

MacNeil, Jami

From: Jim Rigassio <jrigassio38@gmail.com>
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To: MacNeil, Jami
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Thank you for extending the deadline for public comments on application #L-20386-4P-P-N.

Wonderful to see the city of Rockland work with Safe Harbor this past spring to remove overgrown trees and bushes along the water's edge to restore the public's visual access to the harbor. Exciting that after more than a decade of neglected landscaping by the previous owner, the public can once again walk down Ocean Street and visually connect with the harbor.

Summer 2021 brought a new visual fence: Four- and five-storey cruise ships and private yachts using the Safe Harbor docks. The public's water view became a view of cruise ships and giant yachts. Then came the tour busses parked alongside the public beach in a residential neighborhood, staged to take cruise ship passengers to other coastal destinations. Waiting buses that idled for extended periods of time to provide air conditioned comfort for the tourists simultaneously caused discomfort to Rockland residents and visitors using the adjacent public beach.

Two additional issues to raise relate to the conflicting goals of the federal grant and the proposed project: First, the \$1 million grant to improve the public's access to the water would not benefit the general public. Safe Harbor's clients are large yacht owners, and not the general boating public. Their activities put an additional burden on existing public resources. For example, during 2021, Safe Harbor rented moorings at double the rate charged by the harbormaster, and when Safe Harbor failed to provide adequate dinghy dock space for their clients, the town's public landing quickly became overcrowded with dinghys.

Second, the \$1 million federal grant for expanding the Safe Harbor facilities in Rockland includes the addition of pumps for fuel and waste. While we all hope that precautions are taken for diesel fuel to go in boats and human waste to come out without spilling, accidents do happen. Large boats also have bilge pumps that pump brackish and often contaminated water from the bilge and engine rooms directly into the water. The proposed docks on the east side of the existing pier would subject the town beach where residents and visitors regularly swim to unfiltered bilge pump discharge on a regular basis, and the occasional contamination from fuel and waste spills.

Here's my idea for how Rockland and Safe Harbor can work together again towards a solution for everyone: Dragon Cement stops shipping their products by sea next year and decommissions their deeper-water pier in Rockland's South End. Rockland and Safe Harbor work with Dragon Cement to convert the barge pier to the better location for docking cruise ships and large yachts. Smaller boats can use the existing Safe Harbor facility in the inner harbor without crowding the inner harbor and obstructing the public's visual access to the water. The need to dredge would be reduced or eliminated, and the swimmers at the public beach don't have to worry about the proximity of the large ships and won't hear the noise of the tour buses that service the cruise ships.

It is good news that Rockland has become an attractive destination for boaters. We need to make sure harbor development benefits both transient boaters and permanent residents alike.

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