv-475 (E.D. Ark., June 9, 2011)**

Plaintiffs Johnny Fred Miller, Jr., and Patsy Miller, and Christopher and Rebecca Krisell, are residents of Faulkner County, Arkansas. Plaintiffs Jonathan and Lindy Thomas, Thomas and Sarah Gamelin, Micheal and Celeste Phillips are residents of Faulkner County. Plaintiffs Jimmy Waco Sutterfield and Callie Sutterfield, Rodger Waldrip and Sonya Waldrip, and Russell Gillion are residents of Faulkner County, Arkansas. Plaintiffs Mark and Wendy Mahan, and Mary and Norman Mahan, are residents of Faulkner County, Arkansas. Plaintiffs allege that disposal-well operations by Chesapeake Operating, Inc., and BHP

Billiton Petroleum (Fayetteville) LLC, caused thousands of earthquakes in mini-clusters in central Arkansas in 2010 and 2011 and damaged their homes. Plaintiffs assert claims for public nuisance; private nuisance; absolute liability due to ultra-hazardous activities; negligence; trespass; deceptive trade practices; and outrage. On August 20, 2013, the *Frey* case [see above] was severed and consolidated with *Mahan v. Chesapeake Operating, Inc.* (No. 4:13-cv-184). Amended complaints were filed in both the *Sutterfield* lawsuit (2014 WL 7178812 (Jan. 6, 2014)) and the *Mahan* lawsuit (2014 WL 7178807 (Jan. 9, 2014)). The *Miller, Thomas, Sutterfield*, and *Mahan/Frey* lawsuits were **dismissed** with prejudice on March 20, 2014. See Nicholson, *Analysis of Litigation Involving Shale & Hydraulic Fracturing* (June 1, 2014).

***Kay v. Peak Water Systems, LLC*, No. 4:13-cv-487 (E.D. Ark., Aug. 23, 2013)**

Plaintiffs, who own land within three miles of disposal wells operated by the Defendants, claim that fracking fluids and other oilfield wastes are migrating horizontally under their properties after being injected into vertical disposal wells. Plaintiffs claim that Defendants profit from disposal, but do not compensate Plaintiffs for such permanent trespass. The action is for trespass, theft of property, unjust enrichment, and replevin. Plaintiffs also assert that Defendants have engaged in abnormally dangerous and ultra hazardous activities and are strictly liable without regard to fault for damages proximately caused by injection of wastes into the lands of the Plaintiffs. On November 15, 2013, the court granted the defendants' motion to dismiss except for the trespass and unjust enrichment claims. The court adopted its reasoning in *Hill v. Southwestern Energy Co.*, 2013 WL 5423847 (Sep. 26, 2013), and stated that – if it is shown that defendants are using the subsurface storage capacity of plaintiffs' property permanently – Arkansas would recognize a claim either for trespass or unjust enrichment. **The parties settled and the case was closed** in July 2015.

***2010-2011 Guy-Greenbrier Earthquake Swarm Victims v. Chesapeake Operating, Inc. and BHP Billiton Petroleum (Fayetteville) LLC*, No. 23CV-14-84 (Faulkner Cty. Cir. Ct., Ark., Feb. 11, 2014)**

Landowners in Faulkner County, Arkansas, claim they incurred damages due to earthquakes caused by disposal of wastewater. Plaintiffs asserted claims of public and private nuisance, absolute (strict) liability, negligence, trespass, deceptive trade practices, and outrage. The case was **dismissed** with prejudice on March 31, 2014. See *Arkansas Frackquake Victims Commiserate With Oklahomans As Fracking Wastewater Injection Continues, Risking Deadly Earthquakes*, by Julie Dermansky, DeSmog Blog (Jan. 26, 2016), at <http://www.desmogblog.com/2016/01/26/arkansas-frackquake-victims-commiserate-oklahomans-fracking-wastewater-injection-continues-risking-deadly-earthquakes> (the **settlement** in the Guy-Greenbrier earthquake swarm class action lawsuit required people to sign a nondisclosure agreement).

***Davis v. Chesapeake Operating, Inc.*, No. 4:14-cv-81 (E.D. Ark., Feb. 12, 2014)**

Daryl and Nicole Davis, and Joel and Terri Van Pelt are residents of Faulkner County, Arkansas, and own homes in Greenbrier, Arkansas. They claim that they suffered damages, including property damage to

their respective homes, due to defendants' disposal-well operations, which allegedly caused thousands of earthquakes in mini-clusters and swarms in central Arkansas in 2010 and 2011. Claims include public and private nuisance, negligence, trespass, and deceptive trade practices. In addition plaintiffs bring an absolute liability claim, asserting that defendants' disposal well operations and actions "are ultra-hazardous activities that necessarily involve a risk of serious harm to a person or the chattels of others that cannot be eliminated by the exercise of the utmost care and is not a matter of common usage." See Matthew Cabral, Shale Watch, *Arkansas Families Blame Fracking Operations for Earthquakes* (02/27/14), at <http://shalewatchblog.com/2014/02/27/arkansas-families-blame-fracking-operations-for-earthquakes/> (in addition to property damage, plaintiffs claim emotional distress and increased anxiety and worry of additional and possibly more severe earthquakes that could further damage their property or injure themselves or a family member in their home" and they seek punitive damages for public and private nuisance, absolute liability, trespass, negligence, deceptive trade practices, outrage and emotional distress). On March 20, 2014, about five weeks after filing, the claims were **dismissed** with prejudice pursuant to plaintiffs' motion.

***Ramsey v. DeSoto Gathering Co., LLC*, No. 23CV-13-624 (Faulkner Cty. Cir. Ct., Ark., Aug. 12, 2013), removed, No. 4:13-cv-626 (E.D. Ark., Nov. 4, 2013), remanded, *Ramsey v. DeSoto Gathering Co., LLC*, No. 23CV-13-624 (Faulkner Cty. Cir. Ct., Ark., Aug. 12, 2013); and *Ramsey v. DeSoto Gathering Co., LLC*, No. 23CV-14-258 (Faulkner Cty. Cir. Ct., Ark., Apr. 24, 2014)**

[See https://caseinfo.aoc.arkansas.gov/cconnect/PROD/public/ck_public_qry_main.cp_main_idx]

In the August 2013 lawsuit, Barbara Ramsey seeks damages for contamination and for loss and enjoyment of her land. She asserts claims for strict liability, nuisance, trespass, and negligence. On October 2, 2013, the amended complaint added new plaintiffs and defendants. The lawsuit was removed to federal district court, which on March 27, 2014, dismissed several plaintiffs and certain claims. On April 9, 2014, a second amended complaint was filed, naming the plaintiffs dismissed from the federal court action. In light of a dispute as to the validity of the second amended complaint, plaintiffs filed a new complaint, in April of 2014, on behalf of those dismissed from the federal court action. The suit claims that DeSoto's operations cause loud noises and toxic emissions, including methane and hydrogen sulfide as well as other flammable, malodorous and noxious gases. The families also claim their residences are within blast range if the gases would catch fire and cause an explosion. They assert that when there are "equipment blowdowns" the noise sounds like explosions. Seven families assert claims of negligence and strict liability due to abnormally dangerous activity and seek \$8 million in damages and one plaintiff seeks \$20 million for injuries due to post-traumatic stress disorder. See Luke Jones, Arkansas Business, *DeSoto Gathering Co. Sued for \$76M* (Apr. 28, 2014), at <http://www.arkansasbusiness.com/article/98407/desoto-gathering-sued-for-76-million>.

On May 15, 2014, the plaintiffs moved for a default judgment in 23-cv-13-624. On May 19, 2014, the defendants argued that because 23-cv-13-624 was removed to federal court, the state court lacks jurisdiction over the suit. On July 8, 2014, the second suit (23-cv-14-258) was transferred from the 1st Division of the Circuit Court to the 5th Division of the Circuit Court, where 23-cv-13-624 was filed. On December 2, 2014, DeSoto Gathering Company's motion to dismiss or transfer for improper venue was denied in both 23 CV-14-258 and 23 CV-13-624 (Faulkner County, 20th Judicial District). On January 7,

2015, both cases were transferred to the Second Division Circuit Court. On January 26, 2015, a writ of prohibition was sought from the Arkansas Supreme Court in which DeSoto Gathering Company argues that the Faulkner County Circuit Court is not the proper venue for this case. No. CV-15-65.

No. 23CV-13-624 – On February 12, 2015, the federal district court (4:13-cv-626) remanded the case (No. 23CV-13-624) back to the Circuit Court of Faulkner County. On March 9, 2015, defendants moved to dismiss or transfer for improper venue. On July 17, 2015, the court stayed matters until the Arkansas Supreme Court ruled in the related case (23CV-14-258). The state Supreme Court issued its decision on January 28, 2016 (see below). On October 31, 2016, the court entered an order dismissing 13 plaintiffs without prejudice. The defendants waived objections to venue, and the parties agreed to file a joint status report, no later than February 6, 2017, reporting on the progress of settlement discussions and mediation. On January 30-31, 2017, the parties participated in mediation of this case and some, but not all, of the plaintiffs settled. On August 31, 2017, an order was entered stating that all claims as to Lindell and Claudia Southerland, Casey and Nita Chastain, and Thomas and Jenny Whitehurst have been resolved and should be dismissed with prejudice. The claims of William and Margaret Smith remain. On September 1, 2017, claims against Southwestern Midstream Services Company and SEECO, Inc. were dismissed with prejudice. Only the claims against Desoto Gathering Company remain.

On October 3, 2017, DeSoto Gathering Company, LLC filed a motion for summary judgment. It stated that the remaining claims are (1) strict liability based on allegations of ultra-hazardous activity; and (2) negligence. It contends that plaintiffs lack evidence of physical personal injuries; cannot recover damages for emotional distress without an attendant physical injury; lack any proof of legal causation of any type of injury; cannot meet their burden of proving that the Puma North natural gas compressor facility is an ultra-hazardous activity; and have not sustained any injury of the type associated with the alleged ultra-hazardous activities (danger of fire or explosion). On October 18, 2017, the jury trial was cancelled. The claims as to remaining plaintiffs, William E. Smith, William and Margaret Smith, were settled and the case was dismissed on November 2, 2017. **The case is closed.**

23CV-14-258 – DeSoto Gathering filed a petition for writ of prohibition with the Arkansas Supreme Court (CV-15-65) requesting that the Faulkner County Circuit Court be barred from conducting further proceedings. On January 28, 2016, the Arkansas Supreme Court denied DeSoto Gathering's petition. 480 S.W.3d 144. Thereafter, on March 2, 2016, DeSoto filed its answer. On November 2, 2016, the court in No. 23CV-14-258 entered an order that stayed proceedings until a joint status report is filed no later than February 6, 2017. According to the order, the allegations with respect to Scotland II Compressor Station, brought by Clifford and Loveta Pruitt, Allan and Tammy Peterson, Jeffrey and Kimberly Wyborny, Virginia Mills, and Molly O. Stone, shall be assigned a new case number. On May 4, 2017, the plaintiffs informed the court they had settled and filed a motion to dismiss their claims with prejudice. On July 25, 2017, **the case was dismissed**.

Stratton v. Kinder Morgan Treating, No. 4:12-cv-718 (E.D. Ark., Nov. 14, 2012)

Roger and Marla Stratton of Conway County alleged that a nearby compressor station created a noxious and harmful nuisance. Compressor stations employ turbines to compress natural gas and filter and

dehydration units to remove impurities. The units allegedly emit methane and hydrogen sulfide, and create odors and loud noises. Plaintiffs asserted a strict liability claim for abnormally dangerous activities, as well as claims for nuisance, trespass, and negligence. On February 13, 2012, the joint motion to dismiss was granted. **The case is closed.**

CALIFORNIA

***Gardiner Family, LLC v. Crimson Resource Management Corp.*, No. 1:15-cv-751 (E.D. Cal., May 15, 2015)**

The Gardiner family operates one of the largest almond orchards in the San Joaquin Valley. It alleges that its almond trees have been damaged by salt water pulled up during oil production. The salt water contains high concentrations of sodium, chloride, and boron. The plaintiffs allege that the defendants' oil production and waste disposal processes have damaged the Gardiner's land, crops, and trees. The wastes include salt water (also called "brine" or "produced water"); drilling mud and drill cuttings; and hydraulic flowback (fluids and chemicals used for hydraulic fracturing mixed with naturally occurring chemicals and fluids that flow back to the surface during and after the completion of hydraulic fracturing). The wastes are re-injected underground in waste disposal wells. The plaintiffs assert claims of negligence, trespass, private nuisance, public nuisance. 2016 WL 9448256 (first amended complaint). The case was settled on dismissed on October 13, 2017. **The case is closed.**

***Gus Who v. US Government*, No. 16-cv-02993 (N.D. Cal., Jun. 3, 2016)**

An anonymous plaintiff using the pseudonym Gus Who claims he has "prophetic dreams" about earthquakes that will happen as a result of fracking done in secret by the United States government. On July 21, 2016, the United States Magistrate recommended that the case be dismissed because "Plaintiff has failed to state the legal or factual elements of a claim and has failed to show why he should be permitted to bring his case anonymously." The Magistrate also found that the plaintiff "fails to identify any legal basis for his claims and alleges facts that are wholly incredible." 2016 WL 11475280. The case was dismissed on September 26, 2016. Gus Who's appeal to the Ninth Circuit (No. 16-16476) was dismissed. **The case is closed.**

COLORADO

***Strudley v. Antero Resources Corp.*, No. 2011-cv-2218, 2011 WL 1156763 (Denver County Dist. Ct., Colo., Mar. 24, 2011), 2012 WL 1932470 (order granting motion to dismiss, May 9, 2012), reversed, 350 P.3d 874 (Colorado Ct. of Appeals, July 3, 2013), affirmed, 347 P.2d 149 (Colorado Sup. Ct., Apr. 20, 2015)**

On March 23, 2011, the William Strudley family sued Antero Resources and two drilling and service companies, alleging damages due to contamination from the drilling of three natural gas wells in Silt,

Colorado. Plaintiffs allege negligence, negligence per se, nuisance, strict liability, trespass, and medical monitoring trust funds, and violation of the Colorado Hazardous Waste Act and the Oil and Gas Conservation Act. 2011 WL 1156763. On May 9, 2012, the district court dismissed the case. The court noted that the central issue was whether defendants caused plaintiffs' alleged injuries. Following *Lore v. Lone Pine Corp.*, 1986 WL 637507 (N.J. Sup. Ct., Nov. 18, 1986), the Colorado court required plaintiffs -- before allowing full discovery -- to make a prima facie showing of exposure and causation. The court noted that the Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission had concluded that the water supply was not affected by oil and gas operations.

Lone Pine order – Plaintiffs were instructed to establish (1) the identity of each hazardous substance from defendants' activities to which they were exposed and which caused them injury; (2) whether these substances can cause the types of disease or illness that plaintiffs claim (general causation); (3) a quantitative measurement of the concentration, timing and duration of their exposure to each substance; (4) if other than the plaintiffs' residence, the precise location of any exposure; (e) an identification, by way of reference to a medically recognized diagnosis, of the specific disease or illness from which each plaintiff allegedly suffers or for which medical monitoring is purportedly necessary; and (5) a conclusion that such illness was in fact caused by such exposure (specific causation). Plaintiffs were ordered to provide all reports that contain any finding of contamination on their property; a list of the health care providers who provided plaintiffs with health services along with a release authorizing transmittal of medical records; and identification and quantification of the contamination of the plaintiffs' real property attributable to defendants' operations.

The district court, on May 9, 2012, found that plaintiffs "failed to produce sufficient information and expert opinions upon which to establish the prima facie elements of their claims, including exposure, injury, and both general and specific causation." The court noted that the plaintiffs' doctor opined that environmental and health information exists to merit further substantive discovery," but failed to provide an opinion as to whether exposure was a contributing factor to plaintiffs' alleged injuries or illness. In the words of the court, "Plaintiffs' requested march towards discovery without some adequate proof of causation of injury is precisely what the [*Lone Pine order*] was meant to curtail." The court noted that the Colorado Oil and Gas Commission had concluded that "there is no data that would indicate the water quality in [plaintiffs'] domestic well has been impacted by nearby oil and natural gas drilling and operations." The court stated that, "[t]hough the evidence shows existence of certain gases and compounds in both the air and water of Plaintiffs' Silt home, there is neither sufficient data nor expert analysis stating with any level of probability that a causal connection does in fact exist between Plaintiffs' injuries and Plaintiffs' exposure to defendants drilling activities." The district court concluded that the plaintiffs failed to make a prima facie claim for injuries, and dismissed the claims with prejudice. Nicholson, *Analysis of Litigation Involving Shale & Hydraulic Fracturing* (June 1, 2014).

This is the first time a court dismissed a fracking case due to the non-compliance with a *Lone Pine* order. See

<http://www.velaw.com/resources/FirstKnownIndustryOrderDismissingPlaintiffsCaseFailuretoComplyLonePineOrder.aspx>. [NOTE: A list of selected *Lone Pine* cases and articles about *Lone Pine* can be found at the end of this document.] Subsequent to *Strudley*, there is two known groundwater contamination cases in which a court has likewise issued a *Lone Pine* order. *Teekell v. Chesapeake Operating, Inc.*, No. 5:12-cv-

00044 (W.D. La. Aug. 20, 2012) (unreported order), and *Baker v. Anschutz Exploration Corp.*, 2013 WL 3282880 (W.D. N.Y. Jun. 27, 2013) (describing *Lone Pine* order entered September 25, 2013). There have been three reported decisions in which motions for *Lone Pine* orders were denied in hydraulic fracturing cases. See *Hagy v. Equitable Production Co.*, 2012 WL 713778 (S.D. W. VA. Mar. 5, 2012); *Kamuck v. Shell Energy Holdings GP, LLC*, 2012 WL 3864954 (M.D. Pa. Sept. 5, 2012); and *Roth v. Cabot Oil & Gas Corporation*, 287 F.R.D. 293, 2012 WL 4895345 (M.D. Pa. Oct. 15, 2012). There are two known unreported orders denying motions for *Lone Pine* orders. *Boggs v. Landmark 4 LLC*, No. 1:12-cv-00614 (N.D. Ohio, Aug. 13, 2012); and the combined cases of *Beck v. ConocoPhillips Company*, No. 2011-484; and *Strong v. ConocoPhillips Company*, No. 2011-487 (Dist. Ct. Panola County Tex. Mar. 28, 2012).

Subsequent developments – On July 3, 2013, the Colorado Court of Appeals reversed, holding that *Lone Pine* orders are prohibited under Colorado law. The court stated the issue as “whether a trial court in a toxic tort case can enter an order requiring plaintiffs to present prima facie evidence supporting their claims after initial disclosures, but before other discovery commences, or risk having their case dismissed.” The state appellate court offered several reasons for its decision. First, it noted that federal courts rely on Fed.R.Civ.P. 16(c)(2) as authority for *Lone Pine* orders, but the Colorado version of Rule 16 is different and “contains no language granting trial courts the broad discretion contemplated in the rule’s federal counterpart.” Second, it noted that courts are more inclined to issue *Lone Pine* orders after extensive discovery has been conducted than early on in the litigation before plaintiffs are fully able to develop their case. In this case, “the court issued the *Lone Pine* order after initial disclosures, but before other discovery began.” Third, the present case is not a “mass tort case” but instead involves one parcel of land and four family members suing four defendants. Under such circumstances, the court saw “no reason why existing procedural mechanisms should be supplanted by ad hoc procedures not otherwise provided for under Colorado law.” 2013 WL 3427901. On August 29, 2013, the Defendants filed a Petition for Writ of Certiorari with the Colorado Supreme Court.

On April 20, 2015, the Colorado Supreme Court affirmed, holding that Colorado’s Rules of Civil Procedure 16(c) does “not allow a trial court to issue a modified case management order, such as a *Lone Pine* order, that requires a plaintiff to present prima facie evidence in support of a claim before a plaintiff can exercise its full rights of discovery under the Colorado Rules.” In support of its decision, the court noted that C.R.C.P. 16 differs from Fed. R. Civ. P. 16 insofar as the state rule “primarily addresses basic scheduling matters” and “does not contain a grant of authority for complex cases or otherwise afford trial courts the authority to require a plaintiff to make a prima facie showing before the plaintiff fully exercises discovery rights under the Colorado Rules.” The court agreed with the United States District Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania, which stated that it is “preferable to yield to the consistency and safeguards of the [rules of civil procedure], as well as the [c]ourt’s own flexibility and discretion to address discovery disputes as they arise, as opposed to entering [a] rigid and exacting *Lone Pine* order.” *Roth v. Cabot Oil & Gas Corp.*, 287 F.R.D. 293, 299-300 (M.D. Pa. 2012). **This case is pending.**

***Evenson v. Antero Resources Corp.*, No. 2011-cv-5118 (Denver County Dist. Ct., Colo., July 20, 2011)**

Several families filed a lawsuit alleging that drilling and exploration activities of defendant company exposed their properties to hazardous gases, chemicals, and industrial wastes. Plaintiffs are seeking class

action status. The complaint includes causes of action for negligence and medical monitoring, among others. The defendants moved to dismiss, arguing among other things that plaintiffs failed to plead any injury to their property and that their claims lack ripeness, being based on speculative future drilling and operational activities. The court **dismissed** all claims on August 17, 2012. See Nicholson, *Analysis of Litigation Involving Shale & Hydraulic Fracturing* (June 1, 2014); and Jennifer Quinn-Barabanov, *Fracking Plaintiffs Can't Anticipate a Nuisance*, Law360, Steptoe & Johnson LLP (Sept. 25, 2012) at <http://www.steptoelaw.com/publications-8413.html>.

LOUISIANA

***Andre v. EXCO Resources, Inc.*, No. 5:11-cv-00610-TS-MLH (W.D. La., Apr. 15, 2011)**

***Beckman v. EXCO Resources, Inc.*, No. 5:11-cv-00617-TS-MLH (W.D. La., Apr. 18, 2011)**

Plaintiff David Andre brought suit on April 15, 2011, on behalf of consumers of water in Caddo Parish. Three days later, Daniel Beckman and seven other plaintiffs filed a similar suit. According to both complaints, on April 18, 2010, a natural gas well operated by EXCO contaminated the Caddo Parish aquifer and the plaintiffs' property. While the complaints do not allege that EXCO engaged in hydraulic fracturing, they seek to compel disclosure of the drilling muds and solutions used by EXCO. Both complaints allege causes of action for negligence, strict liability, nuisance, trespass, unjust enrichment, and impairment of use of property. See Nicholson, *Analysis of Litigation Involving Shale & Hydraulic Fracturing* (June 1, 2014). On May 28, 2013, the parties in the *Andre* litigation filed a joint motion for approval of a proposed **settlement**. On July 1, 2013, a Settlement Class was conditionally certified and the court granted a "Motion to Preliminarily Approve the Proposed Settlement." On October 25, 2013, the parties filed a Joint Motion for Final Approval of Proposed Settlement, Settlement Class, and Other Related Relief. The Settlement Agreement provides that EXCO be given credit for the \$420,000 previously paid out and will pay an additional sum of \$135,000, which includes payment of attorneys' fees in an amount not to exceed \$30,000. The court granted the joint motion on November 12, 2013, and entered an order of dismissal. In the *Beckman* litigation, a joint motion to **dismiss** was granted on August 14, 2014.

***Teekell v. Chesapeake Operating, Inc.*, No. 555,703 (La. Dist. Ct., Caddo Parish, Dec. 8, 2011), removed, No. 5:12-cv-00044 (W.D. La., Jan. 12, 2012)**

Plaintiffs allege their groundwater was contaminated by gas drilling and production operations on adjacent property. The causes of action include negligence and strict liability. On August 20, 2012, the court signed an order in which the parties agreed to the entry of a "*Lone Pine*" order requiring plaintiffs to make a prima facie case as to causation through expert witnesses prior to full discovery. See Nicholson, *Analysis of Litigation Involving Shale & Hydraulic Fracturing* (June 1, 2014). On June 25, 2013, the court **dismissed** the claims against the defendants with prejudice.

***Walsh et al v. Comstock Oil and Gas-Louisiana LLC*, No. 623544-C (1st Jud. Dist. Court, Caddo Parish, La., Apr. 30, 2020), removed, No. 5:20-CV-00770 (W.D. La., Jun. 18, 2020)**

Arthur and Susan Walsh of Greenwood, Louisiana, who leased their land for production, claim that fracking operations disrupted their sleep and enjoying their home, and that vibrations caused damage to their residence and swimming pool, and that these actions and the failure to minimize dust constitute an actionable nuisance. The parties settled and the case was dismissed on April 9, 2021. **The case is closed.**

NEW YORK

***Maring v. Nalbene*, No. K12009001499 (N.Y. Sup. Ct., Chautauqua County, Aug. 27, 2009)**

Plaintiff alleges that oil and gas companies have contaminated her water well with methane gas. The complaint alleges causes of action for trespass, nuisance, and negligence. Source: Nicholson, *Analysis of Litigation Involving Shale & Hydraulic Fracturing* (June 1, 2014). Documents were filed as recently as March 1, 2016, indicating that the **case is pending**. See <http://www.searchiqs.com/chautauqua.html>.

***Baker v. Anschutz Exploration Corp.*, No. 2011-1168 (N.Y. Sup. Ct., Chemung County, Feb. 11, 2011), transferred, 6:11-CV-6119 (W.D. N.Y., Mar. 9, 2011). See 68 F.Supp.3d 368, 2014 WL 7215153 (summary judgment, Dec. 17, 2014)**

Landowners in Chemung County, New York, claim that improper drilling, well capping, and cement casing caused toxic chemicals to be discharged into their groundwater. The plaintiffs also claim Conrad Geoscience failed to conduct a reasonable investigation of possible contamination. The wells were horizontally drilled but not subject to hydraulic fracturing. The plaintiffs allege negligence per se, common law negligence, nuisance, strict liability, trespass, premises liability, fear of cancer, medical monitoring, and deceptive business acts and practices. On July 13, 2012, the court ordered the parties to mediate. On May 3, 2013, the court stayed discovery pending resolution of the defendants' motion to dismiss. See Nicholson, *Analysis of Litigation Involving Shale & Hydraulic Fracturing* (June 1, 2014). On September 25, 2013, the court issued a *Lone Pine* order that required plaintiffs to provide defendants with expert reports establishing the identity of hazardous substances to which plaintiffs claim exposure as a result of defendants' activities, the locations of exposures, and an explanation of causation. Plaintiffs were required to identify and quantify the contamination of their property attributable to defendants' operations. 2013 WL 3282880. On June 27, 2013, the court denied the defendants' motion to strike plaintiffs' expert reports. The court noted the reports were "far from models of clarity," but held that "they meet the essential requirements imposed by the *Lone Pine* Order." The court left the question of the admissibility of the reports "for another day." 2013 WL 3282880. Summary judgment motions were submitted on November 13, 2014. On December 1, 2014, the plaintiffs dismissed some of their claims, including the strict liability claim based on abnormally dangerous activity, fear of cancer, and future medical monitoring. On December 17, 2014, the district court disallowed the plaintiffs' expert testimony -- that a particular gas well was the cause of methane contamination -- as neither based upon sufficient facts or data nor the product of reliable principles and methods. Consequently, plaintiffs were unable to show causation and the court granted summary judgment to Anschutz. 68 F.Supp.3d 368; 2014 WL 7215153. On March 15, 2016, the court denied the plaintiffs' motion for reconsideration, reaffirming its prior determination that the testimony of plaintiff's expert would not be admissible at trial because it

“would not be based upon sufficient facts or data, would not be the product of reliable principles and methods, and that, in any event, [the expert] has not applied the principles and methods reliably to the facts of the case.” **The case is closed.**

NORTH DAKOTA

***Kartch v. EOG Resources*, No. 31-9-c-225-1 (Mountrail Coun/ty Dist. Ct., Aug. 13, 2009), removed, No. 4:10-cv-00014 (D. N.D. Mar. 4, 2010)**

Frankie and Kristin Kartch alleged that EOG Resources placed a road, a well pad, and a waste pit, and a producing well with storage tanks on their property without authorization. Plaintiffs further alleged that the waste pit was negligently constructed and toxic wastes were left in place which damaged the surface estate. Pursuant to a settlement, the case was **dismissed** on September 18, 2012. Nicholson, *Analysis of Litigation Involving Shale & Hydraulic Fracturing* (June 1, 2014).

***Armes v. Petro-Hunt LLC*, No. 4:10-cv-00078 (D. N.D., Oct. 22, 2010). Order Granting Defendant's Motion for Partial Summary Judgment, 2012 WL 1493740 (Apr. 27, 2012)**

This lawsuit does not involve any allegations of contamination, but instead was brought by an individual injured when an explosion occurred during hydraulic fracking operations. Among other claims, plaintiffs argued that Petro-Hunt engaged in an abnormally dangerous activity and was strictly liable for injuries caused by those activities. The court in April 2012 granted **summary judgment** for the defendant on the strict liability claim, holding that (1) plaintiffs failed to present sufficient evidence to show hydraulic fracturing is an abnormally dangerous activity; and (2) the North Dakota Supreme Court has yet to recognize a claim premised on abnormally dangerous activities. **The case was closed on June 11, 2012.**

OHIO

***Siers v. John D. Oil and Gas Co.*, No. 08cv2322 (Court of Common Pleas, Lake County, Ohio, July 22, 2008)**

Dawn and Carl Siers sued John D. Oil and Gas Company and Great Plains Exploration after the family was forced out of their home and the children spent the night in a hospital emergency room due to exposure to hydrogen sulfide emitted during the drilling of a gas well in Lake County, Ohio. The **case was settled** in March 2009. See <http://www.ernstversusencana.ca/ohio-bill-h-b-278-sparks-controversy> and Shalefield Stories, http://www.environmentamericacenter.org/sites/environment/files/reports/ShalefieldStoriesnp_0.pdf (page 31).

***Payne v. Ohio Valley Energy Systems Corp.*, No. 09P00015 (Court of Common Pleas, Geauga County, Ohio) (complaint, filed Jan. 30, 2009, available at <http://www.tddl原因.com/documents/Complaint.pdf>)**

This case involved allegations of insufficient cementing of production casing of a vertical gas well (rather than contamination due to horizontal fracturing). In December 2007 gas seeped into nearby water wells and caused an explosion at a residential home in Bainbridge, Ohio (near Cleveland). See *Gas-Well Ordeal Finally Ends Well*, Chagrin Valley Times, available at <http://www.chagrinvalleytimes.com/NC/0/2811.html>. Plaintiffs brought an action “in trespass, negligence, private nuisance, nuisance per se, engaging in an ultra hazardous activity, fraudulent concealment, failure to warn, and negligent infliction of emotional distress, for actions and inactions stemming from the drilling of a gas well that has caused the explosion of Richard and Thelma Payne's home ... and the contamination of Plaintiffs' properties, including but not limited to the groundwater aquifer which serves as the drinking water supply for Plaintiffs' properties.” Complaint page 7. Pursuant to a settlement in February 2011, forty-three households received an undisclosed amount and Bainbridge Township received \$50,000 for replacement of a water well and for other expenses at its police station. In 2008, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources issued a lengthy report on the incident. See <http://www.dnr.state.oh.us/Portals/11/bainbridge/report.pdf>.

***Alford v. East Gas Ohio Co.*, No. 2010 CT 10 1185 (Court of Common Pleas, Tuscarawas County, Ohio, Oct. 22, 2010), No. 2013 AP 030014, 2014 WL 2109320 (Court of Appeals, Fifth District, Ohio, May 12, 2014)**

Brian and Erin Alford and their children lived near Port Washington, Ohio, within 400 yards of two compressor stations. After a new engine was installed in January of 2007, the Alfords began experiencing excessive noise, fumes and vibration on their property. The Alfords brought claims against East Ohio Gas (doing business as Dominion East Ohio) for nuisance, trespass, intentional and negligent infliction of emotional distress, negligence and punitive damages. The trial court directed a verdict on the nuisance, trespass, intentional infliction of emotional distress and punitive damages claims. The jury found for the defendant on the claim for negligent infliction of emotional distress, but found in favor of the Alfords on the negligence claim. The jury assigned \$132,000 in damages (\$32,000 for annoyance, injury; inconvenience, endangered comfort, health and safety; \$25,000 for loss of consortium; and \$75,000 for injury to real property). On May 12, 2014, the Court of Appeals for the Fifth District held that (1) the verdict on the negligence claim was supported by sufficient evidence; (2) damages for loss of consortium were improperly granted as the Alfords did not plead a loss of consortium claim; (3) the damages for property value diminution was upheld; (4) the trial court properly directed a verdict for defendant on the claims for punitive damages as there was no intentional infliction of emotional distress, and the defendant's actions were insufficient to demonstrate malice; and (5) the trial court did not err in directing a verdict as to claims for absolute nuisance as the compressor stations operated lawfully and according to certifications and permits and there was no of violations of any permit or standard regarding emissions. On remand, the judgment was modified on June 3, 2014, and reduced to \$107,000 with interest. **The case is closed.**

***Boggs v. Landmark 4 LLC*, No. 1:12-cv-00614 (N.D. Ohio, Mar. 12, 2012). See 2012 WL 3485288 (Order on Defendant's Motion to Dismiss) (Aug. 13, 2012); *Mangan v. Landmark 4, LLC*, No. 1:12-cv-00613 (N.D. Ohio, Mar. 12, 2012)**

After filing – and then voluntarily dismissing – a state action in 2010, these suits were filed on March 12, 2012. See 2012 WL 960913 (*Boggs* complaint); and 2012 WL 924852 (*Mangan* complaint). Plaintiffs allege they suffered health injuries, loss of use and enjoyment of their property, loss of quality of life, emotional distress, and other damages due to drilling and hydraulic fracturing activities. Plaintiffs claim fracking fluids and other chemicals were discharged into the ground or into the waters near their home and water well. Plaintiffs allege the defendant failed to disclose, to the plaintiffs and to public authorities, material facts concerning the nature and extent of the contaminants. The wells are approximately 2500 feet from plaintiffs' property. Plaintiffs assert claims for negligence, strict liability, private nuisance, unjust enrichment, negligence per se, battery, intentional fraudulent concealment, and negligent misrepresentation. On August 13, 2012, Judge Donald Nugent refused to dismiss the negligence and strict liability claims on statute of limitations grounds. The battery claim, which was not raised in the state action, was held to be time barred. The fraudulent concealment claim was not pled with requisite particularity to withstand dismissal because "failure to warn of potential contamination or exposure to dangerous chemicals, without more, is not actionable as fraudulent concealment." On the same day, the court denied the defendant's request for a "Lone Pine" order. On March 11, 2013, the court dismissed the negligence per se claims, but refused to dismiss the strict liability claims, and allowed plaintiffs to assert their negligence and strict liability claims in the alternative. See *Boggs*, 2013 WL 944776, at *2; and *Mangan*, 2013 WL 950560, at *2. In both cases, the court held that the complaints alleged "sufficient facts and information to raise a question as to whether fracking, even in the absence of negligence, should be considered an abnormally dangerous activity." *Id.* See also *Legal Opinion: Federal Suit Could Impact Utica Drilling*, Crain's Shale Report (Dec. 11, 2012), <http://www.crainscleveland.com/article/20121211/SHALEMAGAZINE/121129868/1225/newsletter04>; and Nicholson, *Analysis of Litigation Involving Shale & Hydraulic Fracturing* (June 1, 2014). On May 23, 2014, defendant filed a motion for summary judgment on claims for negligence, nuisance, medical monitoring, unjust enrichment, and strict liability. With regard to the strict liability, the defendant pointed to a recent decision of the Middle District of Pennsylvania which rejected a similar claim. See *Fiorentino v. Cabot Oil and Gas Corp.*, No. 3:09-cv-02284, recaptioned as *Ely v. Cabot Oil and Gas Corp.*, discussed *infra*. The defendant also argued that there is no evidence that its activities caused the alleged damages. On June 30, 2014, the plaintiffs withdrew their request for medical monitoring and their claims for strict liability and unjust enrichment. Plaintiffs argue that issues of material fact exist regarding whether the defendant was negligent and caused the degradation of the water quantity and quality of their well water. On September 24, 2014, the district court granted summary judgment to Landmark on the claims for unjust enrichment, strict liability, and medical monitoring, but denied summary judgment as to the remaining claims. 2014 WL 12546488. On February 3, 2015, the court entered an order stating that the *Boggs* and *Mangan* cases have been settled and dismissed.

***Crothers v. Statoil USA Onshore Properties, Inc.*, No. 2016-095 (Court of Common Pleas, Monroe County, Ohio, Mar. 18, 2016), removed, No. 2:16-cv-00261 (S.D. Ohio, Mar. 25, 2016)**

James and Linda Crothers of Monroe County allege that Statoil's activities caused physical damage to the foundation of their home; diminution in property value; interference with their use and enjoyment of their land via alleged noise pollution, light pollution, and air pollution; and substantial inconvenience and mental anguish. On December 6, 2017, the court granted Statoil summary judgment on all of claims except the nuisance claim. The court held that, although the plaintiffs not own the property, they can pursue their nuisance allegations claiming interference with their daily use of the property because of loud noises, vibrations, dust, and light pollution. Plaintiffs state they have an oral agreement to occupy the property, and that the property will pass to them upon the owner's death, who is the father of one of the plaintiffs. 2017 WL 6035232. On July 24, 2018, the parties filed a notice of settlement. On September 24, 2018, an Agreed Stipulation of Dismissal was filed. **The case is closed.**

***Rohn v. Precision Pipeline, LLC*, No. 2018-CV-01947 (Court of Common Pleas, Stark County, Ohio, Oct. 5, 2018), removed, No. 5:18-cv-02621-KBB (N.D. Ohio, Nov. 14, 2018)**

Earl Rohn sought damages in connection with a April 2017 spill of an estimated two million gallons of drilling fluids near his farm. The spill occurred in connection with a pipeline project. During the cleanup defendant allegedly used Rohn's land without permission and caused substantial damage. Rohn asserted claims of negligence and trespass and sought compensatory and punitive damages. The parties settled the dispute, and on March 20, 2019, an order was entered dismissing the case. **The case is closed.**

***Kiefer v. Chesapeake Exploration, LLC, et al.*, No. 18CVH29188 (Court of Common Pleas, Carroll County, Ohio, Nov. 29, 2018), removed, No. 5:18-CV-02983 (N.D. Ohio, Dec. 28, 2018)**

In his first amended complaint, 2019 WL 2165967 (Mar. 22, 2019), James Kiefer of Carroll County alleges that the defendants, Chesapeake Exploration LLC; Encino Acquisition Partners Holdings, LLC; Encino Energy, LLC; Encino Acquisition Partners, LLC; and EAP Ohio, LLC; are operating well pads in a manner that harms his health and property, as well as his use and enjoyment of his property. Kiefer alleges destruction of his water well, a "constant roar of machinery" when he is in his yard, vibrations that shake his home on a daily basis, cracks in walls and ceilings, and strong, offensive and noxious gas odors on his property and inside his home. In November 2018, the Ohio EPA issued a Notice of Violation to Chesapeake for producing visible emissions in violation of state law, the federal Code of Federal Regulations, and the terms and conditions of defendant's air permit.

He is pursuing claims for negligence, private nuisance, public nuisance, trespass, abnormally dangerous activity, negligent and intentional infliction of emotional distress, and medical monitoring. With regard to strict liability, Kiefer alleges that "[t]he harmful noise pollution and vibrations, as well as the hazardous, toxic chemicals and compounds resulting from Defendants' operation of its well pads are of a hazardous nature capable of causing severe personal injuries and damages to persons and property, and are, therefore ultra hazardous and abnormally dangerous." The parties settled, and on June 4, 2019, the court closed the case. **The case is closed.**

J&R Passmore LLC v. Rice Drilling D LLC, No. 2:18-cv-1587 (S.D. Ohio, Dec. 6, 2018)

Owners of mineral rights in Belmont County, Ohio, contend that the defendant energy companies do not have lease rights to extract oil and gas from the geological formations that lie below the base of the Utica Shale, including the Point Pleasant Formation. They assert claims for intentional subsurface mineral trespass; intentional subsurface mineral conversion; and unjust enrichment. They believe the lease only conveyed rights to produce oil and gas from the Marcellus Shale and Utica Shale, and reserved the rights to all other geological formations. On July 8, 2020, plaintiffs filed a motion for summary judgment. On March 28, 2023, the court denied class certification. 2023 WL 2667749. On April 21, 2023, the court ordered that all summary judgment motions are to be filed no later than sixty) days after entry of an opinion and order on pending summary judgment motions in *TERA II LLC, et al. v. Rice Drilling D LLC, No. 2:19-cv-2221*. The court issued its summary judgment order on June 28, 2023 in *TERA II*. 2023 WL 2667749. An amended complaint was filed on January 11, 2024. On March 29, 2024, the court issued another order which, in part, granted summary judgment to defendants on the trespass, conversion, and unjust enrichment claims as to some (but not all) of the parcels. 2924 WL 1347291. **The case is pending.**

TERA II LLC v. Rice Drilling D LLC, Ct. of Common Pleas, Belmont County, Apr. 25, 2019), removed, No. 2:19-cv-2221 (S.D. Ohio, May 28, 2019)

Thomas and Jeannine Shaw, Joyce Chambers, and Donald Scott Harvey own oil and gas rights in Belmont County, Ohio. They allege defendants are permitted only to drill the Marcellus and Utica Shale formations, and have gone beyond the terms of the leases by drilling into and producing from the Point Pleasant formation below the Utica Shale. On June 28, 2023, the court issued an opinion and order with regard to motions for summary judgment by both sides. The court noted that, in a nearly identical state court action, the Seventh District Court of Appeals of Ohio upheld the trial court's ruling that the leases at issue unambiguously reserved the subsurface rights in Point Pleasant to the plaintiff. The Ohio Supreme Court accepted jurisdiction on two issues: whether the leases conveyed rights to the Point Pleasant formation to defendants, and whether the defendants bad-faith trespassers. The court held that application of non-mutual offensive collateral estoppel would be unfair to Defendants and held that the Ohio court decision will not have non-mutual offensive collateral estoppel effect. On the question of whether defendants had authority to drill into the Point Pleasant formation, the court exercised jurisdiction over the declaratory judgment claim. It noted that the Ohio Supreme Court has not yet ruled on how to interpret the leases, so it must predict how the court will rule.

The court found that the "words 'Utica Shale' reasonably could be given multiple definitions by those across the scientists, landowners, and drilling companies that make up the oil and gas industry." It held that "the Ohio Court of Appeals' decision provides little substantive guidance in this matter as the circumstances of the cases are different," and found that summary judgment is inappropriate.

As to the trespass claim, the court held that "if Defendants do not have authority to drill, Plaintiffs' trespass claim could succeed." The court did grant summary judgment for properties where plaintiffs cannot prove physical invasion. As for conversion and unjust enrichment, that court held "there exists a genuine dispute of material fact as it pertains to Plaintiffs' conversion and unjust enrichment claims, but

Plaintiffs' theory about the application of the rule of capture remains unsupported. As such, this Court DENIES summary judgment for Plaintiffs it relates to conversion and unjust enrichment, and GRANTS in part summary judgment for the Defendants as it relates to the rule of capture theory as applied to these claims but DENIES in part for the remainder of the claim." The defendants were awarded summary judgment on plaintiff's claim of underpayment of royalties by Rice and Gulfport.

The court denied summary judgment for defendants on their affirmative defenses of laches and unclean hands; estoppel and quasi-estoppel; consent; ratification; waiver; and accord and satisfaction. Defendants filed summary judgment motions in December 2023. On January 22, 2024, the Court clarified that the plaintiffs still have conversion and unjust enrichment claims as to both wellbore and non-wellbore invaded tracts and trespass claims as to two specific wells. 2024 WL 231456. After a trial was held in March 2024, judgment was entered in favor of defendants on March 4, 2024. Plaintiffs filed a motion for a new trial, which is pending. **The case is pending.**

***Golden Eagle Resources II LLC v. Rice Drilling D LLC*, No. 22CV122 (Court of Common Pleas, Belmont Cty., Ohio, May 5, 2022), removed, No. 2:22-cv-02374 (S.D. Ohio, Jun. 3, 2022)**

Jeremiah and Terri Gillespie signed a lease in 2013 with Paloma Partners III LLC allowing production from the Marcellus Shale and Utica Shale formations, but reserving production from all other formations and prohibiting drilling through formations below the Utica. The lease was assigned to defendant Rice Drilling. Golden Eagle owns mineral rights that are not part of the Rice Drilling's lease rights.

Golden Eagle has asserted claims for trespass and conversion. Rice on June 10, 2022, moved to dismiss the case on the ground that it never entered underground space claimed by Golden Eagle and because "the Rule of Capture bars the claim." On July 1, 2022, Golden Eagle filed its opposition to Rice's motion to dismiss for failure to state a claim. Golden Eagle claims that Rice "physically invaded and unlawfully entered" the Point Pleasant formation and contends, relying in part on *Chance v. BP Chemicals, Inc.*, 670 N.E.2d 985 (1996), that Ohio in Revised Code 2305.09(E) recognizes an action for trespassing underground. Golden Eagle claims that subsurface trespass by fluid injection "has been accepted (explicitly or implicitly) in every jurisdiction to have considered the issue other than Texas." Golden Eagle says Rice included portions of its underground property within its drilling unit, which it claims is prima facie evidence of hydraulic fracturing that "necessarily constitutes trespass under the facts of this case."

On February 10, 2023, the district court denied Rice Drilling's motion to dismiss for failure to state a claim, and ordered Golden Eagle to amend its complaint regarding its trespass claim. 2023 WL 1927799.

On March 28, 2023, the court denied a motion to certify a class action. On August 11, 2023, the plaintiff voluntarily dismissed without prejudice its complaint. **The case is closed.**

***Bethel Oil and Gas LLC v. Redbird Development LLC*, 22OT000114 (Ct. Common Pleas, Washington Cty., Ohio, 05-25-2022), on appeal, No. 23CA4 (Ohio Ct. App., Fourth District), review pending, No. 2024-1696 (Ohio Sup. Ct.)**

Bethel Oil and Gas alleges waste-fluid injection operations by sixteen defendants have caused toxic waste to migrate onto and damage their property rights in wells. The Court of Common Pleas dismissed the case but, on October 23, 2024, the Ohio Court of Appeals for the Fourth District reversed and remanded. It held that plaintiffs sufficiently alleged that defendants' conduct was the proximate cause of alleged injuries; stated a claim for joint and several liability; and stated a claim for nuisance. 2024 WL 4678037. On March 4, 2025, the Ohio Supreme Court agreed to review the case. **The case is pending.**

OKLAHOMA

***Reece v. AES Corporation*, No. 11-CJ-256 (District Ct., LeFlore Cty., Okla., Oct. 6, 2011), removed, No. 6:12-cv-00457-JH (E.D. Okla., Nov. 5, 2012). See 2013 WL 11104374 (first amended complaint, dated Aug. 19, 2013); and 2014 WL 61242 (order, dated Jan. 8, 2014), affirmed on appeal, No. 14-7010 (10th Cir. Feb. 9, 2016) (638 Fed.Appx. 755; 2016 WL 521247).**

This case concerns alleged contamination caused by disposal of drilling fluids, as opposed to contamination caused by the hydraulic fracturing process. Defendants removed the case to federal court under the Class Action Fairness Act (CAFA). Plaintiffs contend companies involved in generation, transportation and disposal of coal combustion waste and oil and gas drilling waste fluids polluted the environment in LeFlore County, Oklahoma. Defendants include oil and gas companies that generated fluid wastes, and companies that transported fluid wastes to a commercial disposal pit. Plaintiffs claim the fluids contaminated the air, land, surface waters and groundwater at the disposal pit and adjacent area. Plaintiffs raise several claims, including strict liability, medical monitoring, nuisance, trespass, negligence, negligence per se and unjust enrichment. On January 8, 2014, the district court dismissed some of the claims. The district court dismissed the negligence-per se claims with prejudice because the plaintiffs failed to address defendants' argument that the environmental statutes and regulations relied upon were intended to protect the public welfare, not support private actions. With regard to strict liability, the claims against the "oil producers" and "fluid waste" transporters were dismissed because such liability may not be imposed on parties that generate or transport materials to a disposal site from which the materials then escaped. [Oklahoma law does not "impose strict liability on any party that generated or transported materials to a disposal site from which the materials then escaped".] With respect to other claims against the "fluid waste truckers," the court held that there are no facts pleaded which they could be held liable for any other claim. As for the medical monitoring claim, the court noted there are no allegations of physical injury stemming from the oil and gas drilling fluids, and held that – if physical injuries are established – plaintiffs will be allowed to seek necessary future medical expenses, which may include monitoring on an individual basis.. With respect to the "oil producers," the plaintiffs alleged no facts showing what harms they suffered" or how the alleged contamination affected specific properties. Plaintiffs did not plead facts showing any plaintiff has come into contact with any contaminated fluids that has caused specific injury, and plaintiffs did not allege any loss in property values or other property damage resulting from the fluid waste. Plaintiffs were granted leave to amend their complaint to sufficiently plead that they personally sustained injuries as the result of the oil producers' alleged conduct. The trespass and nuisance claims were not dismissed; however, on January 28, 2014, all

remaining claims were dismissed without prejudice. On February 26, 2014, a notice of appeal was filed (10th Cir. 14-7010).

On February 9, 2016, the court of appeals affirmed. It held that the case was properly removed to federal court under the Class Action Fairness Act. Under CAFA, a federal district court has subject matter jurisdiction over class actions involving at least 100 members and over \$5 million in controversy when minimal diversity is met. However, the “local-controversy exception” requires remand if greater than two-thirds of the members of all proposed plaintiff classes in the aggregate are citizens of the State in which the action was originally filed. Plaintiffs did not introduce sufficient evidence to establish the exception. Regarding the adequacy of Plaintiffs’ amended complaint, the court held that a plaintiff in a toxic tort case must prove that he or she was exposed to and injured by a harmful substance, and then held that the plaintiffs’ complaint “fails to state a plausible claim for strict liability, negligence, and negligence per se because it does not contain adequate factual allegations that Plaintiffs have been injured by Defendants’ alleged wrongdoing.” 638 Fed.Appx. 755; 2016 WL 521247 at *17. The allegations of reasonable concern about an injury occurring in the future were not sufficient to allege an actual injury in fact. Under Oklahoma law, a cause of action does not accrue until an injury in fact occurs. The allegations of present physical harm did not satisfy the *Twombly/Iqbal* plausibility standard. Plaintiffs did not identify anyone who sustained personal injuries or property damage as a result of the allegedly contaminated water” and did not point to any specific patient whose symptoms might plausibly be linked to the actions of Defendants. **Dismissal affirmed.**

***Ladra v. New Dominion LLC*, No. CJ-2014-00115 (District Ct., Lincoln Cty., Okla., Aug. 4, 2014), remanded, 2015 OK 53 (Oklahoma Sup. Ct., Jun. 30, 2015)**

Sandra J. Ladra of Prague County was injured in November of 2011 during an earthquake when the walls of her house shook and her chimney toppled, sending bricks down on her legs. She claims the earthquake was caused by the injection of oil and gas wastewater, and is suing more than 25 energy companies, including New Dominion and Spess Oil Company. See http://www.eenews.net/assets/2014/08/06/document_ew_01.pdf (complaint); and Maria Gallucci, *Oklahoma Earthquake Tied To Fracking Wastewater Draws First Lawsuit*, International Business Times (Aug. 8, 2011), <http://www.ibtimes.com/oklahoma-earthquake-tied-fracking-wastewater-draws-first-lawsuit-joins-growing-legal-1653508>. On October 16, 2014, the court held that the case should be heard by the Oklahoma Corporation Commission. Oklahoma Judge Throws Out Lawsuit over Earthquake, Disposal Wells, at <http://www.insurancejournal.com/news/southcentral/2014/10/29/345299.htm>. On November 17, 2014, the dismissal was appealed. On June 30, 2015, the Oklahoma Supreme Court reversed and remanded, holding that “[w]hether Appellees are negligent or absolutely liable is a matter to be determined by a district court.” See <http://law.justia.com/cases/oklahoma/supreme-court/2015/113396.html>. See also *id.* (“Appellees confuse the statutory grant of exclusive jurisdiction to the OCC to regulate oil and gas exploration and production activities in Oklahoma, with the jurisdiction to afford a remedy to those whose common law rights have been infringed by either the violation of these regulations or otherwise.”). On December 18, 2015, the district court denied the defendants’ motion to dismiss, which was based on the fact that the case was filed on August 4, 2014, more than two years after the earthquake on November 5, 2011. Judge Cynthia Ferrell Ashwood, however, held that (1) the

discovery rule allows limitations in tort cases to be tolled until the injured party knows of or, in the exercise of reasonable diligence, should have known, of the injury or its cause; and (2) whether the discovery rule tolled the statute of limitations in this case is a question of fact. On August 17, 2016, the defendants moved to dismiss for failure to join Mr. Ladra as an indispensable or necessary party. However, on November 7, 2016, New Dominion withdrew its motion to dismiss. On November 14, 2016, the plaintiffs filed a first amended petition. On November 23 and 29, 2016, Spess Oil Company and New Dominion LLC filed answers and counterclaims. On January 24, 2017, the parties agreed to protocols for inspections of the plaintiff's properties. On January 30, 2017, the court filed a protective order. According to news sources, on August 15, 2017, it was determined that, pending approval by his current federal employer, former State Seismologist Austin Holland, can be deposed by plaintiffs. In addition, New Dominion must turn over communications with government officials and agencies that discuss waste water disposal and earthquakes.

On September 20, 2017, an order of dismissal was prejudice was filed after the case was settled. See <http://kfor.com/2017/10/20/settlement-reached-between-two-oklahoma-oil-and-gas-companies-and-prague-resident-injured-in-2011-earthquake/>. The case is closed.

Jennifer Lin Cooper v. New Dominion LLC, No. CJ-2015-0024 (District Ct., Lincoln Cty., Okla., Feb. 10, 2015)

Jennifer Cooper of Prague County alleges New Dominion and Spess Oil Company are responsible for property damage from earthquakes in November of 2011. Cooper is seeking class-action status for people in Lincoln County and eight surrounding counties whose homes were damaged by earthquakes that have been blamed on water disposal wells. According to Cooper's attorney, she has suffered property damage and property stigma that has lowered the market value of her home. See <http://bakken.com/news/id/232502/oklahoman-sues-energy-companies-earthquake-damage/>. On November 24, 2015, defendant Spess Oil Company filed an amended answer and counterclaim. 2015 WL 9687755. Spess admits that Oklahoma has naturally occurring seismicity, but denies that its operations are causing earthquakes. It raises several affirmative defenses, including (1) that the claims are barred by the applicable statutes of limitations; (2) that Spess was permitted by the applicable authorities to operate its wells; (3) that the alleged injuries were not a foreseeable result of its actions, and its actions were not the proximate cause of Plaintiff's alleged injuries; and (4) the Prague earthquakes were not a foreseeable result of Spess' actions and its actions were not the proximate cause of the Prague earthquakes. In its counterclaim, Spess seeks a declaration that its operation of injection wells is not an ultrahazardous activity. On January 24, 2017, the parties agreed to protocols for inspections of the plaintiff's properties. On January 30, 2017, the court filed a protective order. Former state seismologist Dr. Austin Holland was deposed in October 2017 in the class action case filed in Lincoln County that involves the large earthquakes near Prague in November 2011. See <https://www.poynterlawgroup.com/single-post/2017/10/19/Former-States-Seismologist-Deposed-in-Oklahoma-Earthquake-Case>.

On October 11, 2017, former Oklahoma seismologist Austin Holland stated in a deposition that he was pressured by officials to suppress findings that link earthquakes with fracking wastewater disposal. See

http://www.normantranscript.com/news/former-state-seismologist-testifies-officials-coerced-him-to-alter-research/article_d8383864-cb20-11e7-8206-2bc32ae1169a.html.

On May 22, 2018, the court granted the plaintiffs' motion for class certification. On August 2, 2018, the court entered an order granting a stay of proceedings pending appeal. A certificate of appeal was filed on August 15, 2018. On September 4, 2018, the court granted a stay pending appeal to the Oklahoma Supreme Court. On November 19, 2018 the court granted an unopposed motion to approve a settlement with Spess, Equal Energy, and Fairfield. The companies did not admit to any liability but agreed to put \$925,000 into a settlement fund. See <https://www.insurancejournal.com/news/southcentral/2018/12/04/510892.htm>.

On January 18, 2019, final approval of the \$925,000 settlement was reached in a class action lawsuit about whether Spess Oil Company, Equal Energy US, Inc., and Fairfield Oil & Gas Corp. operated wastewater disposal wells that allegedly contributed to causing the earthquakes near Prague, Oklahoma. On the same day, an order of dismissal with prejudice was filed. According to a website set up for landowners to submit claims, the settlement "resolves any and all claims alleged to arise against the Settling Defendants, from earthquakes up to the Effective Date with epicenters within a 15-mile radius of Prague, Oklahoma, including, but not limited to the earthquakes occurring between November 5th and 8th, of 2011. The Settling Defendants dispute and deny all of the allegations made by the Plaintiffs." See <http://www.oklahomaequakes.com/>. The settlement covers property owners in Lincoln, Payne, Logan, Oklahoma, Cleveland, Pottawatomie, Seminole, Okfuskee, and Creek counties who suffered earthquake damages from earthquakes up to November 16, 2018 with epicenters within a 15 mile radius of Prague, Oklahoma, including but not limited to those occurring between November 5th and 8th, of 2011. Settlement claims must be submitted by April 29, 2019.

Another defendant, New Dominion LLC, is not included in the agreement. See Associated Press, 3 oil companies agree to settle in Oklahoma earthquake suit (Dec. 2, 2018), at <https://kfor.com/2018/12/02/3-oil-companies-agree-to-settle-in-oklahoma-earthquake-suit/>.

On November 15, 2019, the Oklahoma Court of Civil Appeals affirmed the district court's decision to adopt the plaintiffs' case management plan to certify eight common issues "for issue class trial" and to reserve other issues for subsequent individual non-class trials. The district court found that the predominant issue is whether Defendant's disposal well operation caused the earthquakes in question. *Cooper v. New Dominion, LLC*, No. 117,281 (Okla. Ct. of Civ. App., Nov. 15, 2019), available at <file:///C:/Users/bwatson1/Downloads/1044682340-20200110-104624-.pdf>. The court of appeals found that plaintiff Cooper met her burden of establishing the prerequisites for a class action under 12 O.S. § 2023.

New Dominion on January 9, 2020, filed a petition for a writ of certiorari to review the opinion of the Court of Civil Appeals. *Cooper v. New Dominion, LLC*, No. IN-117281 (Okla. Sup. Ct., Jan. 9, 2020) (interlocutory). New Dominion challenges an interpretation of state law regarding class certification defined in terms of actual injury ("which suffered earthquake damages"). New Dominion argues that issues such as whether its operations constituted an ultra-hazardous activity, a private nuisance, or a trespass are not appropriate for "issue class" certification under Oklahoma law. On May 18, 2020, the

petition for a writ of certiorari was denied by the Oklahoma Supreme Court. On July 5, 2023, the court issued an order granting preliminary approval of a proposed class action settlement with New Dominion.

Lawsuit settlement of \$5.9 million reached in Prague's 2011 earthquake (August 16, 2023),
at <https://www.okenergytoday.com/2023/08/lawsuit-settlement-of-5-9-million-reached-in-pragues-2011-earthquake/>

Almost 12 years after a swarm of earthquakes near Prague, including a 5.7 magnitude quake, sparked a class action lawsuit blaming some energy companies, a \$5.9 million settlement has been reached with another of the firms. New Dominion LLC agreed to the settlement which was approved in Lincoln County District court. The Tulsa oil and gas exploration company was one of several firms named in the original lawsuit filed in 2011 following the swarm of earthquakes on November 5, 6 and 8 of that year. The suit was originally filed by Jennifer Lin Cooper whose home was badly damaged in the large earthquake. In 2018, Spess Oil Company, Equal Energy US, Inc. and Fairfield Oil and Gas Corp. agreed to put \$925,000 in a settlement fund but New Dominion was not part of the settlement.

While New Dominion disputed the allegations that its operations caused the swarm of damaging earthquakes, it reached the settlement which was approved in July 2023 by a District Judge.

An advertisement in The Oklahoman newspaper by attorney Scott Poynter, the lawyer who handled the case for the plaintiffs stated, "The settlement resolved claims that New Dominion's nearby oil and gas wastewater disposal well operations caused these earthquakes" and damaged properties in Lincoln, Payne, Logan, Oklahoma, Cleveland, Pottawatomie, Seminole, Okfuskee and Creek Counties.

The settlement came after an independent mediator was used in November 2022 to mediate the claims. Filings by those whose homes and businesses were damaged in the quakes contended they had developed scientific proof through geophysicists that the seismicity around Prague in November of 2022 "was not an act of God, but instead was inducted by wastewater disposal operations by New Dominion."

The settlement was reached as the attorneys for those who sued New Dominion indicated in court filings, "While Plaintiffs are resolute in their belief that their claims have substantial merit, they also understand that litigation is risky and uncertain."

Who's to blame? While the U.S. Geological Survey did not identify specific firms or persons involved, its 2014 study of the Prague earthquakes determined they were "human-induced." "This research suggests that the M5.7 quake was the largest human-caused earthquake associated with wastewater injection," stated the USGS. The agency determined that a "human-induced earthquake can trigger a cascade of earthquakes, including a larger one."

The USGS pointed to 2011 when there were several earthquakes in Colorado, Texas, Oklahoma, Ohio and Arkansas.

" Many of these earthquakes occurred near waste-water injection wells, and some have been shown to be caused by human activities," stated the USGS.

The agency declared that the 5.7 magnitude quake that left heavy damage in Prague "occurred near active waste-water disposal wells and was linked in a previously published study to fluid injection in those wells. The earthquakes have not been directly linked to hydrofracturing."

Now the law firm of Poynter Law group, based in Little Rock, Arkansas, is attempting to notify those who might be eligible to receive part of the \$5.9 million settlement. A final approval hearing will be held September 25 at 4 p.m. in Norman before Cleveland County Judge Jeff Virgin.

Case is dismissed.

Felts v. Devon Energy Production Company LP, No. CJ-2016-137 (District Ct., Oklahoma Cty., Okla., Jan. 11, 2016)

Terry and Deborah Felts and twelve other residents of Oklahoma County, Oklahoma, filed a lawsuit on January 11, 2016, against Devon Energy Production Company and eleven other energy companies. The complaint alleges that the defendants injected large volumes of drilling waste in disposal wells located near the cities of Edmond and Oklahoma City under conditions that the defendants knew, or should have known, would result in the increased likelihood that earthquakes would occur. On December 29, 2015, and on January 1, 2016, earthquakes of 4.3 and 4.2 magnitude occurred and allegedly caused damage to the plaintiffs. Plaintiffs' first claim asserts that, as a result of defendants' negligent disposal of drilling waste, plaintiffs suffered damage to their property. In their second claim, plaintiffs contend that the defendants' actions in disposing of drilling waste into disposal wells is abnormally dangerous and an ultra-hazardous activity, and therefore the defendants are liable for damages they caused regardless of the amount of care exercised. The plaintiffs also seek punitive damages and injunctive relief.

In March of 2016, several defendants filed motions to dismiss. Plaintiffs filed a response on March 30, 2016. On May 19, 2016, the court granted in part, and denied in part, Devon's motion to dismiss. On June 8, 2016, New Dominion filed its answer and counterclaims. On December 9, 2016, the plaintiffs dismissed, without prejudice to refiling, their causes of action against Special Energy Corporation and Devon Energy Production Company, L.P. In February and March of 2017, the defendants filed answers to the first amended petition. On August 31, 2017, the following defendants were dismissed without prejudice: Marjo Operating Mid-Continent LLC; New Dominion LLC; Pedestal Oil Company Inc.; R.C. Taylor Operating Company; Rainbo Service Co.; Sundance Energy Oklahoma LLC; TNT Operating Company; and White Operating Company. On the same day, the court entered an order on agreed protocols for inspection of the plaintiffs' property. On April 23, 2018, defendant Meadowbrook Oil Corporation moved for summary judgment. Additional summary judgment motions were filed on August 13, 2018. On November 13, 2018, claims against Sundance Energy Oklahoma LLC, Marjo Operating Mid-Continent LLC, White Operating

Company, and TNT Operating Company were dismissed with prejudice. On February 4, 2019, claims against R.C. Taylor Operating Co., LLC, and Rainbo Service Company were dismissed with prejudice. On December 3, 2019, claims against Federal Oil Company were dismissed with prejudice. New Dominion LLC and Callie Oil Company LLC remain as defendants. A pre-trial conference is scheduled for October 19, 2022.

The case was settled in March 2023. On July 11, 2023, the court issued a notice to show cause why the matter should not be dismissed. On January 4, 2024, plaintiffs dismissed all claims against New Dominion. **The case is pending.**

RELATED LAWSUIT: *State National Insurance Company v. Rainbo Service Company*, No. CV-16-481-W (W.D. Okla.). In light of the above lawsuit, State National Insurance Company and National Specialty Insurance Company brought an action seeking a declaration that their policies provide no coverage for the claims asserted against Rainbo in the state court action. On June 8, 2018, the district court granted summary judgment for the insurers. 2018 WL 8332538. The court held that Rainbo's allegedly careless and reckless action in locating and operating its disposal wells at or near geological faults was an arguably unexpected, unforeseen, and therefore, accidental, event. However, the court held that the state claims fell within the policies' Pollution Exclusions because the state lawsuit contends that the "bodily injury" or "property damage" sustained was caused by earthquakes that arose out of the actual discharge, dispersal or release of pollutants and would not have occurred but for the actual, alleged or threatened discharge, dispersal or release of pollutants.

See also <http://www.stopthequakes.com/lawsuit-information>.

RELATED LAWSUIT: *New Dominion, LLC v. H&P Investments, LLC*, No. 20-CV-0592-CVE-CDL, Case No. 21-CV-0504-CVE-CDL (N.D. Okla., Oct. 21, 2020)

New Dominion, LLC seeks a declaration that H&P Investments, LLC is contractually obligated to pay legal expense arising out of NDL's defense and prosecution of third-party earthquake and insurance litigation. On December 19, 2023, the district court disagreed and held that H&P is under no obligation to pay legal expense arising out of the earthquake and insurance litigation. The Court found that the contractual term "operations under the Operating Agreement" refers "only to oil and gas well operations, not to saltwater disposal well operations," and also found that "charging H&P for the litigation arising out of NDL's saltwater injection was not 'necessary to protect or recover the Joint Property' of the parties." 2023 WL 8788951. On March 4, 2024, the Court granted partial summary judgment to H&P, holding that NDL had been improperly charging fees under the Oklahoma Production Revenue Standards Act (PRSA). **Case is pending.**

***Griggs v. Chesapeake Operating LLC*, No. CJ-2016-6 (District Ct., Logan Cty., Okla., Jan. 12, 2016); removed, No. 5:16-cv-138-D (W.D. Okla., Feb. 16, 2016).**

Lisa Griggs of Logan County, Oklahoma, and April Marler of Oklahoma County, Oklahoma, filed suit against Chesapeake Operating, LLC, New Dominion, LLC, Devon Energy Production Co., LP and Sandridge Exploration and Production, LLC., seeking to assert a class action on behalf of landowners who have suffered damages from earthquakes caused by the operation of wastewater disposal wells. The complaint alleges that “the causation link is inescapable” between injection and seismic activity in the state. Griggs asserts that the area around her Guthrie, Oklahoma, home has suffered over 100 earthquakes of greater than 3.0 magnitude in the past two years. Her foundation has been damaged, the chimney has separated from the home, and numerous other cracks have developed. In the same fashion, Marler states that similar seismic activity has damaged her home in Choctaw, Oklahoma. The complaint asserts claims of private nuisance; strict liability due to ultra-hazardous activities; negligence; and trespass. Punitive damages are requested. Injunctive relief is not specifically requested, although the plaintiffs ask for “all other relief to which Plaintiffs and the Class are entitled or that the Court deems just and proper.”

On February 16, 2016, Devon Energy filed a notice of removal pursuant to the Class Action Fairness Act and other federal statutes. Shortly thereafter, defendants filed motions to dismiss. On April 8, 2016, the plaintiffs moved to remand the lawsuit back to state court. On May 20, 2016, the action against Sandridge was stayed in light of its petition for bankruptcy. On June 30, 2016, the court denied the motion to remand.

On July 21, 2016, the plaintiffs voluntarily dismissed all of their claims without prejudice to refile. The case is **closed**. However, the plaintiffs apparently intend to re-file their case in state court after waiting a year. See *Lawyers Blaming Earthquakes on Fracking Drop Case Rather Than Continue In Fed Court*, <http://www.forbes.com/sites/legalnewsline/2016/10/18/lawyers-blaming-earthquakes-on-fracking-drop-case-rather-than-continue-in-fed-court/#4e475162159d> (Oct. 18, 2016) (suggesting that the plaintiffs prefer state court due to less rigorous standards for pleading and expert witnesses). See also <http://www.stopthequakes.com/lawsuit-information>.

SECOND LAWSUIT: On July 21, 2017, Lisa Griggs and April Marler filed a class action lawsuit in state court against New Dominion LLC and two dozen other energy companies. On September 1, 2017, the defendants removed the case to federal district court. On September 7, 2017, the plaintiffs moved to remand the case to state court. *Griggs v. New Dominion LLC*, No. CJ-2017-174 (District Ct., Logan County, Okla., Jul. 21, 2017), removed, No. 5:17-cv-00942 (W.D. Okla, Sep. 1, 2017), remanded (Dec. 28, 2017). This case is discussed elsewhere in this document.

***Lene v. Chesapeake Operating, LLC*, No. CJ-2016-27 (District Ct., Logan County, Okla., Feb. 12, 2016)**

Brenda and Jon Darryn Lene filed suit against Chesapeake Operating, LLC; ; New Dominion, LLC; Devon Energy Production Co., LP; and Sandridge Exploration and Production, LLC; and John Does 1-100, seeking compensation for damages “due to earthquakes caused by Defendants' wastewater disposal operations.” The “John Does” are other Oklahoma entities that have engaged in injection well operations in the vicinity around Plaintiffs' home, and which have also contributed to the earthquakes and resulting damages to Plaintiffs. Plaintiffs assert claims of private nuisance, ultra-hazardous activities, negligence, and trespass.

Defendants' actions and operations as alleged to constitute a nuisance because they have "unlawfully and unreasonably interfered" with the plaintiffs' property rights. With respect to the claim based on ultra-hazardous activities, plaintiffs assert that the defendants engage in activities "that involve a high degree of some risk of serious harm to a person or the chattels of others," and that "the risk cannot be eliminated by exercising the utmost care, and is not a matter of common usage." Plaintiffs claim they "have sustained damages, which are the direct and proximate result of Defendants' ultra-hazardous or abnormally dangerous activities, to which Defendants are strictly liable." With regard to the negligence claim, plaintiffs state that "Defendants owed a duty to Plaintiffs to use ordinary care and not to operate or maintain their injection wells in such a way to cause or contribute to seismic activity. Defendants, experienced in these operations, knew or should have known of the connection between injection wells and seismic activity, and acted in disregard of these facts." As for trespass, plaintiffs allege that "Defendants, without the permission or consent of Plaintiffs and without legal right, intentionally engaged in activities that resulted in concussions or vibrations entering Plaintiffs' property." Such unauthorized invasion of Plaintiffs' property interests constitutes a trespass. On May 20, 2016, Sandridge and Devon Energy filed motions to dismiss. Sandridge also filed for bankruptcy on May 20, 2016. On July 20, 2016, the plaintiffs moved to voluntarily dismiss all of their claims without prejudice to refiling. **The case is closed.**

***Sierra Club. v. Chesapeake Operating LLC*, 5:16-cv-00134 (W.D. Okla., Feb. 16, 2016). Motions to dismiss granted, 2017 WL 1287546 (April 4, 2017)**

This is a civil action for declaratory and injunctive relief, and costs and fees, under the citizen suit provision of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, 42 U.S.C. § 6972(a)(1)(B). The Sierra Club alleges that the defendants, Chesapeake Operating LLC, Devon Production Co., and New Dominion, LLC, "are placing people and the environment in Oklahoma and Kansas at significant and immediate risk from major man-made earthquakes induced by Defendants' waste disposal practices." The defendants, by their disposal activities at the injection wells throughout Oklahoma and southern Kansas, are alleged to have contributed to the increased seismicity in the area. The induced earthquakes allegedly present an imminent and substantial endangerment to health and the environment in violation of RCRA. Plaintiff request that the Defendants "reduce immediately and substantially the amounts of Production Wastes they are injecting into the ground to levels that seismologists believe will not cause or contribute to increased earthquake frequency and severity." Plaintiff also seeks an order "requiring Defendants to reinforce vulnerable structures that current forecasts indicate could be impacted by large magnitude earthquakes during the interim period." Plaintiff further seeks an order "requiring the establishment of an independent earthquake monitoring and prediction center to determine the amount of Production Wastes which may be injected into a specific well or formation before induced seismicity occurs."

The Sierra Club filed an amended complaint on April 11, 2016. Sandridge Exploration and Production, LLC, was added as a defendant. On April 25, 2016, the defendants moved to dismiss. They argue, among other things, that (1) RCRA only covers hazardous contamination; and (2) the Oklahoma Corporation Commission (OCC) has sole authority to address the issue of increased seismic activity and oil and gas operations. The response of the Sierra Club was filed on May 25, 2016. On May 20, 2016, the action against Sandridge was stayed in light of its petition for bankruptcy.

On April 4, 2017, the district court granted the defendants' motions to dismiss. The court first concluded that, pursuant to the abstention doctrine set forth in *Burford v. Sun Oil Co.*, 319 U.S. 315 (1943), it should refrain from exercising federal jurisdiction. The court concluded that *Burford* abstention was appropriate because (1) the suit only requests declaratory and injunctive relief; (2) federal review would disrupt state efforts to establish a coherent policy with respect to a matter of substantial public concern; and (3) the primary relief that the Sierra Club seeks is available from the OCC. Alternatively, the court held that the action should be dismissed because primary jurisdiction to redress the harm alleged rests with the OCC. According to the court, the OCC "is better equipped than the court to resolve the seismicity issues relating to disposal well activities. In light of its ruling, the court did not address whether the Sierra Club's claims fall outside RCRA's zone of interests and/or are barred by RCRA's anti-duplication provision. 2017 WL 1287546. On April 18, 2017, the court dismissed without prejudice plaintiff's First Amended Complaint against defendant, SandRidge E&P, for the same reasons (*Burford* abstention and primary jurisdiction doctrines) stated in the April 4, 2017 order granting the motions to dismiss of defendants, Devon Energy Production Company, L.P., New Dominion, LLC, and Chesapeake Operating LLC. **The case is closed.**

***West v. ABC Oil Company, Inc.*, No. CJ-2016-00049 (District Ct., Pottawatomie County, Okla., Feb. 18, 2016), removed, No. 5:16-cv-00264-F (W.D. Okla., Mar. 18, 2016), appeal pending, No. 18-600 (10th Cir.)**

Lisa West and Stormy Hopson, individually and as class representatives, have sued 15 named defendants, "and a proposed defendant class of other companies operating in injection wells." Plaintiffs ask the Court "to order Defendants to pay earthquake premiums as they are incurred in the future" and also "to award back insurance premiums." They state that "relief regarding purchase of insurance policies needed because of Defendants' injection of wastewater into the Arbuckle formation has induced or triggered earthquakes and will continue to do so for some time even if injection wells were immediately stopped." The proposed class action is on behalf of "Oklahoma residents who own real property in Oklahoma for which they have either purchased earthquake insurance or for which they desire to purchase such insurance, but have been unable to afford to do so." Lisa West asserts that, while her insurance claim for earthquake damage was paid, no one has reimbursed her "for the premiums she incurred and which she will continue to incur as a result of earthquakes induced by Defendants' activities." Stormy Hopson, who resides in Pottawatomie County, "would like to purchase earthquake insurance, and she believes that it is needed based on the increased rate of earthquakes in her area. However, due to her other financial commitments, purchase of earthquake insurance has not been practical." Plaintiffs assert claims of private nuisance, ultrahazardous activity, negligence, and trespass. Plaintiffs seek the entry of a permanent injunction directing Defendants to reimburse Plaintiffs for earthquake insurance premiums incurred a directing Defendants "to reimburse Class Members for earthquake insurance premiums as they are incurred until such time as Defendant Class shows the Court by satisfactory evidence that their activities no longer present a reasonable risk of creating earthquakes or as otherwise directed by the Court." On September 19, 2016, the court noted that the plaintiffs' had withdrawn their motion to remand to state court. On October 14, 2016, the plaintiffs filed an amended complaint.

On November 18, 2016, Eastok Pipeline filed a to dismiss and presented six arguments for dismissal: (1) the claims occurred in November 2011 and are barred by a two-year statute of limitations; (2) plaintiffs

have failed to allege that actions attributable to EastOK caused them injury; (3) EastOK's disposal operations do not constitute an ultrahazardous activity as a matter of law; (4) plaintiffs failed to allege facts demonstrating any duty or breach of duty by EastOK; (5) plaintiffs failed to allege facts showing that the alleged disposal operations were unlawful; and (6) plaintiffs failed to allege any physical invasion of their property by EastOK.

On December 2, 2016, Leasehold Management Corp. filed a motion to dismiss for lack of jurisdiction. Leasehold argues that the lawsuit is an improper collateral attack on a final order of the Oklahoma Corporation Commission (OCC) authorizing operation of disposal wells. Leasehold also argues that, given "the economic importance of Oklahoma's oil and gas industry in the United States" and "the enormity of the the putative class of plaintiffs," the litigation is "a matter of public interest" and is "no longer a private cause of action." According to Leasehold, "[a]lthough this litigation may appear to be a matter of private rights, the issue is so tightly intertwined with production of oil and gas in this state that it must be considered a public right and all legal matters regarding such rightfully rest in the purview of the OCC."

On December 19, 2016, several other defendants filed motions to dismiss. The defendants argue that the plaintiffs have failed to plead facts supporting the elements of their claims for private nuisance, strict liability, negligence, or trespass. In particular, the defendants contend that the amended complaint fails to allege any injuries caused by the defendants; and also argue that the underground injection of fluids in connection with oil and gas production is not an abnormally dangerous or ultrahazardous activity. The defendants further assert that the lawsuit is barred by the applicable statute of limitations; that the request for past and future earthquake insurance premiums is not an available remedy under Oklahoma law; and that the request for an injunction is improper because it would interfere with the exclusive jurisdiction of the Oklahoma Corporation Commission to regulate the operation of disposal wells.

On January 19, 2017, the plaintiffs replied to the motions to dismiss. They argue in part that (1) their complaint plausibly alleges individual harm caused by each of the defendants' contributions to earthquakes; (2) Oklahoma law allows recovery for trespass when vibrations cause property damage; (3) strict liability should be applied because defendants' injection of wastewater is an abnormally dangerous (ultrahazardous) activity; (4) defendants have a duty to conduct their operations so they do not damage the property of others or interfere with their use and enjoyment of same, and defendants breached this duty by causing earthquakes; (5) injunctive relief is appropriate; and (6) the plaintiffs' claims are not controlled, or defined, by the Oklahoma Corporation Commission (OCC). On May 12, 2017, by minute order, the court granted the defendants' motions to dismiss "based upon lack of sufficient allegations of causation." The court granted the plaintiffs leave to amend their complaint, within 30 days, to set forth causation allegations. A second amended complaint was filed on July 18, 2017. See 2017 WL 10940278.

On August 13, 2018, the court ruled on several motions to dismiss. The court agreed with defendants that insurance premiums are not recoverable as damages as a matter of law. After noting that the issue has not been addressed by Oklahoma courts, the federal court found that "the Oklahoma Supreme Court, if confronted with the issue, would find the money damages sought by plaintiffs are not legally cognizable." It further held that the Oklahoma Supreme Court would not recognize the payment of insurance premiums as falling within the scope of the relief available on account of annoyance, discomfort and inconvenience. With respect to causation, the court held in several instances that the second amended

complaint “fails to connect any alleged act or omission of the defendants with damage to a named plaintiff.” The plaintiffs failed to state a plausible claim against Devon, Oklahoma Oil and Gas Management, and New Dominion with respect to the Edmond earthquake swarm, and against White Star Petroleum with respect to the Crescent earthquake swarm. The court also dismissed claims against Chaparral, Sandridge, and Range. The court further held that the plaintiffs failed to allege facts sufficient to show that any named plaintiff was damaged because of any wastewater injection activities allegedly causing the Edmond and Crescent earthquake swarms. However, with regard to the remaining earthquake swarms – Prague, Fairview/Cherokee, Pawnee and Cushing – the court concluded “that the second amended complaint sufficiently alleges facts to establish a reasonable connection between the injection well activities of defendants in question and damage to named plaintiffs.” The court also concluded that plaintiffs satisfied their burden of plausibly alleging causation with respect to the Prague, Pawnee, Fairview/Cherokee, Cushing, and Prague earthquakes.

On August 16, 2018, the court granted the motions of defendants, Equal Energy U.S. Inc., Fairfield Oil & Gas Corp., and Chesapeake Operating, LLC, to strike the class allegations contained in plaintiffs’ second amended complaint. The court held that a class action cannot be maintained. The court stated that the earthquake problem “unquestionably exists in several regions of the State of Oklahoma,” but held that plaintiffs did not meet the requirement, for a class action, of demonstrating “a common – and predominant – issue, the adjudication of which will determine the rights of the plaintiffs and their proposed class members ‘in one stroke.’”

On August 30, 2018, the plaintiffs filed a notice for permission to appeal to the 10th Circuit. No. 18-600. However, on September 24, 2018, the Tenth Circuit denied the Plaintiffs’ request to appeal the district court’s order granting defendants’ motion to strike the class allegations contained in plaintiffs’ Second Amended Complaint. The court of appeals denied interlocutory review because “this matter is not appropriate for immediate review.”

On June 19, 2020, an “administrative closing” order terminated the action “without prejudice to the rights of the parties to file any stipulation or dismissal, or to seek any order required to obtain a final determination of these proceedings based on the settlement. If parties have not filed any such document within 45 days for the purpose of dismissal pursuant to the settlement and compromise, this action shall be deemed dismissed with prejudice.” **The case has been settled.**

Almont Energy LLC v. Newfield Exploration Mid-Continent Inc., No. CJ-16-00028 (District Ct., Oklahoma Cty., Okla., Apr. 22, 2016), removed, No. 5:16-cv-00640-M (W.D. Okla., Jun. 13, 2016)

Almont Energy and TLS Oil and Gas sued Newfield Exploration Mid-Continent on April 22, 2016, in Kingfisher County, Oklahoma (north and west of Oklahoma City). Plaintiffs alleged that the defendant’s hydraulic fracturing activities have caused contamination and have devalued the plaintiffs’ oil and gas well by allowing water, frack fluids, and other substances to invade plaintiff’s producing formations. Plaintiffs asserted claims of nuisance, trespass, negligent injury to real property, unjust enrichment, punitive damages, and attorney fees. However, on June 19, 2017, the plaintiffs filed a Stipulation of Dismissal With Prejudice. The case is closed.

National American Insurance Co. v. New Dominion LLC, CV-2016-00079 (Lincoln Cty., Okla, Sep. 16, 2016), on appeal, No. 118,490, 2021 OK 62 (Okla. Sup. Ct., Nov. 23, 2021)

On September 16, 2016, National American Insurance Company (NAICO) sued New Dominion, LLC, seeks declaratory judgment that its insurance policies did not provide coverage for bodily injury and property damage claims asserted against New Dominion in several “earthquake” lawsuit. New Dominion counterclaimed for breach of contract, indemnity, estoppel, and reformation. The trial court in January 2019 held (1) the Total Pollution Exclusions and the Subsidence and Earth Movement Exclusions precluded coverage for the claims asserted in the earthquake lawsuits; but NAICO was estopped from denying claims for bodily injury during one of the four policy periods. The court denied all other equitable claims by New Dominion. On November 23, 2021, the Oklahoma Supreme Court held that the Total Pollution Exclusions do not clearly and unambiguously preclude coverage but agreed with the trial court that the Subsidence and Earth Movement Exclusions do preclude coverage for the claims asserted in the earthquake lawsuits. The Court found that there is no basis for New Dominion’s estoppel or reformation claims.

With regard to the Total Pollution Exclusion, the Court agreed with New Dominion that the trial court erred in holding that the exclusion clearly precluded coverage. The exclusion excludes coverage for injury and property damage due to ‘pollutants’ – defined as an “irritant or contaminant.” The Court held that “irritant or contaminant” does not clearly encompass the wastewater at issue. “The wastewater does not meet this definition because the harm caused was not the result of the wastewater’s irritating or contaminating nature,” Justice Rowe wrote. “Rather, the earthquakes and the harm they caused were the result of wastewater being injected back into the ground under highly pressurized conditions.” The Court held it was reasonable for New Dominion “to have understood the Total Pollution Exclusion as applicable only in instances where bodily injury or property damage resulted from the irritating or contamination nature of a pollutant” (as opposed to its “pressurizing” contribution to earthquakes). Consequently, the Court found that “the Total Pollution Exclusions were never meant to apply to earthquake-related incidents.”

In contrast, although the subsidence and earth-movement exclusion in policies from 2012 to 2016 was modified over time to more explicitly bar coverage for earthquakes, the Court held that even the earlier language was clear, and found that “it would be absurd to find that the subsidence exclusions do not contemplate earthquakes as well.”

New Dominion’s estoppel claim was rejected because New Dominion did not act on the alleged representations as to coverage, and the reformation claim was rejected in part due to the absence of a showing of fraud or mutual mistake.

The case was remanded and settled on August 22, 2022. **The case is closed.**

***Adams v. Eagle Road Oil, LLC*, No. CJ-2016-00078 (District Ct., Pawnee County, Okla., Nov. 17, 2016), removed, No. 4:16-cv-00757 (N.D. Okla., Dec. 21, 2016), remanded (Apr. 12, 2017), removed, No. 4:18-cv-00568 (N.D. Okla., Nov. 2, 2018), remanded (July 23, 2019)**

James Adams is the lead plaintiff in a class action seeking property damages, fair market value loss, and emotional harm for individuals affected by a 5.8 magnitude earthquake that occurred on September 3, 2016, near Pawnee, Oklahoma. The earthquake is reported to be the largest ever in the state. Defendants operate wastewater disposal wells that allegedly contributed to the earthquake and aftershocks. Plaintiffs claim that defendants' actions "are ultrahazardous activities that necessarily involve a risk of serious harm to a person that cannot be eliminated by the exercise of the utmost care and is not a matter of common usage," and further assert that the defendants are strictly liable for property damages and emotional harm suffered as a direct and proximate result of defendants' activities. Plaintiffs also assert claims for negligence, private nuisance, and trespass. They seek punitive damages and trial by jury. 2016 WL 11518981.

On December 21, 2016, defendant Cummings Oil Company removed the lawsuit to federal court. On December 27, 2016, Cummings Oil moved to dismiss the class action petition for failure to state a claim. Cummings Oil contends that the plaintiff attributes the earthquake in the Pawnee area on September 3, 2016, "to the Defendants, without alleging specific facts linking Cummings Oil or the other Defendants to such earthquake." Cummings Oil also states that joint and several liability was abrogated by the Oklahoma legislature in 2011, and further argues that the plaintiff's "collective" liability theory is not recognized by Oklahoma law. Finally, Cummings Oil argues that the complaint contains general and conclusory allegations that fall short of required pleading standards, and fails to state a claim for strict liability for ultra-hazardous activities. On April 12, 2017, the district court remanded the action to state court. The court found that the putative class action would not necessarily include individual Indian owners of trust or restricted lands, and concluded that it consequently lacked federal question jurisdiction because "federal law governing lands held by Indians in trust or restricted status will not be applicable to the claims of any potential class member and there is no substantial issue of federal law that would support removal of this case to federal court." The court observed that defendants could "seek clarification from the state court as to whether any person owning trust or restricted lands could be a member of the class, but this must be established before the case may be removable on the basis of federal question jurisdiction." A hearing on the defendants' motion to dismiss was held in the state court on July 10, 2017. On September 11, 2017, the plaintiffs filed a second amended class action petition. On September 11, 2017, the plaintiffs filed a second amended class action petition. On August 13, 2018, the court postponed a scheduled evidentiary hearing to determine if ejection disposal wells constitute an ultra-hazardous activity under the Restatement (Second) of Torts Section 520. A third amended class action petition was filed on August 27, 2018. On November 2, 2018, Trinity Operating LLC removed the case to the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Oklahoma.

On July 23, 2019, the court granted the plaintiffs' motion to remand to state court. 2019 WL 3304813. The case was removed pursuant to the Class Action Fairness Act provisions of 28 U.S.C. § 1332(d). The plaintiffs, however, contend the court should remand pursuant to § 1332(d)(4)(A), the local controversy exception to CAFA jurisdiction. The local controversy exception provides that a federal court shall decline jurisdiction where: (1) more than two-thirds of the class members are citizens of the state where the

action is filed; (2) plaintiffs seek “significant relief” from at least one local defendant who is a citizen of the state and whose alleged conduct forms a “significant basis” for the claims asserted; (3) the “principal injuries” were incurred in the state; and (4) no other class action “has been filed asserting the same or similar factual allegations against any of the defendants on behalf of the same or other persons” in the three years prior. The court held that the requirements of the local controversy exception are satisfied, and remanded the case back to state court.

A petition for leave to file an appeal was filed August 6, 2019 with the United States Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit (No. 19-604), but on September 18, 2019, the Tenth Circuit denied the petition for leave to appeal, holding that (1) the decision whether to grant leave to appeal under the Class Action Fairness Act is discretionary and (2) “Trinity Operating has not established that review is appropriate.” On January 3, 2020, Cummings Oil Company filed its answer to the Third Amended Petition. On August 24, 2020, the court said it would hear on January 25, 2021, the motion to strike class allegations. On October 27, 2020, Enervest Operating LLC moved to dismiss Count 1 (Absolute Liability). On January 25, 2021, the court heard argument on the motion to strike class allegations set forth in the Third Amended Petition, and the court reserved ruling on the motion until a hearing on class certification.

The parties have settled. On June 21, 2022, plaintiffs filed a motion for the court to provide preliminary settlement approval of a class resolution with Eagle Road LLC and the notice plan to settlement class members. On November 29, 2023, the court granted a motion to approve the settlement notice and plan of class action settlement with Petro Warrior. The case was settled and dismissed on February 21, 2024. **The case is closed.**

<https://www.poynterlawgroup.com/post/settlement-for-earthquake-damages-near-pawnee-and-cushing>

On July 25, 2022, the Pawnee County District Court preliminarily approved a class action settlement involving the earthquakes near Pawnee and Cushing, Oklahoma, which occurred in 2016. The settlement was reached with Defendant Eagle Road Oil, LLC, but the lawsuit will continue against several other oil and gas companies named as defendants and that have not settled. If you suffered damages from the 5.8m earthquake near Pawnee on September 3, 2016, the 5.0m earthquake near Cushing on November 7, 2016, or any of the related seismicity in these seismicity sequences, you may file a claim and receive a portion of your damages from the cash settlement. But you must file a claim to receive any of the \$850,000.00 cash settlement. For more information, please visit the settlement's website at: www.pawneearthquakesettlement.com

See also <http://eam.pawneearthquakesettlement.com/frequently-asked-questions.aspx>

***Reid v. White Star Petroleum, LLC*, No. CJ-2016-00543 (District Ct., Payne County, Okla., Dec. 5, 2016).**

David Reid is the lead plaintiff in a class action seeking property damages, fair market value loss, and emotional harm for individuals affected by a 5.0 magnitude earthquake that occurred on November 7,

2016, near Cushing, Oklahoma. Defendants operate wastewater disposal wells that allegedly contributed to the earthquake and aftershocks. Plaintiffs claim that defendants' actions "are ultrahazardous activities that necessarily involve a risk of serious harm to a person that cannot be eliminated by the exercise of the utmost care and is not a matter of common usage," and further assert that the defendants are strictly liable for property damages and emotional harm suffered as a direct and proximate result of defendants' activities. Plaintiffs also assert claims for negligence, private nuisance, and trespass. They seek punitive damages and trial by jury. See <https://www.rt.com/usa/369520-oklahoma-fracking-earthquake-lawsuit/>; and <https://www.fastcoexist.com/3066380/in-oklahoma-people-are-suing-fracking-companies-after-earthquakes-knocked-down-their-houses>.

On December 30, 2016, White Star Petroleum moved to dismiss the class action petition on three grounds: "(1) The Petition fails to plead allegations sufficient to state an actionable claim for relief against White Star, and in any event omits allegations that any Plaintiff has suffered any injury caused specifically by White Star; (2) the Petition fails to state a claim for absolute liability for harm resulting from an ultrahazardous activity; and (3) the Petition fails to state a claim for trespass." In its motion, White Star argues that Oklahoma has rejected market share liability and other forms of collective liability. It also contends that the operation of an injection well is not an ultrahazardous activity as a matter of law. Finally, noting that Oklahoma has rejected the suggestion that vibrations from the use of explosives can be an actionable trespass, White Star asserts that "if the use of explosives very near a building damaged by vibrations cannot give rise to a claim for trespass, neither can a seismic event which could have originated dozens of miles away." Defendant FHA Investments LLC filed a similar motion to dismiss on February 23, 2017. On May 31, 2017, the court denied the defendants' motions to dismiss and ordered that the case proceed with discovery. On March 1, 2018, the court stayed the case, but the stay was lifted on September 6, 2018. On November 20, 2018, plaintiffs filed a motion for class certification. On December 19, 2018, the court entered an order regarding class certification discovery and the defendant's response to the motion for class certification. On April 15, 2022, White Star Petroleum opposed plaintiffs' November 2021 motion for leave to amend petition.

The plaintiffs settled with New Dominion and White Star in January and February, 2023, and on April 6, 2023, the court closed the case. **The case is closed.**

Pawnee Nation of Oklahoma v. Eagle Road Oil LLC, No. Civ-2017-803 (Pawnee Nation District Court, Okla., Mar. 3, 2017)

The Pawnee Nation of Oklahoma has filed a lawsuit in tribal court against oil and gas producers, claiming that wastewater injected into disposal wells triggered a 5.8-magnitude earthquake on September 3, 2016, the strongest on record in the state, that damaged several Pawnee Nation buildings. The complaint is available at <https://turtletalk.files.wordpress.com/2017/03/complaint-pawnee-v-eagle-road-oil-et-al.pdf>. Some of the defendants operate wastewater injection wells on lands within the Pawnee Nation, less than 10 miles from the epicenter of the September 2016 quake. The Tribe is seeking at least \$250,000 in damages. Among the tribal structures damaged is the former Pawnee Nation Indian School, a sandstone building on the National Register of Historic Places that houses the tribe's administrative offices. The suit claims the damage to the tribal buildings is the result of more than 53 earthquakes that

took place between September and November of 2016. In particular, the complaint alleges that the defendants have engaged in “ultrahazardous activities that necessarily involve a risk of serious harm to a person that cannot be eliminated by the exercise of the utmost care and is not a matter of common usage.” The plaintiffs also assert claims for negligence, private nuisance, and trespass. They seek punitive damages based on their allegation that the defendants' actions “constitute wanton or reckless disregard for public or private safety.” A jury trial is requested.

The U.S. Supreme Court, in *Montana v. United States*, 450 U.S. 544 (1981), held that, as a general rule, tribes lack regulatory authority over non-Indians on non-Indian fee land within the reservation. The Court, however, set forth two exceptions. First, it stated that “the tribe may regulate ... the activities of nonmembers who enter consensual relationships with the tribe or its members.” Second, it stated that tribes may regulate “the conduct of non-Indians on fee lands within its reservation when that conduct threatens or has some direct effect on the political integrity, the economic security, or the health and welfare of the tribe.” The Court later applied the Montana standard to tribal civil adjudicatory authority in *Strate v. A-1 Contractors*, 520 U.S. 438 (1997), and *Nevada v. Hicks*, 533 U.S. 353 (2001). The existence of tribal adjudicatory jurisdiction over non-members is a federal question, and it can be challenged in federal court. However, under the exhaustion of remedies doctrine, the tribal court must be allowed to address questions of its own jurisdiction. *National Farmers Union Ins. Cos. v. Crow Tribe of Indians*, 471 U.S. 845 (1985). Exhaustion is not required in a few limited circumstances, including when the action is patently violative of express jurisdictional prohibitions.

On October 27, 2017, Judge Dianne Barker Harrold rejected arguments that the tribal court lacked jurisdiction, and ordered the suit to move forward in the discovery process. <https://www.poynterlawgroup.com/single-post/2017/10/27/Pawnee-Nations-Earthquake-Case-Moves-Forward>. On August 24, 2021, the Pawnee Nation approved a settlement with Eagle Road. See <https://pawneenation.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Resolution-21-59-Eagle-Road-Settle-Proposal.pdf>. **The case is closed.**

***Bryant v. Eagle Road Oil LLC*, No. CJ-2017-00018 (District Ct., Pawnee County, Okla., Mar. 8, 2017).**

Johnny Lee Bryant and Janice Marie Bryant seek compensatory and punitive damages and assert claims of absolute liability, negligence, private nuisance, and trespass. They claim that, by disposing of fracking wastewater deep into the earth, defendants Eagle Road Oil LLC and Cummings Oil Company caused adverse change in the form of unnatural seismic activity and earthquakes. On August 13, 2018, the court postponed a scheduled hearing to determine if ejection disposal wells constitute on ultra-hazardous activity in accordance with the guidelines set forth in the Restatement (Second) of Torts section 520. In November and December 2018, several defendants filed motions to dismiss. On November 1, 2019, the case was dismissed with prejudice. It is not known if the case was settled. **The case is closed.**

***Meier v. Chesapeake Operating LLC*, No. CJ-2017-277 (District Ct., Payne Cty., Okla., June 13, 2017), removed, No. 5:17-cv-00703-F (W.D. Okla. Jun. 28, 2017), affirmed, No. 18-6152 (10th Cir., Jun. 21, 2019)**

Matt Meier, Sheryl Meier, and Kai Bach filed a class action lawsuit in Payne County on June 13, 2017, seeking damages relating to earthquake insurance costs allegedly due to the operation of wastewater injection wells. Plaintiffs allege that since 2008, defendants' operation of wastewater disposal wells drilled into the Arbuckle formation has caused thousands of man-made earthquakes throughout large swaths of Oklahoma, and as a result, many Oklahomans have been forced to purchase earthquake insurance to provide financial protection against damage to their homes and property. In addition, plaintiffs allege that the man-made earthquakes caused by defendants' injection wells have caused the cost of earthquake insurance to soar. Plaintiffs allege that the substantial increase in earthquake activity in Oklahoma has caused earthquake insurance companies to hike their premiums by as much as 260 percent from 2014 to 2017. The complaint asserted claims of public nuisance, private nuisance, ultrahazardous activities, and negligence. They seek the "value of premiums paid to obtain earthquake insurance coverage" and the "excess amount required to maintain earthquake insurance coverage after 2009."

After the lawsuit was removed to federal district court, the defendants moved to dismiss. On August 13, 2018, the court dismissed the proposed class action. *Meier v. Chesapeake Operating LLC*, 324 F.Supp.3d 1207 (W.D. Okla 2018). The court rejected the defendants' standing and ripeness challenges, but held that the complaint failed to state a cognizable claim. Noting that the homeowners did not allege their property was damaged, the court held that "the Oklahoma Supreme Court would not allow recovery of earthquake insurance premiums or an increase in earthquake insurance premiums when plaintiffs have not sustained earthquake damage to their property or to their person."

The United States Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit affirmed on June 21, 2019. 2019 WL 2564069,778 Fed. Appx. 561. On appeal, the homeowners argued that the district court dismissed the lawsuit based on an erroneous guess of Oklahoma tort law, and alternatively requested that the question be certified to the Oklahoma Supreme Court. The Tenth Circuit declined to certify the question, and affirmed the district court. The question -- whether a plaintiff may collect damages for increased insurance premiums absent any physical damage -- has not been addressed by the Oklahoma Supreme Court. But the court of appeals held that "it is highly unlikely, given Oklahoma law and the bulk of out-of-state authority, that the Oklahoma Supreme Court would hold in favor of the homeowners." The court noted that the homeowners never requested certification until the district court ruled against them on the merits. After declining to certify the question, the court held that, under Oklahoma law, a homeowner cannot sue for increased insurance premiums absent any actual damage to property. **The case is closed.**

See *Oklahoma v. Farmers Insurance Exchange*, No. CJ-2021-92 (District Ct., Pottawatomie County, Okla., Apr. 1, 2021)

***Griggs v. New Dominion LLC*, No. CJ-2017-174 (District Ct., Logan County, Okla., Jul. 21, 2017), removed, No. 5:17-cv-00942 (W.D. Okla., Sep. 1, 2017), remanded (Oct. 17, 2017), removed, No. 5:17-cv-01232-F (W.D. Okla., Nov. 16, 2017), remanded (Dec. 28, 2017), interlocutory appeal, No. IN-119185 (Okla. Sup. Ct.), assigned to Court of Civil Appeals (Jun. 15, 2022)**

Lisa Griggs and April Marler filed a class action lawsuit against New Dominion LLC and two dozen other energy companies, claiming that “by disposing of fracking wastewater deep into the earth, Defendants introduced contaminants into the natural environment that caused an adverse change to it in the form of unnatural seismic activity.” Plaintiffs claim damages were proximately caused by pollution of the environment through the disposal of fracking wastewater with injection wells. Plaintiffs seek compensation for physical damages to real and personal property; market value losses to their real property; and for emotional distress. In addition, punitive damages are requested. The lawsuit focuses exclusively on wastewater disposal injection into Oklahoma’s Arbuckle formation, and is limited to earthquakes of 4.0 magnitude or greater. Plaintiffs have identified eight clusters of earthquake swarms between February 9, 2014 and August 17, 2016. The complaint presents claims for strict liability for ultrahazardous activity; negligence; private nuisance; and trespass.

On September 1, 2017, the defendants removed the case to district court; however, on September 9, 2017, the plaintiffs moved to remand the case to state court. On October 17, 2017, the case was remanded to state court. On October 24, 2017, a first amended class action petition was filed in state court. On November 16, 2017, the case was transferred to federal court. On December 28, 2017, the case was remanded to Logan County District Court. On March 1, 2018, the court stayed the case, but on September 6, 2018, the stay was lifted. Motions to dismiss were filed in September and October 2018. On November 16, 2018, the court sustained the motions to dismiss based on bankruptcy, but overruled all other motions to dismiss. The judge denied class-action status to Griggs and Marler, who filed on behalf of other central Oklahomans. See <https://www.news-star.com/news/20181120/judge-denies-request-to-dismiss-lawsuit-over-earthquake-damage>.

2020 Interlocutory appeal. – After receiving permission on October 8, 2020, plaintiffs filed an interlocutory appeal (Supreme Court Case No. IN-119185) of the decision to strike plaintiffs' class action allegations. In its Petition in Error, filed November 9, 2020, plaintiffs argue that in the Cooper litigation, class certification was upheld by the Court of Appeals on November 15, 2019. On April 27, 2022, the energy appellees’ filed a joint answer brief, arguing that the district court correctly struck class allegations and that the class claims fail as a matter of law because they do not depend on a common contention that is capable of classwide resolution. On December 29, 2022, the Oklahoma Supreme Court ordered the clerk to issue mandate, affirming and remanding the judgment entered on October 26, 2022. See 523 P.3d 62, 2022 OK CIV APP 42, 2022 WL 17985596 (opinion).

In June 2023, some of the defendants were dismissed by joint motion. On January 4, 2024, the claims against New Dominion were dismissed with prejudice and on June 17, 2024, the claims against Wicklund Corporation were dismissed. **The case is pending.** <http://www1.odcr.com/>

See <http://eam.pawneeearthquakesettlement.com/frequently-asked-questions.aspx>

***Chacko v. Sundance Energy Oklahoma LLC*, No. CJ-2017-7308 (District Ct., Oklahoma Cty., Okla., Dec. 28, 2017)**

George and Christie Chacko, and other residents of Logan and Oklahoma counties, claim property damage due to earthquakes and seismicity proximately caused by produced water disposal operations within and near Oklahoma County, Oklahoma, by Sundance Energy and other energy companies. The plaintiffs asserted claims for negligence, strict liability/ultrahazardous activity, and nuisance. On August 15, 2018, the case was voluntarily dismissed. See *Depew v. Sundance Energy Oklahoma LLC*, No. CJ-2019-4520. **The case is closed.**

***Felts v. Grayhorse Operating, Inc.*, No. CJ-2017-7329 (District Ct., Oklahoma Cty., Okla., Dec. 29, 2017)**

G. Terry Felts and eleven other individuals sued Grayhorse Operating, Inc., Baron Exploration Company, and Meadowbrook Oil Corporation. The plaintiffs alleges that defendants were negligent in conducting activities related to their disposal wells, in part due to failure to protect against earthquakes. The plaintiffs further allege that disposing fracking wastes into wells is an ultra-hazardous activity requiring imposition of strict liability. Finally, the plaintiffs contend that the actions constitute an actionable nuisance. On July 23, 2018, Grayhorse Operating filed a motion to dismiss. On August 29, 2018, Meadowbrook Oil Corporation moved to re-assign the case to Judge Trevor Pemberton, who is presiding over No. CJ-2016-137 (District Ct., Oklahoma Cty., Okla., filed Jan. 11, 2016). On September 14, 2018, the motion to dismiss filed by Grayhorse Operating Inc. was granted. On October 4, 2018, plaintiffs dismissed their case against Baron Exploration Company. On October 5, the court granted Meadowbrook Oil Corporation's transfer order. On October 11, 2018, Baron Exploration dismissed its counterclaims without prejudice. On February 4, 2019, claims against the remaining defendant, Meadowbrook Oil Corporation, were dismissed with prejudice. **The case is closed.**

***Bennett v. Chapparral Energy LLC*, No. CJ-2018-58 (District Ct., Logan County, Okla., Mar. 26, 2018), interlocutory appeal, No. CI-119122 (Okla. Sup. Ct.)**

Lacheverjuan Bennett and twenty-five other individuals sued Chaparral Energy, L.L.C., and twenty-one other energy companies for compensatory and punitive damages. Plaintiffs assert claims of absolute liability, negligence, gross negligence, private nuisance, public nuisance, and trespass. They allege that injection of wastewaters have induced earthquakes in the vicinity of Guthrie, Oklahoma. On June 15, 2018, the action was stayed and reassigned to Judge Philip Corley. Motions to dismiss were filed in October 2018. On July 10, 2019, the court lifted the stay and reopened the case. On August 16, 2019, Judge Corley granted the defendants' motion to dismiss in part and granted plaintiffs 45 days to amend the petition. On September 3, 2019, plaintiffs moved the court to either reconsider its dismissal of claims on statute of limitations grounds or delay an entry of an order. On September 20, 2019, Judge Corley granted the defendants' motion to settle the August 16th journal entry and denied the plaintiffs' motion to reconsider. A second amended petition was filed on November 1, 2019. Motions to dismiss were argued on February 21, 2020.

On April 13, 2020, the court rejected the position of the plaintiffs regarding tolling based on fraudulent concealment, and held that “the earthquakes that occurred prior to March 26, 2016 are outside the two year statute of limitations and defendants' Motion to Dismiss as to those earthquakes is sustained.” The

court reaffirmed its prior ruling that “the continuing tort doctrine does not apply to specific earthquakes alleged to have been caused by defendant’s waste water injections,” and found that “each earthquake is its own and separate cause of action.” On September 10, 2020, the court certified its order, entered April 13, 2020, for an immediate appeal. No. CI-119122 (Okla. Sup. Ct.). On January 11, 2021, the petition for an interlocutory appeal was denied. On February 2023 the case was settled and dismissed. See <http://eam.pawneeearthquakesettlement.com/frequently-asked-questions.aspx>. **The case is closed.**

Pawnee Nation of Oklahoma v. Eagle Road Oil LLC, No. 18-cv-00263 (N.D. Okla., May 17, 2018)

The Pawnee Nation alleges that the defendants have polluted the environment around Pawnee, Oklahoma, through the disposal of fracking wastewater with injection wells. The Nation seeks damages in the form of (1) physical damages to real and personal property; (2) market value losses to the real property; and (3) punitive damages. Defendants include Eagle Road Oil LLC and Cummings Oil Company.

The Nation, which seeks to bring a class action on behalf of itself and its members, claims to have suffered more than \$400,000 in physical and market value damages to its historical government buildings. The Nation asserts a claim of Absolute Liability on the basis that the Defendants’ actions “are ultrahazardous activities that necessarily involve a risk of serious harm to a person that cannot be eliminated by the exercise of the utmost care and is not a matter of common usage.” The Nation also asserts claims of negligence, private nuisance, and trespass. On May 6, 2020, a third amended complaint was filed. The parties entered into a settlement agreement and the case was closed on November 9, 2021. **The case is closed.**

Mercer v. Eagle Road Oil, LLC, No. CJ-2018-00080 (District Ct., Pawnee County, Okla., Aug. 28, 2018)

Anna Mercer seeks damages due to permanent nerve damage to her arm and neck after falling down stairs during the magnitude 5.8 earthquake that struck the Pawnee area in September 2016. She asserts claims of absolute liability for ultrahazardous activities, and negligence. She seeks compensatory and punitive damages. The defendants are Eagle Road Oil LLC, Cummings Oil CO., Territory Resources LLC, Enervest Operating LLC, Petro Warrior LLC, Petroquest Energy LLC, and Trinity Operating LLC. Motions to dismiss are pending. In 2019 it appears Petroquest Energy LLC and Trinity Operating (USG) LLC were dismissed, and on January 6, 2022, Enervest Operating LLC was dismissed. On June 8, 2022, the case was settled. **The case is dismissed.**

Steadfast Insurance Company v. Eagle Road Oil LLC, No. 4:18-CV-00457 (N.D. Okla., Aug. 31, 2018)

The Steadfast Insurance Company sued to recover insurance proceeds (approximately \$325,000) paid to the Pawnee Nation, which suffered induced earthquake damages proximately caused by defendants’ disposal of fracking wastewater. Plaintiff asserts claims of absolute liability based on ultrahazardous activity, negligence, private nuisance, and trespass.

On June 7, 2019, the court granted motions to dismiss plaintiff's claims based on the rule against claim splitting. Three months prior to this lawsuit, the Pawnee Nation commenced a related lawsuit captioned *Pawnee Nation of Oklahoma v. Eagle Road Oil LLC*, No. 4:18-cv-263 (N.D. Okla. May 17, 2018) (described elsewhere in this document). The Nation's allegations in that lawsuit largely mirror Steadfast's allegations in this lawsuit, and the Nation asserts the same causes of action against the same defendants and seeks to recover the same damages. Oklahoma law permits a subrogated insurer and the insured to join as co-plaintiffs in the same action against the defendant to recover for the entire loss. Therefore, the court dismissed the present action: "In another lawsuit pending in this district, Steadfast's insured—the Pawnee Nation—asserts the same causes of action against the same defendants and seeks to recover the same damages arising from the same injury. These duplicative actions concern the same factual and legal issues. Allowing both actions to proceed would waste judicial resources, risk inconsistent rulings, and unfairly subject defendants to multiple lawsuits arising from the same transaction and the same injury. Steadfast has identified no reason why it did not file a single lawsuit with the Nation as co-plaintiffs or why it could not seek to intervene in the Nation's first-filed lawsuit." 2019 WL 2410083. **The case is closed.**

***Harvey v. Cher Oil Company, Ltd.*, No. CJ-2018-5146 (District Ct., Oklahoma County, Okla., Sep. 19, 2018). See 2022 WL 1157309 (Second Amended Petition for Damages, Mar. 29, 2022)**

Based on two sequences of earthquakes -- the "Pawnee Seismicity Sequence" and the "Cushing Seismicity Sequence" -- Michelle Harvey and other Oklahoma citizens assert continuing torts of negligence, private nuisance, trespass, and ultrahazardous activities warranting application of strict liability. Plaintiffs seek damages for damages to real and personal property; emotional distress; and punitive damages. Defendants are Cher Oil Company, Ltd; Cimarron River Operating Corp.; Circle 9 Resources, LLC; Crown Energy Company; Equal Energy US Inc.; FHA Investments LLC; Koby Oil Company LLC; Mid-Con Energy Operating LLC; Oakland Petroleum Operating Company Inc; Orca Operating Company LLC; Petco Petroleum Corp; Shields Operating Inc.; Special Energy Corporation; Tarka Energy LLC; Territory Resources LLC; White Star Petroleum LLC; Eagle Road Oil, LLC, and Cummings Oil Company. On November 15, 2022, the court issued an order on defendants' motions to dismiss. It dismissed claims arising out of earthquakes other than the September 3, 2016, Pawnee earthquake and the November 6, 2016, Cushing earthquake. As to those aforementioned earthquakes, it found that the "strict liability claim involves questions of fact such that such claim is not appropriate for dismissal at this stage of the litigation." It held that claims against Tarka Energy must be dismissed due to a failure to plead a causal link between alleged damages and Tarka's actions or omissions. On December 9, 2022, and February 13, 2023, the plaintiffs dismissed their claims without prejudice to refiling the same. **The case is closed.**

See <http://eam.pawneearthquakesettlement.com/frequently-asked-questions.aspx>.

See announcement: A total of \$3,265,000.00 in settlements have been reached in a class action lawsuit about whether Territory Resources, LLC ("Territory"); Cummings Oil Company ("Cummings"); and Tarka Energy, LLC ("Tarka") operated wastewater disposal wells that allegedly contributed to causing the earthquakes near Pawnee, Oklahoma and also in other areas in Oklahoma occurring within the Settlement Class Period. The Settlements resolve any and all claims against Territory, Cummings, and Tarka alleged to arise from earthquakes that occurred between April 16, 2013 and the Effective Date with epicenters

within the State of Oklahoma, including but not limited to the 5.8m earthquake near Pawnee on September 3, 2016. Territory, Cummings, and Tarka dispute and deny all of the allegations made by the Plaintiff. The lawsuit will continue against the remaining defendant EnerVest Operating, L.L.C. (hereafter “Non-Settling Defendant”). Of the total Settlement Fund of \$3,265,000.00, Territory is providing \$2,075,000.00, Cummings is providing \$815,000.00, and Tarka is contributing another \$375,000.00 in cash consideration. Territory, Cummings, and Tarka are referred to here as the “Settling Defendants. Source:

https://www.poynterlawgroup.com/post/three-new-earthquake-damage-settlements-in-oklahoma?utm_campaign=eb169ee0-6c4b-44e5-bbad-fbd6af3eed85&utm_source=so&utm_medium=mail&cid=ec947a11-3cac-498a-bc46-588b98473d5c

***James v. Berexco LLC*, No. CJ-2018-5143 (District Ct., Oklahoma County, Sep. 19, 2018), removed, No. 5:19-cv-00646-F (W.D. Okla. Jul. 18, 2019)**

***Nelson v. Berexco LLC*, No. CJ-2018-5140 (District Ct., Oklahoma County, Sep. 19, 2018), removed, No. 5:19-cv-00647-F (W.D. Okla. Jul. 18, 2019)**

***Steele v. Berexco LLC*, No. CJ-2018-5144 (District Ct., Oklahoma County, Sep. 19, 2018), removed, No. 5:19-cv-00648-F (W.D. Okla. Jul. 18, 2019)**

***Oravetz v. Berexco LLC*, No. CJ-2018-5142 (District Ct., Oklahoma County, Sep. 19, 2018), removed, No. 5:19-cv-00649-F (W.D. Okla. Jul. 18, 2019)**

In these suits by Oklahoma residents against numerous energy companies, it is contended that the injection of fracking waste water into the ground caused earthquakes and property damage. Plaintiffs assert causes of action for absolute liability, negligence, gross negligence, private and public nuisance, and trespass in connection with damages experienced during earthquakes in 2016 near Cushing and Pawnee. Plaintiffs also seek punitive damages for “knowingly causing seismic activity” as a result of waste water injection activities, which “constitute intentional, wanton, or reckless disregard” for public and private safety.

The lawsuits were removed to federal court on July 18, 2019. On September 19, 2019, the plaintiffs’ motion to remand to state court was denied. In October of 2019 the defendants filed motions to dismiss. Defendants argue that the claims related to the Pawnee earthquake are barred by the statute of limitations. They also contend that the claim of strict liability for ultrahazardous activity must be dismissed because there are alternative safe methods of disposing of waste water. Defendants argue that plaintiffs have not pleaded sufficient facts to show what each defendant did to make it liable or how its actions caused or contributed to any specific earthquake, and instead rely on a theory of market share and joint liability.

On November 19, 2019, the court granted the plaintiffs’ motion for voluntary dismissal. **The case is closed.**

See <http://eam.pawneearthquakesettlement.com/frequently-asked-questions.aspx>.

***Jones v. Berexco, LLC*, No. CJ-2018-5141 (District Ct., Oklahoma County, Okla., Sep. 19, 2018). See 2022 WL 2967682 (Second Amended Petition for Damages, Apr. 25, 2022)**

Susan Jones and other Oklahoma citizens allege their properties have been damaged by defendants' creation of hundreds of earthquakes induced by wastewater disposal operations. Plaintiffs assert continuing torts of negligence, private nuisance, trespass, and ultrahazardous activities warranting application of strict liability. Each Plaintiff seeks damages, including punitive damages, being caused by the Pawnee Seismicity Sequence and the Cushing Seismicity Sequence. The defendants are Crown Energy, Equal Energy, Mid-Con Energy, White Star, FHA Investments, Oakland Petroleum, Marjo Operating, Cher Oil, Koby Oil, and Cimarron River (Cushing Seismicity Sequence), and Territory Resources, Petro Warrior, White Star, Eagle Road, and Cummings Oil (Pawnee Seismicity Sequence). Plaintiffs disclaim any allegations sounding in market share or joint and several liability, as Oklahoma law does not accept either of these legal theories. Plaintiffs assert that their claims are not time-barred because (1) they allege continuing wrongs and continuing torts; and because (2) claims were tolled due to the oil and gas industry's false, fraudulent, or misleading conduct. Each Plaintiff is included within the class definition as pled in the Third Amended Class Action Petition filed in *Adams v. Eagle Road, et al.*, Pawnee County District Court, Case No. CJ-2016-78, which was filed on August 27, 2018 (the "Adams Class Action"), and as it relates to the Pawnee Seismicity Sequence. Plaintiffs contend that the commencement of a class action suspends the statute as to all members of the defined class. Plaintiffs allege (1) defendants' actions are ultrahazardous activities that necessarily involve a risk of serious harm to a person that cannot be eliminated by the exercise of the utmost care and are not matters of common usage, and plaintiffs have suffered damages to which defendants are strictly liable; (2) defendants were negligent; (3) defendants' conduct constitutes a private nuisance; (4) defendants engaged in activities that resulted in concussions or vibrations entering Plaintiffs' properties, which remain and are continuing unlawful invasions and constitute trespasses. Punitive damages are requested because defendants' actions are alleged to constitute wanton or reckless disregard for public and private safety.

A second amended petition for damages was filed on April 25, 2022. On May 2, 2022, the court upheld motions to dismiss by Eagle Road LLC and Cummings Oil Company and gave plaintiffs 20 days to amend their petition. In the order, the court held that (1) the continuing tort doctrine does not apply because the earthquakes at issue were separate and discrete occurrences; (2) the fraudulent concealment exception does not toll the statute; (3) all claims prior to September 21, 2019, are barred; (4) Oklahoma has not adopted the market share theory of tort liability; (5) the petition does not show a reasonable connection or causation link between any individual defendant's conduct, a specific earthquake, and any specific injury of plaintiffs; and (6) the action for strict liability for ultrahazardous activity is dismissed as no authority was submitted that operation of an injection and saltwater disposal is an ultrahazardous activity. In May 2022, several defendants filed motions to dismiss.

On September 30, 2022, the court issued an order, holding that (1) the continuing tort doctrine does not apply because each earthquake is a discrete occurrence; (2) the fraudulent concealment doctrine does not apply here to toll the statute; (3) all claims prior to September 21, 2016, are barred; (4) Oklahoma does not adhere to the market share theory of liability; (5) the petition does not show a reasonable link between any defendant's conduct and a specific earthquake or specific injury of plaintiffs; and (6) the action of strict liability for ultrahazardous activity is dismissed because "no Oklahoma authority was

submitted to find that saltwater disposal is an ultrahazardous activity.” The Second Amended Petition was dismissed and the case was closed in December 2022. **The case is closed.**

See <http://eam.pawneeearthquakesettlement.com/frequently-asked-questions.aspx>.

***Bonar v. Cher Oil Ltd.*, No. CJ-2018-5145 (District Ct., Oklahoma County, Okla., Sep. 19, 2018).**

David Bonar and other residents of Oklahoma County assert claims for absolute liability based on ultrahazardous activities; negligence, gross negligence, private nuisance, public nuisance, trespass, and punitive damages connected to seismic activity allegedly due to wastewater injection well operations. A first amended petition for damages was filed on February 16, 2022. See 2022 WL 3225250. See 2022 WL 3225250. On February 13, 2023, the case was settled and dismissed. See <http://eam.pawneeearthquakesettlement.com/frequently-asked-questions.aspx>. **The case is closed.**

***Depew v. Sundance Energy Oklahoma LLC*, No. CJ-2019-4520 (District Ct., Oklahoma County, Aug. 14, 2019)**

This case is a re-filing of *Chacko v. Sundance Energy Oklahoma, LLC.*, No. CJ-2017-7308 (District Ct., Oklahoma County, Dec. 28, 2017), which was voluntarily dismissed on August 15, 2018. The plaintiffs in this case, Greg and Janice Depew, and other residents of Creek, Garfield, Kay, Kingfisher, Lincoln, Logan, Noble, Oklahoma, and Payne counties, own properties in central Oklahoma. They claim damages due to earthquakes and seismicity proximately caused by produced water disposal operations within and near Oklahoma County, Oklahoma, by Sundance Energy and other energy companies. They assert claims for strict liability for ultrahazardous activity, negligence, private nuisance, and trespass. They argue that the statute of limitations for their claims has been tolled. They claim compensatory and punitive damages and demand a jury trial. On July 30, 2020, a second amended petition was filed. 2020 WL 7767756.

On December 8, 2020, the court entered an order on defendants' motions to dismiss. The court held that “Plaintiffs cannot use Okla. Stat. tit. 12, s 100, commonly referred to as the “Savings Statute,” to expand the Depew case beyond the named Plaintiffs and the named Defendants and the claims for relief common to both the *Chacko* case and the *Depew* case. However, the Court FINDS that the “Edmond Cluster” identified in Depew is substantially similar between *Chacko* and *Depew* sufficient to include a sixth earthquake in the “Edmond Cluster,” one more earthquake than the five earthquakes included in the alleged “Edmond Cluster” as pleaded in the *Chacko* case.” On January 4, 2021, the court denied a motion to reconsider and granted a request to certify for appeal. On September 29, 2021, the Oklahoma Supreme Court denied the petition for certiorari to review certified interlocutory order. No. 119,665. **The case is closed.**

See <http://eam.pawneeearthquakesettlement.com/frequently-asked-questions.aspx>.

***Newby v. Farmers Insurance Company*, No. CJ-2019-5138 (District Ct., Oklahoma Cty., Okla, Sep. 13, 2019), 2019 WL 13094207 (petition)**

Cole and Teri Newby of Edmond, Oklahoma, allege that the defendant, Farmers Insurance Company, "collects massive amounts in premiums from the earthquake policies and pays very little out to the insured and when payouts are possible." Plaintiffs allege that the defendants breached their contractual obligations; hired a company "to perform a sham analysis" and minimized reported damage and thus breached its duty of good faith and fair dealing. On December 15, 2021, the court granted defendants' motion for summary judgment based upon the failure of plaintiffs to file their lawsuit within the time required by the suit limitation clause of the insurance policy. A motion to reconsider was denied on April 14, 2022. The case has been appealed to the Oklahoma Supreme Court. No. 120421. On August 22, 2023, the case was dismissed. **The case is closed.**

***Barton v. Ovintiv Mid-Continent Inc.*, No. CJ-2020-00065 (District Ct., Kingfisher Cty., Okla., Sep. 9, 2020), removed, No. 5:20-cv-01098-F (W.D. Okla., Oct. 29, 2020), order on motion to dismiss, 2021 WL 1566451 (Apr. 21, 2021)**

Julie Barton, Kenny Barton, and Katie Barton commenced this action in Kingfisher County. In June of 2020, Ovintiv began drilling a horizontal well within several hundred feet of plaintiffs' property. Plaintiffs allege that they suffered lightheadedness, nausea, and shortness of breath due to the drilling operations, which generated emissions and well as continuous noise and bright lights at night. Carbon monoxide on July 19, 2020, indicated the presence of 400 ppm of carbon monoxide, which could result in hallucinations, dementia, and serious headaches within one to two hours and risk of death after three hours. In August 2020, after completion of initial drilling, plaintiffs returned from a hotel to their home. At this point the well was fracked, and plaintiffs allege the fracking operations have continued to interfere with plaintiffs' quiet enjoyment of the property resulting from fumes and emissions from Ovintiv's flare, lights coming into Julie's bedroom window at night, loud and continuous noises, and droplets of petroleum fluid "spattered" around the property.

The state lawsuit alleged a claim of private nuisance. After the case was removed to federal court, plaintiffs added an additional plaintiff, a minor child of Julie Barton, and added claims of trespass, intentional interference with prospective economic advantage, strict liability, and negligence. Defendant moved to dismiss the the four newly added claims. On April 21, 2021, the court dismissed the claims of trespass and intentional interference with prospective economic advantage, but denied the motion to dismiss the claims of strict liability and negligence.

Trespass - With regard to trespass, the court concluded that plaintiffs have not alleged a plausible claim because -- although perceptible through smell -- the fumes or emissions at issue are impalpable and constitute an intangible intrusion, which requires an allegation of substantial damage to the property as opposed to personal harm to plaintiffs.

The plaintiffs also failed to allege a plausible claim for **intentional interference with a prospective economic advantage**. The elements of the claim are the existence of a valid business relation or

expectancy; knowledge of the relationship or expectance on the part of the interferer; an intentional interference inducing or causing a breach or termination of the relationship or expectancy; and resultant damage to the party whose relationship has been disrupted.” *Loven v. Church Mutual Insurance Company*, 452 P.3d 418, 425 (Okla. 2019). With respect to plaintiffs who do not own the home, there are no factual allegations of the existence of a valid business relation or expectancy. As for the homeowner, the allegations do not indicate that Ovintiv drilled the horizontal well in close proximity to the property for the intentional purpose of interfering or disrupting Kenny’s economic business advantage in the future sale of the property.

Negligence - The court denied the motion to dismiss the claim for negligence against Ovintiv based upon its decision to locate, drill, and operate the horizontal well in close proximity to their property. It concluded that “plaintiffs have advanced factual allegations sufficient to support a claim that defendant failed to fulfill its duty of due care to plaintiffs and that plaintiffs’ injuries were proximately caused by defendant’s failure to satisfy that duty.”

Strict Liability – Perhaps most significantly, the court denied the motion to dismiss the claim that Ovintiv is strictly liable to them for its conduct of drilling and fracking in close proximity to their property. Defendant asserted that the operation of an oil and gas well is not an ultrahazardous activity as the possible risks involving its operation can be minimized through reasonable care. Plaintiffs contended that the ultrahazardous nature of oil and gas wells is a matter of first impression under Oklahoma law. The court’s analysis is set forth below:

Whether an activity is an ultrahazardous one so that strict liability will be imposed is to be determined by the court. The court is to consider “all the factors listed in [Section 520], and the weight given to each that it merits upon the facts in evidence.” Restatement (Second) of Torts § 520, comment (I). Although the court recognizes that the issue can be determined at the pleadings stage, see, *Reece v. AES Corp.*, Case No. CIV-12-0457-JH, 2014 WL 61242, at *6 n. 13 (E.D. Okla. Jan. 8, 2014), the court nonetheless concludes the record in this case is insufficiently developed for the court to appropriately determine whether the doctrine of strict liability should be applied in this case. On that point, the court reminds the parties that we are still at the pleading stage. The question presented is whether plaintiffs have, with nothing more than black letters on white paper, pled themselves into court on the strict liability claim. Any sort of a broad ruling that strict liability might apply in the general circumstances of the drilling of a well in the hope of finding and producing hydrocarbons would be truly extraordinary. But plaintiffs have managed to plead some notably unusual circumstances. Consequently, at this juncture, the court is constrained to conclude that the strict liability claim is not subject to dismissal under Rule 12(b)(6). Defendant may challenge the strict liability claim at the summary judgment stage based upon a more fully developed record.

On June 10, 2022, a minute order was entered stating that the case was settled.

Dorothy Dooley and ninety-one other plaintiffs from Tulsa County sued Cher Oil Company and nineteen other energy companies for damages related to a sequence of earthquakes near Cushing and Pawnee. Plaintiffs have alleged continuing wrongs and continuing torts that have created temporary damages to their properties. Under Oklahoma law, the applicable statutes of limitations has not yet begun. Plaintiffs assert claims of strict liability for ultrahazardous activity; negligence; private nuisance; and trespass; and seek actual and punitive damages. First amended petition was filed on September 20, 2021. See 2021 WL 5872236. A hearing on defendants' motions to dismiss was held on June 17, 2022. On February 2023 the case was settled and dismissed. See <http://eam.pawneearthquakesettlement.com/frequently-asked-questions.aspx>. **The case is closed.**

***Oklahoma v. Farmers Insurance Exchange*, No. CJ-2021-92 (District Ct., Pottawatomie County, Okla., Apr. 1, 2021)**

Oklahoma sued Farmers Insurance Exchange and related companies for unjust enrichment and for violations of the state Consumer Protection Act and the state Unfair Claims Settlement Practices Act. In support of its claims, the state alleges that the defendants “misrepresented to the claimants pertinent facts or policy provisions relating to the coverage at issue, ... failed to adopt and implement reasonable standards for prompt investigation of such claims, and ... did not effectuate prompt, fair and equitable settlement of claims submitted in which liability was reasonably clear.” The state sought injunctive relief, civil penalties and “disgorgement of Farmers’s profits obtained from premiums paid by said insureds,” and the return of premiums.

On April 5, 2021, the case was settled and a consent judgment was entered. Oklahoma's attorney general and insurance commissioner announced that they reached a settlement. Farmers will reopen the claims process and evaluate the denied claims using an independent administrator. Farmers Insurance has agreed to pay at least \$25 million to resolve claims and will go beyond the \$25 million fund if eligible property damage claims go beyond the agreed upon amount. Barbara Hoberock, Tulsa World, *State announces \$25 million settlement with Farmers Insurance over earthquake claims*, at https://tulsaworld.com/news/state-and-regional/state-announces-25-million-settlement-with-farmers-insurance-over-earthquake-claims/article_bceeafb2-9632-11eb-8af5-b7c62bd651cd.html (Apr 6, 2021). **The case is closed.**

***National Union Fire Insurance Company v. New Dominion LLC*, No. 5:21-cv-00547-D (W.D. Okla., May 26, 2021)**

Plaintiff insurer seeks a declaration that no coverage is owed to its insured for the disposal of fracking wastewater that caused earthquake activity in Oklahoma. In particular, plaintiff alleges that its obligations to defend and indemnify New Dominion under the umbrella policies extend only to covered damages occurring during the policy periods, that the underlying lawsuits seek damages outside those periods, that Plaintiff has no duty to indemnify New Dominion for such damages, that Plaintiff has only a proportionate duty to pay defense costs related to its share of covered damages, and that a limitation of coverage

provision applies. The "Cooper defendants" argue that they should be dismissed from National Union's suit because they are not parties to the insurance contracts at issue. They argue they should not be joined as necessary parties. The court, on April 28, 2022, disagreed, holding that "a resolution of the alleged dispute could affect the Cooper Defendants' rights as claimants to proceeds of the insurance policy." The case was settled, and on November 9, 2022, the case was voluntarily dismissed by the plaintiffs. **The case is closed.**

***Donehue v. Apache Corporation.*, No. 5:21-cv-00710-D (W.D. Okla., Jul. 14, 2021).**

This lawsuit is not directly connected to fracking. Kindall and Andrew Donehue purchased land in Edmond, Oklahoma in 2017 and drilled two water wells that were both contaminated and unsuitable for drinking. They believe the cause is produced salt water stored in unlined pits that leached into groundwater. They assert claims for public nuisance, damage to real property, private nuisance, trespass, negligence, unjust enrichment, and constructive fraud. On January 3, 2023, the district court granted in part the defendant's motion to dismiss, holding the plaintiffs' claims for public nuisance and successor liability could continue. Apache argued (1) there is no evidence it used the disposal pits and (2) the alleged contamination occurred decades before the Donehues purchased their property, but the plaintiffs argued that, even if Apache did not use the pits, it may nevertheless be held responsible for the contamination if it knew (or should have known) that predecessor operators used unlined pits to dispose of produced water. The court concluded there is "minimally sufficient" evidence from which a reasonable juror could conclude that Apache should have known of the existence of the pits and the risk of groundwater contamination.

Public nuisance -- a genuine dispute of material fact as to whether Apache knew or should have known of the existence of unlined pits and their ability to cause contamination precludes summary judgment on the public nuisance claim. **Private nuisance** -- In light of *Moore v. Texaco, Inc.*, 244 F.3d 1229 (10th Cir. 2001), which held that Oklahoma law precludes a private nuisance claim between successive owners, Apache was granted summary judgment on the private nuisance claim. **Negligence** -- The court held the Donehues did not show that any statutory violation by Apache caused their injury. **Trespass** -- summary judgment was proper because plaintiffs failed to show that Apache invaded their land or failed to remove any item that it placed there. **Constructive fraud** -- claim failed because, assuming Apache knew that unlined pits had contaminated the groundwater, plaintiffs did not show a duty to report it. **Unjust enrichment** -- Because the Donehues presented evidence indicating that cleaning the polluted water is not a viable option, the claim for unjust enrichment was not dismissed. **Successor liability** -- There was a genuine factual dispute that precludes summary judgment regarding whether Apache is a successor in interest to MidCon and, therefore, successor liability was a valid issue.

The case was settled and closed. and on October 16, 2024, an stipulation of dismissal was filed.

***Kingfisher Resources Inc. v. Mewbourne Oil Co.*, No. CJ-24-13 (Dewey County Dist. Ct., OK), removed, 5:24-CV-00648 (W.D. Okla., Jun. 25, 2024)**

Plaintiff alleges that defendant negligently performed hydraulic fracturing that caused damages. **The case is pending.**

PENNSYLVANIA

***Zimmermann v. Atlas America, LLC*, No. 2009-7564 (Ct. Common Pleas, Washington Cty., Pa., Sept. 21, 2009). See 2009 WL 3753890 (complaint); 2010 WL 4680900 (Aug. 23, 2010) (amended complaint); and 2009 WL 7120525 (Oct. 12, 2009) (answer)**

Surface owners George and Lisa Zimmermann claim Atlas America used toxic chemicals during the fracturing process that polluted the freshwater aquifers and destroyed farmland. The suit alleges trespass, nuisance, negligence, negligence per se, res ipsa loquitur, fraud and misrepresentation, breach of the settlement agreement, and violation of the casing requirements of the Pennsylvania Oil and Gas Act. On August 4, 2011, the court dismissed the res ipsa loquitur and gross negligence claims. The court also dismissed the fraud and misrepresentation claim, but held that the Zimmermanns could amend their complaint and reinstate this claim. See Nicholson, *Analysis of Litigation Involving Shale & Hydraulic Fracturing* (June 1, 2014). See also *Pennsylvania Lawsuit Says Drilling Polluted Water*, at <http://www.reuters.com/article/2009/11/09/us-fracking-suit-idUSTRE5A80PP20091109>. On April 14, 2014, **the case was settled and closed**.

***Fiorentino v. Cabot Oil and Gas Corp.* [recaptioned *Ely v. Cabot Oil and Gas Corp.*], No. 3:09-cv-02284 (M.D. Pa., Nov. 19, 2009). See 750 F.Supp.2d 506 (M.D. Pa., Nov. 15, 2010) (opinion on motion to dismiss); 38 F.Supp.3d 518 (order holding that natural gas drilling activities, including hydraulic fracturing, are not abnormally dangerous, and imposition of strict liability for damages caused by such activities is not warranted); and 2017 WL 1196510 (opinion denying defendant's motion for judgment as a matter of law, but granting its motion for a new trial (Mar. 31, 2017)).**

Residents in Dimock and Montrose, Pennsylvania, alleged defendants conducted hydrofracturing and other extraction activities that released methane, natural gas, and other toxins onto their land and into their groundwater. See pleadings at 2010 WL 931974, 2010 WL 2070478, and 2010 WL 46220704. Plaintiffs assert claims based on negligence, gross negligence, private nuisance, strict liability, breach of contract, fraudulent misrepresentation, the Hazardous Sites Cleanup Act; and medical monitoring. [Note: the problems in Dimock were featured in the *Gasland* documentary.] The federal district court, on November 15, 2010, refused for the most part to grant defendants' motion to dismiss for failure to state a claim. With respect to the Pennsylvania Hazardous Sites Cleanup Act, the court held that plaintiffs stated a plausible claim for relief under Section 702, which provides that a defendant who is responsible for releasing hazardous substances is strictly liable for response costs, including the cost of a health assessment or health effects study. As for common law strict liability, the court allowed the claim to proceed, noting that Pennsylvania courts have concluded that storage and transmission of gas and petroleum products are not abnormally dangerous activities, but have not decided whether gas well drilling and operation are the same. Plaintiffs also alleged plausible facts necessary to support a claim for medical monitoring. The cause of action for gross negligence, however, was dismissed since it is not recognized under Pennsylvania law. With respect to the claim for fear of future illness and emotional

distress, the court noted that Pennsylvania law does not allow recovery without some manifestation of actual physical injury, but held that plaintiffs did allege physical injury. Although punitive damages is not a separate claim, because the defendants were allegedly grossly negligent, the court declined to strike the allegations regarding punitive damages. Subsequent procedural rulings: 2011 WL 4944274 (Oct. 17, 2011); 2011 WL 5239068 (Nov. 1, 2011); and 2012 WL 959392 (Mar. 19, 2012). Subsequent developments – The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection also sued Cabot Oil, and reached a settlement on December 16, 2010. The affected families received \$4.1 million and Cabot paid a \$500,000 penalty to the PDEP. The settlement allowed Cabot to resume its hydraulic fracturing activities. See *Pennsylvania, Cabot Reach Settlement Over Methane Contamination*, Greenwire (Dec. 16, 2010), available at <http://www.eenews.net/Greenwire/2010/12/16/20/>. In May of 2012, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced that its well water test results “did not show levels of contaminants that would give EPA reason to take further action.” The test results were both praised and criticized. USA Today, *EPA: Pa. Village's Water Not Polluted by Gas Fracking* (May 11, 2012), at <http://content.usatoday.com/communities/ondeadline/post/2012/05/epa-pa-villages-drinking-water-not-polluted-by-fracking/1>. Most of the parties settled in August of 2012. See Christian Science Monitor, *Pa. Drilling Town Agrees to Settlement in Fracking Federal Lawsuit* (Aug. 15, 2012), at <http://www.csmonitor.com/USA/Latest-News-Wires/2012/0815/Pa.-drilling-town-agrees-to-settlement-in-fracking-federal-lawsuit> (“Documents indicate that residents of Dimock Township, Pa., who claim their water was poisoned by fracking, have reached a confidential **settlement**”). On September 12, 2012, a joint stipulation of dismissal was filed with the court. The stipulation covers the majority of plaintiffs, with only three families continuing the lawsuit. On December 17, 2012, the Court allowed counsel for the remaining three families to withdraw, giving these families days in which to secure new attorneys or to proceed pro se. On September 18, 2013, the case was recaptioned as *Nolen Scott Ely, et al. v. Cabot Oil & Gas Corporation and Gassearch Drilling Services Corporation*. See also Nicholson, *Analysis of Litigation Involving Shale & Hydraulic Fracturing* (June 1, 2014).

Strict liability claims. – On January 9, 2014, Magistrate Martin C. Carlson recommended (in a 37 page order) that defendants' summary judgment motion on plaintiffs' strict liability claim should be granted. See 38 F.Supp.3d 518. The Magistrate declined “to become the first court in this or any other jurisdiction to conclude that such natural gas drilling operations constitute abnormally dangerous activities,” and instead found as a matter of law “that natural gas drilling operations and hydraulic fracturing are not abnormally hazardous activities on the basis of the record developed in this case” The Magistrate applied Restatement (Second) of Torts § 520 and considered the following six factors: (a) existence of a high degree of risk of some harm to the person, land or chattels of others; (b) likelihood that the harm that results from it will be great; (c) inability to eliminate the risk by the exercise of reasonable care; (d) extent to which the activity is not a matter of common usage; (e) inappropriateness of the activity to the place where it is carried on; and (f) extent to which its value to the community is outweighed by its dangerous attributes.

With regard to factor (a), the Magistrate concluded that drilling operations do not present a high degree of risk of harm, but found that properly drilled, cased and hydraulically fractured gas wells create, at most, relatively low risk to water supplies. With regard to factor (b), the Magistrate concluded that plaintiffs have not shown a sufficient likelihood that harm resulting from the defendants' gas drilling operations will be great, noting that “there is substantial evidence offered in support of the Defendants’

view that proper gas drilling techniques mitigate risks, and such risks while already low will continue to be mitigated as the industry develops further safety precautions.”

With respect to whether the exercise of due care can eliminate risks posed by drilling operations (factor c), the Magistrate held that although he could not conclude that all risk of harm is absolutely foreclosed by the exercise of due care, “the great weight of the evidence that the parties have submitted indicates that such risks are substantially mitigated when due care is exercised.” On this point the Magistrate noted that the report of Cornell University Professor Anthony Ingraffea focused “on improper well completion and faulty casing, or other negligent failings,” but did not “contain any explanation of, or identify any examples where a gas well was properly constructed and completed, and nevertheless fluid migration or water contamination occurred.” [Subsequent to his report and recommendation, the Magistrate on March 27, 2014, denied the defendant’s motion to strike the plaintiffs’ experts’ affidavits and supplemental reports. 2014 WL 1276487.]

With regard to factor (d), the Magistrate rejected the plaintiffs’ contention that natural gas drilling, and hydraulic fracturing, is a “novel” activity in the area and thus not a matter of common usage. As for factor (e), the Magistrate noted that the wells were drilled pursuant to permits and in compliance with legal requirements with respect to setback limits, and held that the activities were not conducted in inappropriate locations. Finally, with respect to the last factor – whether the economic value to the community outweighs any dangers posed by gas drilling operations – the Magistrate found that “this industrial activity has benefits that extend throughout the Commonwealth, affecting individuals, businesses, local communities, and government.” In its conclusion the Magistrate found that “strict liability should not apply” and that plaintiffs’ claims for property damage and personal injury “should be considered under traditional and longstanding negligence principles, and not under a strict liability standard.”

On April 23, 2014, the district court (without further elaboration) adopted “in its entirety” the magistrate’s recommendation of January 9, 2014, and granted the defendants’ summary judgment motion on the plaintiffs’ strict liability claims. 38 F.Supp.3d 518.

Claims other than strict liability. – On July 22, 2014, the district court granted the defendants’ summary judgment motion on the claims of Nolen Scott Ely, as the executor of the Estate of Kenneth R. Ely. On July 29, 2014, the court likewise granted summary judgment against Hubert family (with the exception of their private nuisance claim) and also dismissed with prejudice claims of plaintiffs Jeanette Carter and Todd Carter, as well as all related counterclaims. See 2014 WL 12479991 (Magistrate Report and Recommendation). On August 26, 2014, Nolen S. Ely filed a notice of appeal (No. 14-3698). On November 19, 2014, the appeal was dismissed for lack of appellate jurisdiction because the July 22, 2014, order is not yet appealable in light of pending claims.

On January 12, 2015, the court denied summary judgment on the private nuisance and negligence claims. However, it granted summary judgment on claims of breach of contract; lost royalties; fraudulent inducement; negligence per se; medical monitoring; violations of Pennsylvania environmental statutes; and the negligence claim brought by the Ely children. The court suggested that the Ely family and a

handful of other landowners remaining in the litigation should enter mediation with Cabot Oil. See *Drilling contamination case narrowed against Cabot in Susquehanna County*, Legal Intelligencer (Jan. 20, 2015), <http://www.post-gazette.com/business/legal/2015/01/20/Drilling-contamination-case-narrowed-against-Cabot-in-Susquehanna-County/stories/201501200019>. An appeal was filed on February 13, 2015 (No. 15-1439). On May 1, 2015, the court denied a motion to certify the order denying the Ely estate claims as final pursuant to Rule 54(b). 2015 WL 1963108. On May 8, 2015, Judge Carlson granted the defendants' motion to amend their answer to include the affirmative defenses of recoupment and mitigation of damages.

Trial and Jury Verdict on March 10, 2016 – On February 17, 2016, the ruled on the defendant's motion to exclude the testimony of one of the plaintiff's expert witnesses, Paul A. Rubin, finding "narrow areas ... where this witness may testify." 2016 WL 4169220. Trial began on February 22, 2016, with regard to the negligence and private nuisance claims. The plaintiffs were represented by Leslie Lewis. Magistrate Carlson on March 8 dismissed the negligence claim, holding that Nolen Scott Ely and his wife, Monica-Marta Ely, cannot recover any monetary damages for the alleged loss in value of their Susquehanna County property because they had not presented evidence that could establish the pre-injury value of their property. The court limited the potential damages in the remaining private nuisance claim to "inconvenience and discomfort" caused by the nuisance, which does not include mental and emotional discomfort or the cost to replace water. The case proceeded on nuisance claims by the Elys and their co-plaintiffs, Raymond and Victory Hubert. On March 10 the jury awarded \$4.24 million. Forty-four plaintiffs initially claimed property damage and injuries, but after settlements and court rulings, only four plaintiffs remained. Jurors were asked to determine whether Cabot was negligent in drilling or completing two wells and whether the work on the wells created a nuisance by contaminating the water wells on the Ely's 8.8 acre property. The jury awarded Mr. and Mrs. Ely \$2.6 million and their three minor children \$50,000 each. Mr. and Mrs. Hubert were awarded \$1.4 million, while another family member was awarded \$50,000. Cabot stated it would file a motion to set aside the verdict and/or grant a new trial based on Ms. Lewis' conduct during the trial.

The District Court, on March 31, 2017, denied defendant's Motion for Judgment as a Matter of Law but granted its Motion for a New Trial granted. On April 7, 2016, Cabot Oil & Gas filed a motion for a Judgment as a Matter of Law, a motion for New Trial, a Motion to Set Aside Verdict, and a Motion for Damages Remittitur. On March 31, 2017, the district court denied Cabot's motion for judgment as a matter of law. Cabot argued it was entitled to judgment in part because plaintiffs' admissions established that water problems existed before Cabot began drilling. The court acknowledged that the evidence showed one of the plaintiffs had been able to light his water on fire before drilling operations commenced. The Court, however, observed that Cabot must meet "exacting standards" to have judgment entered as a matter of law, and found that plaintiffs had submitted sufficient evidence as to whether Cabot's activity was negligent and had contributed to the interference with the plaintiffs' use of their water and enjoyment of their property.

On the other hand, the Court granted Cabot's motion for a new trial, holding that "the weaknesses in the plaintiffs' case and proof, coupled with serious and troubling irregularities in the testimony and presentation of the plaintiffs' case – including repeated and regrettable missteps by counsel in the jury's presence – combined so thoroughly to undermine faith in the jury's verdict that it must be vacated"

The court described in detail “manifold instances of improper conduct at trial, and repeated testimony and argument by counsel that was prejudicial to Cabot.” It also stated that “the plaintiffs’ expert witnesses offered opinion testimony that came perilously close speculation and at best were inferences that had weak factual support.”

The court also observed that “the jury’s award of more than \$4 million in damages for private nuisance bore no discernible relationship to the evidence.” The case had been narrowed to a remaining nuisance claim, and the court held that jury’s award of \$4.24 million “bore no relationship to the facts of the case, the plaintiffs’ own testimony, or the Court’s instructions on the law.” 2017 WL 1196510.

On September 21, 2017, a one-page order was entered dismissing the case without prejudice, with the right to reinstate with 60 days if the settlement is not consummated.

<http://www.pahomepage.com/news/cabot-oil-gas-and-dimock-families-settle-civil-lawsuit/818382810>.

On October 3, 2017, a sealed order was filed settling the minors’ actions. **The case is closed.**

Criminal charges. – In June 2020 a grand jury ended a 2-year investigation of Cabot Oil for environmental crimes in northeastern Pennsylvania. Attorney General Josh Shapiro on June 15, 2020, announced that the Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General plans to file 15 criminal counts against the Houston-based Cabot Oil and Gas, including nine felonies. Cabot will be charged with 7 counts of Prohibition Against Discharge of Industrial Wastes, 7 counts of Prohibition Against Other Pollutions and one count of Unlawful Conduct under the Clean Streams Law. The Grand Jury’s investigation into the contamination of well water in Dimock, Susquehanna County, revealed that Cabot’s fracking activities were responsible for methane pollution in the local water supply. *Houston energy company hit with criminal charges in Pennsylvania*,

<http://www.okenergytoday.com/2020/06/houston-energy-company-hit-with-criminal-charges-in-pennsylvania/> (Jun. 19, 2020). **The criminal case is pending.**

Related news. – A fracking wastewater treatment company announced in November 2020 that it is exploring the possibility of constructing an underground deep injection well in Dimock, Susquehanna County. If approved, it would be the first deep injection well to handle fracking wastewater in eastern Pennsylvania. See Northern Tier Residents Worry About Planned Fracking Waste Well In Dimock (Nov. 30, 2020), at

<https://wskg.org/news/northern-tier-residents-worry-about-planned-fracking-waste-well-in-dimock/>.

Related news. – Pennsylvania Attorney General Josh Shapiro announced on November 29, 2022, that hydraulic fracturing company Coterra Energy Inc. – formerly Cabot Oil and Gas Corporation -- will pay \$16.29 million for the construction of new public water supply lines in Dimock Township after it pleaded no contest to charges that it committed environmental crimes related to discharging methane into local groundwater. The state filed a criminal complaint against Coterra in the Susquehanna County Court of Common Pleas, alleging that it had knowingly discharged methane into groundwater at numerous wells in Dimock Township. See Landmark Deal: Fracking Company Admits Criminal Responsibility, Will Pay \$16.29 Million to Build Pennsylvania Water System (December 1, 2022, at <https://childrenshealthdefense.org/defender/fracking-polluted-water-dimock-pennsylvania/>).

Related news. – *Delaware County Employees Retirement System v. Cabot Oil & Gas Corp.*, No. 4:21-cv-02045 (S.D. Tex., Oct. 5, 2020). – In this case, Cabot Oil is alleged to have misled shareholders by hiding the pollution caused by its Pennsylvania fracking operations. On October 29, 2024, the case was settled and terminated. **The case is closed.**

***Hallowich v. Range Resources Corp.*, No. C-63-CV-201003954 (Ct. Common Pleas, Washington Cty., Pa., May 27, 2010) (praecipe to issue a writ of summons; no complaint was filed). See also *Hallowich v. Range Resources Corp.*, No. 234 WDA 2012 and 235 WDA 2012 (Pa. Superior Court, Dec. 7, 2012)**

Plaintiffs claim gas wells and gas processing facilities caused their health to deteriorate. **The parties settled in July 2011.** On August 23, 2011, the Court of Common Pleas closed proceedings to the public, approved a confidential settlement, and entered an order sealing the record. On January 31, 2012, the court denied as untimely motions by newspapers to unseal the record. The decision was appealed, and an environmental group, doctors, and several medical organizations filed a joint amicus brief in April of 2012. See http://www.rcfp.org/sites/default/files/docs/20120208_165629_jt COURT_rev1.pdf; and <http://blogs.artvoice.com/avdaily/2012/05/01/pennsylvania-doctors-newspapers-sue-frack-companies-over-secrecy/>. On December 7, 2012, the Pennsylvania Superior Court held that the Court of Common Pleas should have considered the petitions to intervene and unseal the record. Consequently, the appellate court vacated the lower court order and remanded for the court to rule on the merits of the newspapers' petitions.

On March 20, 2013, the court ordered the terms of the settlement unsealed. Pursuant to the terms of the settlement, Range Resources paid \$750,000 to Stephanie and Chris Hallowich, who in turn agreed that there was no medical evidence that drilling harmed their health or their children's health. See <http://earthjustice.org/documents/legal-document/pdf/hallowich-appeal-ruling> (decision); *Judges Rule That Fracking Secrecy Court Case Must Be Heard, Press Release*, Earthjustice (Dec. 7, 2012), at <http://ohiocitizen.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/Harrisburg.pdf>; and Rob Wile, *Unsealed Settlement Shows A Shale Driller Paid Family \$750,000 Over Health Claims*, Business Insider (Mar. 21, 2013), at <http://www.businessinsider.com/hallowich-range-drilling-settlement-ppg-2013-3>. The settlement agreement prohibits the plaintiffs – and also their children – from talking about the litigation. See Don Hopey, *Pittsburgh-area shale settlement 'gag' questioned*, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette (Aug. 1, 2013), at <http://www.post-gazette.com/stories/local/washington/confidential-agreement-should-have-been-part-of-washington-county-marcellus-shale-case-record-697530>. **The case is closed.**

In January 2019 it was reported that Pennsylvania Attorney General Josh Shapiro is pursuing criminal investigations of “environmental crimes” committed by the oil and gas industry in Washington County and possibly throughout the state. See *State conducting criminal investigation of shale gas production*, at <https://www.post-gazette.com/news/crime-courts/2019/01/28/pa-attorney-general-josh-shapiro-criminal-investigation-oil-gas-industry-washington-county-environmental-crimes/stories/201901210078> (Jan. 28, 2019). Stephanie Hallowich testified before the investigative grand jury in Pittsburgh on February 19, 2019. See *Woman who sued natural gas driller Range Resources testifies before grand jury*, at <http://www.witf.org/news/2019/02/woman-who-sued-natural-gas-driller-range-resources-testifies->

before-grand-jury.php (Feb. 22, 2019). See also *Haney v. Range Resources*, No. C-63-CV-201203534 (Ct. Common Pleas, Washington Cty., Pa., May 25, 2012) (discussed below). Scott Perry, who heads the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's oil and gas office, testified before a state grand jury investigating environmental crimes involving the shale gas industry on November 14, 2019. See Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, *Pennsylvania grand jury probing shale gas industry over environmental concerns*, at <https://www.mcall.com/news/pennsylvania/mc-nws-pa-shale-grand-jury-20191122-2g44ixkirvba3cljuaiohn3wwm-story.html> (Nov. 22, 2019).

***Berish v. Southwestern Energy Production Co.*, No. 2010-1882 (Ct. Common Pleas, Susquehanna Cty., Pa., Sept. 14, 2010), removed, No. 3:10-cv-01981 (M.D. Pa., Sept. 29, 2010). See 763 F.Supp.2d 702 (M.D. Pa., Feb. 03, 2011) (opinion on motion to dismiss)**

The lawsuit was first filed in September 2010 in Susquehanna County, Pennsylvania, but was removed to federal district court. The complaint alleges that improper casing of fracking wells allowed chemicals to migrate and contaminate water wells. Plaintiffs assert claims for violation of the Hazardous Sites Cleanup Act, negligence, private nuisance, strict liability, trespass, and medical monitoring. See pleadings at 2010 WL 3627011 and 2010 WL 4230599. The federal district court held on February 3, 2011, that the plaintiffs stated a claim for strict liability, but failed to state a claim for emotional distress (except as to one plaintiff). With respect to the strict liability claim, the court noted that Pennsylvania cases have held that oil and gas extraction activities are not abnormally dangerous, but nevertheless declined to grant the motion to dismiss because the determination of whether a particular activity is abnormally dangerous is a fact intensive inquiry. In Pennsylvania, claims for emotional distress require that the plaintiff allege an attendant physical injury. Pennsylvania, however, does recognize a cause of action for inconvenience and discomfort caused by interference with another's peaceful possession of his or her real estate. Subsequent developments -- On May 3, 2012, the district court allowed the plaintiffs to file a third amended complaint and add four additional defendants. The court, however, reserved the right to determine whether the claims against the new defendants are barred by the statute of limitations. See 2012 WL 1569592. On May 17, 2012, plaintiffs filed their third amended complaint in order to add four new defendants. On August 21, 2012 and August 31, 2012, the court dismissed all personal injury claims (except for a minor who retained the right to assert a personal injury claim in the future if she develops an injury), all claims for natural resource damages, and all claims for negligence per se. See Nicholson, *Analysis of Litigation Involving Shale & Hydraulic Fracturing* (June 1, 2014). On August 10, 2015, the court approved the stipulated dismissal of plaintiffs' claims for medical monitoring, strict liability, and all claims under the Pennsylvania Hazardous Sites Cleanup Act.

On March 7, 2016, the court was informed that the parties "are progressing forward with the settlement of this matter" and that "all but two (2) individual plaintiffs have yet to execute the settlement." On April 26, 2016, an order was entered dismissing the "Minor Plaintiffs'" claims. On September 6, 2016, the court entered an order dismissing the case with prejudice. **The case is closed.**

***Armstrong v. Chesapeake Appalachia, LLC*, No. 10-cv-000681 (Ct. Common Pleas, Bradford County, Pa., Oct. 27, 2010), removed, No. 3:10-cv-002453 (M.D. Pa., Nov. 29, 2010), remanded to state court (July 29, 2011), denial of motion to compel arbitration (Jun. 27, 2012), affirmed, 2014 WL 10919559, No. 1346 MDA 2012 (Superior Court of Pennsylvania, Jun. 17, 2014)**

Judy Armstrong, Carl Stiles, and Angelina Fiorentino allege that drilling caused substances to contaminate their water. Causes of action include negligence, strict liability, trespass, medical monitoring, and violation of the Pennsylvania Hazardous Sites Cleanup Act. The action was removed to federal court in 2010, but was remanded in July 2011. Prior to remand, on May 17, 2011, Chesapeake settled an action by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection. See *Chesapeake Fined \$1 Million*, Tulsa World, at

http://www.tulsaworld.com/site/printerfriendlystory.aspx?articleid=20110518_49_E1_HARRIS80433&PrintComments=1 ("the action stems from Chesapeake's contamination of private water supplies with methane in northern Pennsylvania's Bradford County and a February tank fire at a drilling site in southwestern Pennsylvania's Washington County.").

After the case was remanded to state court Chesapeake, filed a motion on September 14, 2011, to compel arbitration and to stay further proceedings. Carl Stiles died in 2012. See Randy LoBasso, *Fracking Unbelievable*, Phila. Weekly (Jly. 31, 2012), at

<http://www.philadelphiaweekly.com/news-and-opinion/164465496.html> ("Late anti-fracking activist Carl Stiles of Bradford County, Pa., died earlier this year after living with illnesses he believed were brought on by shale gas drilling near his home. Stiles, who had intestinal cancer, abandoned his property last year after a toxicologist found barium, arsenic and other volatile organic chemicals in his blood. The radioactivity in his home was nearly seven times the EPA standard limit. And still, no one can say for sure if hydraulic fracturing chemicals were the cause of Stiles' death.").

The Court of Common Pleas denied the 2011 motion and, on June 17, 2014, the Superior Court affirmed, holding that the gas lease – which stated that arbitration could be compelled as to a disagreement over the operations of Chesapeake on the property – did not compel arbitration regarding damages resulting from operations on another person's property. See *Estate of Stiles v. Chesapeake Appalachia, LLC*, 2014 WL 10919559. On November 18, 2015, the state court granted the plaintiffs' motion to amend their complaint to include a wrongful death action, but dismissed their claim for negligent infliction of emotional distress. Judy Armstrong, as representative of the Estate of Carl Stiles, was permitted to continue to pursue the claims of Carl Stiles. **The case is apparently pending.**

***Bidlack v. Chesapeake Appalachia, LLC*, No. 10-EQ-000761 (Ct. Common Pleas, Bradford Cty., Pa., Dec. 17, 2010), removed, No. 3:11-cv-00129-ARC (M.D. Pa. (Scranton), Jan. 19, 2011). See 2012 WL 1657934 (denial of Plaintiffs' motion for relief from the Arbitration Order) (May 11, 2012)**

***Otis v. Chesapeake Appalachia, LLC*, No. 10-EQ-000775 (Ct. Common Pleas, Bradford Cty., Pa., Dec. 17, 2010), removed, No. 3:11-cv-00115-ARC (M.D. Pa. (Scranton), Jan. 18, 2011). See 2012 WL 1657930 (denial of Plaintiffs' motion for relief from the Arbitration Order) (May 11, 2012)**

Plaintiffs' suits, which allege that defendants operated natural gas wells in a manner that contaminated their groundwater supplies, were both filed in the Court of Common Pleas of Bradford County, Pennsylvania. After defendants removed the actions to federal district court, the parties in both cases filed a joint motion for a stay pending arbitration. Claims asserted include negligence, private nuisance, strict liability, and trespass. The court granted the motions and directed the parties to engage in binding arbitration. However, before the parties engaged in binding arbitration, the plaintiffs filed the present motions seeking relief from the court's order. On May 11, 2012, the district court held in both cases that plaintiffs failed to articulate a sufficient basis to set aside the parties' stipulation to arbitrate, and ordered the case stayed until arbitration is completed. See Nicholson, *Analysis of Litigation Involving Shale & Hydraulic Fracturing* (June 1, 2014). On August 21, 2015, the court denied the defendants' motion to dismiss, but stated that the defendants may renew their request for dismissal if the parties cease settlement negotiations and plaintiffs fail to commence arbitration proceedings.

Bidlack – On September 11, 2017, the *Bidlack* case was dismissed with prejudice. **This case is closed.**

Otis – On May 25, 2017, the defendants moved to dismiss, but on June 12, 2017, the motion to dismiss was withdrawn. On September 28, 2017, the court granted the parties' motion to dismiss with prejudice all claims. **This case is closed.**

***Burnett v. Chesapeake Appalachia, LLC*, 11-CV-80 (Ct. Common Pleas, Bradford Cty., Pa., Feb. 25, 2011), removed, No. 3:11-cv-01059 (M.D. Pa., June 1, 2011), remanded to state court (Aug. 31, 2011). See 2011 WL 3876412 (memorandum ordering remand)**

Truman and Bonnie Burnett of Grandville Summit, Pennsylvania, claim they were falsely told their lands would not be damaged by the drilling and operating of gas wells, but in fact suffered injuries when toxic materials were released onto the property and into the water supply. Plaintiffs sued in the Court of Common Pleas of Bradford County, asserting nine causes of actions: Hazardous Sites Cleanup Act, negligence, negligence per se, private nuisance, strict liability, trespass, medical monitoring trust funds, breach of contract, and fraudulent inducement. Chesapeake removed the action to federal court, but on August 31, 2011, the court **remanded** the case back to state court. The court disagreed with defendants that one of the defendants was included in the suit solely to defeat diversity jurisdiction. A notice of discontinuance was filed on January 28, 2013. **The case is closed.**

***Phillips v. Chesapeake Appalachia, LLC*, No. 3:11-mc-00126 (M.D. Pa., Apr. 25, 2011). See 2011 WL 8153167 (M.D. Pa., Apr. 25, 2011) (Petition to Compel Arbitration); 2011 WL 8153165 (Response to Petition to Compel Arbitration) (May 13, 2011); and 2011 WL 8153166 (Petitioners' Reply in Support of Petition to Compel Arbitration) (May 27, 2011)**

Three couples from Wyalusing, Pennsylvania (Bradford County), who leased their oil and gas rights, alleged that drilling activities caused releases, spills, and discharges that contaminated their land and water supplies. Plaintiffs asserted claims for negligence, gross negligence, trespass, nuisance, strict liability, and breach of contract. On April 25, 2011, defendants petitioned to compel arbitration. On June

21, 2012, it was reported that defendants agreed to pay \$1.6 million in damages. **The settlement agreement was filed on December 10, 2012.** The three families agreed to convey their properties (on Paradise Road, Terry Township) to Chesapeake Appalachia on or before December 31, 2012. The case may be the first Marcellus contamination lawsuit to be resolved without a nondisclosure agreement. In a written statement, Chesapeake Energy noted no pre-drill water tests were conducted at these homes, and that pre-drill testing done in other homes in the area showed methane contamination. See *Chesapeake Pays Another \$1.6 million for Bad Marcellus Wells*, at <http://www.platts.com/RSSFeedDetailedNews/RSSFeed/NaturalGas/6413043> (Jun. 22, 2012).

***Becka v. Antero Resources*, No. 11:4812 (Ct. Common Pleas, Washington Cty., Pa., July 18, 2011), removed, No. 2:11-cv-01040 (W.D. Pa., Aug. 12, 2011)**

Paul and Yvonne Becka claim drilling operations contaminated their drinking water. Defendant moved for protective order governing discovery on April 2, 2012. **The case was settled on September 24, 2012.** Sources: Earthjustice, *Fracking Damage Cases and Industry Secrecy*; and Nicholson, *Analysis of Litigation Involving Shale & Hydraulic Fracturing* (June 1, 2014).

***Dillon v. Antero Resources*, No. 11:4813 (Ct. Common Pleas, Washington Cty., Pa., July 18, 2011), removed, No. 2:11-cv-01040 (W.D. Pa., Aug. 12, 2011). See 2012 WL 2899710 (W.D. Pa., Jul. 10, 2012) (opinion regarding discovery process)**

Two families claim various harms to their personal and property interests arising from hydraulic fracturing activities adjacent to their land. Causes of action include negligence, strict liability, and trespass. Defendant moved for a “Confidentiality Order” regulating the discovery process. The court noted that a protective order was appropriate for discovery of information such as plaintiffs’ medical records, private property appraisals, business methods and gas recovery processes used by defendant, and the terms of business arrangements between the defendant and vendors. The court placed the burden of demonstrating the need for confidentiality on the party asserting it, and reserved to the court the decision as to whether any specific information is to be treated as confidential in whole or in part. **The case was settled on August 9, 2012.** Nicholson, *Analysis of Litigation Involving Shale & Hydraulic Fracturing* (June 1, 2014).

***Kamuck v. Shell Energy Holdings GP, LLC*, No. 4:11-cv-01425-MCC (M.D. Pa., August 3, 2011). See 2012 WL 1463594 (Magistrate's Recommendation on Motions to Dismiss and Strike Claims) (Mar. 19, 2012); 2012 WL 1466490 (District Court Memorandum on Magistrate's Recommendation) (Apr. 27, 2012); and 2012 WL 3864954 (order denying “*Lone Pine*” motion) (Sept. 5, 2012) [Tioga County]**

The surface owner alleges that fracking activities harmed him and his property. Edward Kamuck asserts claims for anticipatory trespass, private nuisance, negligence and strict liability. On March 19, 2012, the U.S. Magistrate recommended dismissal of the anticipatory trespass claim, which does not allege an actual intrusion. The Magistrate recommended that the gross negligence and negligence per se claims should be

dismissed, but the “simple” negligence claim should not be dismissed. Gross negligence in Pennsylvania is not a separate cause of action, but is instead a factor which may support a claim for punitive damages. Negligence per se was not properly pled because the complaint did not identify any breaches of statutes designed to protect persons like the plaintiff, and did not identify any statutory violation which was the proximate cause of some injury to the plaintiff. As for strict liability, the Magistrate followed prior cases holding that whether a specific activity is abnormally dangerous is a question of law for the court to resolve, typically after discovery is complete. As for private nuisance, the Magistrate stated that the complaint alleges actions which could support a private nuisance claim. The district court adopted the recommendations on April 27, 2012. See 2012 WL 1466490. On June 21, 2012, defendants requested that the court enter a “*Lone Pine*” order (see, e.g., *Strudley v. Antero Resources Corp.*, 2012 WL 1932470). On September 5, 2012, the court denied this motion. 2012 WL 3864954. In March of 2013 plaintiff’s counsel withdrew from the case. Plaintiff is proceeding pro se. See also Nicholson, *Analysis of Litigation Involving Shale & Hydraulic Fracturing* (June 1, 2014).

On March 25, 2015, the court granted the defendants' motion to strike and motion for **summary judgment**. The court ordered that judgment be entered in favor of the defendants and the case be closed. With respect to the strict liability claim, the court found that “the natural gas drilling activities challenged in this particular case are not abnormally dangerous, and strict liability should not apply.” The private nuisance claim and negligence claims were held to be “unadorned by any competent evidence.” **The case is closed.**

***Roth v. Cabot Oil & Gas Corporation*, No. 2012-324CP (Ct. Common Pleas, Susquehanna Cty., Mar. 19, 2012), removed, No. 3:12-cv-00898 (M.D. Pa. May 14, 2012). See 287 F.R.D. 293, 2012 WL 4895345 (M.D. Pa., Oct. 15, 2012) (decision denying *Lone Pine* case management order); and 919 F.Supp.2d 476 (M.D. Pa., Jan. 30, 2013) (granting in part and denying in part motion to dismiss)**

Frederick and Debra Roth owns property in Springville, Pennsylvania, about 1,000 feet from defendants' gas wells. Plaintiffs had their groundwater tested before commencement of drilling operations, and those tests revealed that the groundwater did not contain detectable levels of methane gas. In August 2010 the Plaintiffs noticed their groundwater supply had become sediment-laden and malodorous. An inspection of Well #2 in April of 2010 revealed the waste pit liner was riddled with holes. Other problems occurred, such as the failure to properly cement Well #3. Plaintiffs' claimed violation of the Pennsylvania Hazardous Sites Cleanup Act; negligence; negligence per se; private nuisance; strict liability; trespass; inconvenience and discomfort; breach of contract; and fraudulent misrepresentation and inducement. On October 15, 2012, the district court denied defendants' motion for a *Lone Pine* order, thus rejecting the defendants' contention that the Court should forego traditional discovery in favor of requiring Plaintiffs to make a prima facie showing of exposure, injury, and causation in support of their claims. See 2012 WL 4895345. On September 4, 2012, defendants moved to dismiss all claims. On January 30, 2013, the district court granted the motion in part, dismissing the trespass, inconvenience and discomfort, and fraudulent misrepresentation claims. With respect to the strict liability claim, the court followed the *Fiorentino* precedent and deferred ruling on the issue to the summary judgment stage, where a more fully developed factual record would better inform its decision. 919 F.Supp.2d 476. **In November of 2013 the parties**

settled the dispute, and on December 12, 2013, the case was closed with prejudice pursuant to a joint motion.

***Manning v. WPX Energy Inc.*, No. 3:12-cv-00646 (M.D. Pa., April 9, 2012) [Susquehanna County]**

Plaintiffs assert that hydraulic fracturing at fifteen wells near their home contaminated their water supply and diminished property values. See Lauren Petracca, *Fracking's Real-Life Victims - Meet the Pennsylvania residents who say their lives have been changed by gas drilling*, Rolling Stone Magazine (Jan. 2013), at <http://www.rollingstone.com/politics/pictures/frackings-real-life-victims-20130123>. Causes of action include violations of the Hazardous Sites Cleanup Act, negligence, private nuisance, strict liability, trespass, and medical monitoring trust funds. On April 10, 2012, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection advised plaintiffs that their water supply contained methane and contained barium above maximum allowable levels. In April 2013, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection released the results of its study, which concluded that the methane in the private water wells was not production gas from the gas wells drilled by WPX Energy Inc. Ben Wolfgang, *Methane study, EPA debunk claims of water pollution, climate change from fracking*, The Washington Times (Apr. 29, 2013), at <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2013/apr/29/pa-environment-agency-debunks-fracking-water-claim/print/>. Tammy Manning appealed this determination on May 29, 2013, and has declared that her lawsuit will continue. She notes that the methane contamination only began after the fracking activities commenced. Mark Drajem, *Fracking Ruled Out by Pennsylvania in Town's Water Case*, Bloomberg (Apr. 30, 2013), at <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2013-04-29/fracking-ruled-out-by-pennsylvania-in-town-s-water-case.html>. See also Nicholson, *Analysis of Litigation Involving Shale & Hydraulic Fracturing* (June 1, 2014).

After the defendants moved for summary judgment on April 15, 2015, the plaintiffs withdrew their Hazardous Sites Cleanup Act; strict liability; and medical monitoring claims, and stated that they are not claiming intentional trespass. On June 30, 2015, the court granted summary judgment for the defendants on the remaining claims (negligence, private nuisance, and negligent trespass) with regard to some, but not all, of the plaintiffs. 2015 WL 3972609. Jury selection was set for April 11, 2016, but on March 22, 2016, the court was informed that **the case had been settled**, and the court dismissed the action without prejudice to reinstate the action with 45 days if the settlement is not consummated.

On Sept. 21, 2016, Tammy Hadlick and the Mannings filed a brief arguing that they were misinformed as to the terms of the settlement, and that the settlement agreement should have included mutual releases in order to protect "against any retaliations or countersuits." On September 30, 2016, the defendants submitted a revised settlement agreement which pertains to all types of litigation, "whether in tort or contract, known or unknown, direct or indirect, suspected or unsuspected, foreseen or unforeseen, real or imaginary, actual or potential, at law or in equity, under the common law, state law, federal law, or any other law." On February 23, 2017, the court ordered the case dismissed with prejudice. **The case is closed.**

***Kalp v. WPX Energy Appalachia, LLC*, No. 2460 (Ct. Common Pleas, Westmoreland Cty., Pa., Apr. 20, 2012), removed, No. 2:12-cv-00662-LPL (W.D. Pa., May 16, 2012)**

Two couples, Galen and Virginia Kalp and Glenlyn and Audrey Kalp, leased their farm in 2006 prior to advent of horizontal hydraulic fracturing. In 2011, WPX constructed a 27 acre drilling site to extract gas from 1,300 acres of adjoining lands. The Kalps argued that this use of their land was unlawful and a breach of contract. **On November 21, 2013, an order was entered closing the case due to a settlement.**

Related regulatory action. – On July 2, 2015, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection ordered WPX Energy Appalachia LLC to restore or replace the water supply of Virginia and Glen Kalp after determining that WPX's fracking activities were responsible for contamination of the water. On August 3, 2015, WPX filed a notice of appeal with the Pennsylvania Environmental Hearing Board (EHB). See *In the Matter of WPX Energy Appalachia LLC*, No. 2015-110, Pa. EHB). WPX, however, withdrew its appeal, and the EHB terminated the appeal on March 4, 2016. See http://ehb.courtapps.com/public/update_info_pub.php. **The regulatory proceeding is closed.**

2017 fine – According to news sources, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection on February 27, 2017, fined WPX Energy Appalachia \$1.2 million for contaminating drinking water. The penalty comes nearly four years after WPX's wastewater leaked from an on-site fracking impoundment pond, contaminating the drinking water of five Westmoreland County families. WPX will also remediate soil, groundwater and surface water.

***Haney v. Range Resources*, No. C-63-CV-201203534 (Ct. Common Pleas, Washington Cty., Pa., May 25, 2012)**

Washington County landowners claim their water was contaminated from fracking flowback, that they and their farm animals became ill, and that they face a risk of cancer due to exposure to spills, leaks and air pollutants. The Plaintiffs (Stacey Haney, Beth, John and Ashley Voyles, Loren and Grace Kiskadden) also allege that Range Resources intentionally hid test results, and asserted several claims, including strict liability, negligence, negligent and intentional infliction of emotional distress, battery, private nuisance, and trespass. Defendants include Range Resources, 12 drilling company subcontractors or suppliers, two individuals, and two water testing laboratories.

On November 16, 2012, January 18, 2013, and July 8, 2015, the court denied Range Resources's motions for a case management order. On November 5, 2013, the trial court directed all third-party manufacturers of products used at the Yeager Drilling Site to disclose the constituent ingredients of their products. On June 11, 2014, the court issued an order placing the burden on Range Resources to secure and provide the desired information. Range Resources filed an appeal, but the Superior Court held that the trial court's 2014 order was interlocutory and not immediately appealable. *Haney v. Range Resources-Appalachia Inc.*, No. 1130 WDA 2014 (Apr. 14, 2015).

On February 5, 2015, the trial court quashed Range's objection to service of a subpoena on URS Corporation, an engineering firm retained by Range. Plaintiffs seek information related to air and water

monitoring and testing by URS. Range appealed, but the Superior Court held that “Range has no grounds for objecting to Residents’ request for relevant information possessed by URS in its capacity as an engineering consultant that was not retained in anticipation of litigation.” See No. 257 WDA 2015 (Jan. 29, 2016), at <http://www.pacourts.us/assets/opinions/Superior/out/j-a35021-15m%20-%201025251956056506.pdf>.

On October 7, 2016, the court granted summary judgment and dismissed Testamerica Laboratories from the case. On April 3, 2017, the court granted summary judgment in favor of Universal Well Services and dismissed it from the case. In September and October of 2017, the court dismissed the claims for strict product liability against Halliburton Energy, Services, Saxon Drilling, and Solmax International, Inc. (but left intact a claim for negligence against Solmax).

A settlement was reached on January 19, 2018, and the terms were spelled out in a court order dated August 31, 2018. The order was issued under seal but became available in May 2019. Range Resources and other defendants agreed to pay \$3 million. The settlement includes a release of claims; a clause preventing plaintiffs from making disparaging comments; and language giving Range Resources a right of first refusal regarding the properties. See Reid Frazier, *Court document reveals Range Resources, other defendants agreed to \$3 million settlement in Washington County contamination suit*, StateImpact Pennsylvania, at <https://www.witf.org/news/2019/06/court-document-reveals-range-resources-other-defendants-agreed-to-3-million-settlement-in-washington.php> (June 4, 2019).

In February 2019, the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette petitioned to intervene and unseal the records. A hearing on the Post-Gazette's petition was held on May 25, 2019, and a ruling is expected in the near future. **The motion to unseal the records is pending.**

The Haney family's problems are documented in book, **Amity And Prosperity: One Family And The Fracturing of America**, by Eliza Griswold. See *Local family's battle over fracking inspires new book*, at <https://www.post-gazette.com/news/science/2018/06/19/Fracking-Washington-County-Eliza-Griswold-Haney-farm-Marcellus-Shale/stories/201806080134> (June 19, 2018).

In January 2019 it was reported that Pennsylvania Attorney General Josh Shapiro is pursuing criminal investigations of “environmental crimes” committed by the oil and gas industry in Washington County and possibly throughout the state. See *State conducting criminal investigation of shale gas production*, at <https://www.post-gazette.com/news/crime-courts/2019/01/28/pa-attorney-general-josh-shapiro-criminal-investigation-oil-gas-industry-washington-county-environmental-crimes/stories/201901210078> (Jan. 28, 2019). Almost two years earlier, in May 2017, seventeen people met with the Attorney General to complain about environment and health impacts from shale gas extraction. Attorney General Shapiro and investigators also met with representatives from environmental advocacy groups in western Pennsylvania. In August 2018 Shapiro sent a letter to the attorneys in the *Haney* litigation which referred to an ongoing “Stacey Haney/Range Resources Investigation” and requested that the attorneys preserve the documents in the litigation. See also *Hallowich v. Range Resources Corp.*, No. C-63-CV-201003954 (Ct. Common Pleas, Washington Cty., Pa., May 27, 2010) (discussed above). Scott Perry, who heads the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's oil and gas office, testified before a state grand

jury investigating environmental crimes involving the shale gas industry on November 14, 2019. See Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, *Pennsylvania grand jury probing shale gas industry over environmental concerns*, at <https://www.mcall.com/news/pennsylvania/mc-nws-pa-shale-grand-jury-20191122-2g44ixkirvba3cljuaiohn3wwm-story.html> (Nov. 22, 2019). On March 9, 2020, as reported by StateImpact Pennsylvania, Attorney General Josh Shapiro says he is conducting “more than a dozen” investigations into companies involved in the oil and gas industry in the state. See Reid Frazier, Attorney General says he’s investigating ‘more than a dozen’ criminal cases into oil and gas companies, at <https://stateimpact.npr.org/pennsylvania/2020/03/09/attorney-general-says-hes-investigating-more-than-a-dozen-criminal-cases-into-oil-and-gas-companies/> (Mar. 9, 2020). A grand jury in Pittsburgh has been convened for more than a year, and Shapiro said criminal charges were expected “in the near future.”

On June 12, 2020, Range Resources pled no contest to environmental crimes at two Washington County sites and will pay a fine of \$150,000. One of the locations was the Yeager site. In announcing the charges, Attorney General Josh Shapiro said Range Resources withheld internal knowledge of contamination and was negligent in protecting the state’s environment. Reid Frazier, StateImpact Pennsylvania, *Range Resources pleads no contest to environmental crimes at southwest Pa. well sites*, at <https://stateimpact.npr.org/pennsylvania/2020/06/12/range-resources-pleads-no-contest-to-environmental-crimes-at-southwest-pa-well-sites/> (June 12, 2020).

Related regulatory action. – ***Haney, et al v. Pennsylvania DEP, Case No. 2013-112.*** – The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection issued permits to Range Resources on June 26, 2013, authorizing hydraulic fracturing operations. Plaintiffs appealed the decision to the Pennsylvania Environmental Hearing Board on July 26, 2013. However, on June 11, 2014, the **appeal was withdrawn** by stipulation. See http://ehb.courtapps.com/public/document_shower_pub.php?csNameID=4694.

Related regulatory action and litigation. – ***Kiskadden v. PA DEP and Range Resources, PA Environmental Hearing Board Case No. 2011-149-R; petition for review filed, No. 1167 CD 2015 (Commonwealth Court, July 9, 2015), opinion, 149 A.3d 380, 2016 WL 6242604 (Oct. 26, 2016)*** – Loren Kiskadden also filed a complaint with the Pennsylvania Department of Environment Protection. The DEP, after sampling his well in June 2011, found dissolved methane gas, chloroform, butyl alcohol, acetone, and high levels of sodium and total dissolved solids, but determined that the well was not contaminated by nearby Marcellus Shale gas drilling by Range Resources. When Kiskadden sought to appeal this determination, the DEP argued he had no right to appeal because the “discretionary” report did not direct or require drilling companies to do anything. On May 16, 2012, the Environmental Hearing Board held Kiskadden may appeal and argue the investigation was inaccurate and incomplete. According to the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette article, Kiskadden’s appeal of the DEP’s determination that his well was not contaminated by Range Resources is the first administrative appeal in Pennsylvania to challenge a DEP water supply determination denying contamination. On June 12, 2015, the Board dismissed the claim, holding that Kiskadden failed to show by a preponderance of the evidence that any pollution to the water well was caused by the drilling operations.. Noting that there were no pre-drilling samples of water quality, the Board stated that

“[s]imply because there are problems on a drilling site ... does not mean that a water well located approximately one half mile away was impacted by those drilling operations.” See http://ehb.courtapps.com/public/document_shower_pub.php?csNameID=4351.

On July 9, 2015, Kiskadden filed a petition for review in the Commonwealth Court, contending that the Board erred in rejecting the conclusion that constituents from the Yeager Impoundment migrated to petitioner's well water. [Cmwlth. Ct. No. 1167 CD 2015]. On December 7, 2015, the court denied Kiskadden's application to vacate and remand to the EPB.

On October 26, 2016, the Commonwealth Court issued its decision. 149 A.3d 380. The court affirmed the Board's determination that Kiskadden did not meet his burden of proving that the drilling operations at the Yeager Site contaminated his well water. In particular, the Court rejected Kiskadden's contentions that (1) substantial evidence does not support the Board's factual findings; (2) that the Board capriciously disregarded material competent evidence demonstrating a hydrogeological connection between his well and the natural gas operations at the Yeager Site; and (3) that the Board erred by relying on speculative evidence to support its finding that a hydrogeological connection did not exist. The majority decried “Range's reckless business practices” as “irresponsible in the extreme, bordering on reprehensible,” but noted that the issue in the case was not whether the activities at the Yeager Site impacted the environment and contaminated the soil and adjacent springs, but was instead “whether Range's activities impacted Kiskadden's water well.” *Id.* at 403. The Court held that “Kiskadden's evidence did not outweigh strong, conflicting evidence that the contaminants in his well water, particularly in the ratios and concentrations detected, were naturally occurring and not unique to oil and gas activities. Moreover, his evidence did not prevail over other credible evidence refuting the existence or likelihood of a physical pathway between his well and the Yeager Site.” *Id.* Judge Patricia McCullough dissented. She relied on the fact that the Board had granted a rebuttable evidentiary presumption to Kiskadden that the chemicals in his well water were contained in products used at the Yeager Site, and noted that the Board did not find that this presumption was rebutted.

On May 2, 2017, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court denied the Petition for Allowance of Appeal. **The case is closed.**

***Butts v. Southwestern Energy Production Company*, No. 3:12-cv-01330 (M.D. Pa., July 10, 2012)**

Plaintiffs own vacation homes on Round Pond, a lake in Susquehanna County, Pennsylvania. They assert causes of action for private nuisance (noise, light, deforestation, and excessive traffic) and negligence, and claim their well water is no longer safe and property values have decreased. Nicholson, *Analysis of Litigation Involving Shale & Hydraulic Fracturing* (June 1, 2014). On April 26, 2013, the magistrate found that, “given the proximity of plaintiffs' Round Pond properties to SEPCO's gas and drilling activities, coupled with the fact that plaintiffs aver that such activities have impacted the use and enjoyment of their land, a private nuisance cause of action has been stated.” 2013 WL 12177102. The magistrate's report, adopted on May 14, 2013, also rejected the arguments that the complaint fails to state a plausible claim for contamination of water wells, and that the claims are subject to dismissal under Pennsylvania's economic-loss doctrine. On August 12, 2014, the court denied Defendant's summary judgment motion.

With respect to the claim of water contamination, the court that that – since the defendant did not produce expert testimony to negate Plaintiffs' firsthand observations that their water was contaminated -- the only evidence regarding causation of record (Plaintiffs' testimony that their water turned black right after the drilling operations) is sufficient to survive summary judgment. **The suit was apparently settled, and on November 12, 2014, all parties stipulated to the dismissal of this action** with prejudice pursuant to Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 41.

***Bezjak v. Chevron Appalachia LLC*, No. GD-13-011271 (Ct. Common Pleas, Allegheny Cty., Pa., Jun. 13, 2013)**

Joseph and Mildred Bezjak, David and Linda Headley, and eleven other individuals in the Pittsburgh area sued eleven companies, claiming noise and odors associated with nearby gas wells constituted a nuisance. See <http://www.cnsenvironmentallaw.com/2013/06/18/neighbors.pdf> (complaint). See also See <http://www.cnsenvironmentallaw.com/2013/06/18/neighbors.pdf> (complaint) and Jim Efstathiou Jr., et al., *Missouri Lawyer Brings Nuisance Claims to Fracking Arena*, at <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2013-06-11/missouri-lawyer-brings-nuisance-claims-to-fracking-arena.html> (Jun. 11, 2013). On August 14, 2013, the nine defendants were dismissed, leaving Laurel Mountain Midstream Operating LLC and Atlas Resources LLC. On July 25, 2014, the court dismissed Counts II, IV, and VI, raising claims of “negligence/recklessness” on the ground that the “duties and remedies for nontresspassorial invasions are those set forth in the law governing nuisances.” The court declined to dismiss the plaintiffs' private nuisance claims and punitive damage claims. On May 14, 2018, a scheduling order was filed setting February 22, 2019, as the date for filing motions for summary judgment. On October 26, the parties stipulated to the dismissal of the claims of plaintiff Albert Stronko. On November 14, the parties informed the court that all claims and counterclaims in connection with Laurel Mountain Midstream Operating LLC have been settled. On January 31, 2019, all claims by the Headley family were settled and discontinued with prejudice. **The case is closed.**

***Leighton v. Chesapeake Appalachia, LLC*, No. 2013-cv-0169 (Ct. Common Pleas, Bradford Cty., Pa., Jun. 19, 2013), removed, No. 1:13-cv-02018 (M.D. Pa., Jul. 26, 2013). See 2013 WL 6191739 (M.D. Pa., 11-26-13) (order on duty to arbitrate)**

Michael and Nancy Leighton signed a lease with Chesapeake Appalachia with an arbitration clause. In 2011 their water supply was found to be of good quality. Chesapeake Appalachia, Chesapeake Energy, Nomac Drilling, and Schlumberger Technology engaged in fracking operations near the property and contaminants escaped. The groundwater had increases in methane, ethane, propane, iron, and manganese, changes in clarity, foul odor, noticeable levels of natural gas, and was flammable. Creek water on the property began bubbling. Plaintiffs allege seven causes of action against all defendants: (1) violation of the Pennsylvania Hazardous Sites Cleanup Act; (2) negligence; (3) negligence per se; (4) private nuisance; (5) strict liability for abnormally dangerous and ultra-hazardous activities; (6) trespass; and (7) “inconvenience and discomfort.” The eighth cause of action is for breach of contract and names only their lessee, Chesapeake Appalachia. On November 26, 2013, the district court held that the claims were within the scope of the arbitration agreement even though the damages did not arise from activities performed on the property. In *Armstrong v. Chesapeake Appalachia, LLC*, No. 10–CV–0681, (Bradford

County Common Pleas, Jun. 27, 2012) (unpublished), the court held that arbitration could not be compelled under similar circumstances; however, the district court distinguished *Armstrong* because it involved only tort claims, whereas in the present case the plaintiffs alleged their lease applies to activities on adjoining land by bringing a claim for breach of the lease in addition to tort claims. The court ordered the plaintiffs to arbitrate their claims against Chesapeake Appalachia, Chesapeake Energy, and Nomatic, and held that the claims against Schlumberger should also be arbitrated if it is shown that Schlumberger was an agent of Chesapeake Appalachia. **On February 12, 2014, the case was dismissed pursuant to a settlement.**

***Brown v. WPX Appalachia, LLC*, No. 13CI04923 (Ct. Common Pleas, Westmoreland Cty., Pa., Sept. 16, 2013)**

Ralph Brown filed a complaint with the Pennsylvania DEP in September 2012, stating that his 600-foot-deep well was contaminated by fracking wastewater that had leaked from the 3 million gallon impoundment. In June 2013 the DEP determined that his well had been contaminated and ordered the drilling company to permanently replace his water supply. See Don Hopey, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, *Families' well water disrupted near Ligonier* (July 4, 2014). On September 16, 2013, Brown filed a lawsuit asserting a claim of nuisance. The suit alleged that the contamination reduced the value of his property and interfered with his family's ability to use and enjoy the land. On April 1, 2016, the suit was settled and discontinued.

***Russell v. Chesapeake Appalachia, LLC*, No. 2013-cv-11291 (Ct. Common Pleas, Dauphin Cty., Pa., Dec. 27, 2013), removed, No. 4:14-cv-00148 (M.D. Pa.). See 2014 WL 7935781 (First Amended Complaint, Dec. 12, 2014); and 305 F.R.D. 78 (M.D. Pa. 2015) (Lone Pine order)**

Sheila Russell and twelve other residents and/or landowners in Bradford County, Pennsylvania, sued Chesapeake and Nabors Completion and Production Services for private, temporary, continuing, abatable nuisance, and negligence/recklessness, seeking recovery of damages arising from defendants' natural gas exploration, extraction, transportation, and associated activities. Plaintiffs complain of wells that intermittently leak natural gas and other toxic and/or radioactive substances into the air, ground, and nearby waterways; daily discharges of toxic and/or radioactive substances and other emissions into the air by manually venting and/or flaring wells; excessive noise; discharges and improper disposal of radioactive materials on or around Plaintiffs' properties; methane migration; excessive lights and offensive odors; excessive dust and silica sand, diesel fumes, or other airborne particulate matter; and excessive unpermitted or unauthorized truck and heavy machinery transportation and traffic.

On March 2, 2015, the court denied the defendants' motion to sever and motion for a *Lone Pine* case management order. With regard to the *Lone Pine* motion, the plaintiffs argued that the request "is akin to a pseudo-summary judgment order requiring that Plaintiffs, without the benefit of discovery, prove facts with specificity beyond what is required by the Federal Rules and ordinary federal practice at this juncture in the litigation." 305 F.R.D. at 85. The court agreed, and found that "[r]equiring Plaintiffs to prove their *prima facie* case with the specific evidence the Defendants request at this juncture is

effectively imposing a summary judgment standard on the Plaintiffs without the benefit of discovery.” Id. The court also noted that “the Defendants did not challenge the substantive sufficiency of the Plaintiffs’ claims in their First Amended Complaint by a Rule 12 motion, and instead filed an answer.” Id.

On December 27, 2018, the court granted summary judgment for Chesapeake on the remaining private nuisance claim. The court held that -- to the extent Chesapeake’s operations constitute a nuisance -- the nuisance is permanent and private nuisance claims are time-barred because plaintiffs filed suit more than two years after they were first injured. The court held that “Chesapeake’s energy extraction operations concern a permanent change in the condition of the land because Chesapeake’s wells and the accompanying operation evince permanence.” Plaintiffs experienced harm when wells were drilled between 2009 and 2011, more than two years before the lawsuit was filed. Moreover, the record did not contain evidence that Chesapeake acted in a way to create a new and distinct nuisance after their wells were initially drilled. “Although sympathetic to Plaintiffs’ exhaustive and individualized descriptions of their plight,” the court concluded that “because Plaintiffs filed the present action more than two years after their claims accrued, Plaintiffs’ nuisance action is barred by the statute of limitations.” The case is closed.

In the Matter of Arbitration between Jacqueline Place and Chesapeake Appalachia, LLC, 14 115 00299 12 (American Arbitration Assn.), at <https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/48182083/Award.pdf> (Jan. 22, 2014)

Jacqueline Place conducted baseline tests of her well water prior to entering into a 2008 lease. In 2010 her water had become “reddish brown” and “oily,” and new tests found dissolved methane levels 1,300 to 2,000 times higher than the baseline tests. Pursuant to her lease, she filed a claim with an arbitrator, and stated that she “lived for ten months deprived totally of the use of her well, and even after its ‘restoration,’ has been burdened with a water supply with chronic contamination, requiring constant vigilance and ongoing monitoring.” **The arbitrator in January 2014 ordered Chesapeake to pay \$59,381.42 for contaminating her water well with methane.** See Brendan Gibbons, *Bradford County woman wins arbitration case with Chesapeake over well contamination*, Scranton Times-Tribune (02/19/14) , at <http://thetimes-tribune.com/news/bradford-county-woman-wins-arbitration-case-with-chesapeake-over-well-contamination-1.1637029>

Chaffee v. Talisman Energy USA Inc., No. 3:14-cv-00690 (M.D. Pa. Apr. 9, 2014)

Residents or owners of property in Bradford County, Pennsylvania, seek damages from Talisman Energy USA Inc. and Central New York Oil and Gas Company, L.L.C. for private, temporary, continuing, abatable nuisance, and negligence/recklessness arising from natural gas exploration, extraction, transportation, storage, and other associated activities. Among other things, the plaintiffs allege that (1) drilling and hydraulic fracturing activities caused unpleasant noises; (2) flaring released toxic or hazardous smoke into the air and ground of the surrounding areas; (3) construction and operation of well pads caused and continues to cause a dangerous amount of large truck and heavy machinery traffic and excessive amount of dust, silica sand, or particulate matter to enter the air; (4) immediately after hydraulic fracturing

occurred, water from water wells frequently turned milky white in color with an oily sheen and contained methane. **On September 5, 2014, the court entered an order dismissing the case** in light of the parties' stipulation of dismissal without prejudice for lack of subject matter jurisdiction.

***Tiongco v. Southwestern Energy Production Co.*, No. 3:14-cv-01405 (M.D. Pa., Jly. 21, 2014). See 214 F.Supp.3d 279 (order, dated Oct. 14, 2016, denying defendant's motion for summary judgment with respect to the private nuisance claim)**

Stephanie Tiongco raises alpacas in Susquehanna County and creates dolls from alpaca fiber on her land. She leased her land to the defendant. She alleges that defendant's operations have caused her home to vibrate and structural beams to shift and sag. She complains of excessive light, noise, dust, and truck traffic. She initially asserted claims for private nuisance and negligence, and sought to enjoin unreasonable drilling activities, but subsequently dropped her negligence claim and her request for injunctive relief. On October 14, 2016, the court denied the defendant's motion for summary judgment with respect to the private nuisance claim. 214 F.Supp.3d 279. The court held that the plaintiff produced sufficient evidence demonstrating that the defendant was the legal cause of the private nuisance, and plaintiff has produced sufficient evidence for a reasonable juror to conclude defendant acted intentionally. However, by agreement of the parties, the court dismissed the case with prejudice on January 20, 2017. **The case is closed.**

***Lauff v. Range Resources - Appalachia, LLC.*, No. GD-14-018458 (Ct. Common Pleas, Allegheny Cty., Pa., Oct. 7, 2014)**

Christopher Lauff and his family sued Range Resources and others for damages arising from oil and gas drilling and extraction activities. The plaintiffs assert a claim for nuisance based on releases, spills, emissions, and discharges of hazardous gases, chemicals, and wastes into the air; contamination of surface waters and groundwater supplies; and excessive noises, odors, lights and truck traffic. The plaintiffs also assert claims for negligence and trespass. On January 7, 2016, certain negligence claims were withdrawn, as well as all strict liability and negligence per se allegations. A second amended complaint was filed on November 17, 2016. On February 22, 2017, the court overruled the defendants' preliminary objections, holding that the allegations, if proven, are adequate to permit a jury to draw a reasonable inference that the defendants "were aware of the nature of the operations to be performed by their lessees on their land so as to charge them with sufficient knowledge of the specific nuisance created on their land and complained of by the Plaintiffs in their Second Amended Complaint. Moreover, the plaintiffs allege that the defendants "entered into additional leases with the natural gas operators even after having actual knowledge of the specific allegations of nuisance set forth in Plaintiffs' Complaint." **The case is pending.**

***Chito v. Hilcorp Energy Company*, No. 11091/14 (Ct. Common Pleas, Lawrence Cty., Pa., Oct. 28, 2014), removed, No. 2:14-cv-01576-TFM (W.D. Pa., Nov. 17, 2014), and *Dubrasky v. Hilcorp Energy Company*, No. 10411/15 (Ct. Common Pleas, Lawrence Cty, Pa., Apr. 21, 2015), removed, No. 2:15-cv-00664-TFM (W.D. Pa., May 20, 2015)**

Timothy Chito and Elizabeth Kesner own property in Pulaski, Pennsylvania, and Kathy and Ivan Dubrasky own property in New Wilmington, Pennsylvania. The plaintiffs in both cases assert claims for private nuisance, negligence, recklessness, and strict liability for abnormally dangerous activity. They allege drilling activities have rendered their land unenjoyable due to “excessive noise, odors, blinding light, tremors, and twenty-four hour operation of heavy industrial equipment.” On August 27, 2015, the court consolidated the two cases (under 2:14-cv-01576) and denied the plaintiffs' motion to remand to state court. On August 19, 2016, Hillcorp Energy filed a motion for summary judgment. On October 4, 2016, the court granted the plaintiffs' motion to discontinue and to dismiss the case without prejudice. **The case is closed.**

***Baumgardner v. Chesapeake Appalachia LLC*, No. GD-15-004224 (Ct. Common Pleas, Allegheny Cty., Pa., Mar. 19, 2015)**

Gary Baumgardner and other homeowners sued Chesapeake Appalachia and other defendants for damages based on allegations that their homes and quality of life have been negatively impacted by problems with air quality, emissions, noises, vibrations, and odors. They assert claims of nuisance, negligence, and fraudulent inducement. An amended complaint was filed on December 14, 2016, and an answer was filed on September 21, 2017. **The case is pending.**

***Briggs v. Southwestern Energy Production Co.*, No. 2015-01253 (Ct. Common Pleas, Susquehanna Cty., Pa., Nov. 5, 2015), reversed and remanded, No. 1351 MDA 2017, 2018 PA Super 79, 184 A.3d 153 (Pa. Super. Ct., Apr. 2, 2018), vacated and remanded, No. 63 MAP 2018, 224 A.2d 334 (Pa. Sup. Ct., Jan. 22, 2020), decision on remand affirming the trial court's order, 2020 WL 7233111 (Pa. Super. Ct., Dec. 8, 2020)**

Adam Briggs, Paula Briggs, Joshua Briggs, and Sarah Briggs, who own 11 acres in Susquehanna County, assert claims of trespass and conversion, and request punitive damages. They allege that Southwestern, in its operation of drilling units located on the adjoining property, has unlawfully been extracting natural gas from beneath Appellants' property. Appellants also allege that Southwestern's actions constitute a past and continuing trespass. The land in question is approximately 11.07 acres in Harford Township, Susquehanna County. Southwestern holds a lease on an adjoining tract. The trial court held on August 8, 2017, that the actions of Southwestern were permitted by the rule of capture.

On April 2, 2018, the appellate court reversed and remanded. 184 A.3d 153. The court was persuaded by the dissenting opinion in *Coastal Oil & Gas Corp. v. Garza Energy Trust*, 268 S.W.3d 1 (Tex. 2008), which argued that the rule of capture should not apply when an adjoining lessee “drains minerals by means of an artificially created channel or device, and then ‘captures’ the minerals” 268 S.W.3d at 43. The appellate court also cited with approval the vacated decision in *Stone v. Chesapeake Appalachia, LLC*, 2013 WL 2097397 (N.D. W.Va. 2013), order vacated, 2013 WL 7863861 (N.D. W.Va. 2013), where the district court stated that hydraulic fracturing beneath a neighbor's land without consent constitutes an actionable trespass. *Id.* at *8. In holding that the rule of capture should not govern and sanction the actions at issue,

the court held that “hydraulic fracturing “may constitute an actionable trespass where subsurface fractures, fracturing fluid and proppant cross boundary lines and extend into the subsurface estate of an adjoining property for which the operator does not have a mineral lease, resulting in the extraction of natural gas from beneath the adjoining landowner’s property. “ 184 A.3d 163-164. In support of its determination, the court noted that “precluding trespass liability based on the rule of capture would effectively allow a mineral lessee to expand its lease by locating a well near the lease’s boundary line and withdrawing natural gas from beneath the adjoining property, for which it does not have a lease. Such an allowance would nearly eradicate a mineral lessee’s incentive to negotiate mineral leases with small property owners, as the lessee could use hydraulic fracturing to create an artificial channel beneath an adjoining property, and withdraw natural gas from beneath the neighbor’s land without paying a royalty.” 184 A.3d 163.

On **January 22, 2020**, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court vacated the order of the Superior Court and remanded to that court for further proceedings. *Briggs v. Southwestern Energy Production Co.*, 224 A.2d 334. **The Court affirmed that the rule of capture applies to hydraulically fractured wells.** As stated by Chief Justice Thomas Saylor, “the rule of capture applies although the driller uses further artificial means, such as a pump, to enhance production from a source common to it and the plaintiff — so long as no physical invasion of the plaintiff’s land occurs.” *Id.* at 348. The Court held that post-fracking migration of natural gas across property lines is not, in and of itself, evidence of a trespass. In support of this statement, the Court noted that a fracture created entirely on a driller’s property could create an area of low pressure sufficient to cause gas to move from a neighboring property even without a physical intrusion. The Court held that the plaintiff must prove that a physical intrusion onto their property took place. *Id.* at 352 (“a plaintiff alleging trespass by invasion of property must aver something more than mere drainage of minerals from the subject property”). For example, fracking fluids that migrate into adjacent property would be a physical intrusion. On March 19, 2020, the record was remitted to the Susquehanna County Court of Common Pleas.

On **December 8, 2020**, the Superior Court of Pennsylvania issued its decision following the remand from the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. 2020 WL 7233111. The court held that the complaint “does not specifically allege that Southwestern engaged in horizontal drilling that extended onto their property, or that Southwestern propelled fracturing fluids and proppants across the property line.” The court reinstated the order of the Court of Common Pleas of Susquehanna, entered August 8, 2017, granting summary judgment in favor of Southwestern (that the actions of Southwestern were permitted by the rule of capture). In a concluding footnote, the court noted that “the Supreme Court’s holding leaves open for future plaintiffs the possibility of litigating trespass claims based on hydraulic fracturing, so long as they specifically plead that hydraulic fracturing resulted in a physical invasion of their property.” As noted in *Briggs II* (see below) the plaintiffs did not take further action in this case. **The case is closed, but see Briggs II.**

***Briggs v. Southwestern Energy Production Company*, No. 2021-51 CP (Ct. Common Pleas, Susquehanna County, Pa., Jan. 12, 2021), motion for removal, No. 3:21-CV-520, 2021 WL 2808903 (M.D., Pa., Mar. 22, 2021)**

Adam, Paula, Joshua, and Sarah Briggs claim that the defendant injects fluids and proppants into its well bore holes on adjacent land, and that the fluids and proppants are “forcible propelled and injected” into their property in Harford Township, Susquehanna County, and that defendant is liable for trespass and conversion of natural gas. Plaintiffs seek actual and punitive damages.

On March 22, 2021, defendants removed the case and filed a motion to dismiss, which argues that the complaint must be dismissed under the doctrine of claim preclusion in light of the prior lawsuit filed in 2015. On August 17, 2023, the district court dismissed the complaint on res judicata grounds to the extent it was based on events during the pendency of *Briggs I* but otherwise granted leave for plaintiffs to amend their complaint. 2023 WL 5310226. On August 24, 2023, the plaintiffs filed an amended complaint. 2023 WL 9291724.

On January 3, 2024, the district court denied the defendant’s motion to dismiss the amended complaint, ruling that the plaintiffs have sufficiently alleged a continuing trespass and have shown that they continue to be alleged victims of intrusive conduct that results in natural gas being extracted from their land. The court rejected Southwestern's argument that plaintiffs cannot allege a continuing trespass given that Southwestern ceased in 2013 propelling proppants into the plaintiffs' land. 2024 WL 38298. On January 17, 2023, Southwestern filed an answer and argued the plaintiffs’ claims are precluded by the Rule of Capture and by a statute of limitations. It also contends that the claims fail because the law does not recognize a claim for unintentional subsurface trespass in the absence of injury to the surface estate. Finally, Southwestern says claims concerning alleged events beneath the surface and alleged damages sustained after Dec. 8, 2020, are not provable.

On March 21, 2025, the court granted summary judgment for the defendant, holding that there was no evidence that the operator physically invaded the plaintiffs' property by the injection of proppants and fracking fluids beneath it to facilitate the extraction of natural gas. The court held that "it undisputed that there is no evidence that SWN injected any proppants or tracking fluids after June 9, 2013. It is further undisputed that Plaintiffs have come forward with no evidence that SWN injected proppants and tracking fluids beneath the 11.07 Acre Property Sub-Portion at any time, and certainly no time after June 9, 2013." Because the plaintiffs could not establish a continuing trespass or conversion, their claims were barred by res judicata/claim preclusion as well as the statute of limitations. The court also held that “SWN had the express contractual right to engage in the alleged tracking activities pursuant to the terms of the lease” and that there was “no evidence that SWN physically invaded Plaintiffs' property by the injection of proppants and fracking fluids beneath Plaintiffs' property to facilitate the extraction of natural gas.” Without a physical invasion, the rule of capture applies. 2025 WL 887779. A motion for reconsideration was filed on April 14, 2025. **The case is pending.**

***Kemble v. Cabot Oil and Gas Corporation*, No. 3:17-CV-00665 (M.D. Pa., Apr. 13, 2017)**

Raymond Kemble filed suit against Cabot Oil and Gas Corp. and GasSearch Drilling Services Corp. (natural gas producers), and Williams Field Services Company, LLC (compressor station owner) with respect to natural gas drilling and fracking activities and operations near his property in Dimock Township, Montrose, Susquehanna County. The action asserts claims for private temporary continuing nuisance and

negligence/recklessness. Allegation of impairment of use and enjoyment of property include contamination of water supply; loud noises, bright lights, excessive dust, silica, and particulate matter, disruptive truck and heavy machinery traffic on rural roads. Plaintiff also alleges that a nearby Teel Compressor Station emits toxic substances and produces “horrific odors” and frequent “high decibel screeching and high pressure venting noises. On June 5, 2017, the defendants moved to dismiss based on the absence of federal question and federal diversity jurisdiction. On June 9, 2017, the court dismissed the complaint without prejudice. **The case is closed.**

Criminal charges. – In June 2020 a grand jury ended a 2-year investigation of Cabot Oil for environmental crimes in northeastern Pennsylvania. Attorney General Josh Shapiro on June 15, 2020, announced that the Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General plans to file 15 criminal counts against the Houston-based Cabot Oil and Gas, including nine felonies. Cabot will be charged with 7 counts of Prohibition Against Discharge of Industrial Wastes, 7 counts of Prohibition Against Other Pollutions and one count of Unlawful Conduct under the Clean Streams Law. The Grand Jury’s investigation into the contamination of well water in Dimock, Susquehanna County, revealed that Cabot’s fracking activities were responsible for methane pollution in the local water supply. *Houston energy company hit with criminal charges in Pennsylvania*, <http://www.okenergytoday.com/2020/06/houston-energy-company-hit-with-criminal-charges-in-pennsylvania/> (Jun. 19, 2020). **The criminal case is pending.**

Cabot Oil & Gas Corporation v. Speer, No. 2017-936 (Ct. Common Pleas, Susquehanna Cty., Pa., Aug. 7, 2017)

Cabot Oil & Gas Corp. and GasSearch Drilling Services Corp. (GDS) have sued Raymond Kemble and attorneys Charles F. Speer, Edward Ciarimboli, and Clancy Boylan, as well as the Speer Law Firm and Fellerman & Ciarimboli. Plaintiffs seek \$5 million in punitive damages for “tortious, malicious, wrongful, and improper use of the legal process” related to what they call “frivolous litigation.” Cabot and GDS allege that defendants knew Kemble had settled his claims against the companies, yet filed a complaint in the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania without probable cause. The plaintiffs assert claims for wrongful use of civil proceedings; breach of contract; and tortious interference with contract. The plaintiffs also contend that Kemble breached a settlement agreement when he filed another lawsuit against Cabot and GDS in April 2017. See *supra*, *Kemble v. Cabot Oil and Gas Corporation*, No. 3:17-CV-00665 (M.D. Pa., Apr. 13, 2017). The settlement was reached in July 2012 in *Fiorentino v. Cabot Oil and Gas Corp.* [recaptioned *Ely v. Cabot Oil and Gas Corp.*], No. 3:09-cv-02284, *supra*.

On December 11, 2017, the court heard arguments. *Gas driller: Make homeowner pay for disparaging us*, (Dec. 11, 2017), at http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=E7QoB1Jj. In February 2019, the court permitted Kemble's attorney to withdraw. At the same hearing the court declined to find Kemble in contempt of court for refusing to answer questions in the form of a deposition. Kemble claims he is unable to answer questions due to illness. The court continued the matter until March 2019. See <http://www.susqcoindy.com/PS/2019/02/06/court-gives-kemble-more-time-in-cabot-case/> (Feb. 6, 2019). In August 2019 Susquehanna County judge Judge Jason Legg rejected the invocation of attorney client privilege and ordered Kemble's attorneys to respond to Cabot’s requests within 30 days.

See <http://www.susqcoindy.com/PS/2019/08/06/anti-gas-activist-denies-knowing-about-lawsuit/> (Aug. 6, 2019).

In March 2020 Cabot Oil pulled out of settlement talks because the parties made “no progress” toward resolution. On February 10, 2022, Judge Legg recused himself. Cabot is now known as Coterra Energy Inc. According to Marcellus Drilling News, a court date has been set for October 6, 2025. See <https://marcellusdrilling.com/2025/04/pa-court-orders-october-trial-date-for-coterra-v-dimock-anti/> (Apr. 8, 2025). **The case is pending.**

Sources: Michael Rubinkam, Associated Press, *Gas driller pulls out of talks in \$5M suit against resident*, https://www.heraldmillmedia.com/news/nation/gas-driller-pulls-out-of-talks-in-m-suit-against/article_debd3119-d690-5ab3-90e6-1b37c72536d3.html (Mar. 5, 2020). See also *Judge Gets Angrier by the Day with Lawyers in Cabot Case* (May 25, 2021), Marcellus Drilling News, at <https://marcellusdrilling.com/2021/05/judge-gets-angrier-by-the-day-with-lawyers-in-cabot-case/> (judge angry delays in Cabot Oil's lawsuit); and *Judge's connection to driller at issue in Pennsylvania pollution case*, <https://www.wesa.fm/environment-energy/2022-03-07/judges-connection-to-driller-at-issue-in-pennsylvania-pollution-case> (Mar. 7, 2022).

***March v. Sunoco Pipeline L.P.*, No. 001793 (Philadelphia County Court of Common Pleas, Mar. 15, 2018), removed, No. 2:18-cv-02774 (E.D. Pa. Jul. 02, 2018)**

Mary March, Russel March, and Jared Savitski bring this action on behalf of themselves and as a class action against Sunoco Pipeline L.P. and Energy Transfer Partners, L.P. in connection with the Mariner East Pipeline project. The pipeline will carry natural gas liquids (“NGL’s”) from Ohio, West Virginia, and western Pennsylvania to the Philadelphia area. Sunoco's use of horizontal directional drilling caused an underground explosion of pressurized drilling fluids on November 11, 2017. As a result of the defendants' conduct, plaintiffs and members of the proposed class have allegedly suffered loss of quiet enjoyment of their property. In their First Amended Class Action Complaint, filed October 23, 2018, they assert claims of negligence, negligence per se, inconvenience and discomfort, private nuisance, negligent hiring, training, and supervision, loss of subjacent support, and loss of lateral support. On March 25, 2019, the court entered an order dismissing action with prejudice. The case is **closed**.

***Zandarski v. Penn Energy Resources, LLC*, No. 18-017450 (Ct. Common Pleas, Allegheny Cty., Pa., Dec. 25, 2018), transferred, No. AD-2023-10764 (Ct. Common Pleas, Butler Cty., Pa., Sept. 11, 2023), and consolidated with AD-2023-10425.**

Joseph and Michelle Zandarski and their two children reside in Butler County, in close proximity to oil and gas production that commenced in 2017. They allege that Penn Energy’s operations cause vibration, noise and bright lights during all hours of the day and night; and have caused pollution to travel onto their property. They assert claims of negligence and private nuisance. 2018 WL 11654601 (complaint). The case was transferred to Butler County and consolidated with a suit by Penn Energy against the Zandarskis (AD-2023-10425). **The case is pending.**

Range Resources-Appalachia, LLC v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Department of Environmental Protection, EHB Docket No. 2020-014-R (filed Feb. 4, 2020)

See http://ehb.courtapps.com/public/document_shower_pub.php?csNameID=5844

In 2011 Range Resources drilled and fracked the “Harman Lewis” well in Lycoming County, which was never put into production. After finding methane in nearby water wells, DEP in 2015 threatened Range Resources with a \$9 million fine. Range Resources maintained it was not the source of the problem, and in 2016 the DEP dropped its action when the company agreed to engage in remediation efforts. In 2019, however, research suggested that a methane plume is moving through the aquifer, giving water a rotten-egg odor, and turning stream sediment and residents’ plumbing fixtures orange. See *Years after record Marcellus Shale fine was dropped, gas leak continues in Lycoming County*, at <https://www.post-gazette.com/business/powersource/2019/04/22/DEP-Range-Resources-Harman-Lewis-natural-gas-well-leak-Lycoming-Pennsylvania/stories/201903310037> (Apr. 22, 2019).

In January 2019, Nancy DeWire and six other homeowners received a letter from DEP confirming that changes in their water were caused by gas drilling. On January 13, 2020, the DEP announced that Range Resources had failed to take any meaningful action to remediate the contamination and ordered the company to propose a new plan to address methane leaks. Range Resources was given two months to submit a plan to reduce the gas migration from the Harman Lewis well, which the DEP claims has defective cement casing. Once the plan is approved, Range has four months to submit a plan to plug the well.

Rather than submit a plan, Range Resources filed an appeal of the January 13, 2020, order with the Pennsylvania Environmental Hearing Board. *Range Resources-Appalachia LLC v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania*, No. 2020-014 (Feb. 4, 2020). Range argues the methane contamination it has been ordered to remediate is coming from either geological formations that were not disturbed during drilling or from drilling conducted by other companies. On May 6, 2022, the Board terminated the appeal as a result of a settlement agreement. See

http://ehb.courtapps.com/public/document_shower_pub.php?csNameID=5844.

The case is closed.

Stanley v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Department of Environmental Protection, EHB Docket No. 2021-013 (filed Feb. 15, 2021)

See https://ehb.courtapps.com/public/update_info_pub.php

Tonya Stanley, Bonnie Dibble and Jeffrey Dibble appealed the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) determination, dated January 15, 2021, that Cabot Oil & Gas Corp.'s fracking activities have not adversely affected the Stanley parties' water supply. Appellants argue that they cannot live at respective properties in Wexford, Pennsylvania due to contamination of water with TEG (triethylene glycol). Appellants' summary judgment motion (seeking a determination that the DEP erred when it issued a report saying that issues of turbidity and sediment in the water supply were not caused by Cabot's oil and gas operations) was denied on June 11, 2021, on the grounds that more discovery of the water contamination issues was needed. On November 10, 2021, the EHB granted a partial summary judgment, finding (1) the distance between the water supply and the nearest gas wells is greater than the liability

presumption set forth in the Oil and Gas Act; and (2) the argument advanced by the appellants that the Department committed an unconstitutional taking is not contained in their notice of appeal. Summary judgment was held to be inappropriate for the remaining issues in the appeal that involve disputed material facts.

On February 17, 2022, the Board held that appellants' pre-hearing memorandum "did not identify any scientific tests, list or attach any exhibits, or name any expert witnesses. Accordingly, the appellants will be precluded from utilizing scientific tests, offering or introducing exhibits, and relying on expert testimony in their case-in-chief at the upcoming hearing on the merits." On April 7, 2022, the state defendants supported the motion of Cabot Oil (now Coterra Energy) for a nonsuit because – at a hearing on February 22, 2022 – appellants allegedly did not present any evidence during their case-in-chief. The landowners opposed the motion on May 9, 2022, and the following day requested the removal of Judge Labuskes for "punishing Landowners for exercising their First Amendment rights of free speech against the Department of Environmental Protection and the Environmental Hearing Board."

On June 15, 2022, the Environmental Hearing Board granted a motion of nonsuit in favor of Cabot (now Coterra Energy Inc.), finding that Tonya Stanley, Bonnie Dibble and Jeffrey Dibble's refusal to be subject to cross-examination by Coterra's counsel meant they had failed to present a case to the board. The board held that landowners failed to prove by a preponderance of the evidence that the department erred when it determined that Coterra's operations did not contaminate their water supply. The landowners did not reference or attach any water sample results and did not identify any expert witnesses to support their claim that there was causal link between Coterra's operations and their water supply. **The case is pending.**

Glahn v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Department of Environmental Protection, EHB Docket No. 2021-049-L (filed May 10, 2021)

See https://ehb.courtapps.com/public/document_shower_pub.php?csNameID=6007

Roger Glahn and Donna Gorecel live in Wyoming County. They seek review of the following Pennsylvania DEP's actions: (1) not advising Appellants of the distance between nearby well bores operated by Southwestern and the absence of GPS coordinates in the Department's correspondence, (2) not requiring that Southwestern Production to provide water to Appellants under the Oil and Gas Act; (3) not advising Appellants that Southwestern is presumptively liable under the Oil and Gas Act, (4) and not testing for chemicals used by oil and gas operations. They allege the DEP has not acted in a timely fashion in issuing a determination letter, has acted in ways "to keep Mr. Glahn and Ms. Gorencel from asserting their rights," and has concealed information regarding chemicals at the site. Among other requests for relief, appellants ask that DEP "make[] a criminal referral of this matter to the Pennsylvania Attorney," and request "that the ATSDR undertake a health assessment in North Branch Township and all other areas in Pennsylvania where oil and gas operations have been as well as where oil and gas operations continue to operate." On November 12, 2021, the Environmental Hearing Board granted the DEP's motion to dismiss for lack of jurisdiction. Chief Judge Thomas Renwand dissented, arguing that jurisdiction exists to review DEP's failure under the Oil and Gas Act to make a determination on a water supply complaint within 45 days of notification. The landowners filed a petition in the Commonwealth Court of Pennsylvania to

review the EHB decision. No. 1273 CD 2021. On January 7, 2022, the court refused enter an order suspending oil and gas operations. On April 18, 2022, the court struck the petitioners' brief and record and granted 30 days to file an amended brief. **The case is pending.**

***Waller v. Cabot Oil and Gas Corp.*, No. (Ct. of Common Pleas, Susquehanna County, Pa., Mar. 9, 2021), removed, No. 3:21-CV-569 (M.D. Penn., Mar. 29, 2021)**

On March 9, 2021, Robert and Anne Brennan Waller sued Cabot Oil & Gas Corporation in the Court of Common Pleas of Susquehanna County, alleging trespass, conversion, and punitive damages. Their land in Dimock Township, Susquehanna is not subject to any gas lease, but they allege that fluid and proppants have crossed over and that proppants remain under their land, allowing for the extraction of natural gas from under their land. After removing the case to federal court, Cabot moved to dismiss, which the court granted in part and denied in part on May 18, 2022. The court held that "the Complaint plausibly alleges a cause of action for punitive damages, and specifically that Cabot's alleged actions and inactions were done with a bad motive or with a reckless indifference to the interests of the plaintiffs and others." 2022 WL 1120217. On February 16, 2023, the case was dismissed. **The case is closed.**

***Teorsky v. Penneco Environmental Solutions, LLC.*, No. GD-22-004214 (Ct. of Common Pleas, Allegheny County, Pa., Apr. 14, 2022), 2022 WL 1120217**

Robert Teorsky of Allegheny County sued Penneco Environmental Solutions, LLC, Dakota Oil & Gas Company, EQT Production Company, Sedat, Inc., and Petroleum Service Partners, Inc., in connection with the conversion of a well into a Class II-D Injection Well approximately 1,500 feet from his property line. Teorsky asserts claims of negligence, gross negligence, private nuisance, strict liability, and trespass, as well as claims under the Hazardous Sites Cleanup Act and for medical monitoring. He relies on a ground water well and asserts that his water supply is contaminated; his property has been harmed and diminished in value; he has become physically ill manifesting in burning skin, shortness of breath, burning eyes, headaches, nausea, sore throat, decreased appetite, loss of smell, and loss of taste; and he has been forced to stay away from his property in order to avoid the toxic fumes. He alleges that "Defendants, by engaging in abnormally dangerous and ultra hazardous activities, are strictly liable with regard to fault for all the damages and injuries to Plaintiff proximately or legally caused by the spills, releases and contamination caused by Defendants, and to remediate the contamination." On April 25, 2023, a stipulation for dismissal was filed. **The case is closed.**

***Hice v. EQT Corporation*, No. 24-cv-896 (W.D. Pa., June 20, 2024)**

David Hice, Joseph Moore and Christina Barlow, on behalf of themselves and all others similarly situated, filed the class action against EQT Corp., EQT Production Co. and Beusa Holdings Inc., claiming their water supply is contaminated by fracking waste fluids. In June 2022, according to the plaintiffs, the defendants caused a "Frac-out" incident, resulting in fracking and flow back fluids to erupt in a geyser and contaminating groundwater. Claims include violation of the Pennsylvania Hazardous Sites Cleanup Act;

negligence; negligence per se; strict liability; private nuisance; public nuisance; future health monitoring; trespass; and fraudulent misrepresentation. Defendants' motions to dismiss are pending. **The case is pending.**

TEXAS

***Coastal Oil and Gas Corp. v. Garza Energy Trust*, (206th District Court, Hidalgo County, Tex., 1997). See 268 S.W.3d 1 (Tex. Sup. Ct. 2008)**

Plaintiff argued that drainage caused by hydraulic fracturing was analogous to trespass by a slant or deviated well. The **Texas Supreme Court held** that drainage caused by hydraulic fracturing is not a form of trespass, but is sanctioned by the rule of capture. 268 S.W.3d at 14 ("the rule of capture determines title to gas that drains from property owned by one person onto property owned by another."). See, e.g., Owen L. Anderson, *Subsurface "Trespass": A Man's Subsurface Is Not His Castle*, 49 Washburn Law Journal 247 (2010); Travis Zeik, *Hydraulic Fracturing Goes to Court: How Texas Jurisprudence on Subsurface Trespass Will Influence West Virginia Oil and Gas Law*, 112 West Virginia Law Review 599 (2010); Aaron Stemplewicz, *The Known "Unknowns" of Hydraulic Fracturing: a Case for a Traditional Subsurface Trespass Regime in Pennsylvania*, 13 Duquesne Business Law Journal 219 (2011); Owen Anderson, *Lord Coke, the Restatement, and Modern Subsurface Trespass Law*, 6 Texas Journal of Oil, Gas, and Energy Law 203 (2010-2011).

***Environmental Processing Systems, L.C. v. FPL Farming Ltd.*, No. CV71974 (75th District Court, Liberty County, Tex., 2006), on appeal, 305 S.W.3d 739 (9th Court of Appeals, 2009), remanded, 351 S.W.3d 306 (Tex. S.Ct. 2011), on remand, 383 S.W.3d 274 (9th Court of Appeals, 2011), reversed, No. 12-0905, 457 S.W.3d 414 (Tex. Sup. Ct., Feb. 6, 2015)**

This is a dispute between a rice farmer (FPL) and an injection well operator (EPS) over the leaching of injected fluids into the subsurface of FPL's property. After prior administrative and judicial proceedings, FPL brought suit in Liberty County in 2006, alleging that EPS's injectate leached into its property, and seeking damages based on trespass, nuisance, and unjust enrichment. After an adverse jury verdict, FPL appealed to the Beaumont Court of Appeals. The court of appeals held it could not review the merits of FPL's trespass claims. 305 S.W.3d 739, 744 (2009), but the Texas Supreme Court remanded the trespass issue. 351 S.W.3d 306 (2011) (possession of an injection well permit does not insulate the operator against trespass or other tort liability). On remand, the court of appeals held that Texas law recognizes a trespass action to protect possessory rights in the deep subsurface. 383 S.W.3d at 282 (2012) ("We conclude that Texas law recognizes FPL's property interest in the briny water underneath its property. We do not agree with EPS that no trespass action exists under Texas law to protect FPL's legal interest in its property.").

On February 6, 2015, the **Texas Supreme Court reversed** the court of appeals' judgment and reinstated the trial court's judgment "that FPL Farming take nothing." 457 S.W.3d 414. The court did not clarify the distinctions between traditional trespass and subsurface trespass and declined to answer the question of whether Texas recognizes a cause of action for subsurface trespass. Instead, the court focused on whether lack of consent is an element of the trespass cause of action on which the plaintiff bears the burden of

proof, or whether consent is instead an affirmative defense on which the defendant bears the burden. The court held that “lack of consent as an element of a trespass action that a plaintiff must prove.” In light of its holding, the court concluded that it “need not address whether Texas law recognizes a trespass cause of action for deep subsurface wastewater migration because the jury found in EPS’s favor on all of FPL Farming’s claims and any error would be harmless.” FPL failed to prove that it did not consent to EPS’s alleged entry.

Gardiner v. Crosstex North Texas Pipeline LP, No. 2008-40133-362 (442nd District Court, Denton County, Tex., May 5, 2008; transferred to 431st District Court, Denton County, Tex.), on appeal, 305 S.W.3d 739 (9th Court of Appeals, 2009), on appeal, 451 S.W.3d 150 (Court of Appeals of Texas, Fort Worth, Nov. 13, 2014), on appeal, 505 S.W.3d 580 (Tex. S.Ct. Jun. 24, 2016) (affirming remand to trial court)

Andrew and Shannon Gardiner, who own a 95-acre ranch in Denton County, sued Crosstex North Texas Pipeline LP after its compressor station began operating in May 2007. The compressor station includes four diesel engines that are “bigger than mobile homes” and produce a “constant roar.” Crosstex implemented a series of mitigation efforts to eliminate unreasonable noise levels, but in 2008 the Gardiners told Crosstex the mitigation efforts were inadequate. The Gardiners asserted claims for private nuisance, ordinary negligence, and gross negligence. They amended their petition to allege that Crosstex had both intentionally and negligently created a nuisance. After the trial court granted a directed verdict to Crosstex on the negligence cause of action, the jury found Crosstex liable for negligent nuisance and awarded the Gardiners \$2,042,500 in damages. See 451 S.W.3d at 154. Crosstex appealed, and the court of appeals held that the evidence was legally sufficient (to state a claim), but not factually sufficient to support the jury's finding of a negligently created nuisance. 451 S.W.3d at 176. It also held that the trial court erred by denying the Gardiners' request for a trial amendment and should have submitted a jury question on whether Crosstex created a nuisance through conduct that was “abnormal and out of place.” *Id.* at 177, 179. The court remanded the case “for a new trial and to allow the Gardiners to add the abnormal and out-of-place variation of their nuisance claim.” *Id.* at 179. Both parties filed petitions with the Texas Supreme Court for review.

The Texas Supreme Court affirmed on June 24, 2016. It held “that the term 'nuisance' refers not to a defendant's conduct or to a legal claim or cause of action but to a type of legal injury involving interference with the use and enjoyment of real property.” 505 S.W.3d at 588. According to the court, “a defendant can be liable for causing a nuisance if the defendant intentionally causes it, negligently causes it, or — in limited circumstances — causes it by engaging in abnormally dangerous or ultra-hazardous activities.” *Id.* The Court affirmed the court of appeals' judgment remanding this case to the trial court for a new trial. On May 30, 2017, the lawsuit was dismissed with prejudice. **The case is closed.**

The *Crosstex* decision will guide Texas courts in the future in nuisance claims. The decision clarifies that whether a defendant may be held liable for causing a nuisance depends not only on proof that the interference is a nuisance, but also on proof of the culpability of the defendant's conduct. A defendant can be liable for causing a nuisance if the defendant intentionally causes it, negligently causes it, or causes it by engaging in abnormally dangerous or ultra-hazardous activities. The mere fact that the defendant's use of its land is “abnormal and out of place in its surroundings” will not support a claim alleging a

nuisance. In the absence of evidence that the defendant intentionally or negligently caused the nuisance, the abnormal and out of place conduct must be “abnormally dangerous” conduct that creates a high degree of risk of serious injury to be actionable.

In a prior decision of the Texas Supreme Court, also involving a compressor station, the Court held that (1) evidence that the homeowners were harmed by noise and gas was sufficient to support finding that homeowners were harmed, but (2) a remand of the permanent nuisance claim for a new trial on liability and damages was warranted because the evidentiary standard concerning valuation of property had changed since the time of the trial. *Natural Gas Pipeline Company of America v. Justiss*, 397 S.W.3d 150 (Texas 2012).

***Scoma v. Chesapeake Energy Corp.*, No. 3:10-cv-01385 (N.D. Tex., July 15, 2010). See also 2010 WL 3706170 (Aug. 11, 2010) (Second Amended Complaint)**

Jim and Linda Scoma, property owners in Johnson County, Texas, allege their water well is contaminated due to hydraulic fracturing actions, including storage of drilling waste and disposal of fracturing waste in injection wells. Plaintiffs claim negligence, nuisance, and trespass, and seek the cost of testing, loss of use of land, loss of market value of land, loss of intrinsic value of well water, emotional harm, nominal damages, exemplary damages, and injunctive relief. **The case was dismissed on December 9, 2011, pursuant to a settlement agreement.** Nicholson, *Analysis of Litigation Involving Shale & Hydraulic Fracturing* (June 1, 2014).

***Ruggiero v. Aruba Petroleum, Inc.*, No. 10-10-801 (District Court, Wise County, Tex., Oct. 18, 2010)**

The Ruggieros, who only owned the surface, learned in 2009 that their ten acres were part of a lease held by Aruba Petroleum, who drilled two gas wells within 300 feet of their home. According to the Ruggieros, thousands of gallons of drilling mud were negligently discharged, the ground was saturated when a frac tank valve was not shut properly, and another tank overflowed and gushed out condensate for more than twelve hours. See <http://shalegasoutrage.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/Tim-Christine-Ruggieros-Story.pdf>. **An out of court confidential settlement was reached in 2011.** See also Sixty Minutes, Gas drilling horror story (Nov. 14, 2010), at <http://www.cbsnews.com/video/watch/?id=7054281n>.

***Knoll v. Gultex Operating, Inc.*, No. 2010-10345-16 (431rd Dist. Ct., Denton County, Tex., Oct. 22, 2010)**

Michael and Susan Knoll are surface owners who lived near a well and a compressor station. The Knolls allege that drilling and hydraulic fracturing operations created odors, contaminated water in their well, and caused headaches and nosebleeds. S.C. Gwynne, Elizabeth Souder and Gary Jacobson, Dallas Morning News, *In Midst of Gas Boom, Anti-Drilling Movement Gains Ground*, Dallas Morning News (May 15, 2011), <http://www.dallasnews.com/business/energy/20110515-in-midst-of-gas-boom-anti-drilling-movement-gains-ground.ece>. In March and April of 2012, the district court dismissed several of the defendants. **On May 7, 2012, the remaining parties settled, and the case was closed on May 16, 2012.** See

<http://justice1.dentoncounty.com/PublicAccess/CaseDetail.aspx?CaseID=1201683> (docket sheet).

***Heinkel-Wolfe v. Williams Production Co., LLC*, No. 2010-40355-362 (362nd Dist. Ct., Denton County, Tex., Nov. 3, 2010)**

Margaret and Paige Heinkel-Wolfe claim drilling operations contaminated the water and air on and surrounding their property. In their amended complaint, plaintiffs dropped their negligence claims and allegations of water contamination, but retained causes of action for nuisance and trespass. **The case was settled at mediation on August 14, 2012, and a final judgment entered on August 27, 2012.** Nicholson, *Analysis of Litigation Involving Shale & Hydraulic Fracturing* (June 1, 2014).

***Sizelove v. Williams Production Co., LLC*, No. 2010-50355-367 (367th Dist. Ct., Denton County, Tex., Nov. 3, 2010) (transferred to 431st Dist. Ct., Denton County, Tex., Jan 1, 2011)**

John and Jayme Sizelove claim drilling operations and gas compressor stations harmed their health. Plaintiffs allege claims for nuisance and trespass, and seek property damages, damages for mental anguish, and exemplary damages. **This case was settled at mediation on November 9, 2012.** Nicholson, *Analysis of Litigation Involving Shale & Hydraulic Fracturing* (June 1, 2014).

***Mitchell v. Encana Oil & Gas (USA)*, No. 3:10-cv-02555 (N.D. Tex., Dec. 15, 2010). See 2010 WL 5384210 (complaint)**

Grace Mitchell, a property owner in Johnson County, Texas, alleged her water well was contaminated due to hydraulic fracturing and associated storage of drilling wastes, and brought claims of nuisance, negligence, fraud, trespass, and strict liability. See *Resident Files Lawsuit Against Encana, Chesapeake*, available at <http://www.cleburnetimesreview.com/local/x1112342972/Resident-files-lawsuit-against-Encana-Chesapeake> (Dec. 21, 2010). The fraud and strict liability claims were not included in the plaintiff's amended complaint filed on April 25, 2011. **The case was dismissed on December 27, 2011, pursuant to a settlement agreement.** Nicholson, *Analysis of Litigation Involving Shale & Hydraulic Fracturing* (June 1, 2014).

***Harris v. Devon Energy Production Company, L.P.*, No. 4:10-cv-00708 (E.D. Tex., Dec. 22, 2010). See 2011 WL 2729242 (Magistrate Recommendation to grant Motion for Partial Dismissal for Failure to State a Claim) (Jun. 14, 2011)**

Doug and Diana Harris sued Devon Energy Production Company in December 2010 for negligence, strict liability, nuisance, and trespass. See pleadings 2010 WL 5384209. Plaintiffs allege that hydraulic fracturing operations near their property caused groundwater contamination, and assert claims of nuisance, trespass, negligence, strict liability, and fraudulent concealment. With respect to fraud, plaintiffs argued

that, by concealing the fact that the gray substance in the well water contained chemicals typically found in drilling mud, defendant intended to induce plaintiffs to drill a new well. On June 14, 2011, the U.S. Magistrate recommended that the fraud claim be dismissed because plaintiffs failed to identify any damages which resulted from the alleged false representation. [Plaintiffs did not ask for damages related to the costs of constructing and maintaining the well.] On July 12, 2011, the district court dismissed the fraud claim. **On January 25, 2012, the court dismissed all claims** “on the basis that recent testing of the plaintiffs’ groundwater wells showed no contamination present at levels that are toxic for human consumption.” Margaret A. Hill, Mary Ann Mullaney, and Heather L. Demirjian, Blank Rome LLP, *United States: Shale Development and Fracking Litigation Trends* (Aug. 7, 2012), at <http://www.law.com/jsp/pa/PubArticlePA.jsp?id=1202564505201&slreturn=20130004165637>.

***Smith v. Devon Energy Production Co., LP*, No. 3:11-cv-00196 (N.D. Tex., Jan. 31, 2011), transferred, No. 4:11-cv-00104 (E.D. Tex., Mar. 7, 2011). See 2011 WL 474901 (complaint) (Jan. 31, 2011); and 2011 WL 2936737 (amended complaint) (Mar. 21, 2011)**

Damon and Amber Smith of Denton County, Texas, allege that fracturing fluids and associated drilling wastes contaminated their water well. The case was transferred to the Eastern District of Texas on March 3, 2011, and the Plaintiffs’ first amended complaint was filed on March 21, 2011, asserting trespass, nuisance, and negligence. **On May 25, 2012, the lawsuit was dismissed on plaintiffs’ motion.** See Nicholson, *Analysis of Litigation Involving Shale & Hydraulic Fracturing* (June 1, 2014).

***Eric Dow v. Atmos Energy Corp.*, No. 2011-30097-211 (211th Dist. Ct., Denton County, Tex., Feb. 28, 2011); *Town of Dish v. Atmos Energy Corp.*, No. 2011-40097-362 (362nd Dist. Ct., Denton County, Tex., Feb. 28, 2011); *William Sciscoe v. Atmos Energy Corp.*, No. 2011-70084-431 (431st Dist. Ct., Denton County, Tex., Feb. 28, 2011); transferred and consolidated as *William Sciscoe v. Enbridge Gathering (North Texas), L.P.*, No. 96-254364-11 (96th Dist. Ct., Tarrant County, Tex.). Decision remanding case to trial court, 519 S.W.3d 171 (Court of Appeals, Amarillo, No. 07-13-00391, June 1, 2015), reversed, No. 15-0613 (Tex. Sup. Ct., May 19, 2017).**

Appellants, eighteen homeowners and the Town of DISH, filed three separate lawsuits against six energy production companies alleging that noise, light, odors, and chemical particulates emanating from Appellees’ facilities caused a nuisance and constituted a trespass, thereby entitling them to recover monetary damages. The three lawsuits were transferred to Tarrant County and consolidated into one lawsuit in the 96th District Court bearing cause number 96–254364–11. The Town of DISH sought recovery of damages occasioned by the erosion of its tax base due to declining property values, together with recovery of “damages” of \$1,000 per day for trespass and exemplary damages. The remaining Appellants sought recovery of damages for (1) the loss of market value of their properties, (2) annoyance and discomfort, (3) injury to personal property, (4) mental anguish, and (5) exemplary damages. None of Appellants sought injunctive relief. The trial court dismissed the complaints.

Court of Appeals – On June 1, 2015, the court of appeals reversed in part. 519 S.W.3d 171. It rejected the argument of the defendants-appellees that the cause of action for trespass by airborne particulates

requires both a physical entry and a significant deposit of particulate materials on the properties. The court held that the migration of airborne particulates can constitute an actionable trespass, but noted that, to establish an actionable trespass, appellants on remand must establish that the particulates emanated from the activities of Appellees and that Appellants sustained some compensable injury as a result thereof. The court of appeals also rejected the arguments that the trespass and nuisance claims are (1) pre-empted by regulatory statutes; and (2) are non-justiciable under the political question doctrine. According to the court, the arguments fail “because Appellants simply do not seek to alter or change the emission standards under which Appellees operate. Instead, Appellants seek to compel Appellees to compensate them for actual damages they have sustained as a result of the lawful operations of Appellees. Just because Appellees are operating their natural gas compression facilities within the applicable regulatory guidelines does not mean that Appellants have not suffered compensable injuries as a result of those operations. Nor does it mean that Appellees are somehow immune from liability for damages they may have caused just because they have a regulatory permit. Stated another way, just because you are allowed by law to do something, does not mean that you are free from the consequences of your action. While the appropriateness of Appellees’ conduct according to applicable regulations may affect by the nature and extent of Appellants’ compensation (e.g., the inability to recover exemplary damages), regulation is not a substitute for prudent operation.” The court reversed the lower court and allowed claims for monetary compensation limited to the past diminution in the value of their properties to proceed. The court affirmed the trial court’s order granting summary judgment as to claims seeking recovery of monetary damages for prospective injuries, mental anguish, or \$1,000 per day for trespass, and to the extent the claims seek to abate an alleged nuisance or ongoing trespass. 2015 WL 3463490 (June 1, 2015).

Texas Supreme Court – On May 19, 2017, the Texas Supreme Court reversed. It held that, because the plaintiffs began complaining about the noise and odor emanating as early as 2006, but did not sue until 2011, the two-year statute of limitations barred their claims alleging trespass and nuisance injuries. According to the court, the defendants “have proven that any legal injury the residents suffered commenced, at the latest, in May 2008. There is no objective evidence showing that the complained-of conditions worsened in the summer of 2009. Even if they did, the residents’ claims had already accrued more than two years before they sued.” The court also held that summary judgment should have been granted to Enterprise because it presented evidence showing its metering station was not be a source of the residents’ complaints, and “no evidence rebuts Enterprise’s contention it is not one of the alleged offenders.” See No. 15-0613. **The matter is closed.**

***Parr v. Aruba Petroleum, Inc.*, No. CC-11-01650-E (Dallas County Ct., Tex., Mar. 8, 2011), jury verdict overturned, 2017 WL 462340, 05-14-01285-CV (Tex. Fifth Court of Appeal, Feb. 1, 2017)**

Robert and Lisa Parr claim natural gas drilling operations in Wise County, Texas, including releases, spills, emissions, and discharges of hazardous gases, exposed their family and their property to hazardous gases, chemicals, and industrial wastes. Plaintiffs alleged gross negligence, negligence per se, common law negligence, private nuisance, and trespass. They contended that numerous wells within two miles of their home put contaminants in the air that caused extensive health problems like memory loss, sores and bleeding while also killing pets and causing livestock to give birth to newborns with birth defects. Air

quality tests by a specialist the family hired found benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene and xylene, toxic chemicals found in petroleum products. The Parrs sued Aruba Petroleum and eight other companies involved with drilling in the area for a total of \$66 million in damages. Some companies were dropped from the suit, while others reached undisclosed settlements with the family. Aruba was the remaining defendant.

Jury verdict – On April 22, 2014, after a trial of two and a half weeks, **a jury awarded \$2.925 million to the plaintiffs**. The jury returned its 5-1 verdict confirming that Aruba Petroleum “intentionally created a private nuisance” through its drilling, fracking and production activities at 21 gas wells near the Parrs' Wise County home over a three-year period between 2008-2011. The verdict included \$275,000 for the Parr's property loss of market value and \$2 million for past physical pain and suffering by Robert and Lisa Parr and their daughter, \$250,000 for future physical pain and suffering, \$400,000 for past mental anguish. The jury did not find actual malice in Aruba's actions, but found that the energy company's activities were “intentional” thereby creating a “private nuisance” under Texas law. This has been called the first anti-fracking verdict in the United States, although the complaint concerned not just fracking but all gas production operations. Aruba noted that it is in compliance with Texas air quality rules, but a nuisance claim, as noted by Florida State law professor Hannah Wisemen, “is specifically in addition to the public law.” The case is also notable because it concerned air emissions, whereas much of the debate around fracking has focused on its potential to pollute groundwater.

Trial court – The trial court denied Aruba Petroleum's motion for judgment notwithstanding verdict on June 19, 2014. Final judgment was filed July 9, 2014. On August 5, 2014, Aruba filed a motion for a new trial, arguing that one of the jurors was statutorily disqualified; the damages awarded by the jury are excessive; and the evidence is legally and factually insufficient to support the judgment. The motion was denied on September 11, 2014.

Court of Appeals overturns jury verdict – On February 1, 2017, the Fifth Court of Appeals in Dallas threw out a \$2.9 million judgment, agreeing with Aruba (which filed for bankruptcy protection in November 2016) that there is no legally sufficient evidence of intent that would support the jury's finding that Aruba intentionally created a private nuisance. According to the court, “None of the evidence cited by the Parrs of the noise, light, odors, and other claimed effects of Aruba's operations established that Aruba actually intended or desired to create an interference on the Parrs' land that they claim was a nuisance or actually knew or believed that an interference would result.” The panel issued a “take-nothing judgment” after finding that the family's claims did not meet the standards for a private nuisance claim. 2017 WL 462340.

Citing the Texas Supreme Court's 2016 ruling in *Crosstex v. Gardiner*, 505 S.W.3d 580, which set a new standard for nuisance claims, the appellate court found the Parrs had not proved Aruba intended to create problems for the family. “None of the evidence cited by the Parrs of the noise, light, odors and other claimed effects of Aruba's operations established that Aruba actually intended or desired to create an interference on the Parrs' land that they claim was a nuisance or actually knew or believed that an interference would result,” the court said. Aruba successfully argued that generalized grievances about its drilling activity near the Parr property, including some anonymous complaints from plaintiff Lisa Parr that did not specifically identify their property, were not enough to alert the company to problems specific to the Parr family or its land.

The Parrs had argued Aruba need not have intended to specifically harm them, citing evidence Aruba was aware that its operations at well sites resulted in noise, odors, ground vibrations and bright gas flaring. They also pointed to testimony from Aruba's corporate representative that the drilling was "probably" "a nuisance to people living in the community close to that drill site." But the appellate court held none of the Parrs' evidence established Aruba actually intended to create an interference on their specific land, or that Aruba believed such an interference would result from its drilling activity. The court entered a take-nothing judgment against the Parrs.

***Lipsky v. Range Resources Corp.*, CV11-0798 (District Court, Parker County, Tex., June 20, 2011), 2012 WL 3600014 (Court of Appeals of Texas, Fort Worth, Aug. 23, 2012) (dismissing interlocutory appeal), 411 S.W.3d 530 (Court of Appeals of Texas, Fort Worth, Apr. 22, 2013) (opinion); on appeal, 460 S.W.3d 579 (Texas Supreme Court, Apr. 24, 2015)**

In the summer of 2010, Shyla and Steven Lipsky became upset after Range Production Company and Range Resources Corporation had begun to extract gas from the Barnett Shale formation near their home. Plaintiffs, who created a YouTube video of a Steven Lipsky holding a flaming hose connected to his well, believed Range contaminated their water well. In December of 2010, the EPA issued an emergency order against Range, stating that the hydrocarbons from Range's operations may have caused or contributed to the contamination. The Texas Railroad Commission in March 2011 issued an order stating that Range's wells were not responsible for the contamination of plaintiffs' water and that the methane gas in the water wells likely was naturally occurring and came from a shallow geological formation. In June of 2011, plaintiffs filed a lawsuit in Parker County District Court, alleged that the fracking operations were negligent, grossly negligent, and a nuisance. Range moved to dismiss all claims as an improper collateral attack on the Railroad Commission's ruling, and filed a counterclaim against the Lipskys and environmental consultant Alisa Rich, alleging defamation, business disparagement, and a civil conspiracy.

On January 30, 2012, the Parker County court granted Range's motion to dismiss, agreeing that the Lipskys' claims were an improper collateral attack on the Commission's determination. The court also declined to dismiss Range's claims against the Lipskys and Rich by denying their motions to dismiss under the Texas Citizens Participation ("Anti-Slapp") Act, which protects citizens who petition or speak on matters of public concern from retaliatory lawsuits. While this matter was on appeal, the EPA in March 2012 withdrew its administrative order against Range. See Joint Stipulation of Dismissal Without Prejudice, *United States v. Range Prod. Co.*, No. 3:11-CV-00116-F (N.D.Tex. Mar. 30, 2012). On August 23, 2012, the Texas Court of Appeals dismissed the interlocutory appeal of the Lipskys and Rich for want of jurisdiction. The court, however, allowed the challenge to proceed as an original proceeding. 411 S.W.3d at 536. The Texas Supreme Court declined to review this decision in December 2012.

On April 22, 2013, the Court of Appeals determined that the Texas Citizens Participation Act (TCPA) required the dismissal of Range's claims against Shyla Lipsky and Alisa Rich. 411 S.W.3d at 554. The court also set aside two claims against Steven Lipsky (aiding and abetting and civil conspiracy), but let stand two other claims: defamation and business disparagement. 411 S.W.3d at 556. Both Range and Steven Lipsky appealed. While their appeals were pending, the Texas Railroad Commission in February 2014

investigated nine new water contamination complaints filed from residents in Steven Lipsky's neighborhood, including one from Lipsky. Mike Soraghan, E&E Energywire, *Texas regulators to finish latest Range investigation this month* (Feb. 6, 2014), at <http://www.eenews.net/energywire/2014/02/06/stories/1059994116>.

On April 24, 2015, the Texas Supreme Court affirmed, denying both petitions. 460 S.W.3d 579; 2015 WL 1870073. With respect to Range's business disparagement claim, the court did disagree with the court of appeals "that general averments of direct economic losses and lost profits, without more, satisfy the minimum requirements of the TCPA." With regard to Range's defamation claim, the court agreed with the court of appeals that "there was some evidence of a defamatory statement concerning Range sufficient to defeat Lipsky's TCPA motion to dismiss." Turning to Range's cross-appeal, the Texas Supreme Court affirmed that determination that "the TCPA required the dismissal of Range's claims against Steven Lipsky's wife and environmental consultant and Range's conspiracy claim against all parties."

Subsequent proceedings in the Lipsky case – On March 8, 2017, the court granted the parties' Joint Motion to Dismiss with Prejudice, having been advised that the parties reached a mutually satisfactory agreement to resolve this litigation. **The case is settled.**

Subsequent proceedings in the Rich case – On remand, the trial court dismissed Range's claims against Alisa Rich and awarded \$470,012.41 in attorney's fees pursuant to the TCPA. The trial court denied Rich's motion for \$30 million in sanctions against Range. On November 22, 2017, the court of appeals held that the trial court did not abuse its discretion by denying the motion for sanctions. *Rich v. Range Resources Corp.*, No. 02-17-00090-CV (Court of Appeals of Texas, Fort Worth, Nov. 22, 2017).

***Marsden v. Titan Operating, LLC*, No. CV-11-0842 (415th Dist. Ct., Parker County, Tex, Jun. 27, 2011), appeal, No. 02–14–00303–CV (Court of Appeals of Texas, Fort Worth, Sept. 17, 2014), reversed, 2015 WL 5727573 (Aug. 27, 2015)**

After signing an oil and gas lease in 2004, Marcus C. Marsden, Jr. and Laura B. Marsden brought an intentional nuisance claim in June 2011, alleging that Titan's drilling activities were substantially interfering with the use and enjoyment of their property. The drilling site for the first well is 176 feet from the house, and the well is about 300 feet away. The Marsdens alleged that Titan's drilling activities had caused constant compressor noise, truck traffic, and truck pump noises. A jury found that Titan had intentionally created a temporary private nuisance and that the Marsdens were not estopped from complaining about the nuisance based on their acceptance of benefits. The jury awarded \$18,000 separately to Marcus and Laura. The trial court entered a final judgment that, in accordance with the jury's verdict, awarded Marcus and Laura \$18,000 each. On August 27, 2015, the **court of appeals reversed**, finding as a matter of law that quasi-estoppel principles preclude the Marsdens from negotiating and signing an oil and gas lease, accepting benefits under that lease and under a related transaction, and later maintaining a nuisance suit against Titan for acts that the lease and the related transaction contemplated or authorized. The lease allowed Titan to drill within 200 feet of any residence or barn.

***Crowder v. Chesapeake Operating, Inc.*, No. 2011-008169-3 (County Court at Law No. 3, Tarrant County, Texas, Nov. 7, 2011), on appeal, 02-14-00323-CV (Texas Second Court of Appeals); *Mann v. Chesapeake Operating, Inc.*, No. 2011-008232-3 (County Court at Law No. 3, Tarrant County, Texas, Nov. 8, 2011); *Anglim v. Chesapeake Operating, Inc.*, No. 2011-008256-1 (County Court at Law No. 3, Tarrant County, Texas, Nov. 9, 2011), on appeal, 02-14-00218-CV (Texas Second Court of Appeals); *Gutierrez v. Chesapeake Operating, Inc.*, No. 2011-008274-3 (County Court at Law No. 3, Tarrant County, Texas, Nov. 10, 2011) [search at <https://odyssey.tarrantcounty.com/default.aspx>]**

Samuel Crowder and Jane Crowder of Tarrant County sued Chesapeake Operating, complaining that the noise, odors and truck traffic 165 feet from their backyard fence from a well site were a nuisance. On May 23, 2014, a Tarrant County jury awarded \$20,000 after finding that the three wells at the site constituted a nuisance. The six-person county court jury found that Chesapeake intentionally created a nuisance with its well site, and that the facility was abnormal and out of place for its environment. The couple asked for \$108,000 in past and future damages, but the jury found the site was a temporary nuisance, rather than permanent, and did not award future damages. **Chesapeake's appeal was dismissed on December 4, 2014, pursuant to the settlement agreement in the Crowder case** reached by the litigants.

A jury found for the defendant in the *Anglim* lawsuit on April 21, 2014. See *Tarrant jury awards \$20,000 to homeowners in nuisance suit against Chesapeake*, Fort Worth Star-Telegram (May 24, 2014), at <http://www.star-telegram.com/2014/05/23/5843320/tarrant-jury-awards-20000-to-homeowners.html>. Anglim appealed, but **on December 4, 2014, the appellate court remanded the Anglim case pursuant to the settlement agreement** reached by the litigants.

The Gutierrez lawsuit was settled in November 2014.

On December 10, 2014, an order of dismissal with prejudice was entered in the Mann lawsuit.

***Beck v. ConocoPhillips Company*, No. 2011-484 (123rd Dist. Ct. Panola County, Tex., Dec. 1, 2011)
Strong v. ConocoPhillips Company, No. 2011-487 (123rd Dist. Ct. Panola County, Tex., Dec. 2, 2011)**

Carroll Beck, Bobby Strong, and others allege ConocoPhillips contaminated their water wells by hydraulic fracturing and by disposing fracking waste near their properties. Causes of action are for nuisance, trespass, and negligence. Plaintiffs claim that defendant failed to use a reasonable alternative means of recovering the minerals. Plaintiffs have asked the court for an injunction precluding future drilling and fracking activities near their land. On March 28, 2012, the court denied defendant's request for a "Lone Pine" order in the *Beck* case and a motion to dismiss in the *Strong* case. Motions for summary judgment in both cases were subsequently denied. See Nicholson, *Analysis of Litigation Involving Shale & Hydraulic Fracturing* (June 1, 2014). On February 22, 2015, the two cases were consolidated. **The cases were dismissed with prejudice on May 27, 2015.** See <http://odyssey.tylerhost.net/Panola/CaseDetail.aspx?CaseID=67140>.

***Cerny v. Marathon Oil Corp.* No. 13-00005-00118-CVK (218th Dist. Ct. Karnes County, Tex., May 21, 2013), removed, No. 5:13-cv-562-XR (W.D. Tex. June 28, 2013); remanded; on appeal, 480 S.W.3d 612 (Texas Fourth Court of Appeals, October 7, 2015, affirming judgment for defendants).**

Michael and Myra Cerny bring causes of action for private nuisance, negligence, and negligence per se, alleging that hydraulic fracturing is causing foundation damage and sinkholes, and that Defendants have released strong odors and noxious chemicals into the environment causing injury. See <http://s3.documentcloud.org/documents/1017919/cernys-lawsuit.pdf>. On August 6, 2013, the federal district court concluded that the negligence claim – that defendants are allowing odors and chemical compounds onto the plaintiffs’ property – is preempted by the Clean Air Act inasmuch as that claim would prohibit emissions in contravention of that allowed by the Clean Air Act and implementing regulations. On October 7, 2013, the court vacated an earlier order and remanded the case to state court. On or about August 15, 2014, the District Court granted motions to strike the majority of the Cernys’ summary judgment evidence as inadmissible hearsay, unqualified lay opinions, and unreliable, speculative, and conclusory expert opinions. The trial court then granted both the defendants’ no-evidence summary judgment motions and traditional summary judgment motions.

On October 7, 2015, the **Texas Court of Appeals**, San Antonio, **affirmed** the trial court’s judgment. See 480 S.W.3d 612. The appellate court held that the Cernys’ nuisance and negligence claims are in the nature of toxic tort claims which fall outside a lay person’s general knowledge and experience, and must therefore be proven with expert testimony. The court noted that “each of the Cernys suffered from multiple chronic health conditions that existed prior to the defendants’ commencement of oilfield operations” and that “the Cerny’s home had foundation damage prior to the defendants’ operations.” The court also held that “other companies’ emissions are plausible potential causes of the Cernys’ personal injuries and property damage.” The Cernys failed “to present more than a scintilla of expert evidence that emissions from a Marathon and/or Plains facility caused their injuries and property damage.” As to the portion of the Cernys’ nuisance claim, the court likewise concluded that they failed to raise “more than a scintilla of probative evidence that Marathon and Plains were the proximate cause of the dust, noise, traffic, and foul odors experienced by the Cernys.” Justice Luz Elena D. Chapa, Justice, dissented in part to the majority’s judgment. To the extent that the nuisance claims were not based on the migration of hazardous chemicals and wastes onto their property, but also alleged excessive noise, foul odors, dust pollution, and abnormal traffic, Justice Chapa stated that the latter types of nuisance claims are within common knowledge and experience, and that the record contains some admissible evidence connecting the alleged foul odors to the conduct of one of the defendants.

On January 6, 2016, the petition for review was filed with the Texas Supreme Court. No. 16-0011. On December 2, 2016, the Court denied the petition for review. **The case is closed.**

***Finn v. EOG Resources, Inc.*, No. C201300343 (18th Dist. Ct. Johnson County, Tex., July 30, 2013)**

Dan and Jan Marie Finn and Ed and Norma Specht of Alvarado, Texas (south of Forth Worth) claim fracking damaged their real estate and homes. The defendants are EOG Resources Inc., Shell Trading Co., Sunoco Partners Marketing and Terminals, L.P., and Enterprise Crude Oil LLC. The plaintiffs assert that hydraulic

fracturing triggered earthquakes that caused significant structural damage. The case, which asserts claims of negligence, nuisance and strict liability, may become a class-action lawsuit. See Nicholas Sakelaris, *Quakes Caused by Frack Water Disposal Damaged Homes*, <http://www.bizjournals.com/dallas/news/2013/08/02/lawsuit-says-quakes-caused-by-frack.html>; and Tammye Nash, *Property owners sue for fracking damages*, Cleburne (TX) Times-Review (09/01/13), at <http://www.cleburnetimesreview.com/local/x1664875143/Property-owners-sue-for-fracking-damages/print>; and Jordan Fletcher, *The fracking-earthquake connection*, The Dallas Morning News (Dec. 8, 2013), at <http://www.dallasnews.com/opinion/sunday-commentary/20131206-the-fracking-earthquake-connection.ece>.

On April 13, 2015, the case was dismissed. It is not known if a settlement was reached. See <http://pa.johnsoncountytexas.org/PublicAccess/Search.aspx?ID=200&NodeID=200%2c210%2c220%2c230&NodeDesc=All+District+Courts>.

***Dueling v. Devon Energy Corp.*, CV12-0843 (43rd District Court, Parker County, Tex., Oct. 10, 2013), removed, No. 4:14-cv-00325-Y (N.D. Tex., May 9, 2014), dismissed (Oct. 2, 2014), appealed, No. 14-11177 (U.S. Court of Appeals, Fifth Circuit, Oct. 27, 2014), remanded, 623 Fed.Appx. 127 (Aug. 14, 2015)**

Plaintiffs assert that Devon Energy's oil and gas drilling site, across the street from their homes in a residential area, is noisy and disruptive, and interferes with their use and enjoyment of their properties. The plaintiffs filed their lawsuit in state court within the two-year statute of limitations for nuisance claims, but named Devon Energy Corporation instead of Devon Energy Production Co. LP. After being added as a defendant, DEPCO removed the case to federal court and was granted judgment on the pleadings based on failure to file within the statute of limitations. On appeal the plaintiffs successfully argued that the district court abused its discretion in denying leave to amend the complaint. 623 Fed.Appx. 127 (Aug. 14, 2015). The parties settled on November 7, 2016, and the case was dismissed on November 30, 2016. **The case is closed.**

***Nicholson v. XTO/Exxon Energy, Inc.*, No. 4:13-CV-00899 (N.D. Tex., Nov. 6, 2013). See 2015 WL 1005338 (order dismissing case for lack of jurisdiction, Mar. 4, 2015)**

Pro se plaintiff Daniel Nicholson seeks damages, claiming that his mother's death was due to the cumulative effects of exposure to chemicals and silica used during hydraulic fracturing drilling, as well as the venting of compressed gas in close proximity to his mother's house. Nicholson also claimed such operations caused property damage and injured other family members living in the house, and contributed to the deaths of four other neighbors. **On March 4, 2015, the district court dismissed the case** for lack of subject matter jurisdiction due to lack of diversity of citizenship.

***Alexander v. Eagleridge Operating, LLC*, No. 14-01430-393 (393rd Dist. Ct., Denton County, Tex., Feb. 28, 2014)**

John and Linda Alexander and forty-one other residents of Denton, Texas, seek up to \$25 million in damages against Eagleridge Operating, LLC, and Eagleridge Energy, LLC, for drilling operations within a few hundred feet of their homes. The residents complain of offensive air emissions and loud and constant noises from drilling and operation of wells. In addition to claiming the sites are private nuisances, the suit accuses the company of trespassing by contaminating the air. EagleRidge says the permitted wells existed prior to any homes being built in the nearby housing developments. The pad sites are within 300 feet of residences. See Dianna Hunt, Denton Record-Chronicle, *Homeowners Seek up to \$25 Million in Damages from EagleRidge*, (March 9, 2014) at

<http://www.dentonrc.com/local-news/local-news-headlines/20140309-lawsuit-filed-against-company.ece>; and <http://justice1.dentoncounty.com/PublicAccess/default.aspx> (court docket). **On May 28, 2014, the court granted the plaintiffs' nonsuit without prejudice against all defendants.**

***Murray v. EOG Resources, et al.*, No. DC-15-08865 (95th Dist. Ct., Dallas County, Tex., Aug. 6, 2015); transferred to Tarrant County**

Cody Murray claims EOG Resources, Fairway Resources LLC, and three subsidiaries of Fairway, are responsible for burns from a methane explosion near his house that burned himself and members of his family, and allegedly caused permanent damage. The petition alleges that the high-level methane contamination of the Murrays' water well resulted from natural gas drilling and extraction activities. The Texas Railroad Commission is investigating the accident.

See <http://thinkprogress.org/climate/2015/08/12/3690730/texas-lawsuit-methane-explosion-fracking/>; and <http://www.eenews.net/stories/1060038097> (Jun. 1, 2016 article on Commission's investigation).

On March 22, 2016, the court granted the plaintiffs' notice of partial nonsuit and dismissed CDM Resource Management, Regency Gas Services, and The Goldman Sachs Group. On March 25, 2016, pursuant to an unopposed motion, the Court transferred the case to Tarrant County. According to one source, after EOG Resources settled, the Murrays' attorneys turned their attention to Fairway Resources, a subsidiary of Goldman Sachs, claiming the company's well was the source of the gas that ignited. See <https://www.texastribune.org/2017/03/06/years-after-well-explosion-texas-family-still-waiting-answers-railroad/>. According to another source, the case has been settled. See <https://hamiltonwingo.com/featured-case/something-in-the-water/> (visited Feb. 23, 2019) (statement, on website of the attorney for Cody Murray, that Murray "and his family now have the resources he needs to recover."). **The case is closed.**

***Berlanga v. Barnett Gathering, LLC*, No. C2017244 (355th Dist. Ct., Hood County, Tex., Oct. 26, 2017)**

Josue Berlanga and his son seek damages related to toxic chemical exposure from natural gas activities. The defendants are Barnett Gathering LLC, Exxon Mobil Corporation, XTO Energy Inc., and two landowners who leased their property for oil and gas development. Plaintiffs have experienced rotten egg/raw sewage-like odors, seeping waters -- including "off-white foam" -- on their property. In April 2016, testing showed elevated levels of styrene and benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene, and xylene compounds in the soil. The energy development activities, which involve fracking and include compressor stations, have allegedly

released gases through fugitive emissions and venting. In March 2016 the plaintiffs left their property which they consider uninhabitable. They have also sought medical attention for problems allegedly related to exposure to chemicals. The plaintiffs assert claims of assault-infliction of bodily injury; intentional infliction of emotional distress; negligence; gross negligence; negligence per se; and strict liability- abnormally dangerous activity. Case was settled on May 29, 2024. **The case is closed.**

Amador v. Barnett Gathering, LLC, No. C2018188 (355th Dist. Ct., Hood County, Tex., Aug. 6, 2018)

Donna and Alejandro Amador seek damages related to toxic chemical exposure from natural gas activities. The defendants are Barnett Gathering LLC, Exxon Mobil Corporation, XTO Energy Inc., and two landowners who leased their property for oil and gas development. Prior to the lawsuit, the plaintiffs and their neighbors filed complaints with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) (rotten egg/raw sewage-like odors) and with the Railroad Commission of Texas, Oil and Gas Division (concerns regarding adverse impacts from water -- including "off-white foam" -- emanating from the ground). In April 2016, testing showed elevated levels of styrene and benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene, and xylene compounds in the soil. The activities, which involve fracking and include compressor stations, have released gases through fugitive emissions and venting. The plaintiffs assert claims of assault-infliction of bodily injury; intentional infliction of emotional distress; negligence; gross negligence; negligence per se; and strict liability- abnormally dangerous activity. On July 31, 2018, the lawsuit was transferred from Dallas County to the 355th Judicial District in Hood County, Texas. On March 12, 2020, an order (dismissed/non-suit) was entered. **The case is closed.**

WEST VIRGINIA

Magers v. Chesapeake Appalachia, LLC, No. 12-C-36H (Circuit Ct., Marshall County, W. Va., Feb. 24, 2010), removed, No. 5:12-CV-49 (N.D. W. Va.). See 2012 WL 1202801 (Notice of Removal) (Mar. 30, 2012); 2013 WL 4099925 (Order granting CNX Gas Company's motion to dismiss); and 2014 WL 4352084 (Sept. 2, 2014, order granting summary judgment to Chesapeake on negligence claim)

Plaintiffs allege that the drilling activities by Chesapeake Appalachia on neighboring lands contaminated their well water. Plaintiffs later amended their complaint and added CNX Gas Company and Columbia Gas Transmission, arguing that CNX's shallow gas wells and Columbia's gas storage field also caused methane contamination of their well water. On April 10, 2013, the district court denied Columbia Gas Transmission's motion to dismiss, but granted its motion for a more definite statement. See opinion and order at

[http://www.arnoldporter.com/resources/documents/Magers%20v%20Chesapeake%20Appalachia%20\(Apr%202013%20order\).pdf](http://www.arnoldporter.com/resources/documents/Magers%20v%20Chesapeake%20Appalachia%20(Apr%202013%20order).pdf). On August 13, 2013, the court granted CNX's motion to dismiss. The court held that Plaintiffs cannot rely on West Virginia statutes intended to protect surface owners but not adjacent owners. Another West Virginia statute, controlling the reclamation of drilling sites, does not provide a private cause of action, and the court refused to imply any causes of action. In addition, Plaintiffs failed to sufficiently plead the breach of a duty owed by CNX, and thus failed to state a common law negligence claim. On September 2, 2014, Columbia Gas Transmission, L.L.C., was granted summary

judgment. Columbia's expert opined that the gas in the water well was from a biogenic source, that Columbia's storage well was not the source of the gas in the well, and that the plaintiffs had no explanation as to how Columbia's operations could have been the cause of the gas in those areas. The court agreed. The court noted that, in a multi-defendant negligence action, although a plaintiff has the burden of proving that a defendant's breach of a particular duty of care was a proximate cause of his or her injuries, the plaintiff does not have to show that such breach was the sole proximate cause of the injury. However, a mere possibility of causation is not sufficient to allow a reasonable jury to find causation. The court held that, in the present case, "it has not been shown that there is more than a mere possibility that Columbia was the source of the methane gas in the plaintiffs' well." 2014 WL 4352084. **On October 7, 2014, the action was dismissed pursuant to a settlement agreement.**

***Hagy v. Equitable Production Co.*, No. 10-c-163 (Circuit Ct., Jackson County, W. Va., Oct. 26, 2010), removed, No. 2:10-cv-01372 (S.D. W. Va., Dec. 10, 2010). See 2012 WL 713778 (denial of motion for a *Lone Pine* order) (Mar. 5, 2012); 2012 WL 1813066 (granting Halliburton's summary judgment motion) (May 17, 2012); and 2012 WL 2562856 (granting BJ Services Company's summary judgment motion) (Jun. 29, 2012), affirmed, 2013 WL 5529753 (4th Cir., Oct. 8, 2013).**

The Hagy family filed suit in state court in October 2010, alleging contamination of the family's property and water well due to defendants' natural gas wells. The case was removed to federal district court. Plaintiffs' causes of action include negligence, nuisance, strict liability, trespass, and medical monitoring trust funds. See 2010 WL 8767305. On July 22, 2011, the court dismissed plaintiffs' claims of strict liability and medical monitoring and dismissed the claims of nuisance and trespass for two individuals who no longer live on the property. After **settling** with defendants Halliburton Energy Services, Inc. and Warren Drilling Company, Inc., on May 7, 2012, the adult children voluntarily dismissed all their other claims. The court on May 17, 2012, granted Halliburton's motion for summary judgment. See 2012 WL 713778. On June 29, 2012, the court granted summary judgment to BJ Services Company, USA, the remaining defendant at that time. See 2012 WL 2562856. Plaintiffs claim BJ Services negligently cemented shale-gas wells, but the court held the plaintiffs failed to provide evidence of any wrongful act. As for trespass, no support was offered for the assertion that fracturing fluids and other chemicals intruded upon plaintiffs' aquifer. Plaintiffs also failed to provide sufficient evidence to avoid summary judgment on their private nuisance claim. On July 23, 2013, pending claims were dismissed and plaintiffs appealed to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit (No. 12-1926), seeking review of the orders granting summary judgment to BJ Services Company USA and Equitable Production Company. Nicholson, *Analysis of Litigation Involving Shale & Hydraulic Fracturing* (June 1, 2014). On October 8, 2013, the Fourth Circuit affirmed in an unpublished opinion. 2013 WL 5529753. The court of appeals held that **summary judgment was proper** on the negligence and trespass claims against BJ Services, and the release agreement with EQT covered the claims and was not obtained by fraud. **The case is closed.**

***Teel v. Chesapeake Appalachia, LLC*, No. 10-C-94DH (Circuit Ct., Wetzel County, W. Va., Dec. 8, 2010), removed, No. 5:11CV5 (N.D. W. Va., Jan. 6, 2011). See 906 F.Supp.2d 519 (partial summary judgment to defendant) (Oct. 25, 2012), affirmed, 2013 WL 5647638 (4th Cir., Oct. 17, 2013)**

Although there is no mention of hydraulic fracturing, the surface owners claimed Chesapeake caused damage to their land by depositing drilling waste and other material in pits. Plaintiffs raised claims of nuisance, trespass, negligence, strict liability, intentional infliction of emotional distress, and negligent infliction of emotional distress. On October 25, 2012, the defendant's motion for partial summary judgment was granted in part and denied in part, the defendant's motion to strike was denied; and the parties joint stipulation of dismissal was approved. The issue presented was whether Chesapeake's use of the plaintiffs' land was fairly necessary to the extraction of gas. The lease executed by the mineral interest owner did not provide Chesapeake with the explicit right to dispose of drill cuttings and other materials within in waste pits on the land. The court nevertheless held that the placement of drill cuttings in pits on the property was suitable and reasonable to the natural gas operations. The court rejected the argument that the use of the pits was unreasonable because a closed-loop system existed as an alternative, noting that cases cited by plaintiffs dealt with other minerals and practices, and consequently did not discuss drill cutting pits created in connection with natural gas wells.

On October 17, 2013, the **Fourth Circuit affirmed** in an unpublished opinion. 2013 WL 5647638. The court of appeals relied on *Whiteman v. Chesapeake Appalachia, LLC*, 729 F.3d 381 (4th Cir. Sept. 4, 2013), which held that "a claim for trespass under West Virginia common law can only lie if one's entry upon the land of another – or one's leaving a thing upon the land of another – is without lawful authority." When the surface owner claims trespass based on the mineral estate owner's activities, the burden is on the surface owner to show a lack of reasonable necessity or a substantial burden. The generalized evidence regarding mining operations did not satisfy the fact-intensive inquiry into the reasonable necessity of Chesapeake's actions on the Teels' property. The Teels also failed to produce evidence plausibly suggesting that Chesapeake's operations impose a substantial burden on their property. **The case is closed.**

***Whiteman v. Chesapeake Appalachia, LLC*, No. 10-C-101K (Circuit Ct., Wetzel County, W. Va., Feb. 7, 2011), removed, No. 5:11-cv-00031 (N.D. W.Va. Feb. 23, 2011). See 873 F.Supp.2d 767 (N.D. W. Va., Jun. 7, 2012) (Plaintiffs' motion for partial summary judgment denied, defendant's motion for summary judgment granted in part and denied in part); affirmed, 729 F.3d 381 (4th Cir., Sep 04, 2013)**

Martin and Lisa Whiteman, owners of surface rights to land, brought a state-court action against the holder of subsurface mineral rights in land, asserting nuisance, trespass, strict liability, negligence, and other claims arising from holder's construction and use of drill cutting pits on land. After removal, the district court held, on June 7, 2012, that (1) the construction and use of drill cutting pits did not constitute trespass; (2) the parties' damage release agreement did not bar owners' claims against holder; (3) the West Virginia Oil and Gas Production Damage Compensation Act did not prevent surface owners from recovering damages against holder under common law; and (4) the owners stated common-law damages claims against holder. 873 F.Supp.2d 767. On September 4, 2013, **the Fourth Circuit affirmed**. 729 F.3d 381. The court of appeals concluded that "the district court was correct to hold that creating drill waste pits was reasonably necessary for recovery of natural gas and did not impose a substantial burden on the Whitemans' surface property" Id. at 394. **The case is closed.**

***Rine v. Chesapeake Appalachia, LLC*, No. 11-cv-00004 (N.D. W. Va., Apr. 10, 2011)**

Larry and Jane Rine claim gas wells and associated waste ponds led to various chemicals contaminating their property and causing emotional distress. **An out of court settlement was reached, and the case was dismissed on July 7, 2011.** Source: Earthjustice, *Fracking Damage Cases and Industry Secrecy*.

***Bombardiere, Sr. v. Schlumberger Technology Corp.*, No. 1:11-cv-00050 (N.D. W. Va., Apr. 14, 2011). See 2011 WL 2443691 (N.D. W. Va., Jun. 14, 2011) (Order Denying Motion to Transfer Venue); and 934 F.Supp.2d 843, 2013 WL 588940 (N.D. W. Va., Feb. 13, 2013) (excluding testimony of plaintiff's medical expert and dismissed medical monitoring claim)**

This is a lawsuit brought by a worker who was exposed to chemicals while performing hydraulic fracturing near Waynesburg, Pennsylvania. The plaintiff claims he handled fracking chemicals without training or protective gear and developed an increased risk of cancer, psychological trauma, and other disorders. After defendants removed the action to federal district court, a motion was filed to transfer venue to the Western District of Pennsylvania. The court agreed that Pennsylvania tort law applied, but held that "the balance of the factors for transfer are strongly in favor of not transferring this action." In April 2012, the district court vacated a protective order by a federal magistrate regarding the dissemination of Schlumberger's trade secrets in three of its fracking chemicals. On January 31, 2013, the district court ruled on Schlumberger's motions for summary judgment. 2013 WL 12143886. Summary judgment was granted on Count One (negligence, willful, wanton and reckless misconduct); Court Four (agency); and Count Eight (punitive damages). Plaintiff withdrew Count Five (strict liability/ultrahazardous activity; Count Six (preparation and use of proprietary chemical fracking fluids); and Count Seven (wrongful interference with employment and wrongful interference with protected property interests). The district court declined to grant summary judgment on Count Two (alter ego). See [http://www.arnoldporter.com/resources/documents/Bombardiere%20v%20Schlumberger%20Tech%20Corp%20\(STC%20SJ%20Jan%2031%202013\).pdf](http://www.arnoldporter.com/resources/documents/Bombardiere%20v%20Schlumberger%20Tech%20Corp%20(STC%20SJ%20Jan%2031%202013).pdf). On February 1, 2013, the court issued an order granting in part, and denying as moot in part, CNX Gas Company's motion for summary judgment. 2013 WL 12143887. On February 13, 2013, the Court dismissed the medical monitoring claim. 934 F.Supp.2d 843. On February 21, 2013, the Court granted a defendant's summary judgment on Count Two. 2013 WL 12143831. As to the remaining counts, the jury on March 7, 2013, found for defendant Schlumberger Technology Corporation. **The case was dismissed on April 16, 2013.**

***Cain v. XTO Energy Inc.*, No. 11-c-165 (Circuit Ct., Marion County, W. Va., June 21, 2011), removed, No. 1:11-cv-000111 (N.D. W. Va., July 22, 2011)**

Although this is not a groundwater contamination case, it concerns the right to drill horizontally. Richard Cain asserts several causes of action, including trespass, unjust enrichment, and quantum meruit. He claims XTO had no right to enter his land and drill well bores horizontally into neighboring lands, and may not pipe gas from neighboring tracts across his land, and build roads on his property. On March 28, 2013, the district court agreed to certify to the West Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals the question of whether a severance deed gives the legal right to drill horizontal wells on a landowner's property in order to extract oil and gas resources from a shared pool of oil and gas estates. See

[http://www.arnoldporter.com/resources/documents/Cain%20v%20XTO%20Energy%20\(Mar%202013\).pdf](http://www.arnoldporter.com/resources/documents/Cain%20v%20XTO%20Energy%20(Mar%202013).pdf) (order); Nicholson, *Analysis of Litigation Involving Shale & Hydraulic Fracturing* (June 1, 2014); and WV court to consider rights of surface owner, Hydraulic Fracturing Blog (Apr. 5, 2013), at <http://fracking.fulbright.com/2013/04/WestVirginiaCourtToConsiderRightsOfSurfaceOwner.html>. However, on May 16, 2013, the court determined that certification was premature. The case was settled in November 2013, and **on December 23, 2013, the case was dismissed by joint stipulation.**

***Perna v. Reserve Oil & Gas, Inc.*, No. 11-c-2284 (Circuit Ct., Kanawha County, W. Va., Dec. 21, 2011)**

Louis Perna is a surface owner who asserts that his timber has been destroyed and that fracking fluids were deposited in unlined pits. Causes of action include negligence, trespass, and nuisance. Plaintiff also seeks property damages under the West Virginia Oil and Gas Production Damage Compensation Act. Nicholson, *Analysis of Litigation Involving Shale & Hydraulic Fracturing* (June 1, 2014). On January 9, 2015, an order was entered dismissing the case. **The case is closed.**

***Dent v. Chesapeake Appalachia, LLC*, No. 12-C-82 (Circuit Ct., Ohio Cty., W. Va., Feb. 27, 2012), removed, No. 5:12CV53 (N.D. W. Va., Apr. 6, 2012), remanded (Feb. 6, 2013). See 2013 WL 461255 (N.D. W. Va., Feb. 5, 2013) (order granting motion to remand and denying motion to dismiss without prejudice)**

David and Sarah Dent claim defendants are liable for damage to their property resulting from natural gas hydraulic fracturing and drilling-related activities performed on a neighbor's property. Plaintiffs sued in state court, raising state law claims of negligence, private nuisance, trespass, the tort of outrage, and invasion of privacy. The case was removed, but the district court, on February 5, 2013, held that it lacked diversity jurisdiction and thus remanded the case to state court. **The case was settled.**

***Dytko v. Chesapeake Appalachia, LLC*, No. 13-C-14 (Circuit Ct., Ohio Cty., W. Va., ???, 2013), removed, No. 5:13CV150 (N.D. W. VA. Oct. 28, 2013)**

Brian Dytko, the owner of 41 acres in Ohio County, West Virginia, filed suit in 2013 in state court, on behalf of himself and his family, against lessee Chesapeake Appalachia, LLC, asserting claims of fraudulent inducement, private nuisance, negligence/intentional tort, and breach of contract. The case was removed. The amended complaint alleges in part that Brian Dytko has suffered breathing difficulties and problems as a direct result of the dust, dirt and other contaminants being kicked up and/or released into the air and/or surrounding land. On May 30, 2014, the court ordered arbitration of lessor Brian Dytko's claims. After the arbitrator determined the oil and gas lease and the surface use agreement were valid, the defendant moved to dismiss the remaining plaintiffs' claims. On July 25, 2016, the court granted the defendant's motions. With regard to the negligence/intentional tort claim, the complaint only alleged injury to Brian Dytko and not to the remaining plaintiffs. The court further held that the arbitrator's ruling as to the private nuisance claim also is binding on the remaining plaintiffs. The remaining plaintiffs' interests were adequately represented by Brian Dytko in the prior arbitration proceeding in which the arbitrator denied all claims. 2016 WL 3983657. **This case is closed.**

***Charles E. Bertrand v. Gastar Exploration Inc.*, No. 14-C-158 (Circuit Court of Marshall County, W. Va., Sept. 30, 2014), removed, No. 5:14-00147 (N.D. W. Va. Nov. 4, 2014), remanded (Mar. 20, 2015)**

Charles E. Bertrand and Debra K. Bertrand complain that oil and gas operations by Gastar on adjacent land have caused fumes and odors, noise, and air pollution. They claim the operations caused contaminated water to flow onto their land and erode their hay fields, and caused dust, dirt, and debris to travel onto their land. In support of their request for compensatory and punitive damages, they allege that Gastar has substantially and unreasonably interfered with their use and enjoyment of their land, and that its actions have been intentional, unreasonable, negligent, and/or reckless. On March 20, 2015, the court remanded the case to the Circuit Court of Marshall County. On May 3, 2016, Gastar moved for summary judgment. **The case is pending.**

***Crowder v. EQT Production*, No. 14-C-64 (Circuit Court of Doddridge County, W. Va., Nov. 26, 2014), affirmed, *EQT Production v. Crowder*, 828 S.E.2d 800 (W. Va. Sup. Ct., Jun. 5, 2019)**

Plaintiffs Margot Beth Crowder and David Wentz own surface estates in Doddridge County overlying severed mineral estates subject to a 1901 lease. Plaintiffs the right of the lessee (EQT Production) to use their surface estates to drill horizontal wells that extend under neighboring properties. Plaintiffs contend that the 1901 lease does not allow EQT to use their surface estates in this manner, and that EQT is therefore trespassing to the extent it is using their surface estates for drilling and removing minerals from neighboring properties. Plaintiffs acknowledge that EQT has the right to use their surface estates to extract gas from the mineral estate directly beneath their lands.

On February 19, 2016, the circuit court held that EQT was liable to the plaintiffs for trespass because it had no express or implied right to enter or use the plaintiffs' surface estates to drill into and produce gas from neighboring mineral tracts. On July 6, 2017, the circuit court found EQT liable to the plaintiffs for unjust enrichment. The court required the plaintiffs to elect between seeking damages under the trespass claim or the unjust enrichment claim. The plaintiffs chose to proceed under their claim for trespass. A jury awarded Mr. Wentz \$ 180,000 and Ms. Crowder \$ 10,000.

On June 5, 2019, the West Virginia Supreme Court upheld the award of trespass damages. 828 S.E.2d 800. The court agreed with the plaintiffs that there is no implied right to use a surface tract to extract minerals from neighboring tracts, and held that a mineral owner (or its lessee) is not entitled to use the surface for the benefit of other mineral ventures in the absence of an express agreement with the surface owner permitting those operations. According to the court:

Horizontal drilling and hydraulic fracturing techniques are an economical and efficient tool for producing hydrocarbons. Nevertheless, it is trespassing to go on someone's land without the right to do so. A mineral owner or lessee has an implicit right to use the overlying surface to access only the minerals directly below the surface. Using the surface to extract minerals elsewhere, without the permission of the surface owner, is a trespass. Should the mineral owner or lessee want to utilize the surface to access minerals under neighboring land, they can certainly reach a separate agreement with the surface owner.

See Kate Mishkin and Ken Ward Jr., The Charleston Gazette-Mail, *Court to Big Fracking Company: Trespassing Still Exists — Even For You* (June 6, 2019), at <https://www.propublica.org/article/west-virginia-eqt-trespassing-fracking>. **The case is closed.**

***In Re: Marcellus Shale Litigation*, Civil Action No. 14-C-3000 (Circuit Court of Ohio County, WV)**

Several suits, first filed in October 2013, focus on noise, dust, excessive traffic, bright lights and a variety of other effects of the boom in the natural gas industry in northern West Virginia. Cases are pending in Doddridge, Harrison, Kanawha, Marion, Monongalia, Pleasants and Ritchie counties. Antero and Hall Drilling, which operate as partners at many sites, are the defendants in almost all of the cases. On November 7, 2014, the state Supreme Court referred the cases to West Virginia's Mass Litigation Panel, which often is used to handle complex lawsuits that involve common issues of law and fact, but also involve large numbers of plaintiffs or multiple defendants. The consolidated action is called *In Re: Marcellus Shale Litigation*, Civil Action No. 14-C-3000, in the Circuit Court of Ohio County, West Virginia. Additional cases were added in 2015 and 2016.

Orders related to the litigation pending before the Mass Litigation Panel can be found at <http://www.courtswv.gov/lower-courts/mlp/marcellus-shale.html>. See <http://wvpublic.org/post/after-living-next-drilling-activity-100-wva-residents-sue-companies> (Dec. 18, 2014); and <http://www.eenews.net/stories/1060024357> (Sep. 9, 2015).

On January 15, 2016, Antero filed its summary judgment memorandum in cases under the docket 13-C-434. *Andrews v. Antero Resources Corp.*, No. 13-C-434 (Circuit Court of Ohio County) See <https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/2720318-Antero-Memo-of-Law-in-Support-of-MSJ.html>. With respect to the negligence claims, Antero argues that the plaintiffs cannot establish water, soil, or air contamination. Antero claims the nuisance claims are barred by the statute of limitations, and argues alternatively that the it has not substantially and unreasonably interfered with plaintiffs' use and enjoyment of their lands. Antero argues that it has the right to do whatever is "reasonably necessary" to get to the minerals. It also suggests that the social value of its oil and gas operations outweigh the harms allegedly suffered by the plaintiffs.

On February 26, 2016, the litigants appeared before the three-judge Mass Litigation Panel. The plaintiffs dropped their negligence claims. The panel ordered the parties to take part in another mediation session. The parties agreed to meet again with McDowell Circuit Judge Booker Stephens, who led a previous mediation session. On July 11, 2016, an order was entered scheduling mediation of all cases in the Marcellus Shale Litigation (except cases filed against Williams Ohio Valley Midstream, LLC), on October 6, 2016, in Charleston.

On **October 11, 2016**, the Mass Litigation Panel granted summary judgment to Antero Resources and Hall Drilling, in several cases arising from Harrison County ("Harrison County Cherry Camp Trial Group"). See <http://www.courtswv.gov/lower-courts/mlp/mlp-orders/marcellus-shale/final-summary-judgment.pdf>. According to the order, the lawsuits were actions "by residents and/or owners of property in Harrison

County, West Virginia for private temporary continuing abatable nuisance and negligence/recklessness arising from oil and/or natural gas drilling, exploration, extraction, pipeline construction, water processing, and related acts and/or omissions.” The Court entered summary judgment based upon Antero’s contractual and property rights, and did not address “whether Antero’s actions or its employees’ or contractors’ actions would ‘otherwise meet the legal definition of a nuisance.’” The Court held that “Antero and Hall were operating within the scope of Antero’s leasehold rights” and that the “noise, traffic, dust, lights, and odors of which Plaintiffs complain are reasonable and necessarily incident to mineral development.” The Court found that “the activities complained of were reasonably necessary to the production of the mineral estate and did not exceed the fairly necessary use thereof or invade the rights of the surface owner under the standards outlined in *Adkins v. United Fuel Gas Co.*, 134 W. Va. 719, 61 S.E.2d 633 (1950).”

On **June 10, 2019**, the West Virginia Supreme Court affirmed the summary judgment. *Andrews v. Antero Resources Corp.*, 828 S.E.2d 858 (Jun. 10, 2019). The court (3-2) held that the impacts of horizontal drilling by Antero and Hall Drilling on the landowners were within the lessees’ implied rights to use the surface areas in their development activities. According to the court, the plaintiffs “failed to present evidence that the activities of which they complain are not reasonably necessary for Antero and Hall to develop the Marcellus shale, and they also have failed to present evidence that they are being substantially burdened by these activities, which arise from the extraction of oil and gas from the Marcellus shale using wells that are not located on their properties, and that have caused no damage to their surface estates.” 828 S.E.2d at 873.

The landowners had alleged that the activities constituted a nuisance, but the lower court reached its decision based on contract and property law. Consequently, the West Virginia Supreme Court did not address the question of whether the owner of mineral rights underlying a particular property has the right to create a nuisance on the surface of that tract to develop minerals underlying another property.

In her dissent, Justice Margaret Workman asserted that the Mass Litigation Panel (MLP) and the majority “are wrong in holding that a nuisance claim is not tenable under any set of facts when mineral owners act within their implied rights; and they are wrong in failing to establish any analytical framework for creating balance between the sets of competing rights.” 828 S.E.2d at 876. She believes the Supreme Court “should have enunciated the parameters of a nuisance claim in the fracking context; and we should have remanded the case with directions for the MLP to determine whether sufficient material issues of fact exist to permit a jury, under proper instruction of law, to decide whether respondents’ actions constitute a nuisance, and if so, what damages should be awarded.” 828 S.E.2d at 883. She also stated that, with respect to pending cases, “there should be a court-directed process to mediate competing rights of surface/mineral owners.” *Id.*

[Note: in *EQT Production v. Crowder*, 828 S.E.2d 800 (Jun. 5, 2019) (described elsewhere in this document), the West Virginia Supreme Court held that, a mineral owner or its lessee does not have the right to use the severed surface estate to benefit mining or drilling operations on other lands, in the absence of an express agreement with the surface owner permitting those operations. The *Crowder* case involved a claim for trespass, whereas the *Andrews* case asserted a claim for nuisance.]

See Ken Ward Jr., The Charleston Gazette-Mail, *In West Virginia, fracking companies lost on trespassing, but a court just gave them a different win* (June 14, 2019), at <https://stateimpact.npr.org/pennsylvania/2019/06/14/in-west-virginia-fracking-companies-lost-on-trespassing-but-a-court-just-gave-them-a-different-win/>.

On June 16, 2020, the court granted Antero Resources' motion for partial summary judgment on negligence claims in the litigation pertaining to the North Canton Compressor Station. See <http://www.courtsww.gov/lower-courts/mlp/mlp-orders/marcellus-shale/OrderGranting-Anteros-Mot-for-PartialSJ.pdf>. Plaintiffs admitted that they have not experienced or identified any medical issues or physical, real and/or personal property damages, and offered no evidence to establish claims for personal injury or property damage.

On July 7, 2021, the court granted summary judgment to Antero and Hall Drilling regarding claims from Doddridge and Harrison Counties in an area known as Halls Run Road. The cases presented the same facts and issues as *Andrews v. Antero Resources Corp.*, 828 S.E.2d 858 (Jun. 10, 2019).

The cases before the Mass Litigation Panel are completed. See <https://www.courtsww.gov/lower-courts/mass-litigation-panel/orders/completed>.

***Easthom v. EQT Production Co.*, No. 16-C-23 (Circuit Ct., Wetzel County, W. Va., Feb. 29, 2016), removed, No. 5:16-cv-00042 (N.D. W. Va., Mar. 30, 2016)**

James and Mary Easthom allege that defendant's operations have caused fumes, dust, noise, bright lights, and constant truck traffic. They assert negligence and nuisance claims and seek damages and injunctive relief. On January 6, 2017, the parties submitted a notice of settlement. The parties settled the case and, on March 2, 2017, the case was dismissed. **The case is closed.**

***Adams v. Chesapeake Energy Corp.*, No. 17-C-244-B (Circuit Ct., Logan County, W. Va., Aug. 30, 2017), removed, No. 2:17-cv-04038 (S.D. W. Va., Sept. 25, 2017)**

Charles Adams, Karen Adams and Dreama Davis sued Chesapeake Energy and related companies, seeking damages for contamination due to fracking operations. The complaint alleges that the defendants' well, located on higher ground, leaked and contaminated a pond and a well, and killed fish, cattle, and pets. The defendants' also are alleged to degraded a road, threatened plaintiffs with a gun, and cut locks from gates. Plaintiffs allege claims for private nuisance, intentional infliction of emotional distress, negligence, trespass, breach of contract, and strict liability.

On October 3, 2018, the district court entered an order granting partial summary judgment for the defendants. 2018 WL 4781182. The court found that the report submitted by the plaintiffs' expert was deficient. The report stated that "there is reason to be concerned that the water is being impacted by fracking activities," but offered no definitive opinion that the water from Plaintiffs' well and pond was contaminated, and did not explain how any such contamination might have occurred from "fracking

activities.” Chesapeake Appalachia was granted summary judgment on claims for private nuisance, intentional infliction of emotional distress, negligence, trespass, and strict liability. Because the evidence showed that neither Chesapeake Energy nor Chesapeake Operating drilled, completed, owned or operated the well, summary judgment in their favor was granted.

On October 5, an order of dismissal was entered, indicating that the action “has been compromised and settled.” **The case is closed.**

***Haywood v. Caretta Minerals, LLC*, No. 19-C-11 (Circuit Ct., McDowell County, W. Va, Mar. 1, 2019), removed, No. 1:19-cv-00264 (S.D. W. Va., April 11, 2019)**

Teldia Haywood and four others allege their property is “being contaminated by blasting, fracking, and drilling operations.” They assert a strict liability claim; a nuisance claim; a claim for violations of the West Virginia Groundwater Protection Rule; and a negligence claim. The suit was removed to federal court, and on March 30, 2020, the court granted motions to dismiss by Caretta Minerals, LLC’s and CNX Gas Company, LLC. 2020 WL 1520245. The court, in part, held that “plaintiffs have not pled any facts stating that defendants conducted blasting, fracking, or drilling operations in or near the specific area where plaintiffs reside” and no facts have been pled “facts supporting that plaintiffs’ injuries can be traced to defendants’ activities.” Plaintiffs alleged that defendants tortiously contaminated their groundwater by runoff of hazardous chemicals from their blasting, fracking, and drilling activities, but “without knowing where plaintiffs reside, where and when the runoff generally occurred, and which specific activities by which defendant are alleged to have caused the runoff contamination, defendants have no notice of knowing the specific claims alleged against them.” **The case is closed.**

***American Petroleum Partners Operating, LLC v. Schaber*, No. 5:19-cv-250 (N.D. W. Va., Aug. 23, 2019)**

American Petroleum Partners Operating, LLC and APP Midstream, LLC brought this action against Leslie and Lori Schaber, who are farmers and owners of the surface estate of property in Marshall County, West Virginia. The dispute concerns APP’s use of the surface for construction and operation of a well pad and midstream facilities. Plaintiffs contend that use of the surface for these purposes is authorized by a Surface Use Agreement and a Right of Way and Easement Agreement, and that APP can drill oil and gas wells on the well pad and complete the wells, and engage in production, by means of hydraulic fracturing.

On November, 21, 2019, the Schabers counterclaimed for breach of contract, negligence, private nuisance, and conversion. 2019 WL 8301247. They claim that APP breached the surface use agreement by permitting the groundwater source on the property to be damaged; by permitting slippage of the surface to interfere with use and enjoyment of the property; by permitting large boulders to become unearthed, rendering pastures unsafe and unusable; by failing to install and replace proper fencing on the Subject Property, causing loss of value to livestock; and, by failing to pay contractors, leading to the attachment of a mechanic’s lien to the property. In particular, they claim that during construction of the well pad, substantial amounts of dirt were removed without compensation, livestock was ensnared in negligently built fencing, negligent construction caused soil movement that cut off access to most of the

farm to vehicle and livestock traffic, sediment entered and negatively affected natural water sources; and large areas not subject to the surface use agreement became inaccessible and unsafe for farming activities. In addition, the Schabers allege that the well pad is emitting hydrogen sulfide, and that two of their children have experienced difficulty breathing and pneumonia since the onset of the sulfurous odor permeating their home.

The Schabers further assert that they attempted to relocate their family, which includes a disabled child who requires specialized equipment, by purchasing property elsewhere, but were unable to use the subject property as collateral for a loan because APP's contractor had recorded a mechanic's lien. The Schabers assert that the surface use agreement requires APP to indemnify the Schabers for injuries due to the mechanic's lien. The parties settled in July 2021. **The case is closed.**

***Pike v. Antero Resources Corp.*, No. 5:19-CV-276 (N.D. W. Va., Sep. 24, 2019)**

Rufus, John, and Daniel Pike, owners of mineral interests in Tyler County, brought claims of intentional surface trespass, conversion, and unjust enrichment. They alleged that Antero, without permission, built a road and drilled horizontal gas wells and improperly converted oil and gas. On November 7, 2019, the court granted Antero's motion to dismiss because plaintiffs failed to meet their burden of proving diversity of citizenship. **CLOSED**

***Scott. v. SWN Production Co., LLC*, No. 21-C-101 (Circuit Court, Marshall County, West Virginia, Nov. 24, 2021), removed No. 5:22-cv-3 (N.D. W. Va., Jan. 5, 2022)**

Stephen and Pamela Scott sued SWN Production Company, alleging noise and other nuisance claims based upon SWN's site preparation work, drilling rig construction, drilling operations, and hydraulic fracturing. The Scotts allege that SWN failed to use appropriate noise barriers and have interfered with their use and enjoyment of their land and have caused the emotional and mental anguish, stress and anxiety. 2022 WL 1772973 (complaint). On July 6, 2023, the court granted summary judgment to the defendant on the negligence and punitive damages claims, but denied summary judgment on the private nuisance claim. On July 24, 2023, the case was dismissed because the parties reached a settlement agreement. **The case is closed.**

WYOMING

***Locker v. Encana Oil & Gas (USA) Inc.*, No. 39970 (Dist. Ct. for Fremont Cty., Ninth Jud. Dist., May 21, 2014), removed, No. 1:14-cv-00131 (D. Wyo., Jly. 2, 2014)**

Jeff and Rhonda Locker live on a farm near Pavillion, Wyoming. They assert claims of negligence, private nuisance, strict liability, fraud, and medical monitoring, and argue that Encana's gas wells are responsible for Rhonda's deteriorating health. They claim that Encana Oil and Gas (1) negligently contaminated their ground water, (2) intentionally made misrepresentations during a settlement agreement in 2003, (3)

fraudulently convinced plaintiffs to consume unsafe water, (4) persuaded plaintiffs to resume consuming contaminated ground water, and (5) concealed and prevented investigation of the contaminated ground water. and that the company tried to cover up evidence linking its operations to the pollution. The drilling at issue took place prior to the development of hydraulic fracturing. Water tests conducted in 1988 showed the water in the Locker's well was clean. In 1992, the well water turned black when a nearby gas well was reworked by Tom Brown Inc., and a test in 2001 revealed the presence of toluene. The Lockers allege they were not told about the 2001 test results, and assert that when they settled with Tom Brown Inc. in 2002 the company falsely said it had found no evidence of pollution. In 2004 Tom Brown Inc. was purchased by Encana Oil and Gas. On December 21, 2016, the federal district court denied Encana's motion for summary judgment. The court held that issues of disputed fact remain as to whether the Lockers were fraudulently induced to enter into the 2002 settlement agreement. With regard to the defendant's statute of limitations defense, the court held that issues of disputed fact remain as to when the Lockers knew, or had reason to know, of the existence of their causes of action. The case was settled, and an order dismissing the action was entered on February 27, 2018. See *Pavillion couple reach settlement with Encana on polluted water*, at https://trib.com/business/energy/pavillion-couple-reach-settlement-with-encana-on-polluted-water/article_42c6121f-5156-5e70-84f0-d0de2c07b340.html (Jan. 24, 2018) **The case is closed.**

CANADA

***Ernst v. EnCana Corp.* 0702 00120 (Ct. of Queen's Bench of Alberta). 2014 ABQB 672 (Nov. 7, 2014), affirmed, 2017 SCC 1 (Supreme Court of Canada, Jan. 13, 2017), at <http://scc-csc.lexum.com/scc-csc/scc-csc/en/item/16325/index.do>**

Jessica Ernst sued Alberta Environment, the Energy Resources Conservation Board (now known as Alberta Energy Regulator, or AER), and Encana over the contamination of her well water in Rosebud, Alberta. The 2003 lawsuit claims the contamination was from hazardous and toxic chemicals used for hydraulic fracturing from 2001 to 2006, and asserts that Encana was negligent in the fracking of shallow coal seams. Ernst also alleges that Alberta Environment's investigation into the contamination of her well was negligent.

The AER (the energy regulator) was dismissed in 2013 on the basis of statutory immunity, a decision affirmed by the Supreme Court of Canada on January 13, 2017. The Court held that a provincial provision shielding the Alberta Energy Regulator from legal action was constitutional. Ernst had sought damages of \$50,000 in claiming the regulator breached her constitutional right to free speech. The Supreme Court disagreed that the immunity clause in the Energy Resources Conservation Act was unconstitutional because it barred her claim for charter damages. It observed that Ernst could have asked a court to set aside the regulator's directive instead of seeking damages.

On November 7, 2014, Alberta Chief Justice Neil Wittmann held that Ernst could proceed with her \$30 million lawsuit against Alberta's Ministry of Environment, finding "a reasonable prospect Ernst will succeed in establishing that Alberta owed her a prima facie duty of care." The court held that neither the provincial Water Act nor the Environmental Enhancement and Protection Act conferred statutory

immunity, and that government regulators and agencies can be sued if they engage in negligent investigations. See *Judge Rules Landowner May Sue Gov't in Landmark Fracking Case* (Nov. 11, 2014), at <http://thetyee.ca/News/2014/11/11/Ernst-Fracking-Update/>; and *Canadian Claiming Fracking Contaminated Water Can Sue Government, Court Rules* (Nov. 19, 2014), at <http://www.bna.com/canadian-claiming-fracking-n17179912027/>. On January 12, 2016, the **Supreme Court of Canada heard argument** on whether immunity bars Ernst from suing AER for infringing her right of expression.

On January 13, 2017, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that Ernst cannot sue the Alberta Energy Regulator over alleged violations of her right to freedom of expression under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. See <https://scc-csc.lexum.com/scc-csc/scc-csc/en/item/16325/index.do>. The 5-4 majority upheld an immunity clause passed by the legislature that protects the Alberta Energy Regulator from any Charter claims or lawsuits. Although her claim against the Alberta Energy Regulator has been dismissed, Ernst has stated that she will continue her case against Alberta Environment and Encana. According to her website, Ernst's lead lawyer, Mr. Klippenstein, quit the lawsuit in August 2018, but a year later had not returned files needed to continue her lawsuit. See <https://www.ernstversusencana.ca/the-lawsuit/>.

See Oliver Hutchison, *Hydraulic Fracturing Litigation: The Case of Jessica Ernst & the Problem of Factual Causation*, 42 Canada-United States Law Journal 184 (2018).

On April 1, 2021, Court of Queen's Bench Judge J.T. Eamon accepted applications from Encana and the Alberta government to dismiss the case due to inactivity on the file for three years. See Andrew Nikiforuk, *The Brutal Legal Odyssey of Jessica Ernst Comes to an End*, at <https://thetyee.ca/News/2021/05/18/Brutal-Legal-Odyssey-Jessica-Ernst-Ends/> (May 18, 2021).

Daunheimer v. Angle Energy (2013)

In 2013 Diana Daunheimer of south-central Alberta sued Angle Energy, now owned by Bellatrix Exploration, for \$13 million. Her claim alleged that the company did not exercise reasonable care while fracking its oil and gas wells near her home between 2008 and 2012. In 2008 Angle Energy drilled and fracked wells near her family's farm west of Didsbury, Alberta. Thereafter, in August 2010, the company drilled and fracked a sour gas well south of her family's property. Four of the wells were fracked with "frac oil" consisting of kerosene, light aromatic solvent naptha, benzene, xylene and other additives. The fifth well was a "gas frac" using gelled propane.

The family alleges air, water, and noise pollution. Air pollution is alleged to have affected farm animals and given the family headaches, spells of dizziness, and chronic respiratory infections. Angle's drilling activity is also alleged to have damaged property, killed livestock, contaminated well water, and caused a tumour on Daunheimer's daughter's neck. The noise pollution allegation focused on a "roaring" compressor station.

Angle Energy (now Bellatrix Exploration), in its statement of defence filed in February 2014, denied that its oil and gas operations contributed to or caused the alleged injuries and damages.

On August 25, 2017, an order was entered regarding the settlement of the claims of the two minor children in the sum of \$25,000 for each child. **The case is closed.**

NETHERLANDS

A Dutch court ruled on March 1, 2017, that an energy company jointly owned by Shell and ExxonMobil is liable for the psychological suffering of residents in the north of the country whose homes have been damaged by small earthquakes caused by gas drilling. The court, in the northern city of Assen, found that the Netherlands Petroleum Company (NAM) breached the fundamental right “to the undisturbed enjoyment of living.” NAM had previously acknowledged its responsibility for earthquake-related damages. The case was filed by residents near the northern city of Groningen who claimed they suffered emotionally because of the earthquakes, which have for years rattled homes - and their nerves. While earthquakes caused by the gas drilling are relatively minor, they have caused serious cracks and structural damage to thousands of buildings in the region. NAM already is paying to repair that damage. The court said the Dutch state ignored advice to order NAM to cut the amount of gas it pumped from the Groningen gas field, but stopped short of declaring the government liable for damages. See *Dutch Court Finds Energy Firm Liable for Emotional Suffering*, Associated Press (Mar. 1, 2017).

On April 20, 2017, the Arnhem-Leeuwarden court ruled that the Public Prosecutor must investigate whether NAM violated Article 170 of the Criminal Code by damaging housing and possibly creating life threatening situations. Based on that investigation, a decision could be made to prosecute the Dutch company. See *Court Orders Criminal Investigation Against NAM over Fracking Earthquake Damage* (April 20, 2017), at <http://nltimes.nl/2017/04/20/court-orders-criminal-investigation-nam-fracking-earthquake-damage>. But see March 2021 decision discussed below.

The Dutch Council of State, the country's top administrative court, in January 2019 heard requests calling for production at the giant onshore gas field Groningen to be halted. See <https://www.cnn.com/2019/01/17/reuters-america-dutch-citizens-demand-end-to-quake-hit-groningen-gas-production.html>. On January 31, 2019, the Dutch High Court said gas production at the Groningen field can continue. The court issued a preliminary ruling and said it would reach a final verdict on production plans after it had heard 26 other complaints from local authorities and interest groups in April. See <https://www.reuters.com/article/netherlands-gas-court/update-1-groningen-gas-production-can-continue-as-planned-dutch-high-court-idUSL5N1ZV2QW>.

In May 2019 a magnitude 3.4 earthquake hit the Groningen area. The quake near the village of Westerwijtwerd was one of the most powerful to ever hit the Netherlands. Six earthquakes have struck the Groningen gas field so far in 2019, and in 2018 there were 15 tremors. The natural gas is typically extracted through drilling – rather than hydraulic fracturing – and causes earthquakes as the ground

settles. See Samuel Osborne, Groningen earthquake: *Dutch province hit by tremor blamed on decades of gas extraction*,

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/groningen-earthquake-today-netherlands-gas-extraction-fracking-a8924846.html> (May 22, 2019).

The Netherlands announced in September 2019 that it will halt the production at Groningen by 2022. See <https://www.cnn.com/2019/09/10/reuters-america-update-2-netherlands-to-halt-groningen-gas-production-by-2022.html>.

In March 2021 the Public Prosecution Service (OM) found “no evidence of deliberate criminal behavior by NAM” and recommended that the company not be prosecuted for damages caused by fracking earthquakes in Groningen. In 2017, the Groninger Bodem Beweging and a number of individuals filed an Article-12 procedure to try and force the prosecutor to prosecute NAM for damages caused by fracking earthquakes. The Arnhem-Leeuwarden court ruled that the OM had to investigate possible criminal violations by NAM.

<https://nltimes.nl/2021/03/26/nam-prosecuted-groningen-earthquake-damage-prosecutor>.

In March 2023, new proposals were announced by the institute IMG regarding the handling of damage claims related to earthquakes caused by the extraction of natural gas in Groningen. The proposals are estimated to cost an extra 5 to 10 billion euros. Another proposal is to largely drop the burden of proof connected to residents’ damage claims. The institute has called on the government to make a quick decision regarding its proposals.

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