

Ari Solotoff, Esq.
Drummond Woodsum
Chair, Entertainment, Media & Arts Practice Group
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1. My name is Ari Solotoff and I am an attorney at Drummond Woodsum in Portland, where I serve as the Practice Group leader of our firm's Entertainment, Media & Arts practice.
2. I practice as one of the few, if not only, entertainment lawyers in Maine and Northern New England.
3. I live in House District 115 in Portland.
4. On behalf of Maine's exciting and growing ecosystem of highly talented and dedicated filmmakers, media makers, visual media producers, production crew members, and on-screen talent, and the worldwide audiences they serve, I wish to speak in support of LD1957, An Act to Promote Film Production in Maine.
5. Based on my experiences practicing as an Entertainment lawyer in Maine over the last ten years, I am pleased to share that we are experiencing a period of tremendous interest in film production and media-making in our state.
6. In addition to the availability of the visual media production incentives that currently exist for certified visual media productions, there are three primary factors driving this growth:
 - a. First, our state has attracted an incredible group of highly experienced producers, directors, and other production skill sets from traditional media centers in New York and Los Angeles. Individuals who built their careers elsewhere have come to or returned to Maine to support the growth of these industries in a place they love.
 - b. Second, investors, financiers, and other buyers from traditional television networks, studios, and streamers are discovering the astonishing natural beauty and unique stories of Maine people.
 - c. Third, individuals from across the state are welcoming producers and projects to their communities, because they are seeing the direct economic impact that these projects have on their business establishments and local economies.
7. This is a pivotal moment for film production in Maine and especially for small budget filmmakers, who rely on the state's visual media tax incentives and investor tax incentive programs to make productions feasible, affordable, and also attractive to potential investors.
8. Any efforts to eliminate or curtail the visual media tax incentive programs are likely to have lasting and significantly harmful effects that outweigh the potential savings or short-term benefits, particular at this moment in time, when film production in Maine is finally beginning to accelerate.
9. I know of at least one production that one not be able to proceed without the existence and maintenance of these programs, with more to follow.
10. Now is our opportunity to add fuel to the fire by supporting Maine visual media producers and investors, by maintaining and expanding these valuable tax credits that are available through the Maine Film Office and the Seed Capital Tax Credit Program.
11. I respectfully request that the Legislature's Taxation Committee give strong consideration and support to LD1957, including continued support and expansion of this valuable certified visual media production program.
12. Let's make sure the lights and cameras continue to roll here in Maine.

other states, which, face it, are far less beautiful, and employing Maine people, who often far more talented, than found in other states.

I urge you to vote “out to pass” on LD 1957.

Thank you.

Senator Grohoski, Representatives Tipping and Bickford, Esteemed Members of the Taxation Committee, I am Barbara Cray of Westport Island and I am here to testify today in favor of LD 1957

I am a member of the Board of Directors of the Maine Film Association. I am not a professional filmmaker, yet, and I am a “professional lawyer” and volunteer advocate for issues primarily involving women’s rights. But I am a filmmaker, I just don’t make enough, if any, money from my activities.

So LD 1957 enhances incentives currently available in the State by increasing reimbursement for wages to residents of Maine from 50K to 75K, non-Maine wages from 10K to 209K, and provides for a reimbursement of production expenses at 25% (and 3% more in certain counties).

But there are protections built in. First, the total production expenses must have been a least \$75,000 to be entitled to seek incentives. And there is a maximum reimbursement \$500,000, then increased to \$1,000,000 after January 1, 2028.

So I will likely not be in a position with my work to qualify for incentives. But the incentive will in fact benefit me in my creative media endeavors by the hiring of Maine talent (not me) and facilities by larger productions knowing that this expense can constitute a percentage of the incentive payment, thus creating a more robust professional film environment in Maine.

In my case, I moved to Maine 7 years ago, and have competed two films here that are shown on public television stations. (One was a women’s rights film about the suffrage movement.) I needed different forms of help for these projects, including some camera work, editing, sound and music. This effort was a bit hit and mix. Some were highly skilled, some not so much, because there is just not enough work to go around to keep skilled people gainfully employed. In attending MFA and other film-oriented events, I personally know that Maine is full of creative people who work in film, but who do not make enough money to fully support themselves. With more work in Maine due to incentives, the entire media community will be so much more robust, benefitting the small scale creatives like me in addition to the larger scale creatives.

And media is so important. At this time, media is the most used vehicle to communicate ideas. Films explore ideas, and foster thought, as well as social change. Maine can be more central to these forms of expression by joining with