

Testimony of Benjamin Joseph

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 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 in Maine. I am also a graduate of the University of Southern Maine with a degree in Media Studies. I’m here today to express my strong opposition to LD 1493, “An Act to Limit Corporate Use of the Visual Media Production Credit.”

This bill, while well-intentioned in its goal to limit the abuse of public funds, ultimately risks crippling the very companies and creators that have built a sustainable visual media ecosystem here in Maine. By disqualifying certain types of productions—namely those that promote a product or service or that serve internal corporate purposes—LD 1493 draws an arbitrary and damaging line through the heart of our industry’s economic engine.

Let me be clear: the vast majority of work taking place in Maine’s visual media sector **is not Hollywood glitz**—it’s commercial, nonprofit, and internal communication work for **local and regional brands**. These jobs keep Maine’s creatives employed, our gear rented, and our freelancers booked.

Consider **L.L.Bean**, an iconic Maine company that routinely produces commercials, digital ads, and internal training content right here at home. Under LD 1493, these productions would no longer qualify for the very incentives that help them choose Maine talent, Maine crew, and Maine vendors. Instead, they may opt to shoot in another state where incentives are more inclusive, taking tens of thousands of dollars in direct local spending with them.

The same applies to other companies in Maine that invest in local production:

- **Unum**, headquartered in Portland, frequently contracts with video production companies for recruitment, training, and brand messaging.
- **Wex**, a global payment technology firm located in South Portland, has commissioned promotional content that highlights Maine locations and workers.
- **Idexx Laboratories**, another major employer, frequently requires media for internal training, scientific communication, and employee engagement.

Even our tourism-driven economy is affected. Many destination marketing campaigns for towns, Hotels and outdoor brands are technically promotional and would be ineligible under LD. 1493, despite supporting local crews and showcasing Maine's natural assets.

As someone who has helped return over \$800,000 to Maine-based production companies through the visual media incentives program, I've seen the ripple effects firsthand. These incentives don't just support one production—they build continuity. They enable a company to make its next hire, invest in new equipment, or train an intern. Restricting eligibility based on subjective criteria of creative intent punishes local businesses for supporting their own workforce.

LD 1493 would create confusion, discourage in-state production, and compel Maine businesses to seek alternatives—precisely the opposite of what this incentive was designed to achieve.

If we want to grow Maine's visual media economy and keep talented creatives here, we must recognize all types of media as economically valuable—not just narrative films or documentaries. A locally produced corporate video may not make headlines, but it certainly pays rent for the editor, the camera operator, the sound tech, and the production assistant.

I urge this committee to reject LD 1493. Let's continue to strengthen, not undermine, a program that has demonstrated its value in building Maine's creative future.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Benjamin Joseph

Co-Owner, Fine Cut Media, Inc.

USM Graduate, B.A. in Media Studies