

1 Spatiotemporal changes in seismic velocity associated with hydraulic fracturing-induced earthquakes  
2 near Fox Creek, Alberta, Canada

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9  
10 **Abstract**

11 To characterize the subsurface geomechanical response to hydraulic fracturing activities, we study the  
12 spatiotemporal changes of seismic velocity during the completion of four injection wells in the Fox Creek  
13 area, Alberta, Canada. We estimate temporal velocity changes ( $dv/v$ ) from ambient seismic noise recorded  
14 during the Tony Creek Dual Microseismic Experiment (ToC2ME) by comparing a 5-day stacked noise  
15 correlation function with a reference noise correlation function stacked over the deployment period. In  
16 the frequency band (0.1 - 0.4 Hz) most sensitive to the injection depths ( $\sim 3.4$  km), we observe daily  $dv/v$   
17 that revealed alternating gradual velocity decreases and increases with magnitudes in the range of  $\pm 0.9\%$ .  
18 We found a strong temporal correlation between the onset of velocity decreases and periods of intense  
19 seismicity, suggesting that the observed  $dv/v$  reductions are likely caused by stress-induced subsurface  
20 deformation due to elevated pore pressures, increased crack density, and ground shaking. A period of  
21  $dv/v$  increase observed between the beginning and end of different well stimulation is attributed to  
22 crustal healing. Comparing the  $dv/v$  time series with injection parameters, we observed a 272.66%  
23 increase in induced seismicity and 50% more reduction in  $dv/v$  during the second injection phase that are  
24 correlated with 90.53%, 169.64%, and 4.34% increase in the injection volume, rate, and pressure,  
25 respectively. Our study provides valuable new information on the changes in reservoir elastic properties  
26 within the Western Canadian Sedimentary Basin. It also demonstrates that coda wave interferometry  
27 using data from dense seismic arrays near injection sites can be an additional tool for monitoring hydraulic  
28 fracturing operations.

29  
30 **Keywords:** Hydraulic Fracturing, Coda wave Interferometry, Seismic Noise, Temporal Velocity Change

31 **1. Introduction**

32 Hydraulic fracturing (HF) is a novel technology for enhancing subsurface permeability of hydrocarbon  
33 reservoirs, geothermal systems, and underground mines to increase productivity. It typically involves the  
34 injection of fluids under high pressure through a wellbore into a targeted formation to create fractures  
35 which subsequently serve as conduits to extract the trapped resources (Schultz et al., 2017, 2018, 2020).  
36 Although this process can yield increased economic benefits and reduced environmental footprints, it is  
37 poised with the risk of generating felt and damaging earthquakes (Ellsworth, 2013; Pezzo et al., 2018; Kao  
38 et al., 2018a). Within the Western Canadian Sedimentary Basins (WCSB), HF activities have been identified  
39 as the primary driver of increasing seismicity since 2010, including the largest induced event (M4.6) on  
40 August 17, 2015, in the northern Montney Play (e.g., Ghofrani and Atkinson, 2016; Babaie Mahani et al.,  
41 2017; Schultz et al., 2018,2020; Hui et al., 2021). Long-term analysis of earthquakes within the WCSB

42 revealed that ~62% of earthquakes with  $M \geq 3$  from 2010-2015 were associated with HF compared to only  
43 ~8.5% before 2010 (Atkinson et al., 2016, 2020; Ghofrani and Atkinson, 2020). Increasing concerns from  
44 both society and the governments result in several regulatory procedures being enacted to guide HF  
45 operations (e.g., traffic light protocol; AER, 2015; Kao et al., 2016, 2018b) and mitigate the potential  
46 seismic risk. Adherence to these operational standards will benefit enormously from monitoring the  
47 subsurface response to ongoing HF activities continuously (e.g., Qin et al., 2020; Yu et al., 2020; Zhang et  
48 al., 2020). Likewise, understanding the causative mechanism of any physical changes in the subsurface  
49 makes it possible to improve the assessment of seismic hazards due to induced earthquakes (Kortink,  
50 2020). Therefore, novel and cost-effective ways of monitoring the subsurface during high-pressure fluid  
51 injection and HF operations are highly sought after to guide well operations and reduce the probability of  
52 generating induced earthquakes large enough to cause damage (Civilini et al., 2020).

53

54 Generally, it is difficult to measure changes in pressure without direct access to the targeted formation.  
55 Hence remote measurements of any Earth property that can indirectly provide information about  
56 subsurface pressure are highly valuable. For many years, seismologist have used seismic velocity to reveal  
57 the internal state of the Earth, and several experiments have shown its high sensitivity to stress  
58 perturbation due to fluid pressure within the subsurface (e.g., Olivier and Brenguier, 2016; Amann et al.,  
59 2018; Doetsch et al., 2018). Temporal behaviors of fluids in the subsurface can be detected and monitored  
60 by remotely measuring the time-lapse changes in seismic velocity at seismogenic depths (Grêt et al., 2006;  
61 Niu et al., 2008; Clarke et al., 2011; Tribaldos and Ajo-Franklin, 2021). To achieve this, several seismological  
62 methods have been developed that use a variety of sources (e.g., active source, repeating earthquakes,  
63 and ambient seismic noise) and can be applied to a wide range of applications (e.g., volcanoes, geothermal  
64 reservoirs, earthquakes, underground mines, landslides, active faults, earth dams, seasonal cycles,  
65 precipitations, and water table fluctuations) and reported in the literature (e.g., Ikuta and Yamaoka, 2004;  
66 Chadwick et al., 2010; Nakata and Snieder, 2012; Roux and Ben-Zion, 2013; Froment et al., 2013; Mordret  
67 et al., 2016; James et al., 2017; Wang et al., 2017; Lecocq et al., 2017; Clements and Denolle, 2018; Hillers  
68 et al., 2019; Qiu et al., 2020). However, due to the more recent advancement in seismic interferometry  
69 (e.g., Lobkis and Weaver, 2001; Shapiro and Campillo, 2004), increasing deployments of dense seismic  
70 networks (e.g., Eaton et al., 2018) and the development of efficient algorithms for data processing (e.g.,  
71 Lecocq et al., 2014), the passive seismic ambient noise method is widely favored for continuous  
72 monitoring of temporal velocity changes at unprecedented precision and temporal resolution (e.g.,  
73 Brenguier et al., 2008, 2014, 2016; Froment et al., 2013; Obermann et al., 2014; Hobiger et al., 2016; Taira  
74 and Brenguier, 2016; Mao et al., 2019; De Plaen et al., 2019; Yates et al., 2019). Based on this method,  
75 noticeable reduction in seismic velocities in the order of a fraction of a percent (~ 1%) have been reported  
76 to precede the eruption of volcanoes (De Plaen et al., 2016; Olivier et al., 2019; Wu et al., 2020), sharp  
77 velocity drops are observed to have coincided with the occurrence of large magnitude earthquakes (e.g.,  
78 Taira et al., 2015; Wu et al., 2016; Yukutake et al., 2016; Pei et al., 2019), and velocity perturbations related  
79 to meteorological conditions (temperature, rainfall, groundwater, snow, frost, and atmospheric pressure)  
80 are documented (e.g., Lecocq et al., 2017). This approach is also suitable for monitoring HF and fluid  
81 injection-induced velocity changes, and a handful of case studies have been published that reveal near-  
82 well velocity reductions (e.g., Doetsch et al., 2018; Taira et al., 2018; Vaezi and Van der Baan, 2019; Zhang  
83 et al., 2020).

84

85 Being a relatively new type of measurement, delineation of the detailed spatiotemporal velocity changes  
86 and the underlying physical mechanisms are not yet fully understood. Further advance would require  
87 studies using newly available data from dense seismic networks deployed near the deformation source.  
88 Specifically, for fluid injection and HF, it is not yet fully understood how fluid pressure within the Earth's  
89 crust evolves over time and triggers induced earthquakes via fault reactivation or aseismic deformation  
90 (e.g., Wang et al., 2017; Doetsch et al., 2018; Igonin et al., 2020). Therefore, in this study, we investigate  
91 the temporal velocity changes during the completion of four HF wells in the Fox Creek area, Alberta,  
92 Canada using ambient seismic noise data recorded by a dense seismic network with full azimuthal  
93 coverage around the wellbore. Our goal is to detect spatiotemporal changes in seismic velocity related to  
94 the HF activities, understand their causative mechanisms, and investigate their relationships to other  
95 observations, such as induced seismicity, ground motions, and injection parameters. We also seek to  
96 understand the potential of using coda wave interferometry to understand the subsurface changes that  
97 might induce earthquakes.

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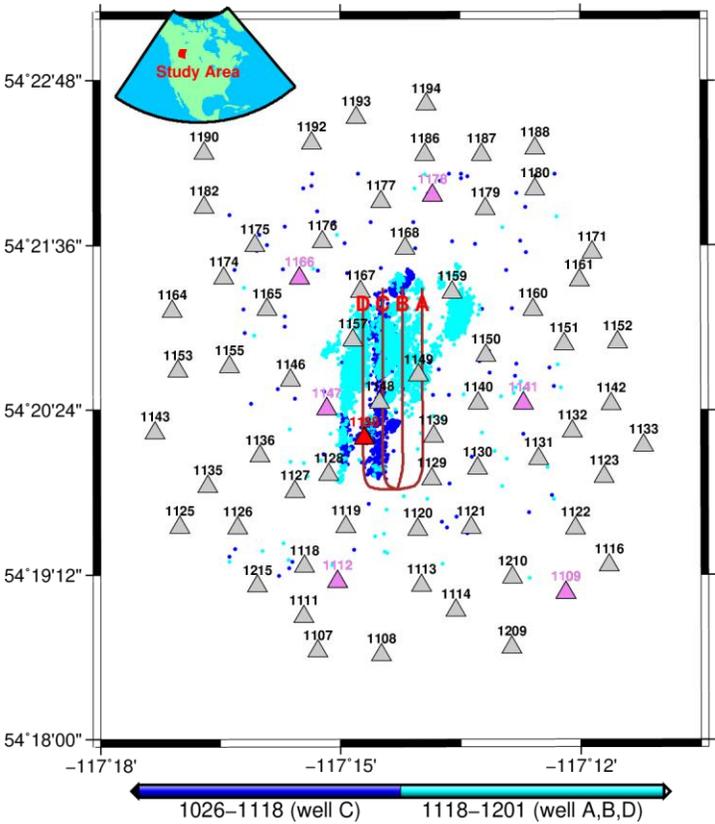
## 99 **2. Data and Method**

100 We retrieved continuous ambient seismic noise data recorded by sixty-nine (69) three-component  
101 shallow-buried 10 Hz geophones, six (6) broadband seismometers, and one (1) strong-motion  
102 accelerometer deployed during the Tony Creek Dual Microseismic Experiment (ToC2ME) from the  
103 Incorporated Research Institutions for Seismology (IRIS) Data Management Center (e.g., Eaton et al., 2018;  
104 Igonin et al., 2018, 2020; Fig. 1). The ToC2ME array recorded data for ~37 days (October 26, 2016 -  
105 December 1, 2016) and was deployed around 4 HF wells within a radius of ~8 km. The HF injection was  
106 performed at a depth of ~3,400 m within the Kaybob-Duvernay horizon in the Fox Creek area, Alberta.  
107 When conducting this study, the geophones' instrument response information is incorrect, so we use data  
108 from the six broadband seismometers and the accelerometer to investigate possible ground shaking due  
109 to HF-induced earthquakes. For further analysis, we use a published catalog with ~18,039 induced events  
110 recorded from October 25, 2016, to November 30, 2016 (Igonin et al., 2020). Also, we use well  
111 completions and fracture data obtained from the geoLOGIC database (e.g., Eaton et al., 2018).

112

113 We use the Python package MSNoise (Lecocq et al., 2014) and follow the established workflow to pre-  
114 process the raw data, perform ambient noise correlation and estimate the seismic velocity changes (e.g.,  
115 Brenguier et al., 2008; Taira et al., 2015, 2018). Specifically, we first down-sample the raw waveform to  
116 20 Hz and apply a bandpass filter between 0.01 and 8.0 Hz. Subsequently, the waveform is divided into  
117 30-minute time segments with the mean and trend removed. Next, we perform one-bit normalization and  
118 spectral whitening to suppress seismic signals related to earthquakes and monochromatic noise sources  
119 (e.g., Bensen et al., 2007; Larose et al., 2004; Lecocq et al., 2017). The same geophones (OYO GSX-3  
120 sensors) were used at all stations, so instrument responses are expected to be stable over time, making  
121 instrument corrections unnecessary. We compute the cross-correlation between the vertical-vertical (ZZ)  
122 components using all the stations in a 30-minute window with 90% overlap, and we linearly stack the  
123 noise correlation functions (NCFs) for each station-pair to obtain a daily stack for a lapse time between -  
124 50 and +50 s. Likewise, we linearly stack all the NCFs for each station-pair during the entire deployment  
125 period to obtain reference NCFs (see Fig. S1). To enhance the signal-to-noise ratio (SNR) and suppress the

126 effect of non-isotropic noise sources, we merged the causal and acausal sides of the NCFs for subsequent  
127 velocity change ( $dv/v$ ) measurements.  
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131 **Fig. 1.** Map of the study area showing the seismic network, hydraulic fracturing wells (A, B, C, and D), and  
132 induced earthquakes (Igonin et al., 2020). Triangles colored in violet and red show the location of the six  
133 broadband seismic stations and the accelerometer, respectively. They are co-located with the 69 shallow-  
134 buried geophones shown in gray-colored triangles. The blue-colored circles show the induced  
135 earthquakes recorded during the stimulation of well C from 2016-10-26 to 2016-11-18 while the cyan-  
136 colored circles denote the stimulation involving wells A, B, and D from 2016-11-18 to 2016-12-01. The  
137 insert map shows the geographical location of the study area on the map of North America.  
138

139 The estimation of  $dv/v$  from NCFs is fast developing, and several methods with varying advantages and  
140 disadvantages have been published (e.g., Lobkis and Weaver 2003; Clarke et al. 2011; Mikesell et al. 2015;  
141 Mao et al. 2019; Taylor and Hillers, 2020). We test both the frequency-domain Moving-Window Cross-  
142 Spectrum (MWCS) method (Poupinet et al. 1984; Clarke et al., 2011) and the time-domain stretching  
143 interpolation (STR) method (Lobkis and Weaver 2003; Sens-Schönfelder and Wegler 2006). It turns out  
144 that, in our case, the STR method can deliver a more stable and precise result with fewer fluctuations  
145 when optimally dilated waveforms are used, similar to other successful applications (e.g., Sens-  
146 Schönfelder and Larose, 2008, Hadziioannou et al., 2009, 2011; Yukutake et al., 2016; Nimiya et al., 2017;  
147 Tribaldos and Ajo-Franklin, 2021). For this method, the current NCFs (which are more sensitive to the

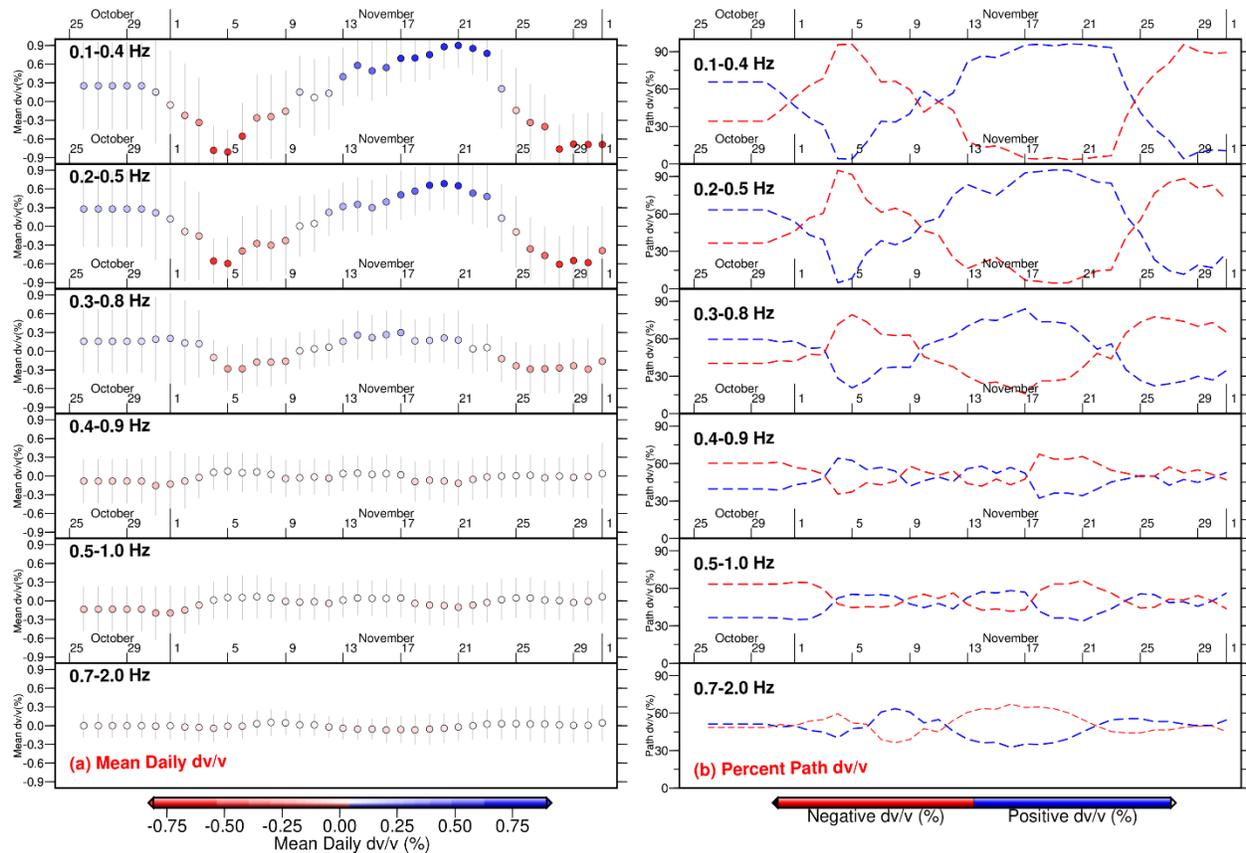
148 current state of the subsurface) or the reference NCF (which is sensitive to the average state of the  
149 subsurface) are dilated or compressed in a selected time window in the time domain, and the stretching  
150 coefficient ( $\delta_s$ ) that gives the maximum correlation coefficient between them is determined via a grid  
151 search. To prevent direct wave contamination, we measure the time delays using 30-s-long data in the  
152 coda wave window (5 - 35 s) of the NCFs, which are more sensitive to velocity changes and less affected  
153 by variations of noise sources (Snieder et al., 2002; Sens-Schönfelder and Wegler, 2006; Stehly et al.,  
154 2006). The reference NCF is the stack of all NCFs in the selected frequency band for the entire study period,  
155 and we compare it with the current NCF-stack of 1, 2, 5, 10, 15, 20, and 30 days to investigate the trade-  
156 off between SNR and temporal resolution. If we assume that the surface waves are evenly distributed and  
157 scattered, as well as a homogenous velocity perturbation, then the obtained  $\delta_s$  for a specified time lag ( $\tau$ )  
158 is proportional to the apparent velocity change ( $dv/v$ ) in the medium (i.e.,  $dv/v = -d\tau/\tau$  and  $dv/v = \delta_s - 1$ )  
159 (e.g., Ratdomopurbo and Poupinet, 1995; Snieder et al., 2002; Brenguier et al., 2008). To ensure that  
160 stable NCFs are used in the study, only  $dv/v$  values with  $\delta_s$  between the reference and current NCFs greater  
161 than 0.85 are accepted. Due to the relatively short data recording period ( $\sim 37$  days), the effect of seasonal  
162 variation of noise sources, which is reported to introduce apparent velocity changes when the STR method  
163 is used, is not of concern (e.g., Hadziioannou et al., 2009; Zhan et al., 2013). The NCFs are computed in six  
164 (6) frequency bands (0.1-0.4 Hz; 0.2-0.5 Hz; 0.3-0.8 Hz; 0.4-0.9 Hz; 0.5-1.0 Hz, and 0.7-2.0 Hz) to enable  
165 the measurement of  $dv/v$  at different depths (e.g., Obermann et al., 2016).

166

### 167 **3. Results**

168 The  $dv/v$  is computed using a different number of days (1,2, 5, 10, 15, 20, 30) in the stacking process for  
169 the current NCFs, and we find that a minimum of 5 days is necessary to obtain a more stable result. Hence,  
170 we present the results of  $dv/v$  estimated by stretching or compressing a 5-day stacked current NCFs with  
171 a reference stacked over the deployment period. This approach enables us to track the velocity change  
172 evolution over a relatively short timescale. Fig. 2a shows the network-averaged daily  $dv/v$  measurements  
173 at various frequency bands (0.1-0.4, 0.2-0.5, 0.3-0.8, 0.4-0.9, 0.5-1.0, and 0.7-2.0 Hz). It reveals a  
174 frequency-dependent velocity change with the amplitude fluctuation most pronounced in the lowest  
175 frequency range (0.1-0.4 Hz) considered in the study. The amplitudes of  $dv/v$  are much reduced in higher  
176 frequency bands (e.g., 0.4-0.9, 0.5-1.0), and eventually disappear in the band of 0.7-2.0 Hz. Averaging the  
177 daily  $dv/v$  suppresses the background variations, and the reduced amplitudes at higher frequencies  
178 indicate that the potential velocity changes are indistinguishable from the background variations. The  
179 observed spatiotemporal evolution of the daily  $dv/v$  (Fig. 3) and the time history of the mean daily  $dv/v$   
180 for all stations (Fig. 2a) show four distinct phases of velocity changes characterized by alternating  
181 decreases and increases with an average period of 5, 5-6, 12-16, 10-14 days respectively (see Fig. 2b).

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185 **Fig. 2.** Time history of temporal seismic velocity ( $dv/v$ ) at six different frequency bands (0.1-0.4, 0.2-0.5,  
186 0.3-0.8, 0.4-0.9, 0.5-1.0, and 0.7-2.0 Hz). (a) shows the network-averaged daily  $dv/v$  measurements and  
187 their standard deviation at different frequency bands over the deployment period (b) Percentage of  
188 station-pairs associated with velocity increases ( $>0\%$ ; blue dashed line) or decreases ( $<0\%$ ; red dashed  
189 line) over the deployment period. The maximum number of the inter-station path is 2,346.

190

191 In the lowest frequency band where the velocity changes are most pronounced (i.e., 0.1-0.4 Hz), the mean  
192 daily  $dv/v$  ranges from -0.81% to 0.90% with a standard deviation of 0.35 to 0.87. From the onset of the  
193 experiment (October 26, 2016), the mean daily  $dv/v$  is  $\sim 0.26\%$  and remains constant till October 30, 2016  
194 (Fig. 2). The constant  $dv/v$  value at the beginning of the experiment may represent the background value  
195 or be caused by temporal resolution limitations. Using a 5-day stacked moving window may have limited  
196 our ability to observe changes at a smaller time scale distinctively. The mean daily  $dv/v$  began to decrease  
197 on October 31, 2016, reaching  $\sim -0.81\%$  on November 5, 2016. A sharp drop from  $-0.33\%$  to  $-0.78\%$   
198 occurred from November 3 to 4, 2016. A healing phase started on November 6, 2016, i.e.,  $dv/v$  began to  
199 increase gradually and eventually exceeded the background value. It reached  $\sim 0.90\%$  on November 21,  
200 2016, then dropped persistently to  $\sim -0.76\%$  on November 28, 2016. After that, it leveled out at  $\sim -0.68\%$   
201 till the end of the survey on December 1, 2016.

202

203 Using 69 shallow-buried geophones, we obtain a total of 2,346 inter-station paths, sensitive to  
204 perturbations in the medium along the path connecting any two stations. The percentage of these paths

205 that revealed either positive or negative velocity change can also provide some additional insight into the  
206 dominant process at various times during the deployment (see Fig. 2b). In Fig. 3, we show the  
207 spatiotemporal evolution of the  $dv/v$  across the study area for each day throughout the deployment  
208 period. The trend of the estimated percentages generally follows the same trend as the time evolution of  
209 the mean daily  $dv/v$  described above, revealing four distinct phases where  $dv/v$  alternates from positive  
210 ( $dv/v$  increases) to negative ( $dv/v$  decreases) in a transitional manner. For example, at 0.1-0.4 Hz, 65.64%  
211 and 34.36% of the inter-station paths are associated with positive and negative daily mean  $dv/v$ ,  
212 respectively (Fig. 2b) between October 26 and 30, 2016. It suggests that a more significant portion of  
213 the study region is characterized by velocity increases in the first injection phase (Fig. 2b and Fig. 3). In the  
214 second injection phase (October 31 to November 5, 2016), most of the study area experienced velocity  
215 decreases with the percentage of inter-station paths indicating negative  $dv/v$  increasing from 34.36% to  
216 96%. Subsequently, a healing phase began when the percentage of inter-station paths crosscutting the  
217 study area with positive  $dv/v$  increased from ~4% to ~96% over a relatively long period (from November  
218 6 to 21, 2016). Following the healing phase was a relatively fast velocity reduction across almost the entire  
219 study area from November 22 to December 1, 2016 (Fig. 2b and Fig. 3). At higher frequencies considered  
220 in the study (e.g., 0.2-0.5 and 0.3-0.8 Hz), similar patterns of  $dv/v$  can be observed but with reduced  
221 amplitudes (see Fig. 2 and Fig. S2-S6).

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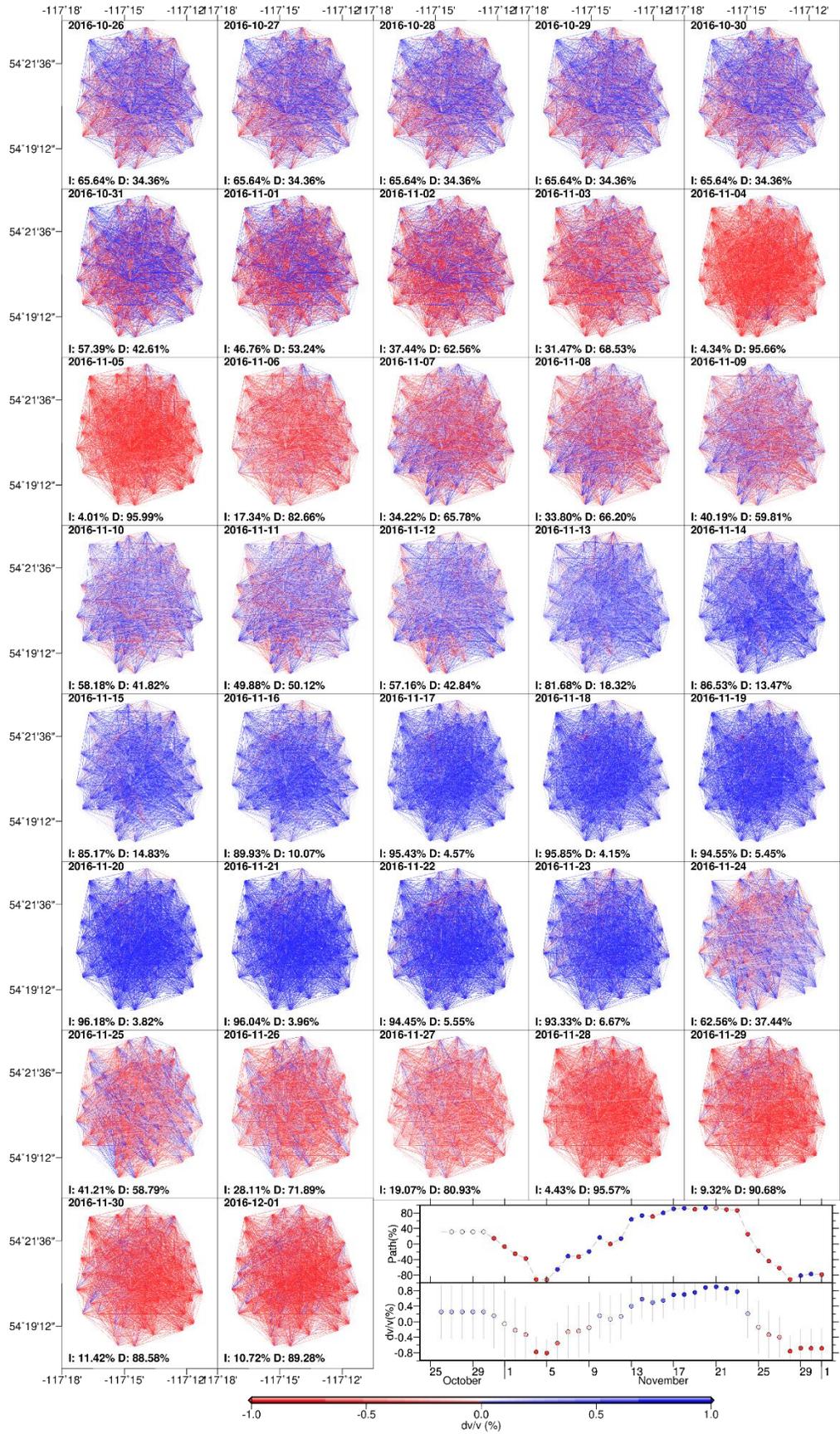
## 223 **4. Interpretation and Discussion**

### 224 **4.1 Depth Sensitivity of $dv/v$ Measurements**

225 Measuring the temporal seismic velocity change at various frequency bands with distinct sensitivities to  
226 different depths enables us to investigate the observed changes' origin and separate the effects of  
227 potential causal mechanisms. It is usually assumed that the early coda of the noise correlation functions  
228 is mainly composed of scattered surface waves (e.g., Obermann et al., 2013, 2016). Therefore, we  
229 compute the depth sensitivity of Rayleigh waves to a local 1-D shear wave velocity ( $V_s$ ) model at several  
230 frequencies between 0.1 and 1.0 Hz (Levshin et al., 1989). The local velocity model was constructed from  
231 well-logs up to a depth of 3.5 km and crustal refraction profiles to a depth of 6 km (Zelt and Ellis, 1989;  
232 Tan et al., 2019).

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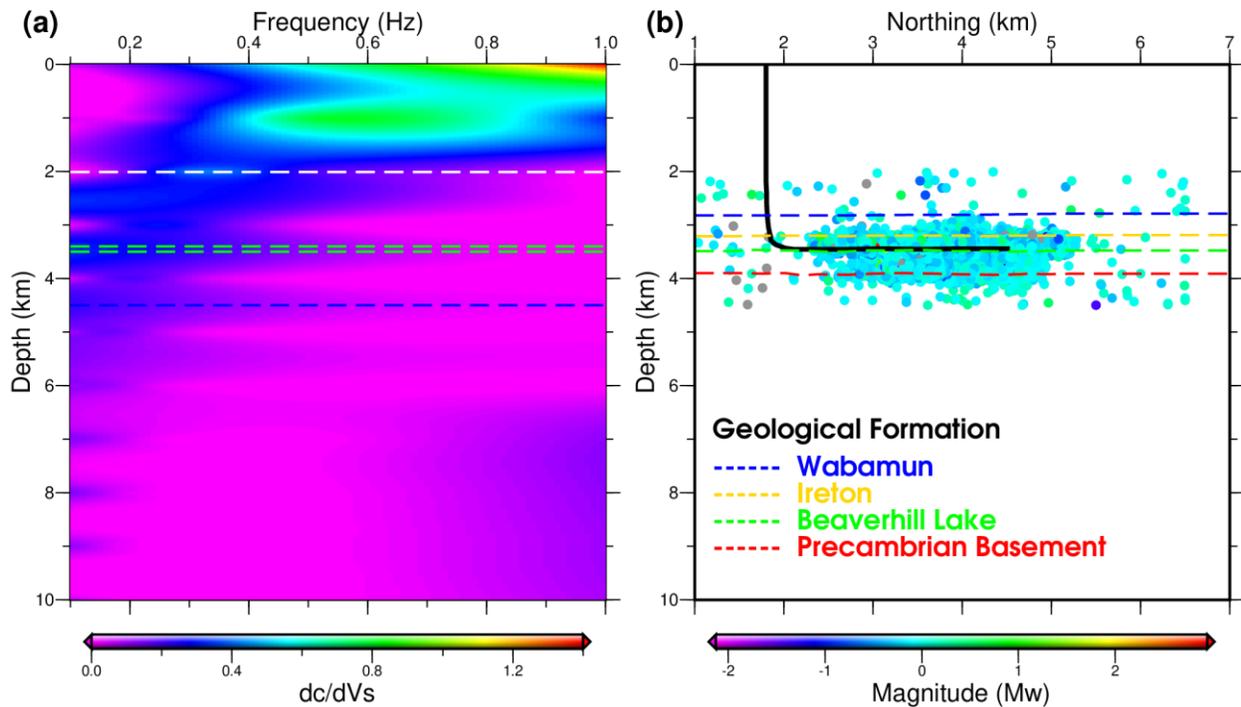
234 As shown in Fig. 4a, the velocity changes computed at higher frequency (e.g., 1 Hz) are mainly sensitive to  
235 perturbations at depths less than 1 km below the surface, whereas  $dv/v$  at relatively lower frequencies  
236 (e.g., 0.1 Hz) are sensitive to perturbations in deeper structures (> 2 km). The most pronounced velocity  
237 changes were observed at relatively lower frequencies (0.1-0.4 and 0.2- 0.5 Hz), suggesting that the  
238 process responsible for the observed changes is most likely occurring at depths greater than 2 km beneath  
239 the study region (see Fig. 2a). Similar  $dv/v$  trends with varying amplitudes at the frequency bands  
240 considered in this study may indicate that the observed velocity changes extend over variable depth  
241 ranges. The depth estimates of the recorded induced events are between 2.0 and 4.5 km, and the reported  
242 depth of the four injection wells is between 3.4 and 3.5 km (Eaton et al., 2018; Poulin et al., 2019; Igonin  
243 et al., 2020).



245 **Fig. 3.** Daily spatiotemporal evolution of  $dv/v$  throughout the deployment at 0.1-0.4 Hz. The colored lines  
 246 show the inter-station paths across the study area and the associated  $dv/v$  measurement. Also shown are  
 247 the daily averaged values like in Fig. 2. Plots at other frequency bands are presented in Fig. S2-S6.

248  
 249 The sensitivity kernel at the lower frequency bands (e.g., 0.1 - 0.4 Hz) where we observed the most  
 250 significant  $dv/v$  perturbations has large values up to 4 km below the surface similar to the depths of the  
 251 induced events and injection wells (Fig. 4b). The correlation between the depth sensitivity of the observed  
 252  $dv/v$  variation at this frequency band (0.1-0.4 Hz) and the depths of HF stimulation and induced  
 253 earthquakes provides the first indication that the observed  $dv/v$  is most likely related to subsurface  
 254 perturbations associated with HF injections.

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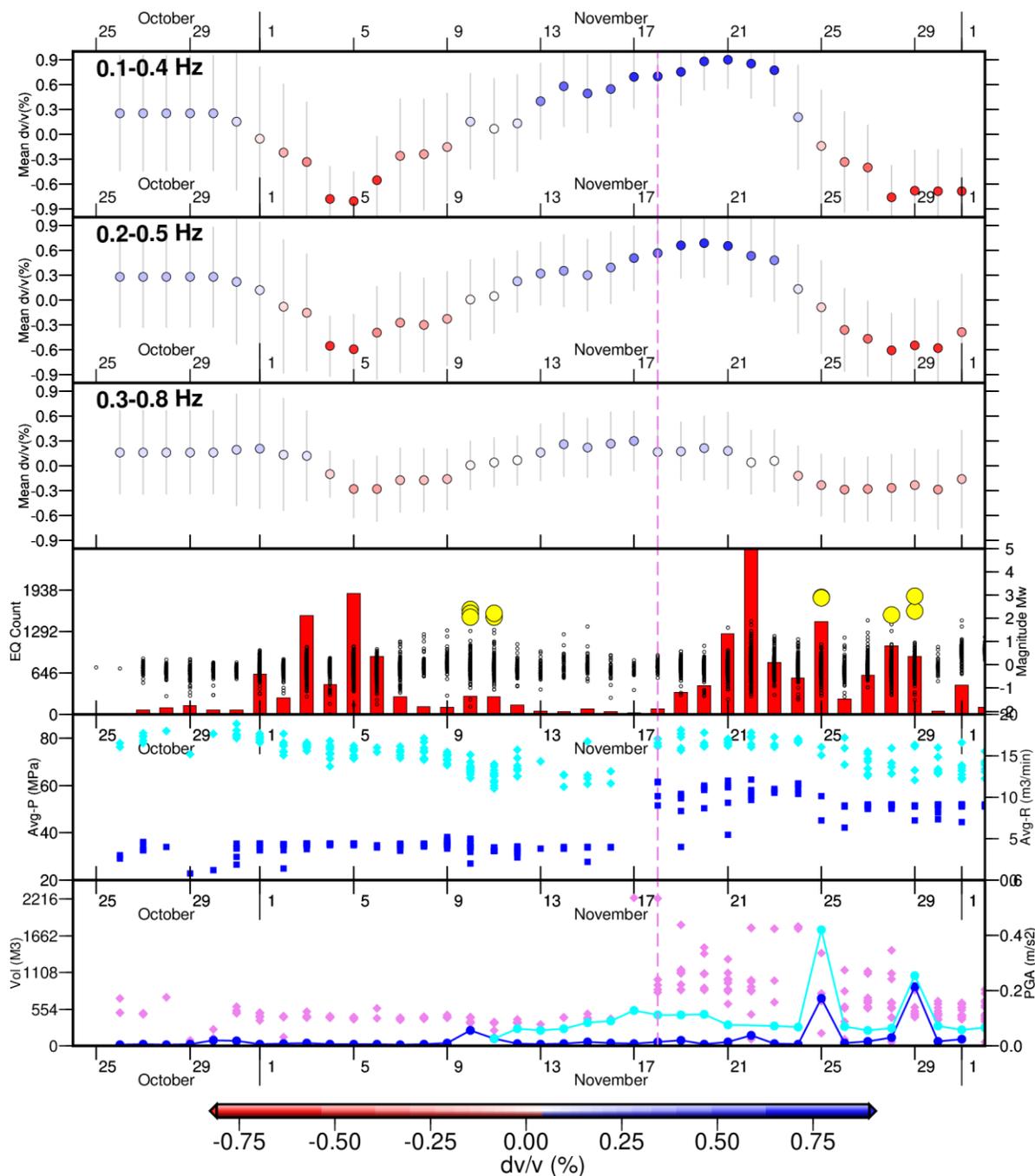
257  
 258 **Fig. 4.** (a) Sensitivity kernel of Rayleigh wave to 1-D local velocity model at different frequencies ranging  
 259 from 0.1-1 Hz. The corresponding sensitivity kernels are the derivative of the Rayleigh wave phase velocity  
 260 to the S wave velocity at various frequencies. As expected, the depth of the highest sensitivity increases  
 261 as frequency decreases. White and blue dash lines show the depth range of induced earthquakes, and  
 262 green dash lines show the injection depth range. (b) The depth distribution of induced events (Igonin et  
 263 al., 2020) with colors indicating event magnitudes. The horizontal dashed lines show the top boundary of  
 264 different geological formations (Eaton et al., 2018).

265

#### 266 4.2 Origin and Causative Mechanism of the observed $dv/v$

267 Spatiotemporal changes in the seismic velocity are typically controlled by various factors and natural  
 268 internal processes, such as stress, deformation, fluids, and meteorological conditions. Therefore,  
 269 understanding the exact mechanisms causing changes in  $dv/v$  is often challenging because of the difficulty

270 in isolating the contribution from individual effects (e.g., Sens-Schönfelder et al., 2014; Donaldson et al.,  
 271 2017). To investigate the causative mechanism of the observed  $dv/v$ , we compare the time evolution of  
 272 the daily mean  $dv/v$  to the temporal evolution of induced seismicity, daily injection parameters (average  
 273 pumping pressure, average pumping rate, injected volume), and daily peak ground acceleration (PGA) in  
 274 Fig. 5.  
 275



276  
 277  
 278 **Fig. 5.** Comparison of the temporal evolution of  $dv/v$  with induced seismicity, injection parameters  
 279 (injected volume, injection rate, and pressure), and ground motion. The vertical pink dash line demarcates

280 the end of the first stimulation (well C) and the onset of the second stimulation (well A, B, D). The first  
281 three panel shows  $dv/v$  measurements at 0.1-0.4, 0.2-0.5, and 0.3-0.8 Hz. The fourth panel from the top  
282 shows the temporal evolution of induced earthquakes with more significant events (M2+) highlighted with  
283 yellow-colored circles. The fifth panel shows the average injection pressure (cyan diamonds) and injection  
284 rate (blue squares). The last panel shows the injected volume (pink diamond) and daily peak ground  
285 acceleration (PGA). The navy-blue line and circles show the average PGA from the six broadband  
286 seismometers, while the cyan line and circles show the estimated PGA from the accelerometer.

287  
288 There were two phases of HF stimulations. The first one was performed from October 26 to November  
289 17, 2016, to well C only, while wells A, B, and D were simultaneously stimulated with increased injection  
290 rates and pressures from November 18 to December 1, 2016 (Fig. 1; Eaton et al., 2018). Since the goal of  
291 HF is to increase the permeability of reservoir rocks by generating fractures via fluid injection, the process  
292 alters the poroelastic stress of the subsurface configuration, elevates pore pressures, and consequently  
293 generates earthquakes. All these processes further enhance the degree of deformation near the injection  
294 wells (Bao and Eaton 2016; Atkinson et al., 2016; Kao et al., 2018a). The daily distribution of induced  
295 events shows two broad peaks of intense seismicity during the two stimulation periods that generally  
296 correlate with the timing of  $dv/v$  reductions. Therefore, we hypothesize that the observed seismic velocity  
297 reductions are caused by subsurface deformation (e.g., opening of pores, enhancement of crack density)  
298 in response to stress changes induced by fluid overpressures and subsequent ground shaking by swarms  
299 of induced events (e.g., Mordret et al., 2016; Taira et al., 2018; Zhang et al., 2020). Possibly due to the  
300 smaller magnitudes of induced events and limited ground shaking, there is no clear sign of co-seismic  
301 velocity drop similar to those reported for natural earthquakes, even for the most significant induced  
302 events ( $\sim$ M3) during the deployment (e.g., Taira et al., 2015; Pei et al., 2019; Wu et al., 2016; Yukutake et  
303 al., 2016). Similarly, we did not observe precursory velocity drops preceding the occurrence of induced  
304 events like those reported at volcanic edifices (e.g., Brenguier et al., 2008; De Plaen et al., 2016,2018,  
305 Yates et al., 2019).

306  
307 Another essential feature of the  $dv/v$  time series is the complete recovery of seismic velocity reduction  
308 after the first stimulation. This pattern has been routinely observed following co-seismic  $dv/v$  reduction  
309 after the occurrence of natural earthquakes (e.g., Brenguier et al., 2008; Pei et al., 2019). However, in our  
310 case, the extended period of recovery (a total change of  $\sim$  1.71%) correlates with periods of reduced  
311 seismicity and a slight reduction in injection pressure before the onset of intense HF activities in the  
312 second stimulation (Fig. 5). Hence, the observed  $dv/v$  increases may likely reflect the relaxation process  
313 of rock healing, gradual closure of fluid-filled cracks, and re-compaction as the first HF operations wound  
314 down (e.g., Brenguier et al., 2008, 2014; Snieder et al., 2016; Taira et al. 2015, 2018). The early  
315 decommissioning of the geophones did not allow us to observe the seismic velocity reduction's potential  
316 recovery after the second stimulation.

317  
318 Comparing the first HF phase (well C) to the second (wells A, B, D), we note that the mean number of  
319 induced events per day increased from  $\sim$ 128 to  $\sim$ 477, the mean daily injected volume increased from  $\sim$ 433  
320 to  $\sim$ 825 cubic meters, the mean daily injection pressure increased from 72.15 to 75.28 MPa, and the  
321 injection rate increased from 3.92 to 10.57 cubic meters per minute. The increased injection of fluid at a

322 higher rate and pressure and stimulation of more wells simultaneously led to an increase in induced  
323 seismicity and correspondingly a larger magnitude of  $dv/v$  reduction in the second stimulation compared  
324 to the first. During the period of intense seismicity,  $dv/v$  reduced from 0.25% to -0.81 % (a total change of  
325  $\sim 1.06$  %) during the first HF phase. A similar drop (from  $\sim 0.90\%$  to  $-0.69\%$ , a total change of  $\sim 1.59\%$ ) is  
326 also observed for the second HF phase.

327  
328 To further investigate the potential contributions of ground motions due to induced seismicity to the  
329 observed  $dv/v$  variations, (e.g., Takagi et al., 2012; Yu and Hung, 2012; Hobiger et al., 2016), we compare  
330 the temporal evolution of the daily mean  $dv/v$  with the daily peak ground acceleration (PGA) averaged  
331 from six broadband seismometers and that recorded by an accelerometer collocated with the geophones  
332 (Fig. 1 and Fig. 5). Prominent peaks of the mean daily PGA temporally correlate with the relatively larger  
333 induced events ( $M_w$  larger than 2.0, yellow circles in Fig. 5). They also coincide with periods of  $dv/v$   
334 reductions. The observations corroborate our earlier inference that dynamic stresses contribute to the  
335 observed  $dv/v$  reductions (e.g., Taira et al., 2018; Zhang et al., 2020).

336  
337 Although several studies have reported a link between  $dv/v$  and several meteorological conditions (e.g.,  
338 Lecocq et al., 2017), it is probably less likely to happen in our case due to the relatively short deployment  
339 period ( $\sim 37$  days). Similarly, spurious velocity changes related to seasonal variation in the distribution of  
340 noise sources can be ruled out (e.g., Zhang et al., 2013).

## 341 342 **5. Conclusions**

343 This study uses seismic noise coda wave interferometry to investigate changes in subsurface seismic  
344 velocity in response to hydraulic fracturing operations within the Western Canada Sedimentary Basin. The  
345 first phase of HF stimulation was performed from October 26 to November 17, 2016, to one well, while  
346 three wells were simultaneously stimulated in the second phase with increased injection rates and  
347 pressures from November 18 to December 1, 2016. During both HF stimulations, we observe seismic  
348 velocity changes with amplitudes that increase with decreasing frequency. Specifically, two time periods  
349 of velocity reductions appear after many induced earthquakes during the well stimulations. However,  
350 much larger numbers of induced events and more significant  $dv/v$  reductions are observed in the second  
351 stimulation with increased injection volume, pressure, and rate. An extended period of velocity increase  
352 correlates with reduced induced seismicity towards the end of the first stimulation. Considering all the  
353 temporal comparisons that we have examined; we conclude that the observed  $dv/v$  reduction is likely  
354 caused by ground deformation due to fluid injection and ground motion from induced earthquakes. On  
355 the other hand, increases in  $dv/v$  are associated with postseismic recovery processes indicating periods  
356 of crustal strengthening. Our study shed new light on subsurface structural changes induced by hydraulic  
357 fracturing operations and provides valuable new information that can be potentially useful for seismic  
358 hazard study in the region.

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363 GitHub: <https://github.com/ToC2ME/>). We used the seismicity catalog developed by (Igonin et al., 2020),

364 which is publicly available (<https://zenodo.org/record/3900657>). Well completions and fracking data  
365 were obtained from the geoLOGIC frac database ([www.gdcweb.geologic.com](http://www.gdcweb.geologic.com); Last accessed July 2020).  
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