

Hello Senator Grohoski, Representative Cloutier, Senator Tipping, and Members of the Maine Taxation Committee:

My name is Devon Platte, and I'm a film and television producer originally from Los Angeles that now lives here in Portland, Maine. Long story short, fell in love with a Maine girl on my first trip to Maine ("Murder in Small Town X" TV series for Fox, filmed in the Eastport area), and I've pretty much been here ever since.

I'm sorry I can't attend today's hearing in August in person today, but I DID want to absolutely voice my support for Maine's film and television industry here via written testimony. But backing up for just a second ... Film/TV producer ... What does that actually MEAN, right? In a nutshell, it means I imagine things that could happen, and then I make them happen. And because film and television is THE most collaborative art form, "making things happen" typically involves hiring dozens of people and spending thousands – sometimes millions – of dollars to take an idea from concept to completion.

So what does that mean for Maine, exactly? Well, because now that I live here full time on Munjoy Hill, I've managed to bring various shows to Maine over the years:

The aforementioned "Murder in Small Town X" TV series;

Episodes of "Fear" and "Paranormal Project" TV series for VH1 (filmed in Bangor area);

Multiple scouts for "Treasure Hunters" TV series on NBC (Portland area), which ultimately filmed in Hawaii (because of better media tax incentives);

Seven seasons and hundreds of episodes of the original "North Woods Law" TV series for Animal Planet (featuring the Maine Warden Service, and filmed all over state);

Season one of "Puckland" (featuring Maine Mariners hockey club, and in Portland area) TV series for NBC Sports Network (and WCSH & WLBZ);

Season one of "Called to the Wild" TV series for National Geographic Channel (filmed in Rangeley area);

Too, I'm currently working on bringing several new shows to Maine — the next season of "Alone" TV series for History Channel, season two of "Beast Games" TV series for AmazonPrime, several more horror and paranormal shows, etc. So, nutshell, as a film and television producer I do what I can to "make rain" in

the film and TV space, all of which benefits the Maine economy and Maine tourism.

How so? Because again, each of those shows that filmed in Maine spent a significant amount of money on its production -- hired dozens of local crew members, rented hundreds of hotel room nights, cars, trucks, gas, spent thousands in local restaurants and bars and other stores and vendors, and all the while making a visual product that is basically a world-wide commercial for Maine tourism. "Screen Tourism," it's called. And since one of Maine's biggest industries IS tourism, that's a good thing, right?

However, the production game has changed in recent years with the advent of state media tax incentives. Yep, as you likely know by now states like Massachusetts, New York, Georgia, Louisiana, New Mexico, Canada (not the 51st state, just nearby), etc. are now encouraging media productions to come film/spend money in their states with enhanced media tax incentives ... thus making it harder and harder for me to convince shows that Maine is still the best place for them to come film their project. Why? In a nutshell, Maine has mediocre/non-competitive film incentives. Which is why if we want to keep up in this good, clean industry — and keep HOME some of the good, young people that work in this good, clean industry — we need to get more creative with how we "market" Maine, because believe me, it's getting harder and harder to attract productions to come to this far corner of America. Sure, "Lobster & Lighthouses" are great, but it's not nearly enough anymore.

Additionally, I also happen to (currently) serve as a volunteer board member on the Maine Film Commission, appointed by the governor's office to assist Maine Film Director Steve Lyons with anything we can do to help grow the film and industry here in Maine. Which I (and my nine fellow volunteer board members) are happy to do, because naturally we're all big fans of this/our industry, big fans of Maine, big fans of the tireless work Steve Lyons has done in the past year or so since accepting the job to improve the state film office, and we will continue to work hard and support Steve we can to grow Maine's media industry.

To that end, I fully support LD1957, and I do not support LD1493.

That said, I DO appreciate Senator Tipping's position, and work to amend LD1493 (basically scaling it back to simply eliminating commercials and/or corporate videos in Maine). But here's the thing: Every film and television project I've ever done actually involves the same basic components — freelance crew members, camera and lighting equipment, airplane tickets, hotel rooms, restaurant meals, cars and trucks and boats and gas, etc. ... and all of which contributes to the state economy in some way, right? But depending on the size

of the project, or where it is in its development evolution, it could be 1-2 people (early stages), or could be 100-200 people (big production), or somewhere in between. But the basic production ingredients are still the same, and they all contribute. As a matter of fact, as a freelance producer I've worked on numerous commercials myself over the years (mixed in with the film and television shows). So while commercials and/or corporate training videos may not be quite as, uh, "sexy" as "North Woods Law," or "Maine Cabin Masters," or "Lost on a Mountain in Maine," or the next Stephen King movie, they STILL absolutely employ freelance Maine crew members, rent camera gear, hotel rooms and restaurant meals, etc. They are just a smaller, shorter-term project under the same "production umbrella." Thus, I'm not necessarily for cutting commercials and corporate videos from the new bill, either. But rather, in the spirit of compromise, perhaps Senator Tipping's bill could be amended to raise the "minimum expenditure" a significant project must spend to qualify for a state media incentive? Something that keeps the "quality bar high," but also doesn't eliminate any particular category of project from the production umbrella. Food for thought.

Members of the committee, I appreciate your time and efforts today in addressing this topic, because I truly believe that the arts matter in our society ... and this particular art is the most collaborative of them all. And with that collaboration comes significant economic impact. If I can ever be of any further assistance, please don't hesitate to contact me here in Portland. Thanks very much!

Best,

Devon Platte,  
Producer,  
Portland, Maine

Devon Platte  
Portland  
LD 1957

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