

IN RE JUVENILE T.

Argued April 9, 2025
Decided April 29, 2025

Panel: STANFILL, C.J., and MEAD, HORTON, CONNORS, LAWRENCE, DOUGLAS,
and LIPEZ, JJ.

MEMORANDUM OF DECISION

In this consolidated appeal, T. appeals from judgments entered by the Juvenile Court (Portland, *Darvin, J.*), adjudicating T. of committing criminal mischief, 17-A M.R.S. § 806(1)(A) (2025), theft by unauthorized taking or transfer, 17-A M.R.S. § 353(1)(A) (2025), and arson, 17-A M.R.S. § 802(1)(B)(2) (2025). *See* 15 M.R.S. §§ 3401-3405 (2025). T. argues that there is insufficient evidence in the record to support his adjudications for criminal mischief and theft. Contrary to T.'s contentions, the court's findings, which are supported by competent evidence in the record, were sufficient for the court to find beyond a reasonable doubt that T. committed the juvenile offenses of criminal mischief and theft. *See State v. Bittues*, 2019 ME 83, ¶¶ 7-8, 208 A.3d 800.

T. further argues that his adjudication for arson must be vacated because the trial court erred in interpreting the arson statute, 17-A M.R.S. § 802(1)(B)(2). The interpretation of a statute is a question of law that we review de novo, and we find no error in the trial court's interpretation of the statute. *See State v. Conroy*, 2020 ME 22, ¶ 19, 225 A.3d 1011 (stating that we look first to the plain language of a statute to determine its meaning and will consider legislative history and other indicia of legislative intent only when a statute's language is ambiguous); *see also Bale v. Ryder*, 290 A.2d 359, 360 (Me. 1972). T. alternatively argues that, even if the arson statute applies here, his adjudication should be vacated on the ground that his conduct was de minimis.

See 17-A M.R.S. § 12 (2025). We conclude on this record that the court did not abuse its “broad discretion” in denying T.’s motion to dismiss on de minimis grounds.¹ *State v. Labbe*, 2024 ME 15, ¶¶ 24-25, 314 A.3d 162 (quoting *State v. Kargar*, 679 A.2d 81, 83 (Me. 1996)); see also *State v. Patterson*, 2004 ME 79, ¶ 9 & n.3, 851 A.2d 521.

The entry is:

Judgment affirmed.

Jeremy Pratt, Esq. (orally), and Ellen Simmons, Esq., Camden, for appellant Juvenile T.

Abigail L. Couture, Asst. Dist. Atty. (orally), Michelle L. McCulloch, Asst. Dist. Atty., and Christopher J. Coleman, Asst. Dist. Atty., Cumberland County District Attorney’s Office, for appellee State of Maine

Portland District Court docket numbers JV-2023-46 and JV-2023-115
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¹ The State’s argument that T.’s motion was untimely made after the close of evidence also lacks merit. See *State v. Labbe*, 2024 ME 15, ¶ 24 n.14, 314 A.3d 162 (rejecting a similar argument from the State and noting that the de minimis statute, 17-A M.R.S. § 12 (2025), “does not prescribe either the time or the procedure” for requesting a dismissal on de minimis grounds).