Managing Ollama Environment Variables in NSSM

When the Ollama server is installed and managed by **NSSM (Non-Sucking Service Manager)** as a Windows Service, standard system environment variables (set via the Windows GUI or setx) are often ignored.
To permanently set the OLLAMA_KEEP_ALIVE variable and prevent Ollama from shutting down after 5 minutes of inactivity, the variable must be injected directly into the NSSM service configuration.

Prerequisite: Find the Service and NSSM

Step 1: Identify the Service Name

1. Press **Win + R**, type services.msc, and press Enter to open the Windows Services Manager.
2. Locate the service associated with Ollama.
3. Right-click the service, select **Properties**, and confirm the **Service name** is **ollama**. This is crucial for the next steps.
4. If the service is running, select the service and click **Stop**.

Step 2: Locate the NSSM Executable

You have confirmed the nssm.exe executable is located at D:\misc\nssm.exe and the service name is ollama.
- **Open Command Prompt or PowerShell (Run as Administrator)**.
- You will run the configuration commands using the full path: d:\misc\nssm <command> ollama.

Method 1: Inject Variable via NSSM Command Line (Recommended)

This method directly sets the variable using a single command.
Example (using your confirmed path and service name):
d:\misc\nssm set ollama AppEnvironmentExtra OLLAMA_KEEP_ALIVE -1

- **OLLAMA_KEEP_ALIVE**: The variable name.
- **-1**: The value, which instructs Ollama to keep the running model loaded indefinitely, preventing the 5-minute timeout.

Method 2: Inject Variable via NSSM Graphical User

Interface (GUI)

If you prefer a visual approach, you can use the NSSM edit GUI.

1. Open **Command Prompt** or **PowerShell** (Run as Administrator).
2. Run the edit command using your confirmed path and service name:
   d:\misc\nssm edit ollama

3. The NSSM Configuration window will open. Navigate to the **Environment** tab (it's often one of the tabs on the far right).
4. In the main text area, add the following line:
   OLLAMA_KEEP_ALIVE=-1

   (Note: Ensure this is the only entry if you want to replace existing environment variables, or simply add it to the list if the text area is not blank).
5. Click **OK** to save the changes.

Final Steps: Restart and Verify

Step 3: Start the Service

1. Return to the **Services Manager** (services.msc).
2. Right-click the Ollama service and select **Start**.

Step 4: Verify the Timeout Setting

1. Open your terminal and run a model to ensure it is active:
   ollama run llama3:8b ""

2. Immediately check the model status using the **ps** command:
   ollama ps

The **UNTIL** column for the loaded model should now show a value of **Forever**, confirming that the OLLAMA_KEEP_ALIVE=-1 environment variable was successfully applied to the NSSM service.