



New Scenic America banner

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**Massachusetts residents:** A public hearing on the [proposed new billboard regulations](#) will occur on Tuesday, June 5, from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m., at the State Transportation Building at 10 Park Plaza in Boston, in Conference Rooms 5 and 6. Those unable to attend can express their opposition to the proposed regulations to the OOA at 617-973-8470 or [via email](#).

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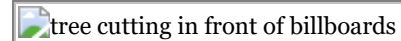
Know someone who might be interested in scenic issues? Why not [encourage them](#) to sign up?

## Investigative report: tree killing around signs is widespread practice

A [new report](#) finds that the practices of poisoning, cutting and chopping down trees to increase the visibility of billboards are more widespread than previously believed.

The report, by the investigative journalism organization FairWarning, details a pattern of tree destruction by the billboard industry and highlights several recent incidents in which it is alleged that billboard companies killed trees by poisoning or cutting.

Robert Barnhart was the first whistleblower [to come forward](#) and claim that his bosses at Lamar told him to drive around in an unmarked truck at night and hack at and poison trees obstructing the views of billboards. Barnhart's story was the [focus of a video](#) produced by Ossion Or that includes interviews with his attorneys. Barnhart has [since been joined](#) by a second worker who backs up his claims about the poisoning.



The report was followed by a [story in Forbes](#) in which Scenic America President Mary Tracy said "Scenic America commends the workers who have had the courage to tell the truth about poisoning of America's landscapes for corporate greed." Scenic America [has opposed](#) outdoor advertisers for decades on the issue of tree removal.

## San Francisco Beautiful sues city over billboard settlement

The nonprofit group San Francisco Beautiful has [sued the city](#) for violating a voter-approved ban on new billboards by entering into a legal settlement that will actually result in [more signs going up](#) across the city.

In 2002 nearly 80% of voters opted in favor of Proposition G, which banned new billboards in the city. The city has been involved in a longstanding lawsuit with outdoor advertisers Metro Fuel over illegal signs, and in apparent fear of continued litigation, city officials agreed to the settlement, despite the fact that it would allow additional billboards to go up.

You can support our unique and vital mission by making a [tax-deductible donation](#) today.

### *In case you missed it:*

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## **Scenic Visionary Awards go to producer and director of "This Space Available"**

Scenic America President Mary Tracy presented the International Scenic Visionary Award to the director and producer of This Space Available, the groundbreaking documentary film on visual pollution, at a recent special screening of the movie in Washington, D.C.

Tracy presented the award to director Gwenaëlle Gobé: "For changing the world through your passion and vision as Director of This Space Available," and to producer Marc Gobé: "For changing the world through your tireless efforts as Producer of This Space Available."

[Click here](#) for more information and photos from the presentation.

"San Francisco voters were clear: 'No new billboards'," said Kearstin Krehbiel, San Francisco Beautiful Executive Director. "For years, Metro Fuel broke the law, in plain view for all to see. They got caught. Now, instead of collecting \$7 million in fines owed by Metro Fuel, the City has settled to give these law breakers more of what they want – illegal advertising in our neighborhoods. Enough is enough."

The San Francisco Chronicle [applauds the lawsuit](#) and says it's a "firm reminder of what city voters wanted - and what they aren't getting in a decision that's an advertisement for the power of the billboard industry."

[Click here](#) to view San Francisco Beautiful's petition, and [click here](#) for a copy of the city's settlement with Metro Fuel.

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## **New rules would mean more sign blight for Massachusetts**

A proposed set of [new regulations](#) on outdoor advertising would see Massachusetts go from having some of the strongest billboard controls in the country to some of the weakest, and result in a proliferation of signs all over the state.

The new regulations would, among other things, allow digital billboards to proliferate and exempt from regulation signs featuring "non-commercial" messages, meaning they could be erected without permits, without payment of fees and without regard to other applicable billboard restrictions such as local zoning requirements and spacing and sizing requirements.

"The changes being proposed by MassDOT are unconscionable," said Mary Tracy, president of Scenic America.

A public hearing on the proposed regulations will occur on Tuesday, June 5, from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m., at the State Transportation Building at 10 Park Plaza in Boston, in Conference Rooms 5 and 6. Those unable to attend can express their opposition to the proposed regulations to the OOA at 617-973-8470 or via email at [OOAInformation@dot.state.ma.us](mailto:OOAInformation@dot.state.ma.us).