

Taxation, LD 1075, An Act to Promote Economic Growth Through Increased Film Incentives
Feb 6, 2024, 1:00p State House, Room 127

Dear honorable members of the Committee on Taxation,

Kindly accept this written testimony as an appeal for passage and eventual funding of this bill. I trust my fellow accomplished Maine film professionals will address its practical nuts and bolts in their testimony. I want to speak to you on a broader level, on your power to transform lives.

Almost 30 years ago, my life was changed overnight. A Portland-based office worker, I was hired as crew on *Stephen King's Thinner*, a big budget feature film shot in Maine, one of the last major features to do so. It's not an exaggeration to say the experience transformed me. For several months, I was a part of a kinetic team, making a movie written by our beloved author, in our home state. I made good money and had finally found my calling: I was a filmmaker.

Bitten by the bug, in the decades after, I kept trying to work in film. Unfortunately, the incentives were better in other states and provinces, so Maine kept losing major opportunities. We Maine film folk are hardy and determined, so we made small budget films, short films, and a few bigger productions came here. But we never had the steady work of other states.

Almost 15 years ago, as one of the founders of Maine Film Advocates, I volunteered full time trying to get better film incentives. In 2009, LD 1449 passed the Taxation Committee with unanimous support, with our testimony. The bill passed through the House and Senate, then failed in the Appropriations Committee because there was no money left to *fund the fiscal note*. It was devastating. We had tried so hard... and had nothing to show.

I had to seek other employment, and kept making short films on the side. I have watched as new energies have taken up the struggle, and each time they get a little farther. But I will ask you, what will it take? A few generations of filmmakers have suffered the loss of bigger dreams. As Langston Hughes asked, *What happens to a dream deferred?*

Maine filmmakers have proved our worth. A Mainer who works out of state won the 2021 Academy Award for cinematography! We are worthy of the funds and big opportunities. Please don't let young Mainers' dreams die like mine have. **Anything** you can do to leverage Maine film gives you the power to change many people's lives for the better. Please use that power.

With great respect,

Jenny Anastasoff

Portland, Maine

February 2024 Written Testimony