

Carter Smith
Bailey Island, Harpswell
LD 1957

As a filmmaker born and raised in Maine, and currently living in Harpswell, I have spent fifteen years trying to persuade film productions to shoot in my home state. Every single time a potential Maine shoot enters the conversation, the idea is IMMEDIATELY shut down because of the lack of incentives for projects filmed in Maine.

From Hollywood blockbusters to small independent films, making films at every level is incredibly expensive. The challenge with ALL projects is how to make the financing you have (which is inevitably never enough) stretch as far as possible. This starts with the decision on where to shoot. Every single production I've been a part of has approached this decision based 100% on incentives.

I've directed large studio films for Dreamworks and Paramount (shot in Australia because of incentives), Blumhouse, Hulu and Amazon (shot in Louisiana and California because of incentives) and independent films (shot in New York because of incentives)

The ONLY film I've been able to make in Maine was a microbudget thriller that I produced and financed myself.

As both writer/director and producer, I saw firsthand how our small production benefited the community where we shot. The local restaurants that we hired to cater our meals. The hotels our cast and crew stayed in. The local hardware store that kept us stocked with everything from batteries to emergency rain cover. But also our incredible Maine cast and crew, who were so excited to FINALLY get the chance to work on a feature film in their home state.

As a Maine native/resident, I'm currently developing a film that takes place in Maine, adapted from a novel by a famous Maine author... but there is zero chance that we shoot the film here without incentives. Production is already weighing locations like Massachusetts and Canada, where our budget will go further.

Film incentives bring business.

If Maine wants a part of that business, the state has to offer incentives to make shooting here a financially responsible choice.