IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
FIELD SERVICES AND COMPLIANCE BUREAU
FIELD OFFICE #2 - MASON CITY IOWA

DATE: July 24, 2013

TO: The Record

FROM: Scott Wilson SW

SUBJECT: **Absolute Energy LLC; Emergency Response inspection**
HSI# 072213-RLT-1007; 1372 State Line Road, Saint Ansgar, Mitchell Co.

I met with Tyler Schwarck, Absolute Energy, at the site on July 23, 2013 to observe the spill of natural gasoline. Natural gasoline (67 octane) is added to pure alcohol as a denaturant. A failure of the loading rack equipment caused the spill. The gasoline dispenser is equipped with a relief valve in case of over-pressurization. The valve failed and allowed an estimated 125 to 450 gallons of fuel to be released during the past weekend. Schwarck was unsure of the actual spill quantity because there is a difference in the apparent loss that was calculated based on the pressure gauge and the stick readings. The fuel drained into the gravel between the railroad tracks. I took several digital photos of the site.

Pinnacle Engineering, from Rochester, Minnesota, had been at the site the previous day and directed Schwarck to dig test holes in several locations on either side of the nearest railroad track. It appeared that the spill spread primarily north and west through a sand layer located three or four feet below ground. A layer of dense clay is located immediately below the sand layer. It is believed that all of the fuel was contained in the gravel next to the railroad tracks and in the sub-surface sand layer that spreads out in an area at least 40 long and 70 feet wide. Contaminated soil (primarily fine gravel dust) was excavated yesterday and was placed on a plastic-lined concrete pad. The pile was also covered with plastic. I did not observe any run-off from the pile. A recovery sump was installed in the gravel immediately next to the spill location. I bailed out a small quantity of water from the sump, but I did not see an observable sheen. I did not detect a noticeable gasoline odor in my sample container, but I did detect the smell of gasoline in the sump. Because it appeared that there was a minimal amount of fuel in the sump, we decided that bailing the water from the sump would not be beneficial at this time.

Schwarck stated that Pinnacle Engineering may use vapor extraction to remove the fuel. They will use a Geoprobe to determine the best placement for the vapor extraction tubes. Because the spill is located immediately adjacent to several railroad tracks and the ethanol/gasoline loading rack, it would be very difficult and expensive to remove the fuel by over-excavating the entire area. All of the drainage in the area is directed toward the nearby storm water pond. Schwarck will frequently observe the pond for any evidence of fuel. He closed the pond outlet so that he can control what exits the property.

Schwarck also stated that Absolute Energy will develop a proposal to install secondary containment around the loading areas. They will also work with the manufacturer of the relief valve to determine the cause of the release. The valve assembly was added about a year ago. We reviewed the options for land-farming the contaminated soil or taking it to the local landfill. Schwarck will submit the 30-day written spill report.

SW

C: DNR Emergency Response