



INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

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Mike Braun
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FEB 3 2026

INDIANA STATE
ETHICS COMMISSION

To: Katherine Noel
Chair, Indiana State Ethics Commission

Regan Perrodin
Ethics Director, Office of the Indiana Inspector General

From: James French
Ethics Officer, Indiana Dept. of Environmental Management

Date: February 3, 2026

Re: Waiver of 42 IAC 1-15-1

In accordance with 42 IAC 1-5-1(c), as IDEM's Ethics Officer, I am filing this waiver of the application of the gift rule based on the following facts.

Megan Espinda is the Agricultural Liaison for IDEM. Her daily duties include working with agriculture community and the stakeholders of the industry to interpret environmental regulations.

Espinda received from the Indiana Farm Bureau (225 South East St., Indianapolis, IN 46202) to attend the American Farm Bureau Federation Annual Convention, which occurred January 9-14, 2026. The convention is a trade show and networking opportunity for farmers and those in related fields, featuring educational workshops, speakers, a trade show, and tours of farms. Espinda personally attended the conference January 9-12.

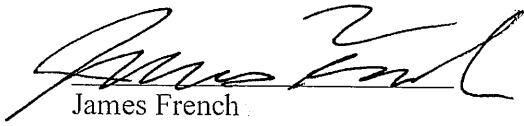
Specifically, Espinda received:

- o One, economy class, round-trip flight from Indianapolis to Orange County, California (IND-SNA specific amount unknown)
- o Registration for the American Farm Bureau Federation Annual Convention (\$100)
- o 3 nights at the Marriott Anaheim, January 9-11, 2026 (amount unknown, standard room and convention/group rate is assumed)

Though IDEM does not assert that it has a business relationship with the Indiana Farm Bureau, IDEM is 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 conference gave Espinda the opportunity to learn more about and stay up to date on current agricultural events; network with various state, federal, and local government, corporate, and field professional entities; and to improve relationships between said entities and IDEM. Further, the opportunity for Espinda to improve her own knowledge of

agricultural priorities in the United States will benefit the people of Indiana when applied to her current position.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James French', written over a horizontal line.

James French
Ethics Officer
For the Indiana Department of Environmental Management