



Okay, Not Okay

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Melisa Robinson won her case.

After years in lower courts, she prevailed definitively in the Oklahoma Supreme Court. The court ruled that the town of Okay, Oklahoma, must compensate her for their taking of her property.

But the town balked—the judgment has not been obeyed. The town says that the department that dug the sewer line, the Okay Public Works Authority, has no money. And that the city is not responsible for the bill even though the Authority is run by the city.

More litigation, this time federal litigation—which Robinson is undertaking [with the help](#) of Institute for Justice—is required to force the town to comply

with the result of the previous litigation.

Robinson’s problems began in 2009, when city workers dug a sewer line through her family’s mobile home community without any legal right to do so and without even notifying the property owners in advance, causing much damage in the process.

A jury award for the damage was overturned on appeal. But in 2022, the Oklahoma Supreme Court ruled that the city owed an amount that with attorney’s fees and other costs totals more than \$200,000 today.

“Okay needs to pay what the Oklahoma Supreme Court says it owes me,” says Melisa Robinson. “If the city can do this to me, there’s nothing stopping any government from doing the same thing to others. I want to be paid and I want to put a stop to this before it catches on.”

It would certainly be the opposite of Okay to see this practice “catching on” beyond Okay.

This is Common Sense. I’m Paul Jacob.