

STATE OF MICHIGAN
IN THE 3RD JUDICIAL CIRCUIT COURT FOR THE COUNTY OF WAYNE

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF
MICHIGAN,

Petitioner,

No. 26-001270-PZ

v

HON. EDWARD EWELL, JR.

M-TWELVE FUELS, LLC,

Respondent.

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***EX PARTE* PETITION FOR CIVIL INVESTIGATIVE SUBPOENAS**

I. Introduction

The American oil business has historically had a reputation for unfair competition, ruthless tactics, and a willingness to squeeze every dollar out of energy consumers.¹ But even the greatest oilman—John D. Rockefeller—recognized a limit: “every right implies a responsibility; every opportunity, an obligation; every

¹ See *There Will be Blood*, dir. Paul Thomas Anderson (2007 Miramax Films); Sinclair, *Oil!* (New York: Penguin Random House, 1926).

possession, a duty.²” And beyond any moral or ethical restriction, there lies the most important restraint: the law.

The Michigan Consumer Protection Act (MCPA) makes it unlawful for a person or business engaged in trade or commerce to charge “a price that is grossly in excess of the price at which similar property or services are sold.” MCL 445.903(1)(z). As elaborated below, the Attorney General seeks authorization for an investigation under the MCPA because there is probable cause to believe a Michigan gas station near Detroit Metro Airport charged grossly excessive prices for gasoline to unsuspecting motorists.

II. Parties, Legal Authority, and Venue

1. Michigan’s Attorney General is authorized to file an *ex parte* petition with the Circuit Court requesting issuance of investigative subpoenas pursuant to Section 7 of the MCPA, MCL 445.907, which provides in pertinent part:

- (1) Upon the *ex parte* application of the attorney general to the circuit court in the county where the defendant is established or conducts business or, if the defendant is not established in this state, in Ingham county, the circuit court, if it finds probable cause to believe a person has engaged, is engaging, or is about to engage in a method, act, or practice which is unlawful under this act, may, after *ex parte* hearing, issue a subpoena compelling a person to appear before the attorney general and answer under oath questions relating to an alleged violation of this act....The subpoena may compel a person to produce the books, records, papers, documents, or things relating to a violation of this act....

² Brown University Library, *John D. Rockefeller Credo*, <<https://library.brown.edu/create/rock50/the-credo-of-john-d-rockefeller-j>>

2. Respondent M-Twelve Fuels, LLC (M-Twelve Fuels) is a Michigan, limited liability company. (**Exhibit A—LARA Registration.**) M-Twelve Fuels is owned by William Bazzi, and it was created in 2023 with its listed street address as 9201 Middlebelt, Road, Romulus, Michigan. (*Id.*) Mr. Bazzi is listed as its sole resident agent. (*Id.*)

3. M-Twelve Fuels has its principal place of business at 9201 Middlebelt Road, Romulus, Michigan, which is located in Wayne County, Michigan. (*Id.*) Thus, this Court is an appropriate venue in which to file this Petition.

4. It is the Attorney General’s understanding that M-Twelve Fuels, LLC is a tenant at 9201 Middlebelt Road, Romulus, Michigan. (**Exhibit B—Email from Respondent’s Landlord.**)

III. Background

5. Detroit Metropolitan Airport is Michigan’s largest airport, handling more than 2.6 million annual passengers in 2025.³ It is revered as one of the country’s best major airports and is of significant import to Michigan’s economy. However, an oft cited weak point for Detroit Metro is its reliance on personal cars for travelers coming to and from the airport. As a result, rental cars are a key component to the smooth operation of the airport.

³ Wayne County Airport Authority, *Detroit Metropolitan Airport ranked by J.D. Power as #1 in Customer Satisfaction for Mega Airports* <<https://www.metroairport.com/about-us/dtw-news/detroit-metropolitan-airport-ranked-jd-power-1-customer-satisfaction-mega>> (posted September 20, 2023).

6. As this Court is surely aware, most rental car agreements require that a hired car be returned with a full tank of gas. Otherwise, a consumer will be charged a fuel surcharge by the rental company.

7. Travelers returning rental cars before a departure are often faced with a stressful combination: arriving at the airport at a fixed time, navigating complex road networks around the airport; and enduring the general unpleasantness of modern air travel. There is probable cause to believe Respondent's conduct exacerbates that combination by price gouging on gasoline near the airport.

8. The gas station at issue is located directly across the street from the cluster of rental car company return lots at Detroit Metro:



9. The gas purchased at any gas station is no different than that sold by competitors.

10. The proximity of Respondent to those airport rental car returns means consumers are often ensnared in a difficult choice: spend precious time looking for

cheaper gas or accept Respondent's severely inflated gasoline price. As evidenced by the volume of complaints received by the Attorney General, it is apparent that many consumers choose the latter. However, they evidently come away from the transaction with a sense of unfairness, which tarnishes their experience in Detroit and Michigan at large. As any host knows, the last experiences of one's guests shape their perception of the entire visit. Giving consumers a final kick on their way out is harmful to the State and its economy.

IV. Documentation of current Probable Cause

11. In 2025 and 2026, the Attorney General received more than sixteen complaints against Respondent—all alleging that the inflated prices at the pump were unfair or unlawful. (**Exhibit C—Consumer Complaints.**) Specifically, the complainants noted that the Respondent was “ripping off the customers,” “taking advantage of travelers who don’t know about gasoline prices in the metro areas,” and “[g]ouging gasoline prices.” (*Id.*) Specifically, one complainant—Kelly V.—wrote in February 2026 that the Respondent was “charging over \$4/gallon (current \$4.10) for gas when surrounding gas stations are averaging \$2.80-\$3.00.” (*Id.*) Another, Kevin T., complained in April 2026 that “premium was \$7.74! That’s \$2 over [regular]!!!” (*Id.*)

12. Fox2Detroit reported on April 8, 2026 that gas prices in the state were increasing but that “[o]ne station in Romulus near Metro Airport” was charging more than any other in the area. Fox2Detroit, *Gas Prices Surge in Romulus near Metro Airport* [https://www.fox2detroit.com/news/gas-prices-surge-romulus-near-](https://www.fox2detroit.com/news/gas-prices-surge-romulus-near)

metro-airport (posted April 8, 2026). They reported that the gas station was pricing regular gasoline at \$5.25 per gallon despite AAA reporting the “average price of gas in Michigan [at] \$3.98 a gallon. At one gas station in Romulus it is almost \$2 more than that.” *Id.*

13. After speaking to consumers at the station, the report quoted one consumer as saying: “[i]t kills me really. It kills a lot of people, a lot of people struggling are suffering these days.” *Id.* In that same story, a gas station reportedly “just up the street” had gas priced at \$3.79 per gallon, compared to Respondent’s \$5.14—a difference of more than 35%. *Id.*

14. Respondent refused to speak to the reporters to justify the prices.

15. Given the flow of complaints, Special Agent Jamie Grabowski began an investigation of the Respondent on April 9, 2026. (**Exhibit D—Investigator Report.**)

16. First, he drove to the Respondent’s location and took a picture of the displayed price, which showed regular gas at \$5.14. (*Id.*) Next, SA Grabowski then pulled into pump 4 at Respondent’s station. (*Id.*) Again, he took photographs of the displayed pictures, which showed regular at \$5.24 if paid for by credit card. (*Id.*) Finally, he pumped about four gallons of gas in his assigned state vehicle. (*Id.*) The total cost of the transaction was \$20.91. (*Id.*)

17. SA Grabowski then conducted a search on Gas-Buddy to compare prices at other gas stations within Romulus, Michigan. (*Id.*) Note that Gas-Buddy

is a publicly available, online gasoline pricing compiler. It lets users see real time, reported gasoline prices at specific stations across the country. (*Id.*)

18. SA Grabowski's search revealed that several of the closest gas stations to Respondent were charging a far lower price. (*Id.*) For example, a Marathon station just on the other side of I-94 was charging a mere \$3.79 per gallon. (*Id.*) The Shell station at 35335 Eureka Road, which is at the southwest corner of the airport, was also only charging \$3.79. (*Id.*) In sum, of the three other gas stations within closest proximity to the airport, not one charged more than \$3.89. (*Id.*) That stands in stark contrast to the \$5.14 charged by Respondent as observed by SA Grabowski. (*Id.*)

19. After Special Agent Grabowski submitted his report, the next step was to do a wider Gas Buddy search on those stations owned by the same individual operating Respondent. A Department of the Attorney General Analyst performed a search of all gas prices listed by stations believed to be associated with William Bazzi. (**Exhibit E—Affidavit of Kassandra Hiltner.**) Of those four other locations owned by Mr. Bazzi, the average sales price of gasoline was \$4.99 per gallon. (*Id.*) At Respondent's station, Analyst Hiltner found the sales price to be \$6.09 per gallon on the day of her search. (*Id.*) That represented a markup of \$.10 per gallon compared to Mr. Bazzi's other stations—a nearly 22% markup.

20. Again, the Attorney General has yet to receive any response from the Respondent justifying its high prices.

21. As explained above, the Attorney General thus has probable cause to believe Respondent has engaged in the following unfair trade practices identified in the MCPA: “(z) Charging the consumer a price that is grossly in excess of the price at which similar property or services are sold.” MCL 445.903(1)(z).

22. Respondent continues to charge anywhere from 22% to 72% more than its competitors for similar gasoline.

23. For Michigan consumers, such prices are likely “grossly in excess” of the price of identical gasoline sold by other stations. The following example illustrates the significance of this.

24. The most common vehicle in Michigan is Ford’s F-150.⁴ A 2026 F-150 holds 36 gallons in its tank. According to AAA, the average price of fuel in Wayne County in May 2026 was \$4.52—whereas Respondent’s gas price was noted at \$5.99. A markup of \$1.47 per gallon means it costs \$52.92 more to fill up the most common vehicle in Michigan. Given the total tank would run \$162.72 at the average price in Wayne County, a Michigan F-150 driver is paying 32% more when buying Respondent’s gasoline. Therefore, there is sufficient probable cause to believe Respondent is charging a “price that is grossly in excess of the price at which similar property . . . are sold.” MCL 445.903(1)(z).

25. The Attorney General anticipates subpoenas can help better understand pricing by Respondent. Specifically, the Attorney General anticipates

⁴ See Road & Track, *Best-Selling Cars in Every State*, <<https://www.roadandtrack.com/rankings/g44809123/most-popular-car-by-state/>> (posted February 28, 2025)

examining the prices charged over time and comparing them to prices charged by both Mr. Bazzi's other gas stations as well as peer gas stations near and around the airport. This data will demonstrate whether the price charged is "grossly in excess of the price at which similar property or services are sold." MCL 445.903(1)(z).

26. In addition, the Attorney General will seek investigative testimony from a person designated by M-Twelve to explain the factors contributing to the gasoline prices charged—including any unusual overhead costs it believes may justify some or all of the cost differential.

Accordingly, the Attorney General respectfully requests that this Court enter an order finding there is probable cause to believe the MCPA has been violated, and authorizing the investigation detailed above. An order to this effect is filed with this Petition for this Court's consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

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