



INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

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Mike Braun
Governor

Clint Woods
Commissioner

To: Katherine Noel
Chair, Indiana State Ethics Commission

William Deane
Ethics Director, Office of the Indiana Inspector General

From: James French
Ethics Officer, Indiana Department of Environmental Management

Date: May 14, 2026

Re: Waiver of 42 IAC 1-15-1

FILED

MAY 14 2026

INDIANA STATE
ETHICS COMMISSION

In accordance with 42 IAC 1-5-1(c), as the Indiana Department of Environmental Management's (IDEM's) Ethics Officer, I am filing this waiver of the application of the Gift Rule based on the following facts.

Katie Blackburn, Shay Hartley, Hannah Harvey, Nawal Hopkins, Carrie Maniet, Kate Robinson, Caitlin Shaffer, and Hani Sharaya are employees of the State, working in IDEM's Office of Land Quality's (OLQ's) Petroleum Branch (Petroleum Branch employees). The Petroleum Branch handles all regulatory matters pertaining to petroleum and petroleum storage tanks in the State of Indiana.

The Petroleum Branch employees have been gifted free registration and booth space by the Indiana Food and Fuel Association (IFFA) to attend the 2026 M-PACT Fuel and Convenience Tradeshow (Tradeshow), which occurred April 14-16, 2026. The address for the IFFA is 8720 Castle Creek Parkway East Drive, Suite 121, Indianapolis, IN, 46250. The IFFA represents owners, operators, contractors and consultants in the underground storage tank and convenience store industry.

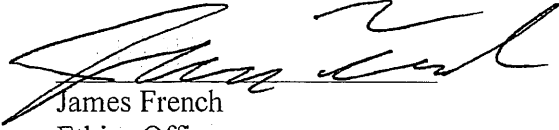
The Tradeshow is a networking and educational event for the fuel and convenience field in the Midwest. The Tradeshow brings participants from Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Ohio, and other states across the Midwest every year to the Indiana Convention Center for a three-day event. The Tradeshow features over 3,000 fuel and convenience professionals and 300 exhibitors showcasing the latest products, services, and technologies, as well as educational sessions led by industry experts.

Specifically, the employees received exhibitor booth registration for eight (8) attendees, valued at approximately \$3,200.00.

Though IDEM does not assert that it has a business relationship with the IFFA, IDEM is nevertheless filing this waiver out of an abundance of caution to avoid any appearance of impropriety.

This waiver of the Gift Rule is consistent with the public interest because the Tradeshow presents the agency with an opportunity to engage and strengthen relationships with stakeholders in the petroleum industry, answer regulatory questions, communicate recent regulatory changes, discuss areas of IDEM focus for the coming year, collaborate with the regulated community, and provide general outreach. This relationship building enhances IDEM's reach and can lead to improved environmental outcomes. Participation in the

event also allows the Petroleum Branch employees to gain firsthand insights into emerging technologies and other issues impacting the industry. Further, IDEM staff attendance provides increased visibility of IDEM and the Petroleum Branch, reinforcing public confidence in the agency's commitment to protecting health and the environment.



James French
Ethics Officer
Indiana Department of Environmental Management