



INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

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Mike Braun
Governor

Clint Woods
Commissioner

To: Katherine Noel
Chair, Indiana State Ethics Commission

Rachael Ehlich
Ethics Director, Office of the Indiana Inspector General

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

Date: October 9, 2026

Re: Waiver of 42 IAC 1-5-1

FILED

OCT 09 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.

IDEM External Partner Services' (EPS) Chief Kristen Brier; EPS Executive Director of Public Services Carl Wodrich; EPS Section Chiefs Pamela Guerrero and Julie Rhodes; EPS Program Managers Kaitlin Carroll, Katya Drake, William Foster, Tom Leas; EPS' Compliance and Technical Assistance Program staff Joshua Pins, Hannah Hack, Leigh Anne Harvey, Tammy Haug, John Hudson, and Chrystal Wagener; and IDEM Photographer Aidan Whitney (collectively, "EPS Staff") are employees of the State. IDEM EPS' mission is to connect IDEM with regulated entities, local governments, community partners, and the public.

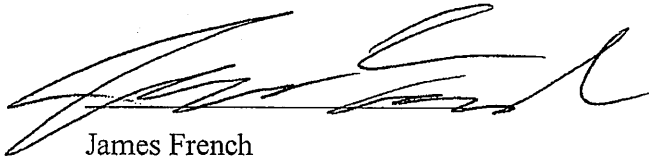
The EPS Staff have been gifted paid registration fees by Partners for Sustainability (Partners) to attend the 29th Annual Partners for Sustainability Conference and Trade Show (Conference), which occurred September 10th, 2026. Partners is an organization comprised of Indiana industry leaders, businesses, nonprofit organizations, and government entities interested in sustainability and pollution prevention.

The Conference is an annual trade show organized by Partners that features guest speakers, workshops, industry vendors, and networking opportunities.

Specifically, the employees received registration fees at \$275 per person, totaling \$4125.00.

Though IDEM does not assert that it has a business relationship with Partners, 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 gift offered EPS Staff the opportunity to strengthen and support environmental stewardship and pollution prevention efforts in Indiana, at no cost to the state. Participating allowed EPS Staff to build valuable connections with nearly 250 industry and nonprofit representatives, improving collaboration and fostering stronger public-private partnerships. The workshops and presentations provided opportunities to learn new approaches that can enhance program effectiveness, improve compliance, and support innovation in environmental protection.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James French', with a stylized, flowing script.

James French
Ethics Officer
Indiana Department of Environmental Management