

Testimony of Benjamin Joseph

In Support of LD 1957 – “An Act to Promote Film Production in Maine”

In Opposition to LD 1493 – “An Act to Limit Corporate Use of the Visual Media Production Credit”

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Taxation

May 13th, 2025

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

My name is Benjamin Joseph, and I am the co-owner of Fine Cut Media, Inc., a production company based here in Maine. I am also a proud graduate of the University of Southern Maine with a degree in Media Studies. I am here today to speak in strong support of LD 1957 and in opposition to LD 1493.

Over the past several years, I have worked closely with the visual media production incentive program, both in my current role at Fine Cut Media and previously as Head of Finance at Lone Wolf Media. In that time, I’ve successfully completed incentive filings that have returned over \$800,000 to Maine-based production companies. I’ve witnessed firsthand how this program has allowed smaller companies to stay afloat during lean times, scale operations when possible, and, most importantly, create jobs and training opportunities for Maine residents.

These incentives are not just line items—they are lifelines. Whether a project is a national documentary, a corporate training video, or a regional commercial, each one represents work that stays in Maine when this program is in place. Local businesses benefit, from hotels and caterers to camera rental houses and payroll services. Crew members—many of whom are freelancers—get steady work and are more likely to stay in Maine long term. Students and recent graduates from our colleges and universities see a viable path to employment without leaving the state. That retention is critical.

When I was at Lone Wolf Media, we consistently relied on the incentives to maintain full-time staff, provide competitive wages, and develop pitches that became greenlit productions—each one hiring local talent and generating meaningful economic activity here at home. LD 1957 strengthens this path forward. By raising wage caps and creating modest but impactful regional incentives, this bill acknowledges the realities of modern production and opens the door to more projects—especially in rural counties that are often overlooked.

In contrast, LD 1493 would move us backward. Its attempt to restrict incentive use for internal communications, corporate messaging, or short-form media discounts the fact that these projects are often the bread and butter for Maine-based media companies. These are precisely the types of

productions that pay local editors, camera operators, designers, and support staff on a consistent basis. Limiting what qualifies ignores the interconnected nature of creative media work and risks creating a program that favors only large outside productions at the expense of the very Maine-based businesses this program was meant to support.

Visual media in Maine is more than entertainment—it's economic development. It's job creation. It's talent retention. LD 1957 is a thoughtful update to an existing program that has proven successful, and it deserves your support. LD 1493 risks undoing years of progress and would hurt the growth of Maine's creative economy.

Thank you for your time, and for your consideration of both bills. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Benjamin Joseph

Co-Owner, Fine Cut Media, Inc.

USM Graduate, B.A. in Media Studies