

AMENDMENT OF THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A fuel anti-theft system for a vehicle possessing a fuel system further comprising a plurality of fluid entry points, the fuel anti-theft system comprising:

a plurality of sensors of a pre-selected number positioned on a corresponding number of the fluid entry points, each sensor defining a secure state and a potentially tampered-with state, the potentially tampered-with state indicative of the sensor being absent, wherein actual states of the sensors combine to create an actual combined state of the sensors, the secure states of the pre-selected number of sensors combining to create a combined secure state of the pre-selected number of sensors;

a controller in electrical communication with the sensors and being configured to sense the actual combined state of the sensors and to determine whether the actual combined state of the sensors is the combined secure state of the pre-selected number of sensors and to generate a signal responsive thereto whereby the signal indicates whether all of the pre-selected number of sensors are secure; and

an output configured to output the signal indicative of whether all of the ~~[[per]]~~ pre-selected number of sensors are secure

2. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 1 wherein the controller is further configured to sense the combined secure state of the sensors via a chassis ground of a vehicle on which the controller is configured to be mounted.

3. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 1 wherein the controller is further configured to sense the combined secure state of the sensors when they are in parallel electrical communication with one another.

4. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 1 further comprising a resistor possessing a resistance ~~[[about]]~~ sufficiently equal to a resistance of a particular sensor in the secure sensor state to emulate the particular sensor.

5. (Original) The system of claim 1 further comprising a geo-positioning unit in electrical communication with the output.
6. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein at least one of the sensors further comprises a normally open switch and a clamp, the clamp being positioned relative to the switch to close the switch when the clamp moves to a clamped position.
7. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein at least one of the sensors further comprises a grounding strap.
8. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein at least one of the sensors further comprises a ground return lead.
9. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein one of the sensors is configured to be positioned at a fuel cap of the vehicle.
10. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein one of the sensors is configured to be positioned at a fuel filter of the vehicle.
11. (Currently Amended) A method comprising:
 - sensing a combined signal from a plurality of sensors positioned at entry points of a vehicle fuel system wherein each sensor defines a secure state and a suspect state indicative of the sensor being absent and wherein the secure sensor states of a pre-selected number of sensors nominally in the system combine to create a secure system state signal;
 - determining whether a sensed, actual combined signal ~~about equals~~ is the secure system state signal for the pre-selected number of sensors; and
 - responsive to the determining, outputting a signal indicative of whether the sensed, actual combined signal is the secure system state signal for the pre-selected number of sensors.

12. (Original) The method of claim 11 wherein the sensing of the combined signal is via a vehicle chassis ground.

13. (Original) The method of claim 11 wherein the sensors are nominally wired in parallel with one another.

14. (Original) The method of claim 11 wherein a resistor contributes to the combined signal.

15. (Original) The method of claim 11 further comprising noting a location of a vehicle when the combined signal is not the secure system state signal for the pre-selected number of sensors.

16. (Currently Amended) A fuel anti-theft controller comprising:

an input configured to electrically communicate with ~~at least one~~ a plurality of sensors configured to be positioned at ~~[[an]]~~ entry points of a vehicle fuel system and defining a nominal state and a potentially tampered-with state indicative of at least one of the sensors being absent;

a circuit in electrical communication with the input and being configured to sense a combined state of the sensors and to determine whether the combined state of the sensors indicates that all of ~~[[the]]~~ a pre-selected number of the sensors are present and secure; and

an output in electrical communication with the circuit and being configured to output a signal indicative of whether all of the pre-selected number of the sensors are present and secure.

17. (Original) The controller of claim 16 wherein the controller is further configured to sense the combined state of the sensors via a chassis ground of a vehicle on which the controller is configured to be mounted.

18. (Original) The controller of claim 16 wherein the controller is further configured to sense the combined state of the sensors when they are in parallel communication with one another.

19. (Currently Amended) The controller of claim 16 further comprising a resistor possessing a resistance [[about]] sufficiently equal to a resistance of a particular sensor in the nominal sensor state to emulate the particular sensor.

20. (Original) The controller of claim 16 further comprising a geo-positioning unit in electrical communication with the output.

