Governor Abbott named nine men to the Technical Advisory Committee to the University of Texas at Austin's Bureau of Economic Geology — a group that will advise the governor on issues related to earthquakes, no longer a rarity in Texas, and possible connections to oil and gas development.

The committee was created during the 2015 Legislative session under House Bill 2, which also authorized nearly $4.5 million for a seismic monitoring program led by the bureau. The initiative would create a statewide network of seismic monitors that would help research better understand the quakes, which have grown in frequency and alarmed some Texans.

The committee will include mostly men with expertise in  either petroleum production, seismic research or both. The appointments include:

**•    Dan Hill**, professor and head chair of petroleum engineering at Texas A&M;
Chris Hill, city manager of Irving, the North Texas town where some of the shaking has taken place;
**•    Dana Jurick**, manager of Seismic Analysis for the Geoscience and Reservoir Engineering Organization at ConcoPhillips Company;
**•    Hal Macartney**, geoscience manager of Sustainable Development for Pioneer Natural Resources;
**•    Kris Nygaard** of Houston is senior stimulation consultant for ExxonMobil Upstream Research Company;
**•    Craig Pierson**, the state seismologist, who is house at the Railroad Commission;
Brian Stump, a professor and well-regarded quake expert at Southern Methodist University;
**•    Scott Tinker**, the official state geologist and director of the Bureau of Economic Geology;
**•    Robie Vaughn**, owner of Dallas-based Vaughn Capital Partners.

The idea for the program emerged after months of discussion between lawmakers and regulators about how to respond to the quakes that are shaking unsuspecting communities throughout the state, but particularly North Texas.

Experts suspect nearby disposal wells triggered some of the quakes. The number of those wells — deep resting places for liquid oil and gas waste — has surged amid Texas’ drilling bonanza. Drilling areas in South and West Texas have also seen more earthquakes.