

# The gas is cheap. The Trump administration isn't saying who's paying for it.

BY James Bikales | 07/10/2026



Customers pump gas at a Freedom Fuel Network station on July 8, 2026, in Dresher, Pennsylvania. | Joe Lamberti/Getty Images

President Donald Trump promoted a network of Philadelphia-area gas stations offering discount prices as a gift to the American people around Independence Day.

It's not clear who's footing the bill.

The White House has said only that the venture is a private company willing to take a hit on its profit margins to help American drivers struggling with high prices following the war in Iran. Trump himself [said on social media](#) it is backed by a "VERY smart Retailer" that is "doing this because they love the U.S.A."

The Freedom Fuel Network's [bare-bones website](#) lists the 25 participating stations across southeastern Pennsylvania and south Jersey. Many of those stations changed their branding to the Freedom Fuel Network virtually overnight, according to [local news reports](#).

More than a half-dozen fuel industry analysts and officials, including some who work with retailers in the two states, told POLITICO they had no idea who was behind the effort and were baffled at how the retailer could survive offering discounts of up to 50 cents per gallon, well below market rate.

“I’ve been seeing the news coverage, and we’ve had members or whatnot who’ve reached out about it to ask what it is, and I haven’t been able to find really any answers,” said Eric Blomgren, executive director of the New Jersey Energy Marketers Group, which represents fuel retailers and distributors in the state.

Business records show that Freedom Fuel Network, LLC, was incorporated in Delaware on June 23, just a week before Trump promoted it on his Truth Social account. The White House declined to name who was behind the network, only disclosing that it is a “private company” and that the administration had no involvement in its formation or in recruiting stations to join.

“There is no entity or person subsidizing the lower gasoline costs,” a White House official, granted anonymity to detail the initiative, said in a statement. “They are simply reducing their margin to make prices at the pump more affordable for drivers in Philadelphia and New Jersey.”

The official added that there is “no defined timeline” for how long the discounts would be offered, but said the participating stations had seen a “massive increase in volume.” The White House declined to connect POLITICO to a representative for the Freedom Fuel Network, which did not respond to questions sent through a contact form on its website.

“Freedom Fuel is a patriotic company doing a good thing for drivers in Pennsylvania and New Jersey by lowering their gas prices,” White House spokesperson Taylor Rogers said in a statement. “They are doing their part to answer the President’s call to lower prices at the pump. This retailer is taking the lead, and we hope to see others follow.”

It’s not clear whether the Freedom Fuel Network itself owns or operates any of the participating stations, or if they operate independently and chose to adopt the common Freedom Fuel branding. Most gas stations in the U.S. are owned and operated by individual proprietors, some of whom [license branding](#) from major oil producers like Exxon Mobil or Chevron.

At least seven of the stations in the Freedom Fuel Network appear in property records to be owned by affiliates of Blue Owl, a major publicly traded New York-based asset manager. Trump [disclosed last month](#) that he bought and sold millions of dollars in Blue Owl stock last year and retains significant holdings.

Through its subsidiaries, Blue Owl owns hundreds of gas station properties formerly operated by Georgia-based gasoline supplier and retailer Mountain Express Oil. Mountain Express declared bankruptcy in 2023 after a failed effort to expand nationwide [backed by Blue Owl](#).

A Blue Owl spokesperson said in a statement that the properties are under long-term leases and it has no say over its tenants' operations or business decisions.

“Blue Owl owns the properties through a triple-net lease structure and is not involved in the tenant’s operations or business decisions,” the spokesperson said, referring to a [type of lease](#) in which the tenant is responsible for property taxes, insurance and maintenance costs.

The White House official said Blue Owl has “nothing to do with Freedom Fuel.”

One of those Blue Owl-owned stations, in Dresher, Penn., played host to Jarrod Agen, the executive director of the White House’s National Energy Dominance Council, for an unveiling ceremony last Friday. Plastered with eagles, flags and other patriotic branding, the station offered gas for \$3.47 a gallon — well below the \$3.91 average for the Philadelphia area, according to the American Automobile Association — “in honor of our 47th president,” Agen said [in a video](#) produced by the White House.



*A Freedom Fuel Network gas station offers gas for \$3.57 a gallon on July 8, 2026 in Dresher, Pennsylvania.*

The bargain-basement gas pump pricing comes as the Trump administration is trying to calm Americans’ cost-of-living anxiety as the U.S.-Israel war with Iran has caused gasoline prices to

spike ahead of midterm elections. The White House has ramped up pressure on the oil and gas industry to lower prices at the pump, which have been slower than crude prices to come down since the U.S. and Iran signed their now-abandoned ceasefire last month.

The Trump administration has announced a [Justice Department investigation into major oil producers](#) for allegedly price gouging drivers, and [urged states to look into alleged misconduct](#) keeping pump prices high.

National groups representing the fuel industry said they were in the dark about the new initiative.

A pair of groups representing truck stops and fuel marketers had “never heard of the Freedom Fuel Network until the White House announced its existence,” Tiffany Wlazlowski Neuman, spokesperson for NATSO and SIGMA, said in an email. “Ours is a very dynamic industry comprised primarily of small, mom-and-pop operators.”

Rob Underwood, president of the Energy Marketers of America, said he “learned about the Freedom Fuel Network like everyone else when the story hit the news.” He added that retail gas prices are declining across the industry in response to falling oil prices.

The Freedom Fuel Network was registered in Delaware by the Corporation Trust Company, which handles correspondence and compliance work for hundreds of thousands of companies.

Josh Destefano, a spokesperson for the Corporation Trust Company, said in a statement that it does not comment on the activities of the businesses for which it provides registered agent services.

The 25 stations largely did not share the same branding before joining the Freedom Fuel Network. Many of them lacked branding or were branded as independent local chains, such as Gas N Go and Karco, according to Google Maps images. Even before the latest transition, several of the stations appear to have shifted their branding or gone independent in recent years.

Most of the stations do not list contact information online or in public records beyond addresses, and POLITICO was unable to reach them for this article.

One station in Brookhaven, Penn., was branded as a Shell until it joined the Freedom Fuel Network and still remained visible on the British oil giant’s website as of this week. Rakhee Sharma, a Shell spokesperson, said the company is “not affiliated with the Freedom Fuel Network and was not involved in its formation.”

“Most Shell-branded stations in the U.S., including this location, are independently owned and operated by businesses that license the Shell brand,” Sharma said.

Analysts said the Freedom Fuel stations appeared to be selling gas at or below the wholesale price in the area, which does not account for labor costs and credit card fees paid directly by the station operator.

“You can’t see these stations at these prices for long,” said Tom Kloza, chief energy adviser for U.S.-based fuel retailer Gulf Oil. “The economics will dictate that — they’re going to have to either close down or raise prices very, very dramatically.”

In fact, some states, including New Jersey, have laws barring gas stations from selling under market rate to prevent large retailers from choking out smaller competitors, Kloza noted. Those laws are rarely enforced, however, because the discounts are typically offered as very short-term promotions.

Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysis at pricing service GasBuddy, said gas stations will sometimes offer cheap gas on opening day or after a change of ownership. But he had never seen this many stations change their branding and prices overnight in a coordinated fashion.

“It’s very rare, and especially this name, I mean, Freedom Fuel Network — that’s not your average gas station,” he said.

De Haan noted the Freedom Fuel Network shares some similarities to a [T-Mobile promotion](#) in early June in which the mobile network operator wrapped select stations in three cities in its distinctive pink branding and offered its members \$1.99-per-gallon gas. A T-Mobile spokesperson said it had no involvement in the Freedom Fuel Network.

Blomgren from the New Jersey Energy Marketers Group said more retailers outside of the network would like to bring down prices, but continue to contend with elevated fuel prices because of the war in Iran.

“I know the president’s been tweeting in general about, ‘Oh, we need to get prices lower because of the price of oil,’ but the [wholesale] price of gas is like 80 cents a gallon higher than it was when the war started, even if the price of oil has been reaching the [pre-war] level,” he said. “So retailers have basically done all they can, I think.”