



Senator Grohoski, Representative Perry and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Taxation:

I am writing in support of LD 1075 “An Act to Promote Economic Growth Through Increased Film Incentives.”

In the last two years, there has been a surge of interest in exploring the most effective ways for Maine to diversify and modernize its economy through the expansion of statewide film and media making. Several reports have been published, including Maine Film Association’s Economic Study, which found that local media making had a \$64 million impact, and the more recent Olsberg report, commissioned by the State Tourism Office, which detailed Maine’s current and potential visual media infrastructure. There have also been numerous feature articles in the press, as well as editorials – all broadly supportive of the notion of subsidized growth.

Film, television and media making is a low carbon footprint, value-added industry that straddles a wide variety of sectors, including tourism, construction, food & hospitality, and tech, to name a few. Productions rely on local vendors for a variety of needs, sometimes for months at a time. There are also upwards of 150 to 200 available jobs on a movie set, for example, a number of them entry level. This can be enticing, and sometimes high-paying work with benefits. These are jobs that could be occupied by Mainers, whether they be seasonal workers looking to supplement their income, or recent college graduates looking to embark on an exciting new career. In fact, a visual media production could be considered a temporary, independent small business, pumping money into the surrounding economy and offering a multitude of employment opportunities. The industry reinforces the core principles of the Governor’s 10-Year Development Strategy, which champions modernization, jobs recreation, and the in-state retention of post-secondary graduate hires.

However, as with any business, productions seek financing – whether it originates in house, from a studio, venture capital fund, or independent investor. Incentives have now become one of the leading considerations when recruiting capital. For



this reason, we need to start recognizing, legitimizing, and supporting the media making community, the way we have with other established statewide enterprises. We need to support our local start-ups and industry professionals – whether they be filmmakers (non-fiction or fiction), branding companies, animation houses, gamers, podcasters, or young savvy folks on the verge of discovering an untapped creative enterprise with explosive revenue potential. And, at the very least, low to modest budget films set in Maine should be filmed in Maine.

This is not to say that we should open Maine up exploitatively. We need a responsible, conscientious, and well-managed incentive program – one that is attractive enough for eligible productions from away, with built in protectionisms to keep the most dollars in state, induce further employment, expand ROI and boost the overall taxable economy, while keeping the fiscal note low.

Maine’s current program is considered one of the least successful in the country. LD 1075 aims to make the state more competitive, accelerating the growth of the industry, and opening up new avenues of investment through proposed increases.

Please vote “Ought to Pass” when considering LD 1075. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Erik Van Wyck

President

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