ABSTRACT

The Eagle Ford Shale, a formation that is 50 miles wide and 400 miles long and located in South Texas was traditionally considered to be economically unfeasible as a potential natural gas and oil producing formation. Since the onset of hydraulic fracturing of the non-porous rock, the Eagle Ford Shale now has a different outlook. Beginning in 2008, the Shale has rapidly become one of the highest producing areas of natural gas and oil, with a positive economic impact on the communities located within it. Previous studies have shown both direct and indirect impacts of the Shale development on the regional communities. The intent of this study is to re-evaluate the overall economic return of the Eagle Ford Shale development in consideration of a set of extended impacts, in addition to the production, drilling, and related activities that have traditionally been considered. The extended impacts to be considered include what is sometimes known as soft infrastructure, which entails increased stress on systems of government, law enforcement, by-products of oil production, transportation load increases and road damage, and stress on water resources, and air quality. This paper will discuss the fundamental study approach and the preliminary findings for one Eagle Ford Shale community. The research methodology outlined here can be applied to other communities affected by Shale oil and gas development. The findings will provide direct evidence of the importance of considering all of the extended impact factors to better illustrate the overall impact of shale development on rural communities.

PRELIMINARY RESULTS

The author will like to thank the CEES department at Texas A&M International University for preparing the images of the night lights above.

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