

# Shale Gas Issues in the United States

Plus comments on alternative energy sources

Dr. Robert B. Finkelman ([bobf@utdallas.edu](mailto:bobf@utdallas.edu))

University of Texas at Dallas

and

China University of Geosciences, Beijing



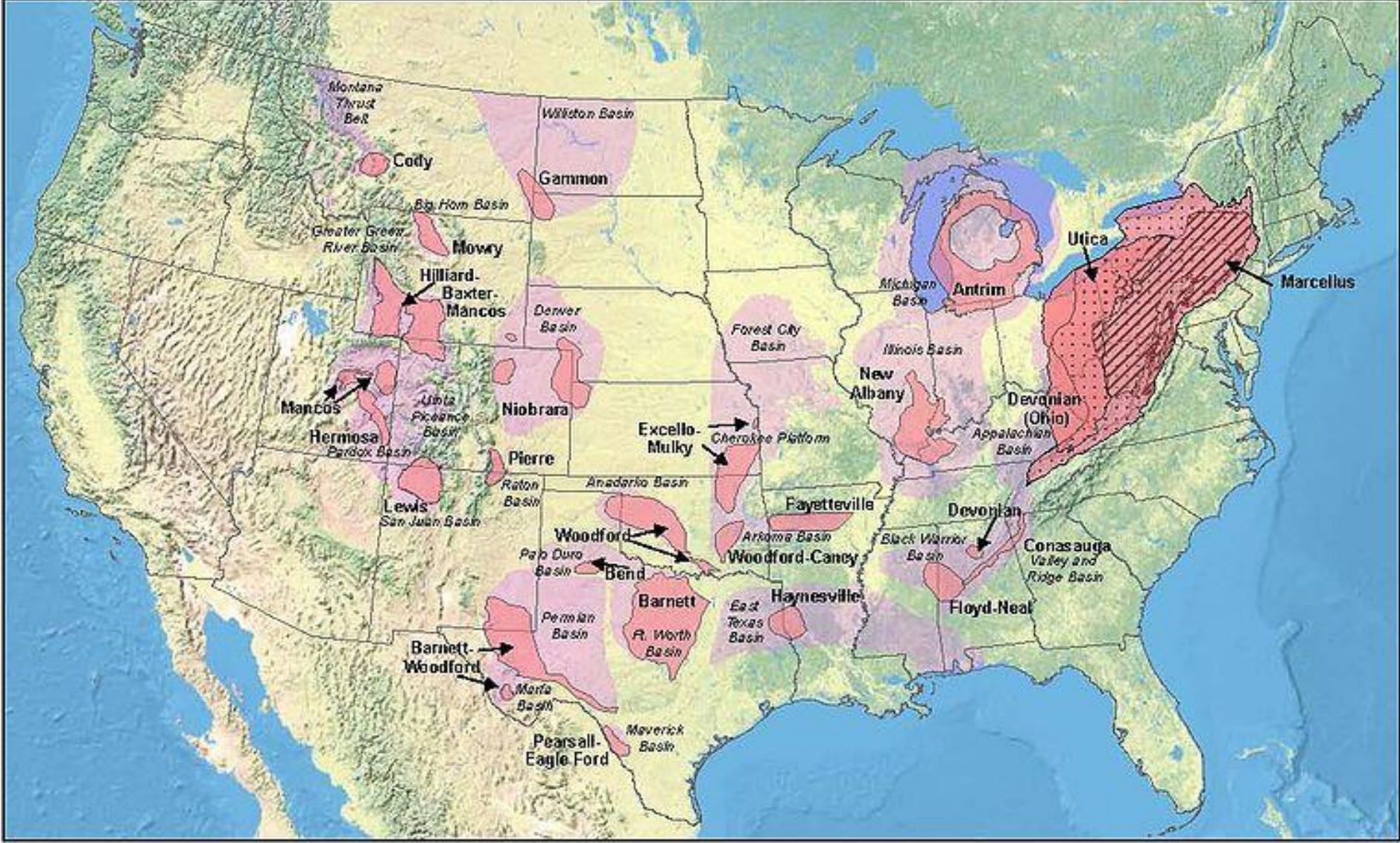
President Obama and President Hu Jintao announced in 2012 a broad agreement to strengthen cooperation between the United States and China on clean energy including a shale gas initiative that states:

*Shale Gas Initiative.* *The two Presidents announced the launch of a new U.S.-China Shale Gas Resource Initiative. Under the Initiative, the U.S. and China will use experience gained in the United States to assess China's shale gas potential, promote environmentally-sustainable development of shale gas resources, conduct joint technical studies to accelerate development of shale gas resources in China, and promote shale gas investment in China through the U.S.-China Oil and Gas Industry Forum, study tours, and workshops.*

# Why Shale Gas is Viable

- Advances in horizontal drilling
- Advances in hydraulic fracturing
- Increase in price of natural gas
- Anticipated increase in energy demand
- Concerns about coal (environment), oil (reliable sources), nuclear (safety)

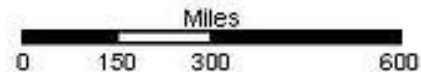




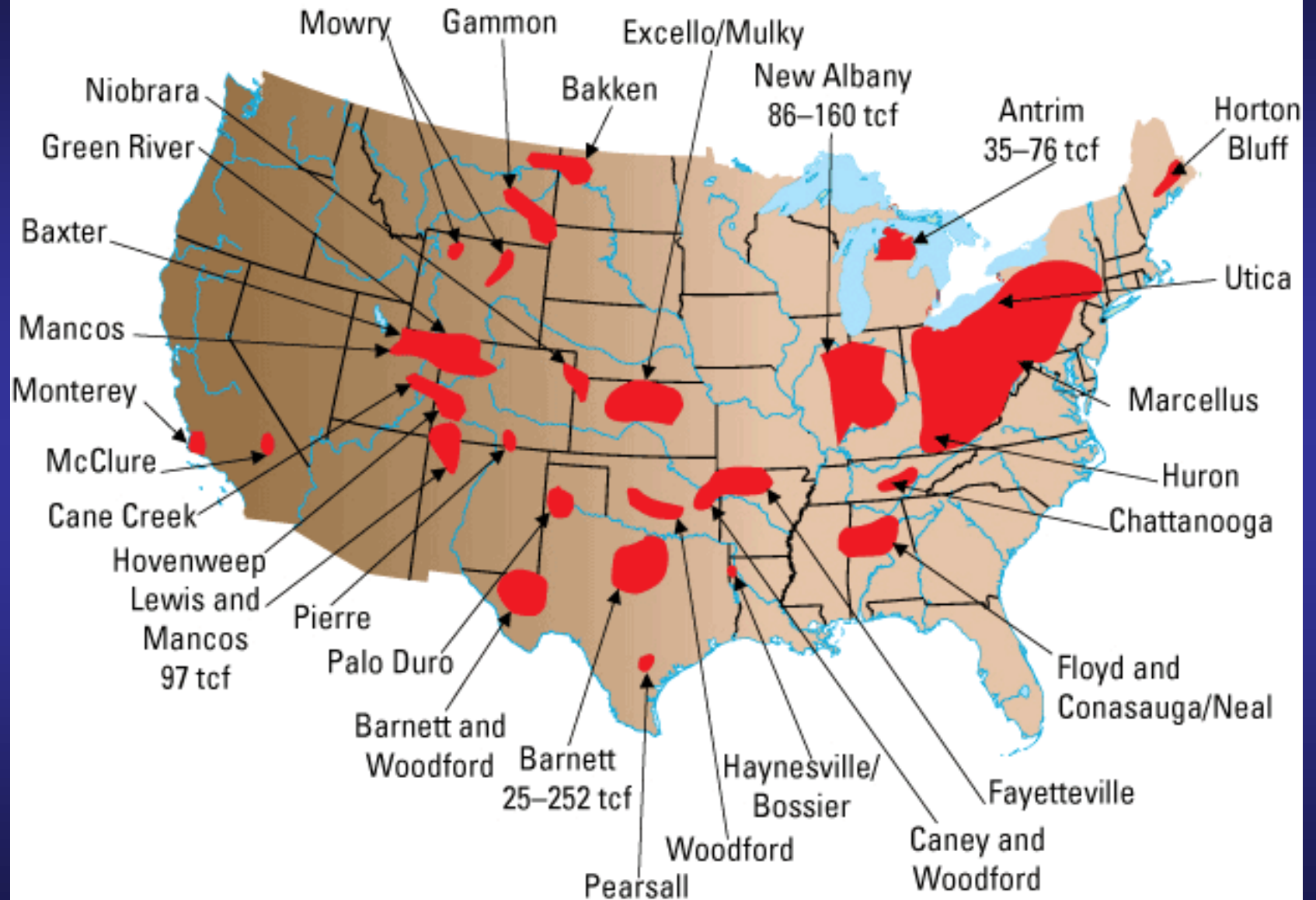
# United States Shale Gas Plays

## Stacked Appalachian Plays

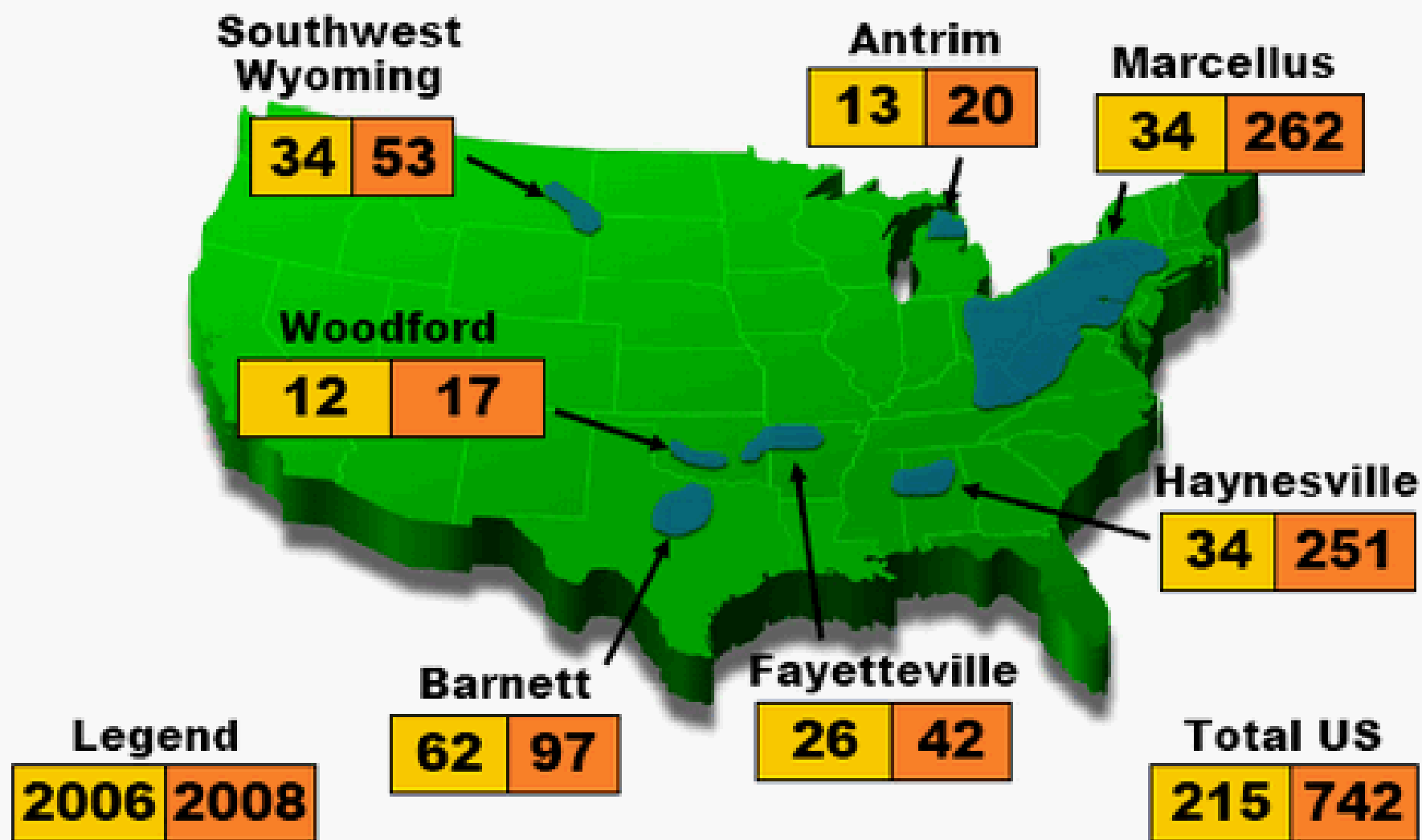
November 2008





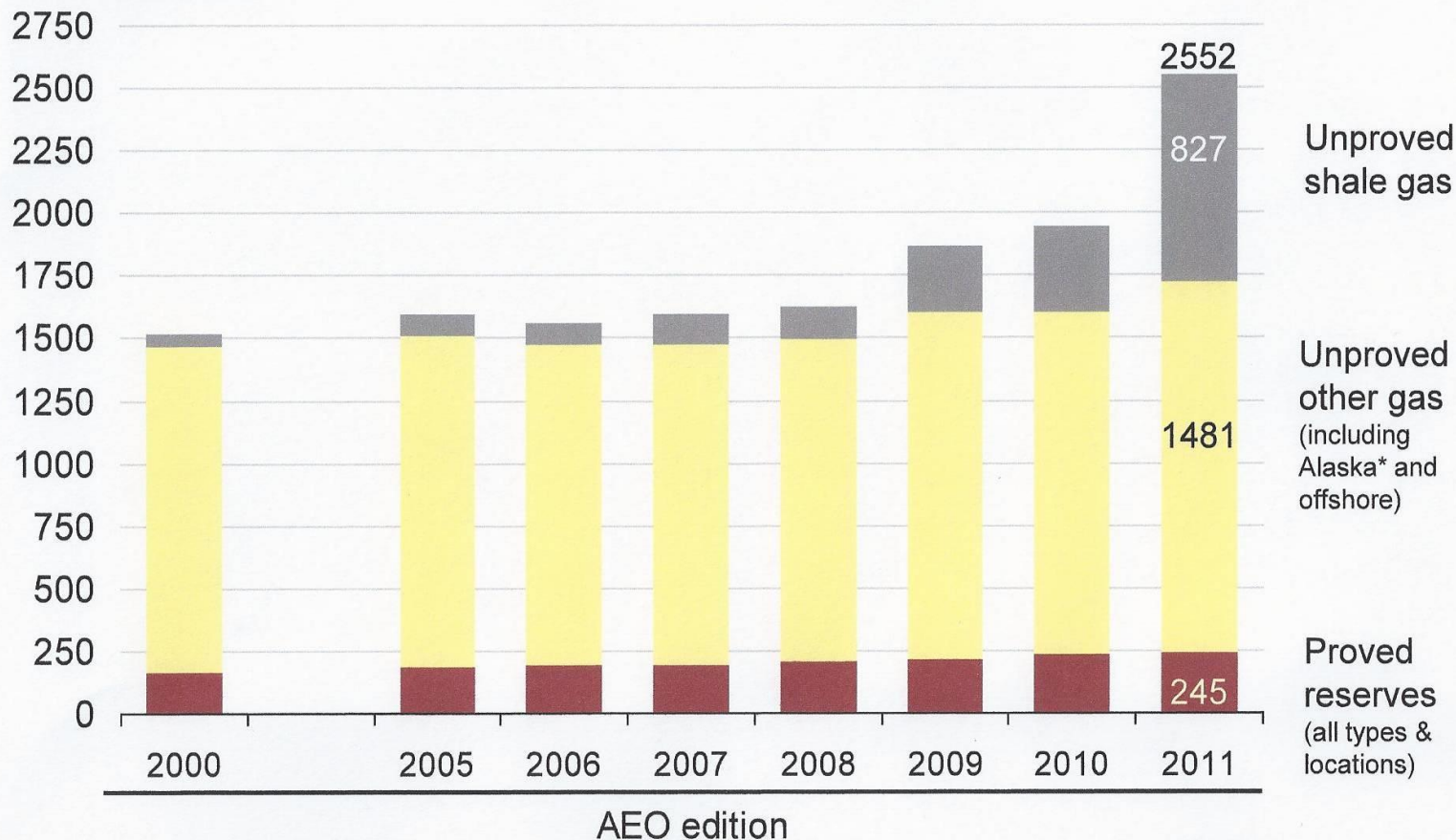


## Estimated Recoverable NG For Select Shale Basins (TCF)



## Shale gas has been the primary source of recent growth in U.S. technically recoverable natural gas resources

U.S. dry gas resources  
trillion cubic feet



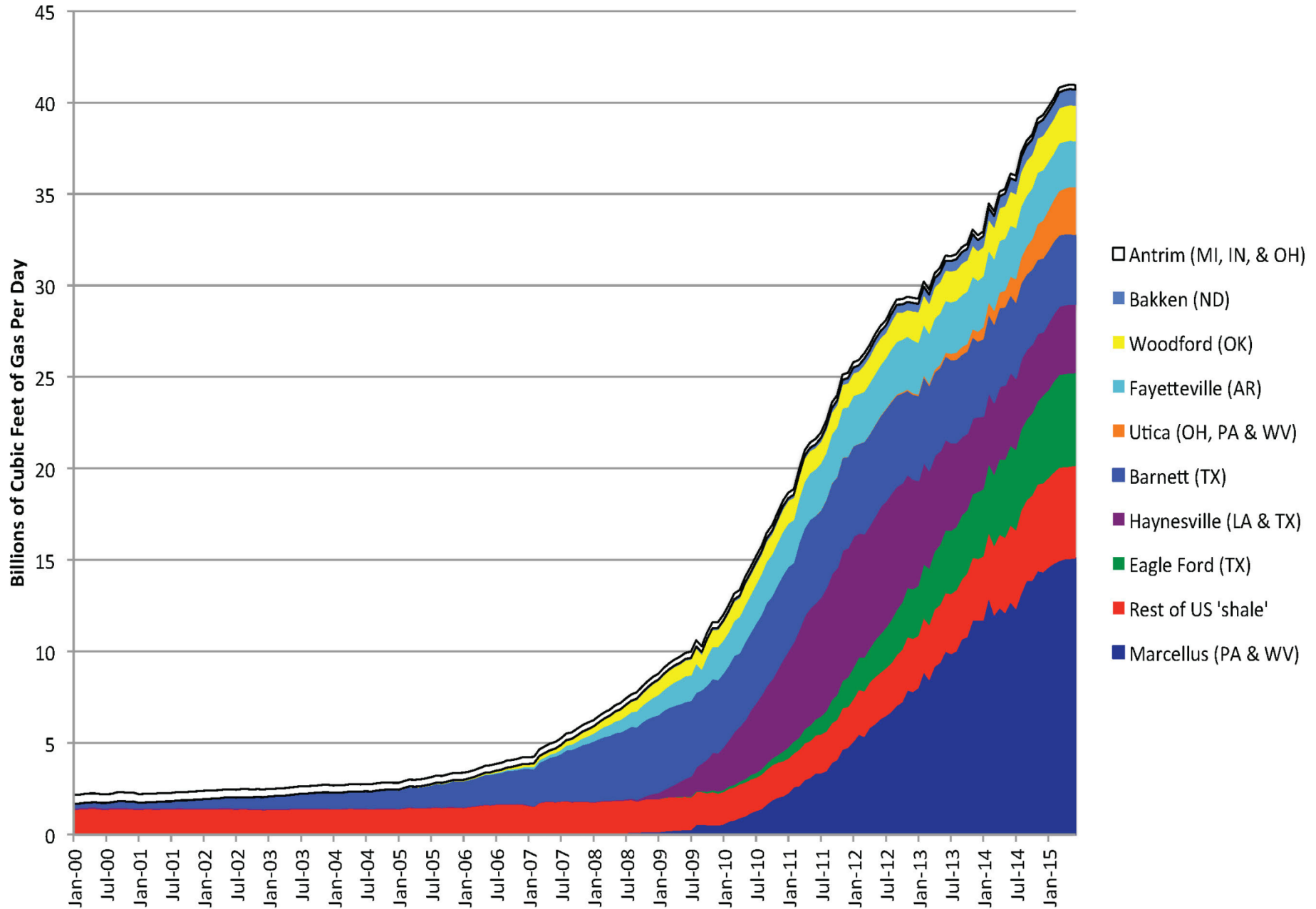
\* Alaska resource estimates prior to AEO2009 reflect resources from the North Slope that were not included in previously published documentation.



Richard Newell, December 16, 2010

Source: EIA, *Annual Energy Outlook 2011* 22

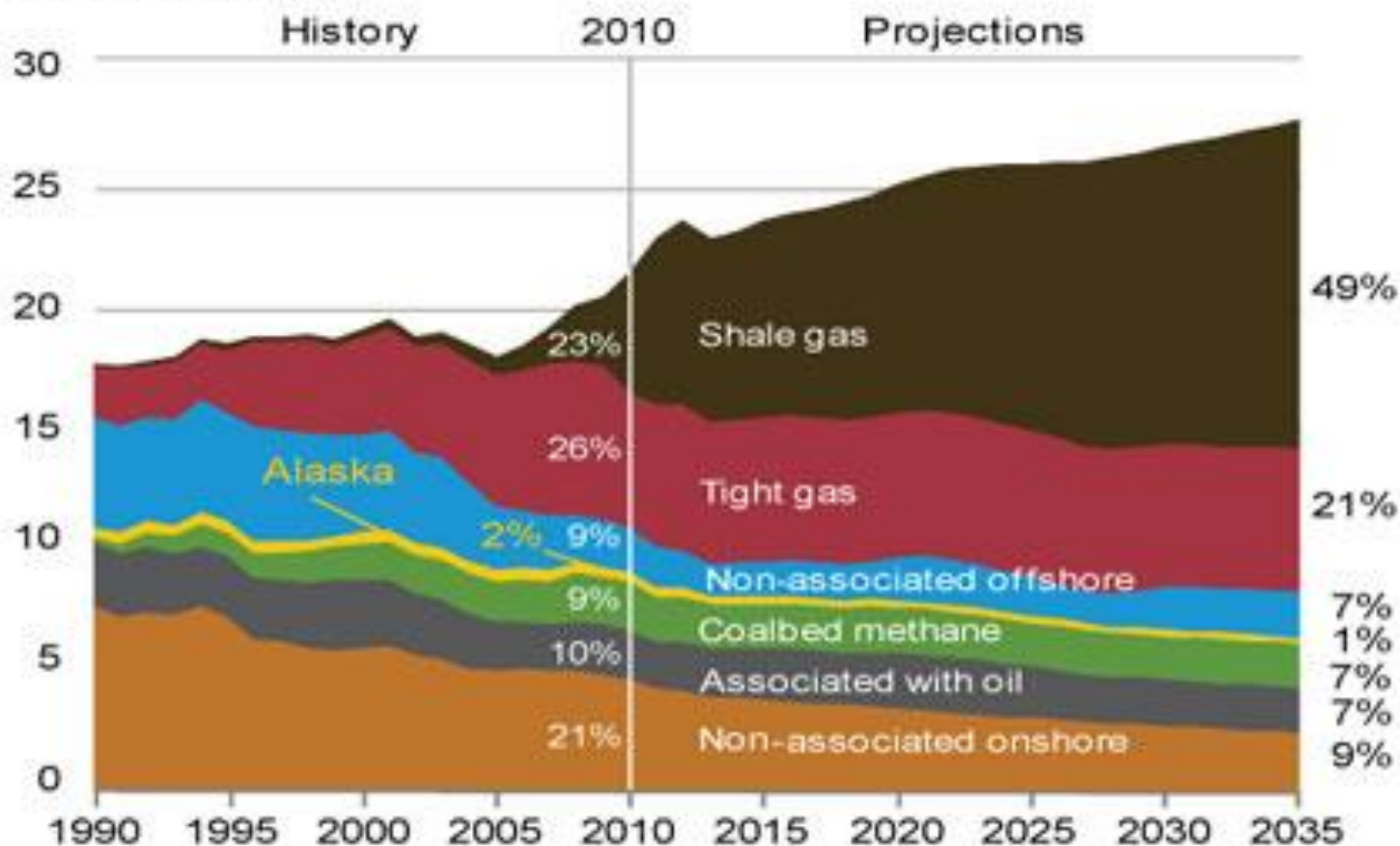
# U.S. Shale Gas Production





# U.S. Natural Gas Production, 1990-2035

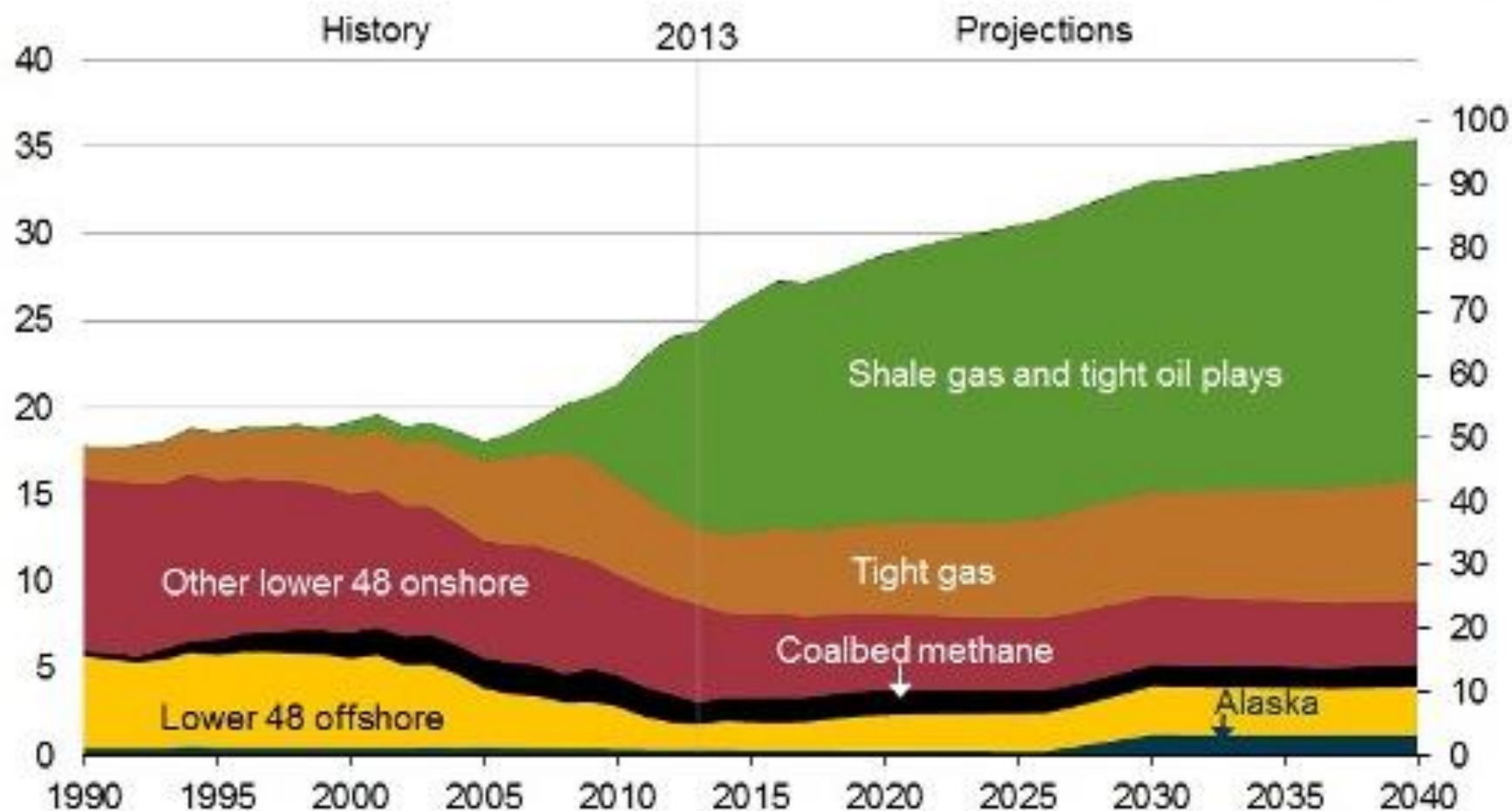
trillion cubic feet



Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration, AEO2012  
Early Release Overview, January 23, 2012.

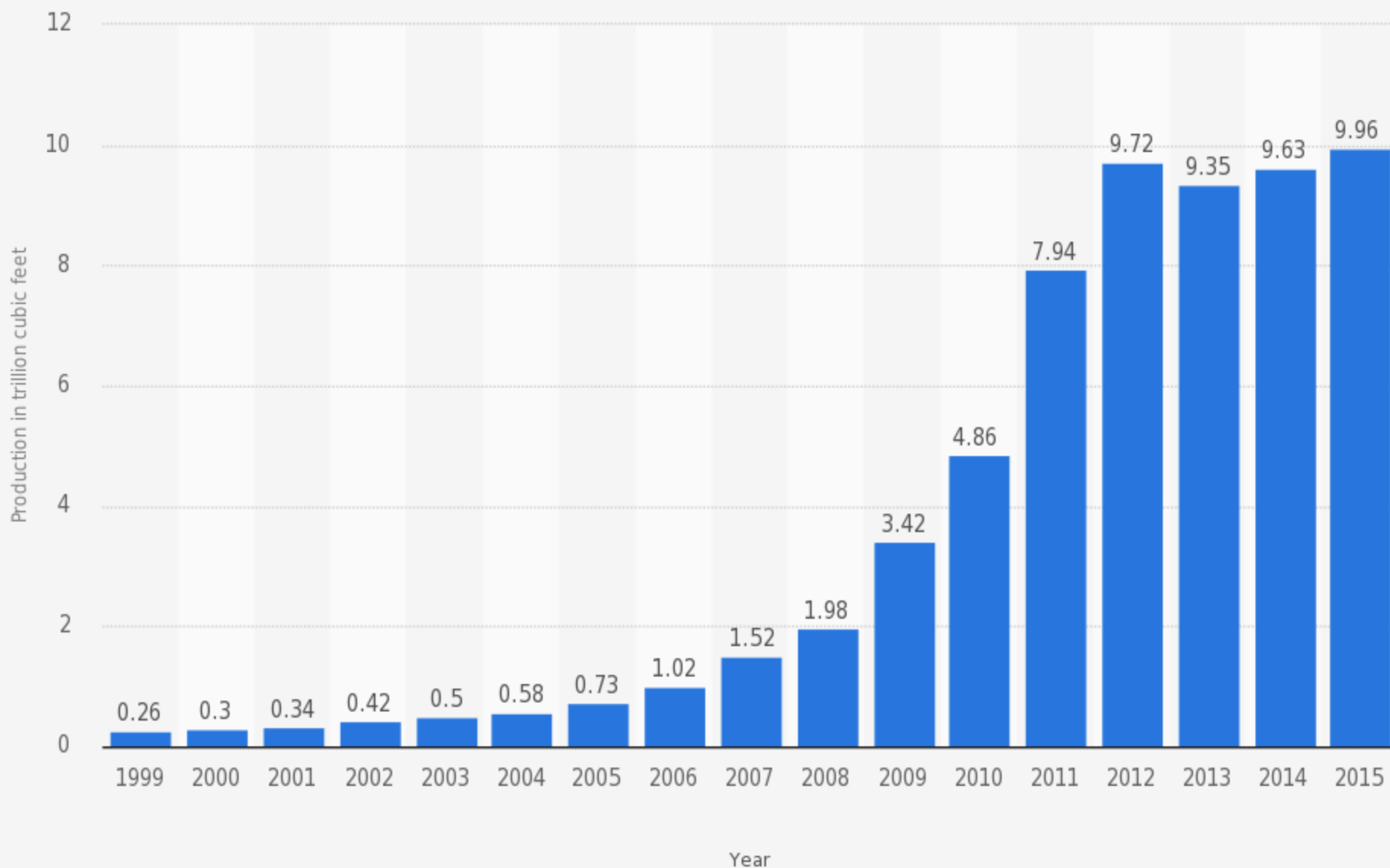
U.S. dry natural gas production  
trillion cubic feet

billion cubic feet per day



Source: EIA, Annual Energy Outlook 2015 Reference case

## U.S. shale gas production from 1999 to 2015 (in trillion cubic feet)



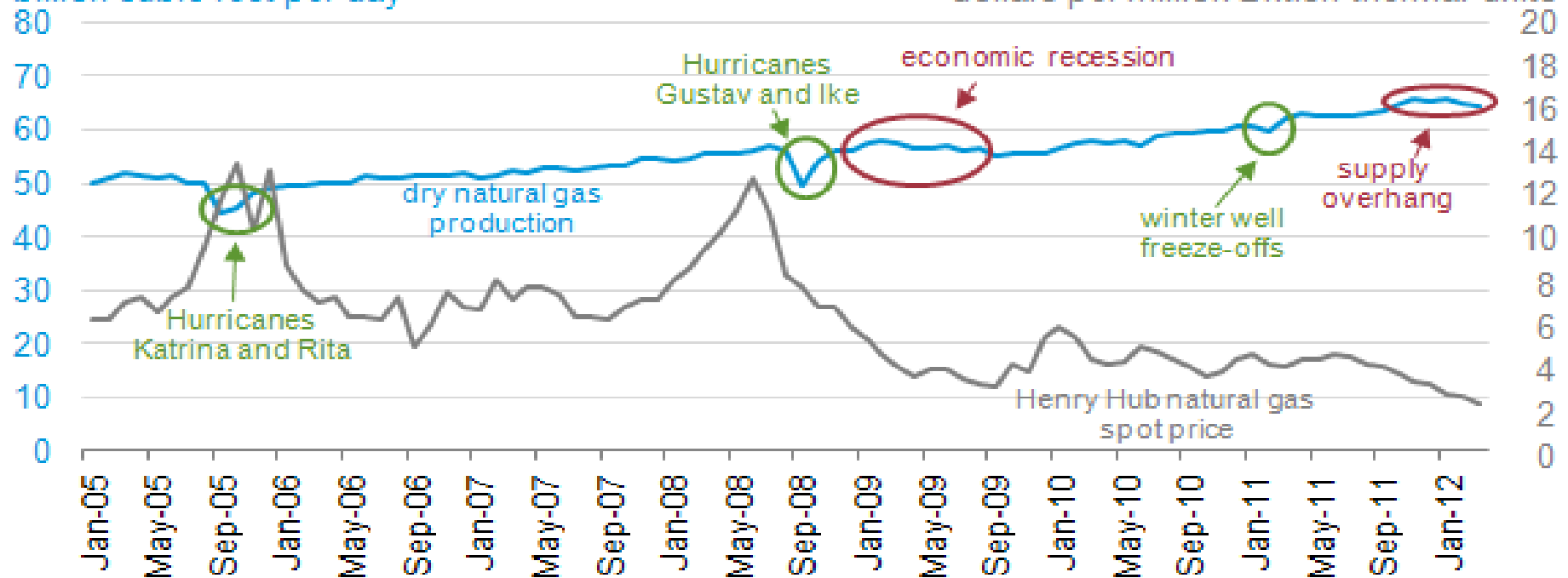
Source::  
EIA  
© Statista 2015

Additional Information:  
United States

## Monthly U.S. dry natural gas production and Henry Hub natural gas spot price, January 2005 - March 2012

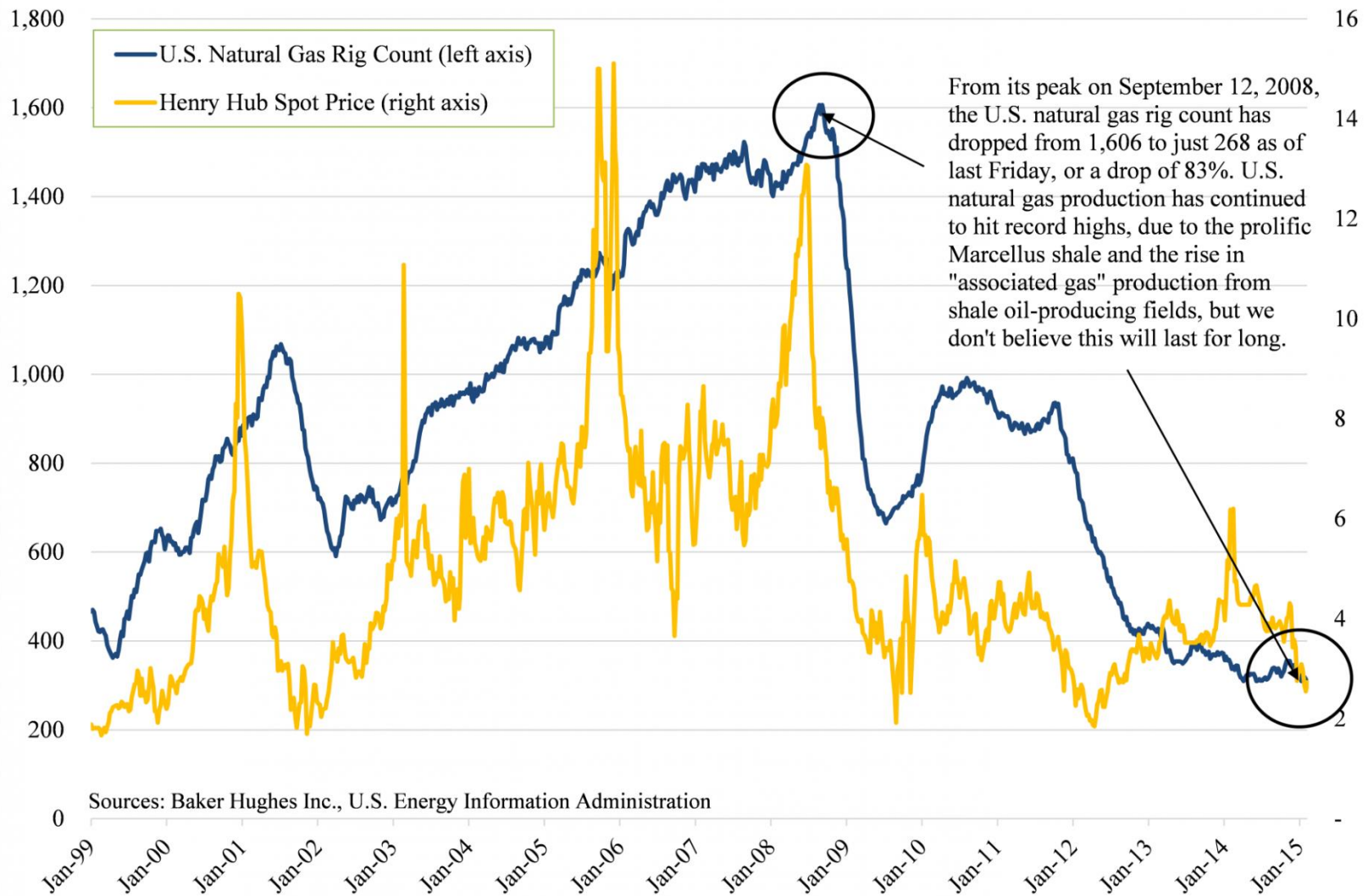
billion cubic feet per day

dollars per million British thermal units

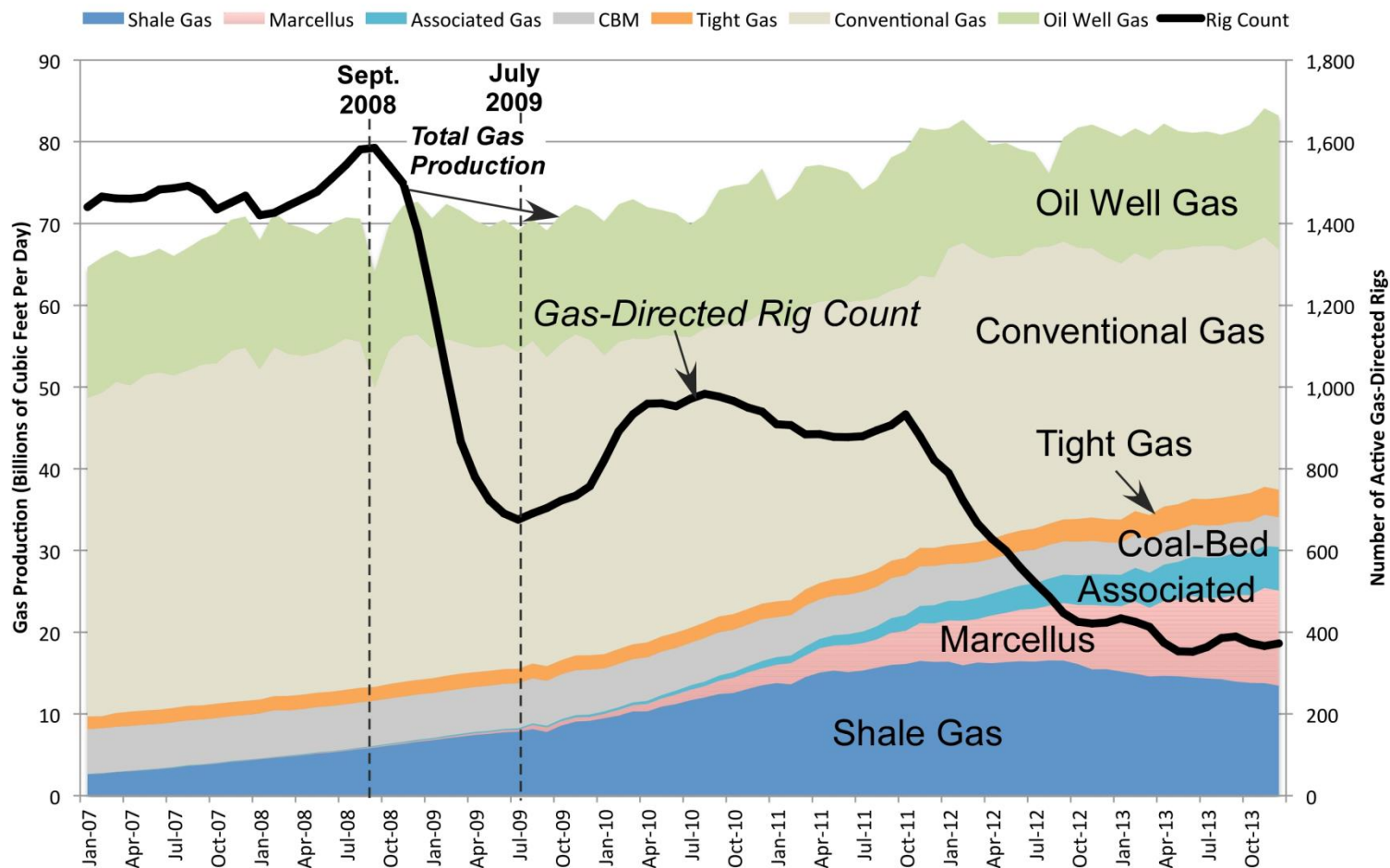




**Figure 1: U.S. Natural Gas Rig Count vs. Henry Hub Spot Price  
(January 8, 1999 to March 6, 2015)**



## Components of Gas Production and Gas-Directed Rig Count



# Concerns Spread Over Environmental Costs of Producing Shale Gas

The extent to which utilities will burn natural gas to slash carbon dioxide emissions tied to global warming is a national issue. But on the ground, where it's being produced, the issues become very local

**Scientific American**

July 9, 2010

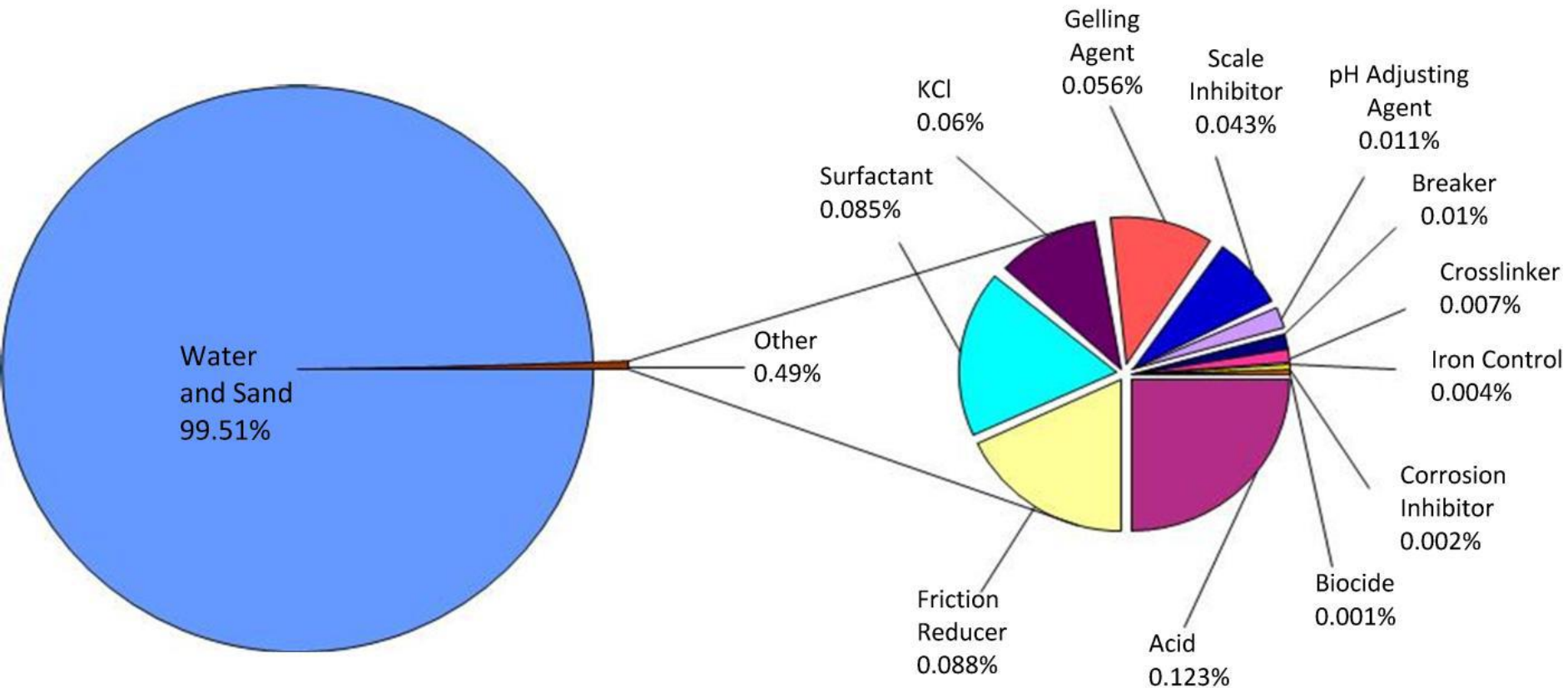
# What are the Concerns?

- Air Quality – benzene, radioactivity
- Water Quality – methane, radioactivity, fracking chemicals
- Environment – leakage or disposal of waste water, sludge, etc.
- Home Value – Noise, dust, traffic, appearance
- Water requirements





# COMPOSITION OF A FRACTURE FLUID



Generally 3-12 chemical additives



# Produced water from oil production

- **High Salinity**
- Organics
- Radioactivity
- Trace elements



# Evaporation Ponds



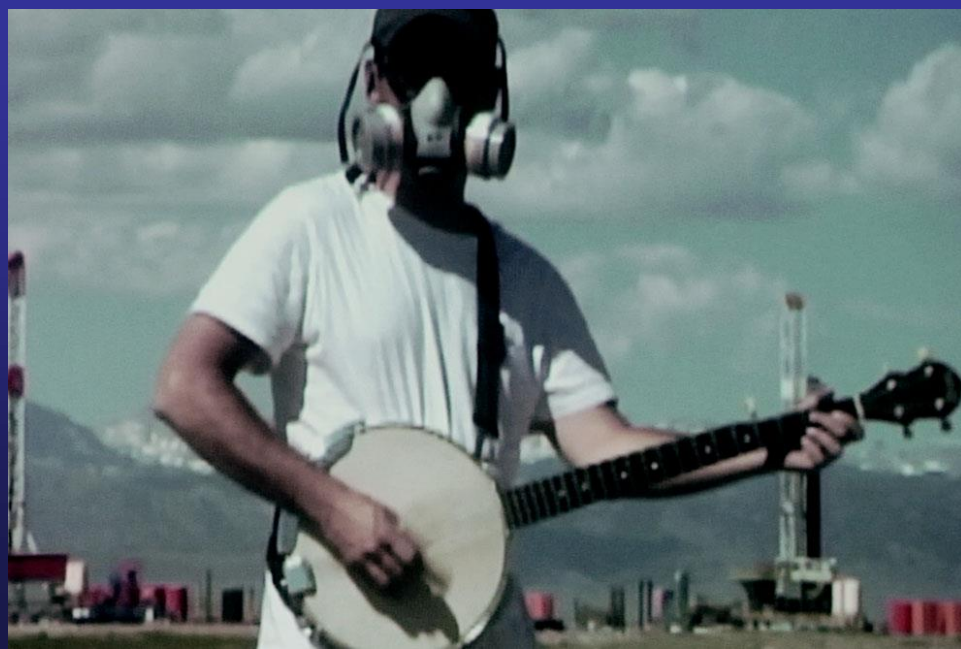




**WATER  
UNDER  
ATTACK.COM**







The most current controversy has to do with swarms of small earthquakes ( $<4$ ). In Texas, Oklahoma and elsewhere preliminary data indicates that reinjection of produced waters is the primary cause of the microseisms.

## **Is Fracking Triggering Earthquakes In Texas?**

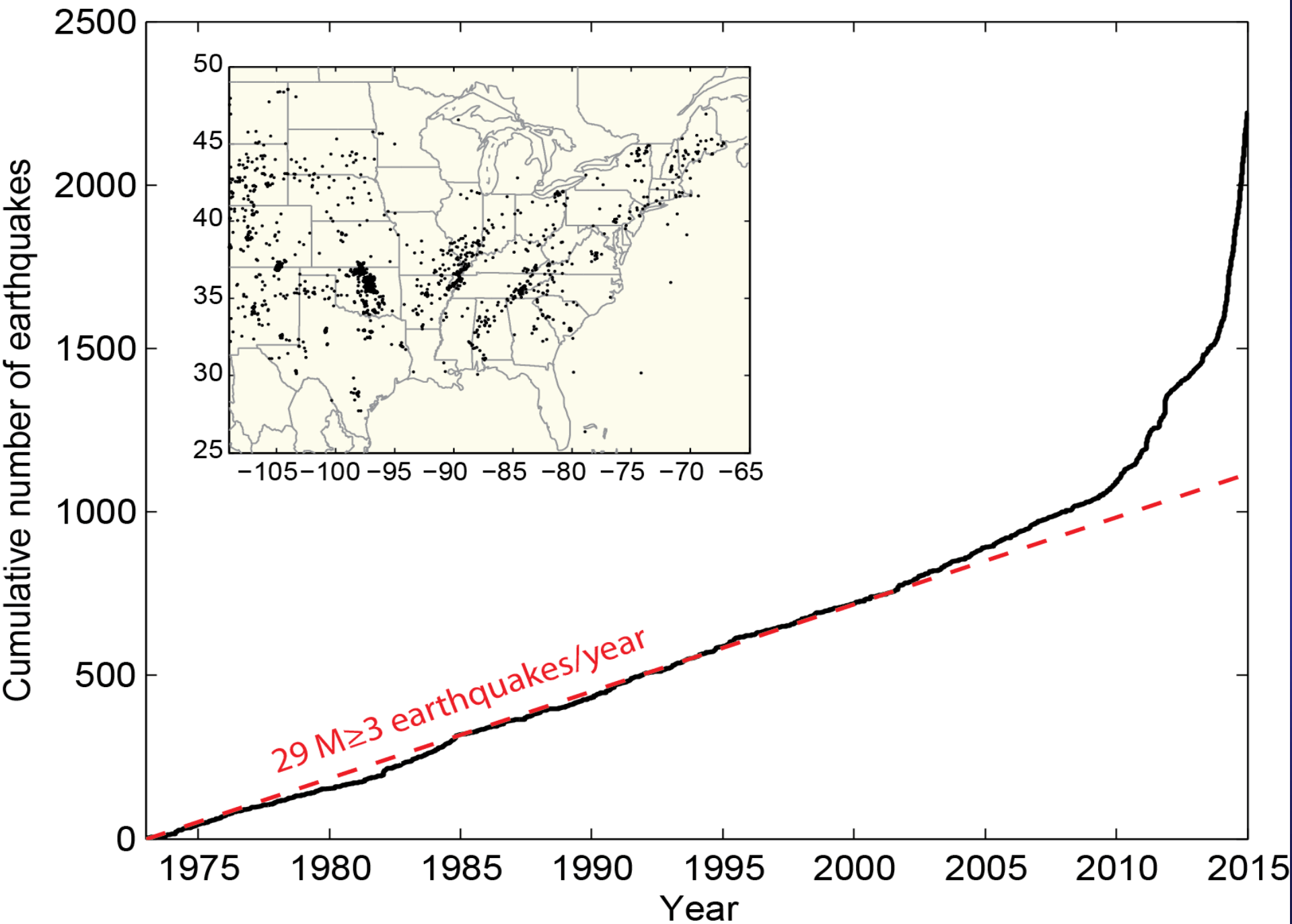
**A dramatic increase in earthquakes in Texas is causing alarm, with many pointing the finger at the fracking industry.**

Irving police had no reports of injuries or major damage in the 11 earthquakes that hit the area since Tuesday, but asked the public to stop calling 911 to report the shaking unless someone was hurt or there was another emergency. The magnitudes ranged from 1.6 to 3.6, according to the USGS.





Cumulative Number of  $M \geq 3$  Earthquakes, 1973–2014



# Study links earthquakes in Texas to natural gas drilling



# UT study: Fracking-related activities have caused majority of recent Texas Earthquakes – May 20, 2016

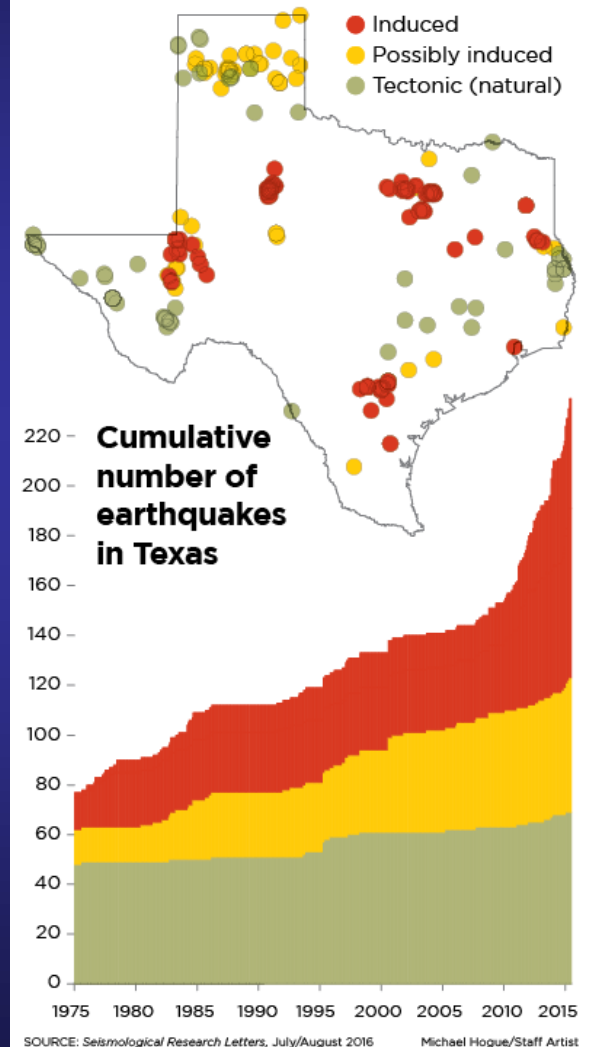
Spate of small earthquakes shuts down fracking activity in Lawrence County, PA.  
April, 28, 2016

Do fracking activities cause earthquakes?  
Seismologists and the state of Oklahoma say yes! Earthquakes increasing in volume and intensity around fracking and waste disposal sites. April 28, 2016

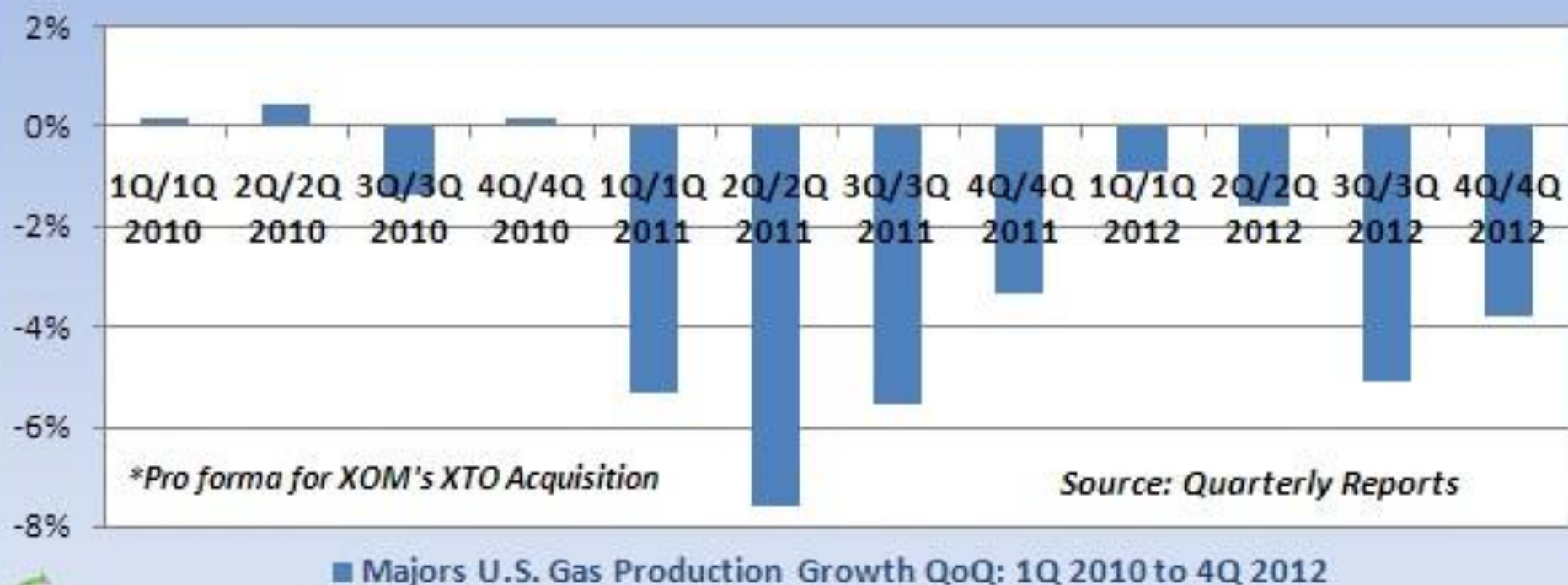
Fracking triggers 90% of large quakes in B.C., Alberta oil and gas patch.  
But less than 1% of fracking activity directly responsible for earthquakes. March 29, 2016

## Texas quakes through the years

A new paper argues that humans have caused the vast majority of earthquakes that have struck Texas since 1975. The map shows locations and causes of earthquakes from 1847 to 2015.



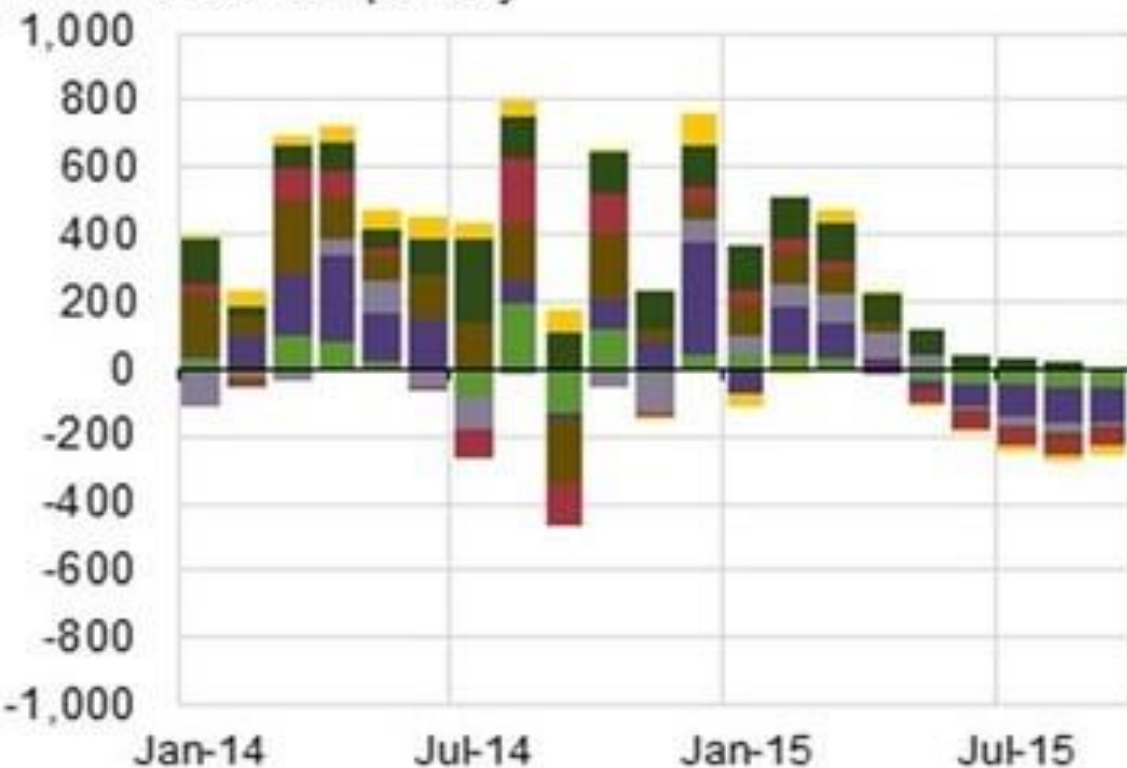
## Shale Gas Production has Slowed Majors' U.S. Gas Production Decline\*



EnergyTrends  
INSIDER

© Lou Gagliardi - EnergyTrendsInsider.com

Monthly change in natural gas production in DPR regions (Jan 2014-Sep 2015)  
million cubic feet per day





# Has U.S. shale gas production finally stopped growing?

According to the EIA's August Monthly Drilling Productivity Reports the answer is yes—even the monster Marcellus play in Pennsylvania is declining in production.

But this may not be true.

The Stock Market is saying that gas production will continue with gas prices remaining in a tight \$2.65-\$2.95 per gigajoule range.

# Will US shale gas bring global energy prices tumbling down?

BBC News June 2015

The U.S. is looking beyond its own borders to become a major player in global gas markets. In fact by the end of this decade, the **country plans to challenge Qatar, the undisputed king of liquefied natural gas (LNG).**

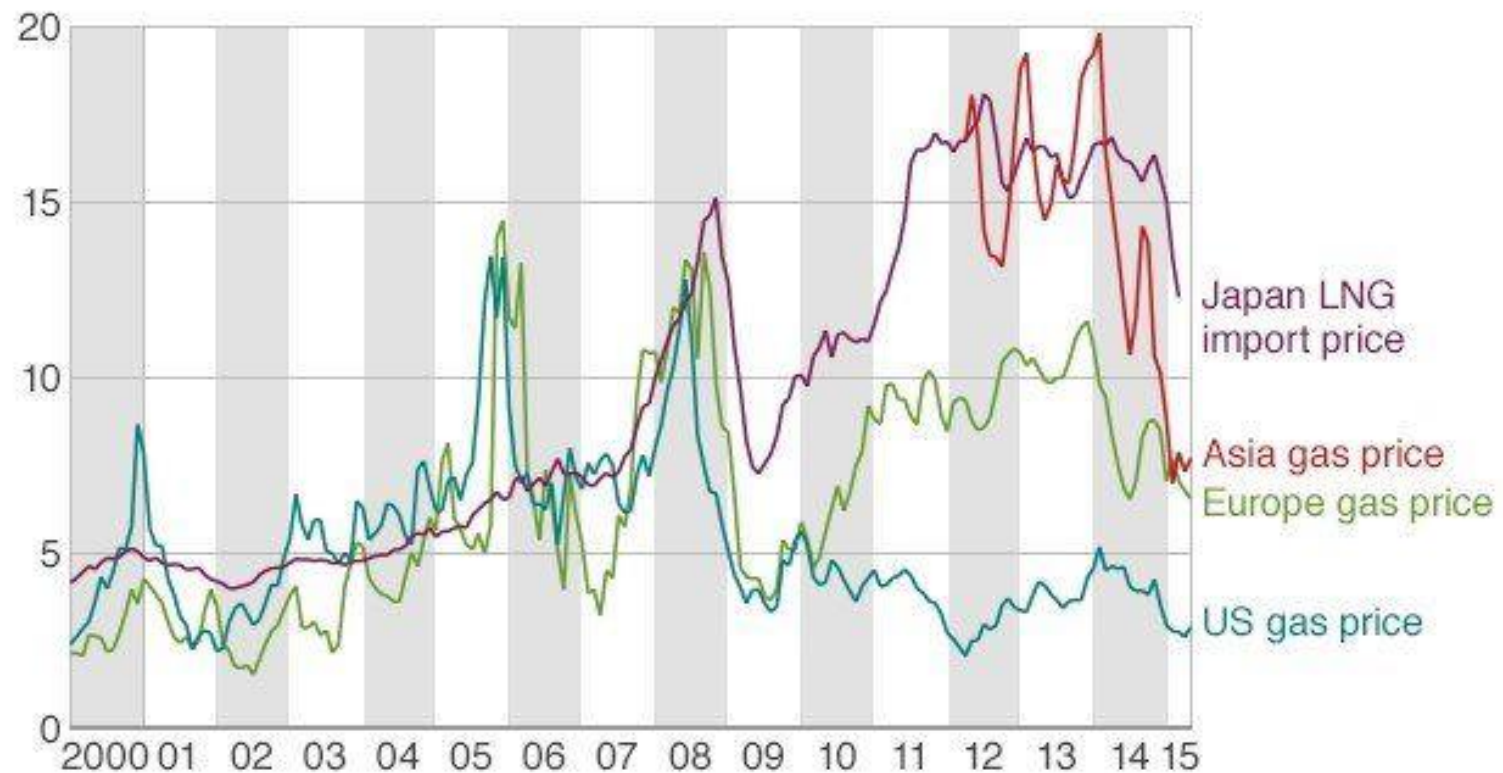
US shale gas could, then, have a profound impact not just domestically, but on the rest of the world. The reality however will be somewhat different.

With US gas prices around the \$3 mark, the economics of gas liquefaction and export depend entirely on getting a higher LNG price in the export market.

Take the basic cost of the gas at \$3, add in a small mark up, liquefaction costs of \$3 and transport costs of \$2, and suddenly the economics don't work that well.

## Global gas prices, 2000-2015

\$ Million metric British units



Source: Bloomberg, Argus LNG

# What Do I Expect?

**Truth** – Scientists must determine the true sources of the pollutants and earthquakes .

**Compromise** – The gas industry (and States) must make more efforts to honestly communicate with the public and to accommodate concerns.

**Results** – New technological advances  
Somewhat higher costs  
Gas resources off limits

Continued development of shale gas but at a lower pace. Exports may alter the picture.



Acquiring and maximizing  
the value of oil and gas  
assets through innovation.

UpCurve Energy

# Coalbed Methane (CBM)

(Coal Bed Methane Coalbed Gas Coal Seam Gas)

## An Introduction



# COAL

- Organic Matter
- Minerals
- Elements
- Water
- Oil
- Gas

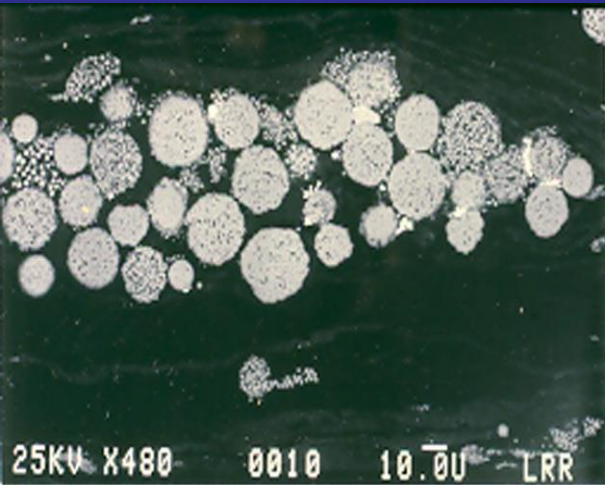
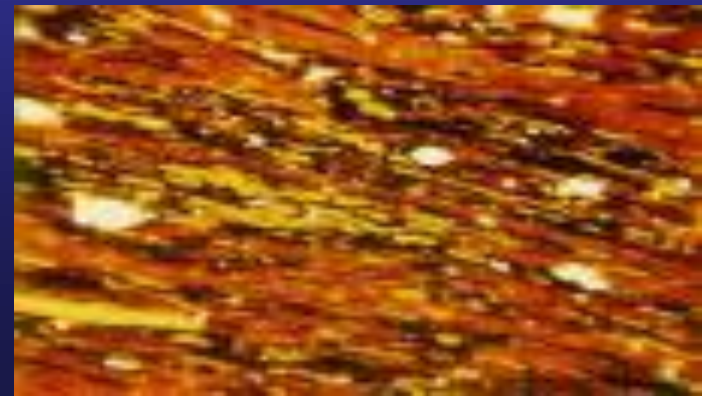
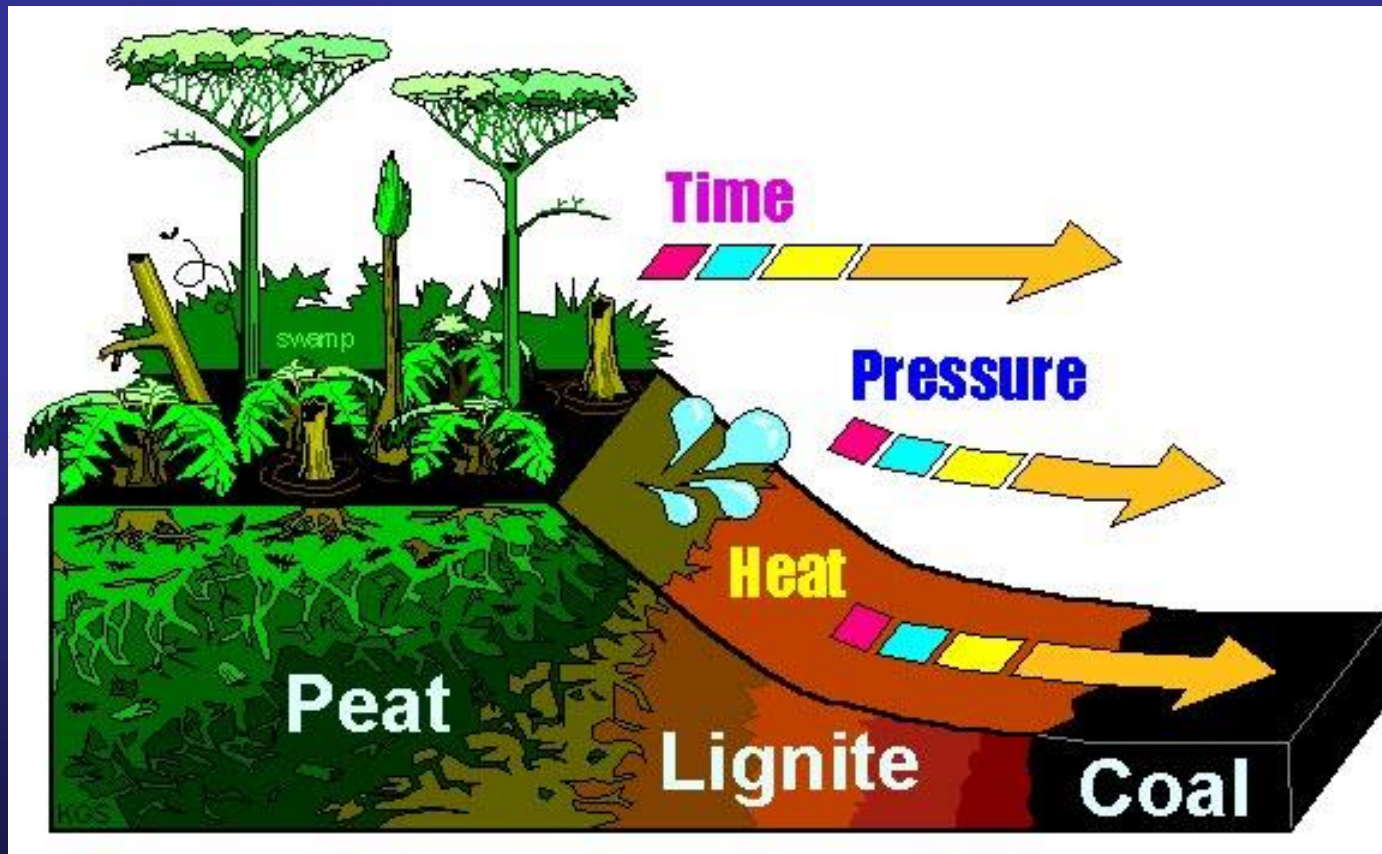


Figure IN-5. Ferris coal beds.



# Coalification

As pressure increases, water is squeezed out and pore size is reduced. Water and carbon dioxide are the first products released. At later stages, oxygen and hydrogen are released. Methane is eventually expelled.





## Temperature

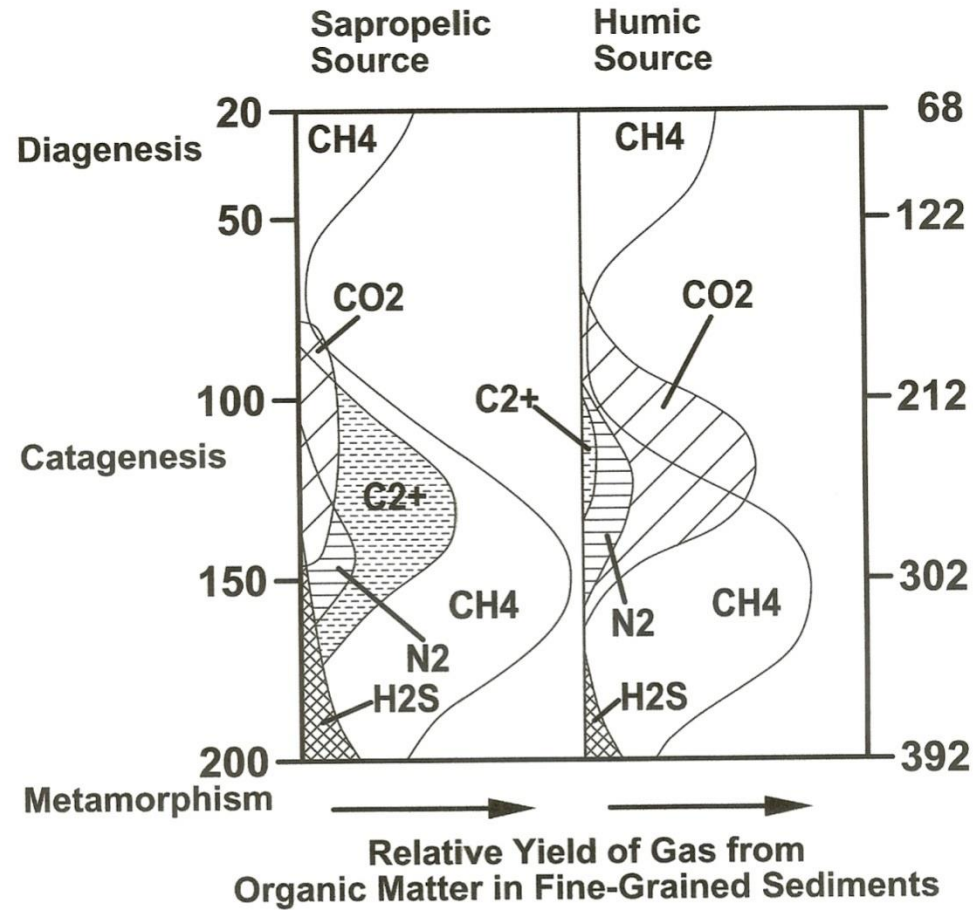
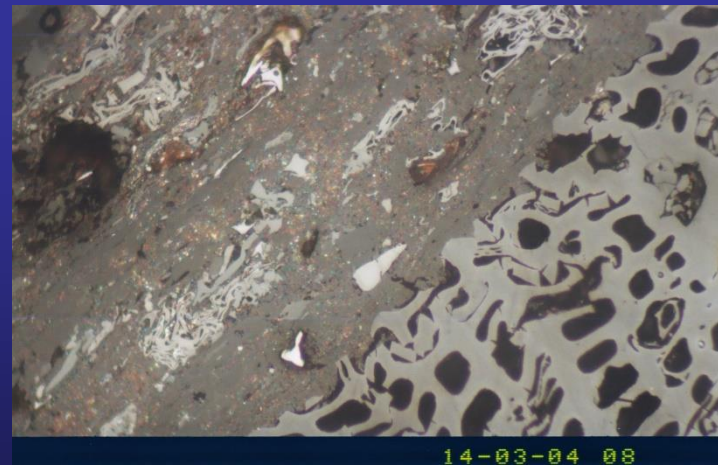


Fig. 5-1. Generation of gases with depth: C<sub>2</sub><sup>+</sup> represents hydrocarbons heavier than CH<sub>4</sub>; N<sub>2</sub> is generated initially as NH<sub>3</sub>.

# Methane Retention

- **Absorbed molecules on the surface of the organics**
- Free gas within the coal pores or fractures
- Dissolved in water within the coal bed



# Methane in Coal Mines

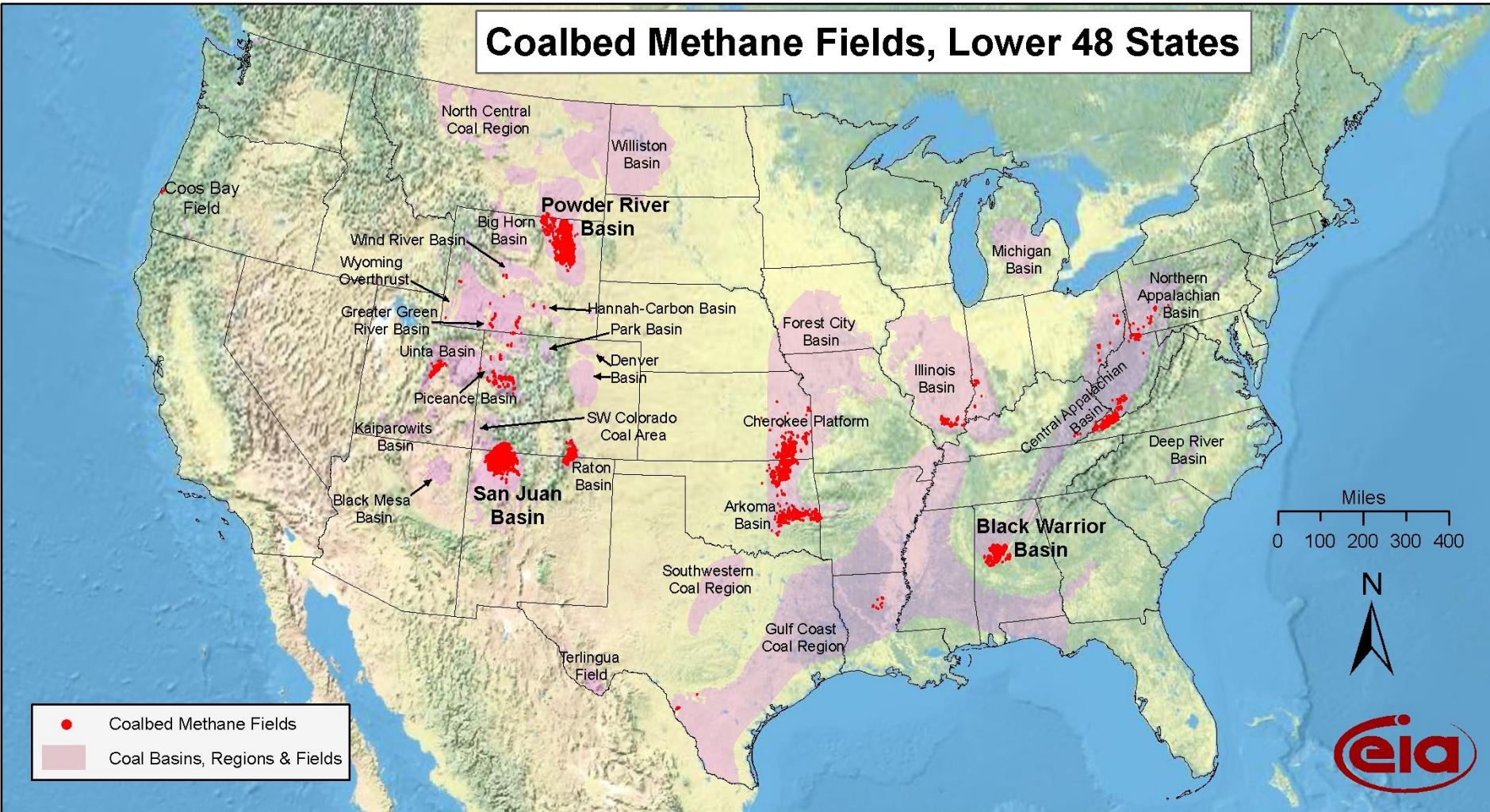






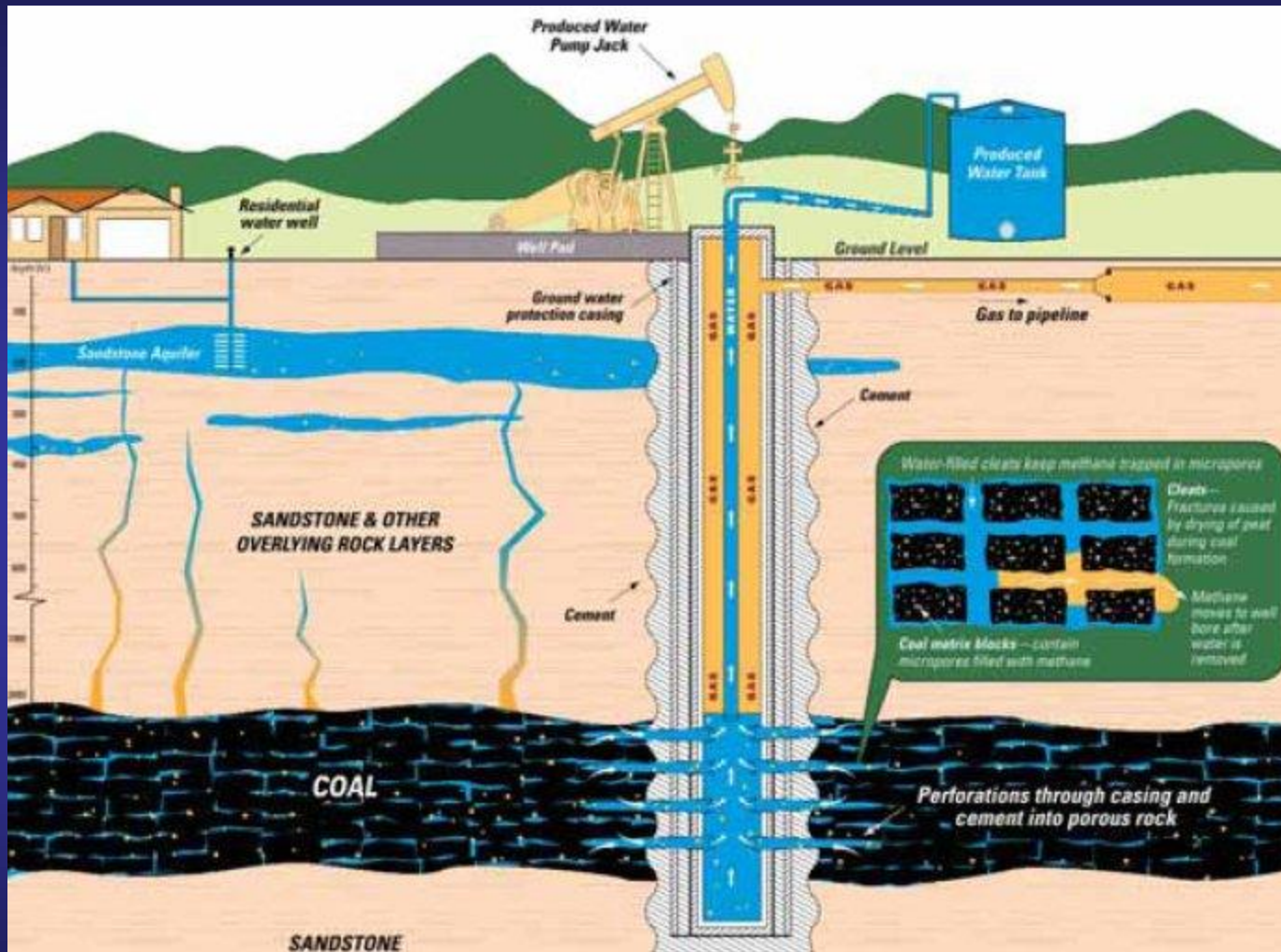


# Coalbed Methane Fields, Lower 48 States



Source: Energy Information Administration based on data from USGS and various published studies  
 Updated: April 8, 2009

2007 reserve estimate – 21,875 BCF



# Advantages of CMB

- Low exploration costs
- Shallow source (greater depth limits permeability)
- Inexpensive to complete
- Existing technology
- May be used for CO<sub>2</sub> storage
- May degas ahead of coal mining



# CBM Environmental Concerns

- Large Volumes of Produced Waters (average well 17,000 gallons of water/day = 6.2 million gallons/year)
- Some enriched in salts, organics, radon, methane
- Drawdown of aquifer
- Disposal issues:
  - Pollutes surface waters
  - Reinjection is costly
  - Chemical treatment – very costly
  - Freezing – only in cold climates
  - Evaporation ponds - dust

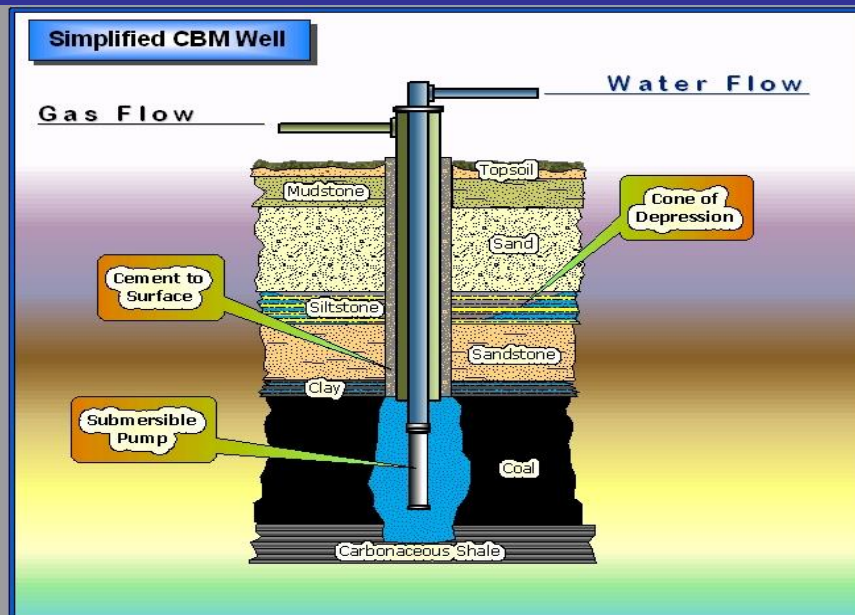


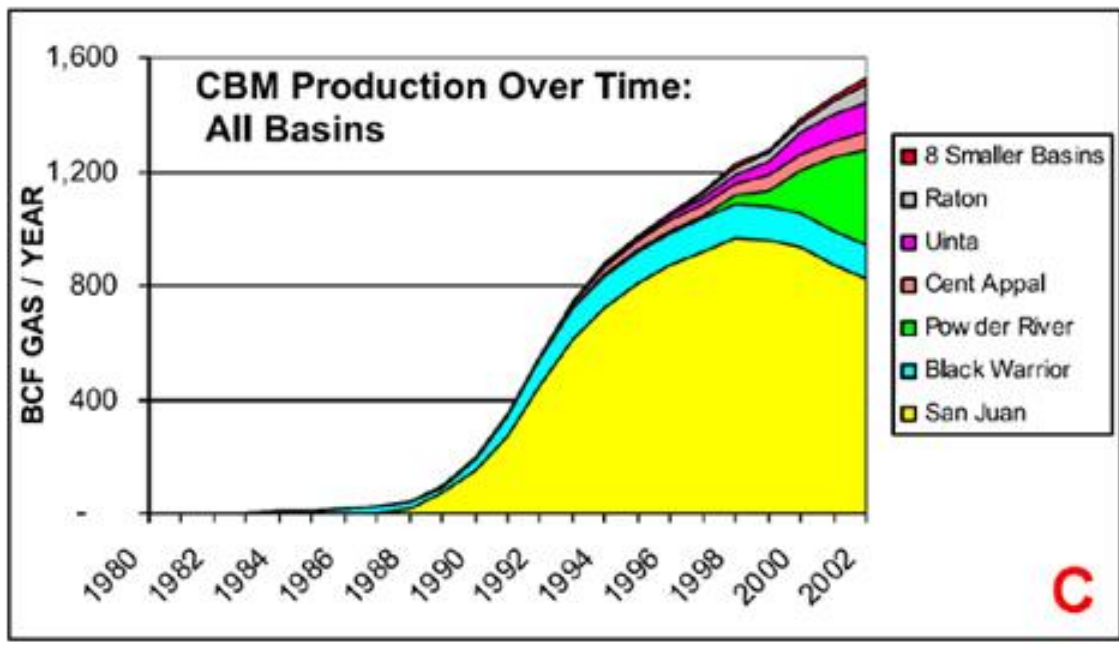
Methane is a potent greenhouse gas – Climate Change Issues

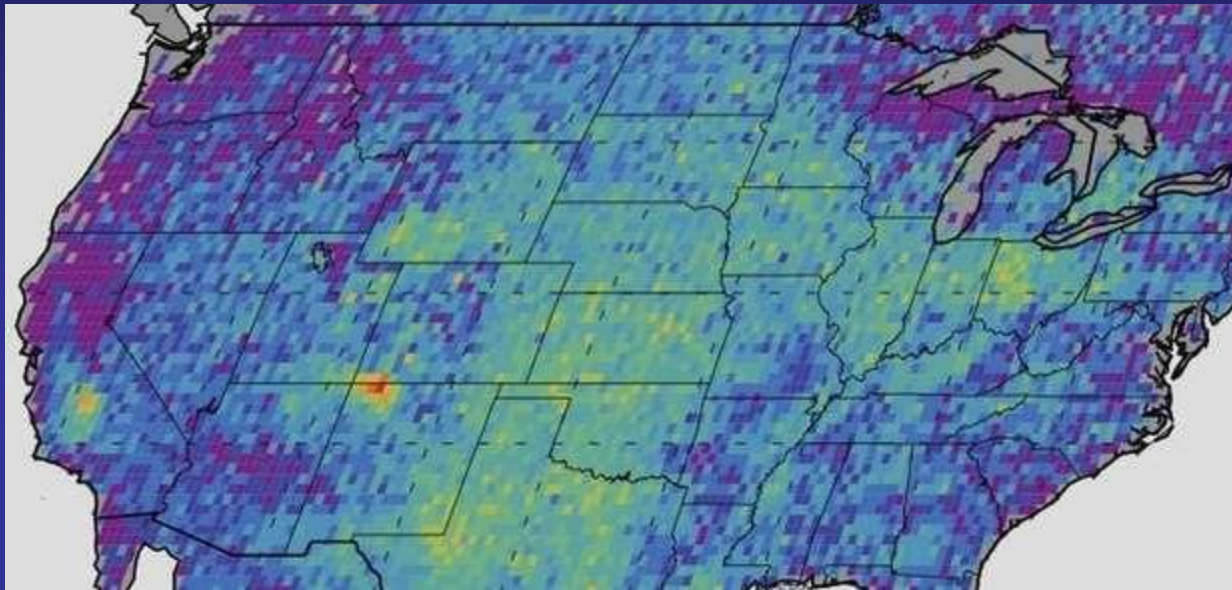


# Disadvantages of CBM

- Requires dewatering
- Need to stimulate flow (fracing)
- Environmental concerns
- Gas leakage (+/-)
- Methane migration in ground water







Methane Emissions from gas production –  
note the San Juan Basin

# Other Sources of Energy

- Tar Sands
- Oil Shale
- Nuclear
- Hydropower
- Wind
- Solar
- Geothermal
- Biomass
- ????



# Tar Sands (Oil Sands)



Unconventional petroleum deposit consisting of a mixture of sand, clay, water and bitumen.

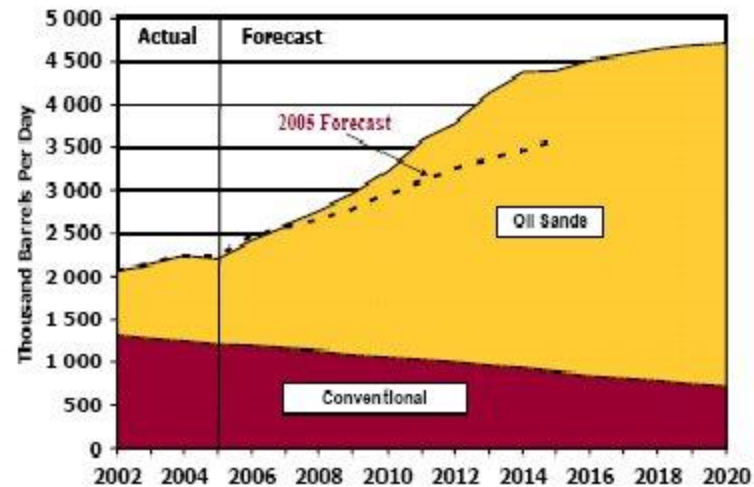
- **Canada and Venezuela each have reserves approximately equal to the world's reserves of conventional crude oil!**

**Tar sands may represent as much as two-thirds of the world's total "liquid" hydrocarbon resources!**

# Canadian Production



Chart 2: Comparison of Oil Sands versus Conventional Oil Production



Canada Production – about 3 million barrels/day

Venezuela – about 500,000 barrels/day

Reserves – USA, Russia

## Environmental Concerns

- Land – Deforestation, Fragile Environments, Toxic Chemicals, Cost
- Water – Large amounts needed for separation process, water pollution
- Air – CO<sub>2</sub>, H<sub>2</sub>S, Heavy metals

# Oil Shale



An organic-rich, fine grained sedimentary rock containing kerogen (solid organic compounds).

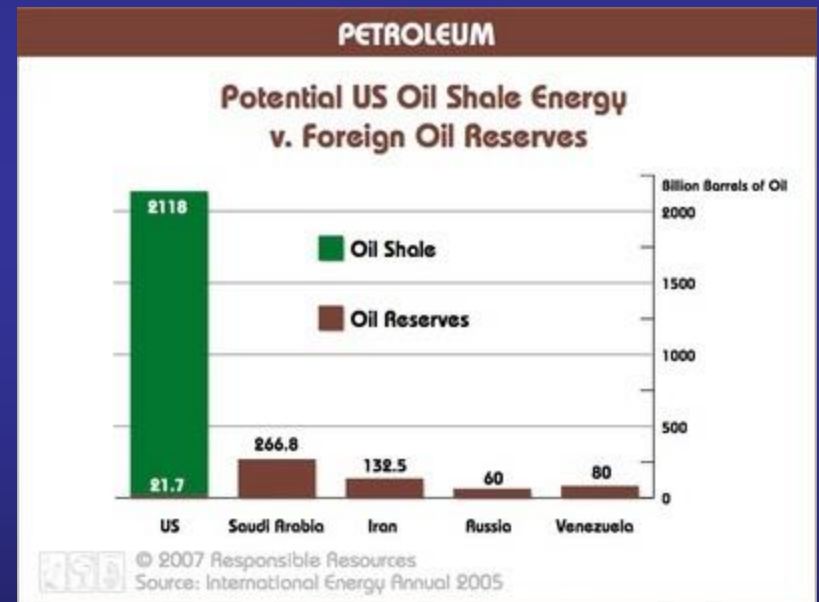
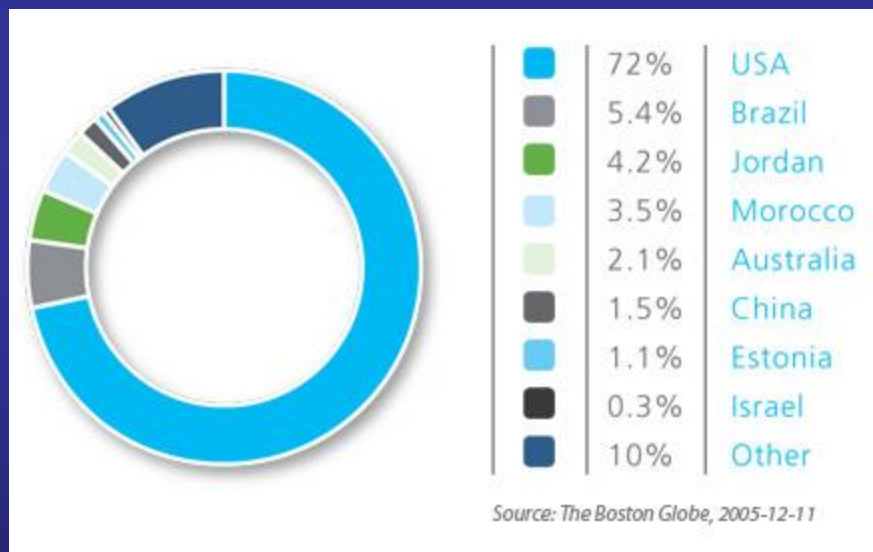
Resources are estimated at about 3 trillion barrels of oil, far exceeding world's proven conventional oil reserves!



# Oil Shale

Estonia (62%), China, Brazil, German, Israel, and Russia use oil shale for energy (oil or power) or for chemicals.

USA (70%), Russia, and Brazil account for 86% of the world's oil shale resources.



Environmental Concerns – Acid mine drainage, environmental damage, sulfur gas, dust, **heavy metals**, **high water usage**.

# Nuclear Energy - \$117/megawatt-hour



## Issues

- No carbon dioxide
- Efficient
- Disposal of radioactive waste
- Fear! Of explosion, meltdown, etc.
- Time

# Hydropower



## Issues

- Cheap electricity
- Little pollution (though reservoir may have environmental impacts)
- Multiuse – water activities/drinking water source/flood control
- Needs running water

## Wind Energy \$115/megawatt-hour



### Issues

- Variable and intermittent winds/storage
- Aesthetics/birds/noise
- Essentially no pollution
- Costly maintenance



## Solar Energy - \$236/megawatt hour



### Issues

- High Cost
- Intermittent/large footprint/storage
- No pollution

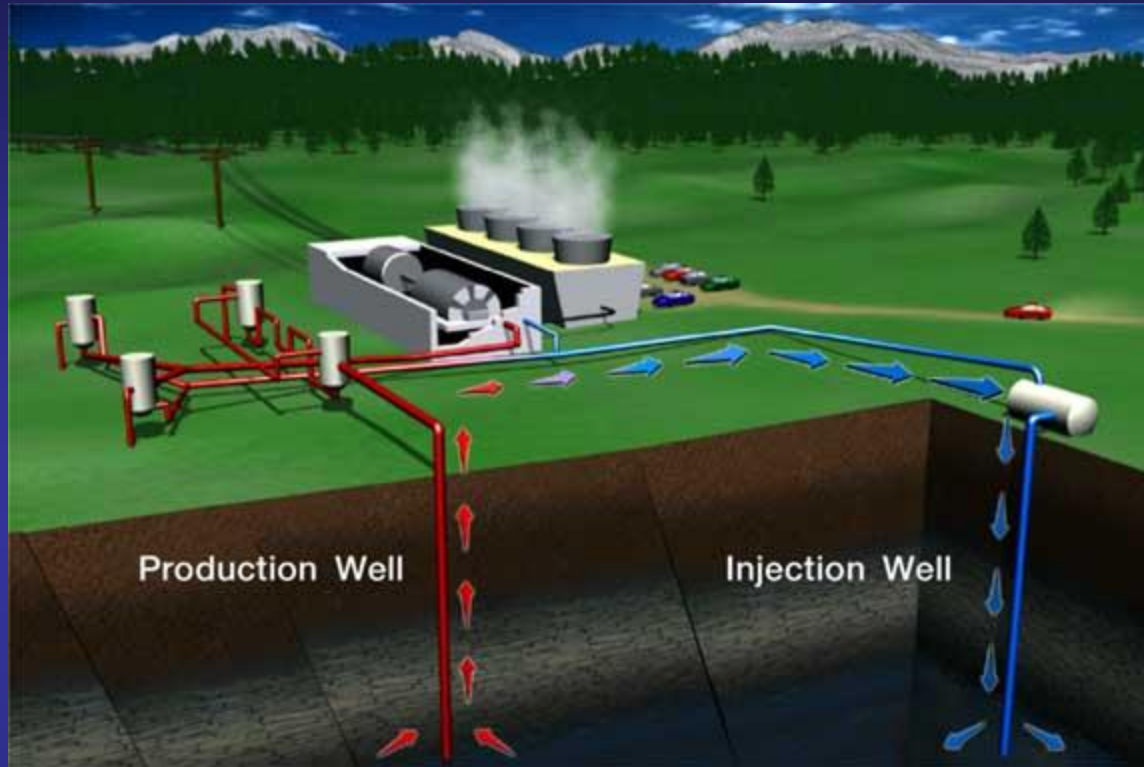
# Biomass



## Issues

- Renewable/abundant
- Carbon neutral
- Expensive
- Large footprint

# Geothermal Energy



## Issues

- Inexpensive, reliable, sustainable
- No pollution
- Location, location, location

Geothermal energy is the energy stored in the form of heat below the earth's surface. Geothermal heat and water have been used for thousands of years. The Romans, Chinese, and Native Americans used hot mineral springs for bathing, cooking and for therapeutic purposes.

Today geothermal water is used in many applications such as district heating, systems which provide steam or hot water to multiple units, as well as for heating and cooling of individual buildings, including offices, shops and residential houses, by using geothermal heat pumps. Moreover, it has industrial potential for raising plants in greenhouses, drying crops, heating water at fish farms and other industrial processes.

In general, ground temperature increases about  
3 degrees C with every 100 meters in depth  
(30 degrees C/km)



# Advantages of Geothermal Energy

- Almost unlimited supply of renewable energy.
- Theoretically more than adequate to supply humanity's energy needs.
- Widespread – promotes national security
- Negligible environmental impacts (little greenhouse gas)
- Requires little water, land, energy input
- Safe, reliable
- Low cost per kW/h

## Geothermal Energy - Limitations

- Plant sittings - must be near where heat is most accessible – thin crust, plate boundary, hot spots

### **Location, location, location**

- Unique nature of each potential geothermal plant.
- High capital costs – financial risk.
- Scalability – surge in demand. (New drilling techniques, storage systems)
- Thermal plumes (hot or coal water).

## Geothermal Energy - Projections

- By 2030 – 10% of global energy production.
- In 50 -100 years it will be a substantial contributor to world energy supply.

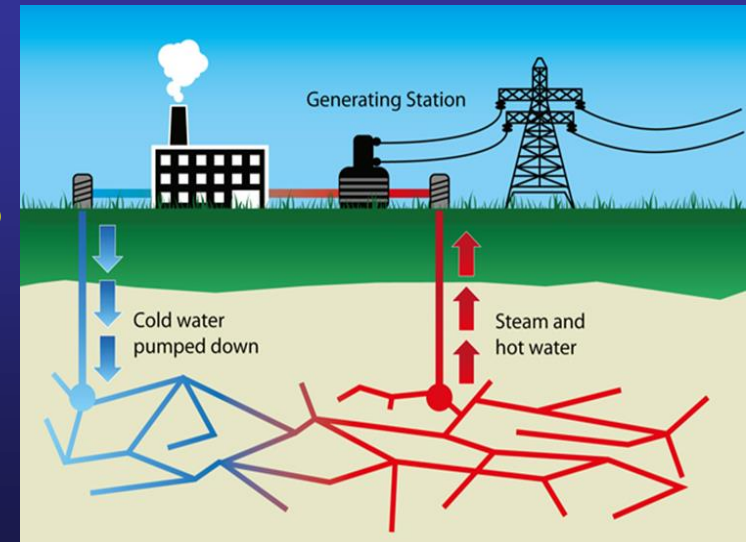
# There are two types of Geothermal Energy

We can think of them as:

*Passive* – using the heat from hot springs and geysers to heat homes, greenhouses, bathing, and therapeutic purposes.



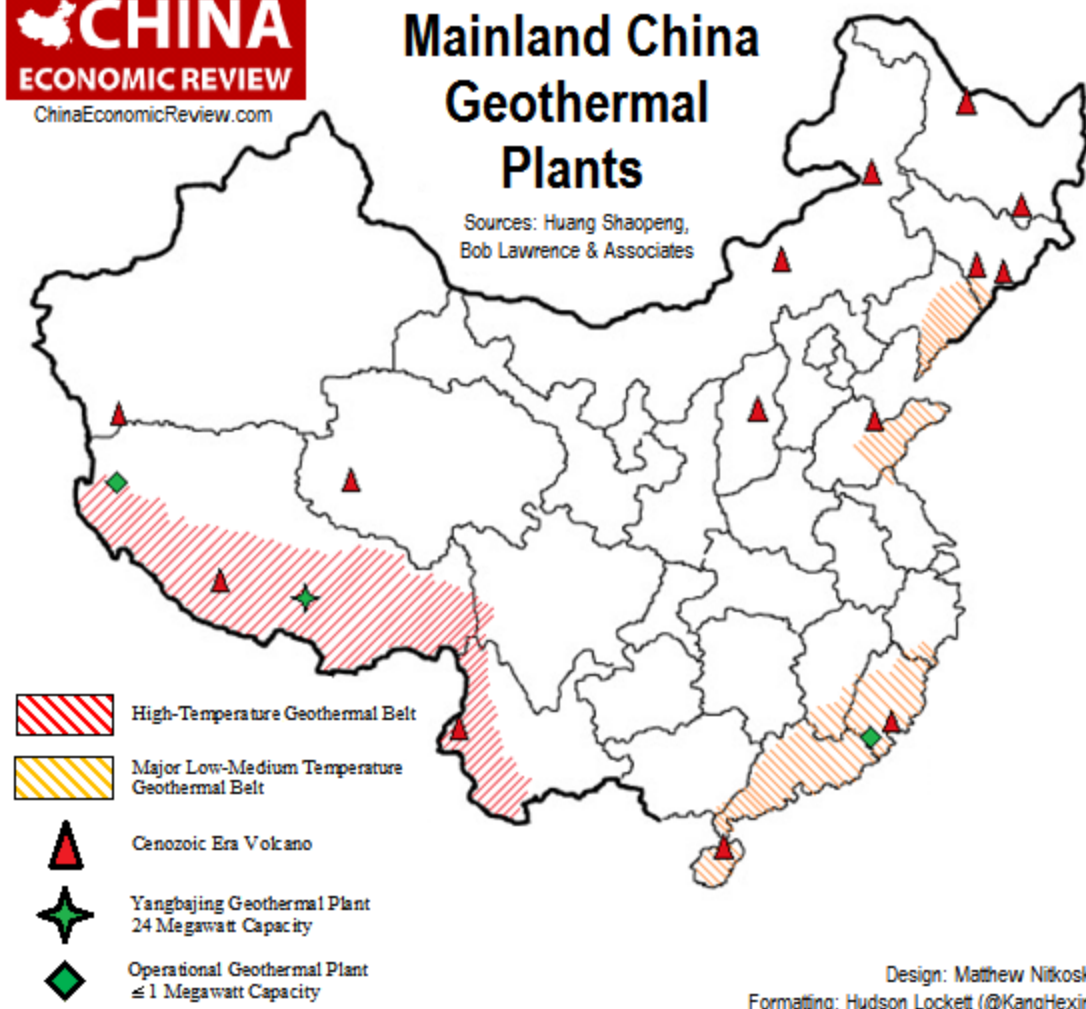
*Active or Enhanced Geothermal Systems* – drilling conduits and injecting fluids into hot rocks and harvesting the heat for generating electric power.





## Mainland China Geothermal Plants

Sources: Huang Shaopeng,  
Bob Lawrence & Associates



Design: Matthew Nitkoski

Formatting: Hudson Lockett (@KangHexin)