

March 9, 2025

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is in regard to the proceedings related to the State of Maine investigation regarding the poisoning of trees by use of pesticides at 11 Mechanic Street, Rockport Maine.

I am one of the sons of Ruth Graham, deceased February 2024. Our Mom lived at 11 Mechanic Street until her death. I am also the Personal Representative for her Estate.

Our mother was legally blind through advanced macular degeneration. She could see shapes and colors but otherwise was severely limited. My brother noticed trees dying in an unusual location and unusual pattern several years ago. He asked our mother about it, and she was quite distressed. Apparently, she then followed up by contacting a few people to make an assessment.

The trees were a known issue as it relates to the current owner of 9 Mechanic Street. Our mother mentioned to us that during the sale process related to 9 Mechanic years ago, she had been contacted about the prospects of removing all the trees on her property in the view pattern between #9 and the harbor. She also recounted multiple instances thereafter, when the current owners of 9 Mechanic Street requested that the trees be taken down. She declined those requests.

I have previously been in contact with Alex Peacock, from the state of Maine, who was involved in the investigation. We had, and still have, an interest in finding out the facts and circumstances related to this matter.

The entire matter caused our mother a great deal of distress. She was elderly, in her 90's, and becoming increasingly frail. She did not want to have an adverse relationship with anyone in the area, particularly a next-door neighbor. She was generally very popular with neighbors and the frequent pedestrians along Mechanic Street. However, she respected the privacy and property rights of others, and she valued her own rights.

She was very approachable. For many years, she provided access to her dock for neighbors she knew well. Some of those neighbors noticed the tree distress and spoke with her about it. In short, it became a known issue for some of the neighbors.

After her death, we placed 11 Mechanic Street on the market. We received informal feedback that some buyers and brokers were generally aware of the tree poisoning situation and at least one interested buyer felt it was a concern and naturally, that informal feedback was negative. We are aware that many people know about it.

This is not the first tree poisoning adjacent to water in the area. The recent Camden case is nationally notorious. This act is similarly obnoxious. And the fact that it is on the property of a different owner and the fact that it was perpetrated in a manner that took advantage of an elderly, frail and legally blind person is egregious.

We hope that the State of Maine agencies and the Town of Rockport agencies do not take this incident lightly. We just learned of the proposed settlement with the State of Maine, and we simply ask the question of whether the remedy is fitting. Is \$3000 without any admission of guilt a disincentive to anyone where the value of a view can be in the hundreds of thousands of

dollars or even more? Does it bear appropriate proportionality to the recent Camden tree poisoning matter? Does the settlement do anything to alleviate the negative reputation that some might associate with the properties immediately proximate to the poisoning?

Respectfully,

Steven L. Graham