

Small Businesses Urge Action on the Pending Expiration of Film & Television Production Program

March 9, 2021

The Honorable Karen Spilka
President of the State Senate
State House
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable Ron Mariano
Speaker of the House of Representatives
State House
Boston, MA 02133

Massachusetts State Senate
State House
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Massachusetts House of Representatives
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Dear President Spilka, Speaker Mariano, and Members of the State Legislature:

We write as local businesses to respectfully urge your timely action to remove the impending expiration of the Film, Television and Streaming Production Incentive program.

Our businesses, some of which didn't exist just a few short years ago, are part of an infrastructure and ecosystem that has grown and matured as our state has become a prime destination for film and television production. **If the production incentive expires, the investments and jobs it creates will leave Massachusetts.** Many small businesses like ours will wane and be forced to close their doors. By removing the expiration clause, you will instead create new investments in soundstages, equipment, and workers; and bring more multi-year episodic series to plant a stake in Massachusetts, creating even more businesses and jobs.

The incentive program is working exactly as it was intended

The film incentive program has accomplished exactly what it was intended to do. Established in 2006 to attract feature film productions to Massachusetts, it has built an industry and generated the economic activity that comes with it. Objective data of the credit's success is compelling:

- Over 270 films and television and episodic series have been produced
- Filming has occurred in over 225 cities and towns
- Productions have spent more than \$2.8 billion in Massachusetts
- Goods and services have been purchased from local small businesses in over 270 cities and towns
- It has created many thousands of new good-paying middle-class jobs
- There are now more than 50 high tech post-production and visual effects companies across Massachusetts employing more than 550 highly skilled workers.
- There are now more than 2-dozen Massachusetts colleges and universities that have academic programs in film, television, and media production. There are over 4,000 film

and media students who now have a career path in Massachusetts. These students no longer have to move out of state for jobs.

Many local vendors, suppliers, and services like ours that support the industry didn't exist when the program went into effect. Now we employ workers across Massachusetts; post-production and special and visual effects work that had to be shipped out of state in the past is now done here by Massachusetts-based companies; and our ever-growing infrastructure supplying the industry with soundstages, lighting, rigging equipment, trucks and trailers, and set decoration and props continues to grow exponentially.

The program generates a wide economic footprint across the state

A first-of-its-kind study analyzing the economic impact of film/TV/streaming production in Massachusetts was recently conducted to measure the impact of this new trend in the entertainment industry. The study, conducted by Industrial Economics Inc, (IEC) [analyzed the production of Hulu's Castle Rock, Season 1](#). It found that just one season of the production for *Castle Rock*:

- Created 1,026 FTE jobs
- Generated \$69 million in economic activity
- Spent monies in 210 cities and towns across the state
- 72% of expenditures directly impacted the state economy
- Generated \$4.73 of economic activity for each dollar spent by the state in anticipated tax credit

The sunset is a barrier to capital investment right now

There is significant demand for more local studio and soundstage spaces. Many of our businesses are ready to make major investments in new infrastructure, equipment, workers, and capacity to grow the local film and television industry. But the scheduled end of the production incentive puts these substantial investments at risk. Businesses will not invest in an industry that's scheduled to disappear. At a time when Massachusetts needs economic stimulus the most, the uncertainty created by the rapidly approaching sunset of the production incentive is preventing job-creating investments now.

If the credit ends, the investment and jobs will leave Massachusetts

Massachusetts competes with dozens of states that have film and television production incentive programs. A state without a program is simply not considered for film and television production investment of any kind.

The Massachusetts industry's expertise keeps bringing producers like Netflix, Apple TV, Disney, HBO, Hulu, and Warner Brothers back – creating significant economic impact that continues to

build the industry that supports so many small businesses and family-sustaining jobs. Without the program, the state will lose that investment and those jobs to other states.

The demand to produce new content is strong and we are poised to capture it

While production halted for months in 2020 due to COVID-19, consumers devoured content from their homes like never before, streaming films and television series across an expanding landscape of subscription services. As a result, there is now an intense pent-up demand for quality streaming content.

Because we have successfully created a sought-after industry here, and safely reopened our economy, we are poised to satisfy that demand and capture the industry growth that will bring even more investment and good-paying jobs to Massachusetts for years to come. But without eliminating the sunset of the production incentive now, continued investment in Massachusetts by Netflix, Amazon, Apple TV, Disney, HBO, Hulu and others, will cease and go elsewhere and thousands of current and future local jobs will follow.

Support small businesses, create jobs and build careers when we need it most

The local film and television industry builds small businesses and creates thousands of good-paying jobs for working middle-class residents. Thousands of film and media students who graduate from Massachusetts colleges and universities can now establish their careers right here in the Commonwealth. These are the kinds of jobs the state needs to grow our economy and recover from the COVID-19 economic crisis.

If the roadblock of the impending expiration date is removed, the film industry can help lead Massachusetts in economic recovery, creating thousands of good-paying jobs and supporting local businesses when they need it the most. But if action isn't taken very soon, the Film & Television Production Incentive program will end and the local film and television industry, and its jobs, businesses, and contributions to our economy, will disappear.

Sincerely,

Brenda Anderson
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Trail Head Outfitter &
General Store
Orange

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Producer
Red Hawk Entertainment
Watertown

Laura Azevedo
Executive Director
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Melrose

Julie Arvedon Knowlton
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