
BUCCANEER FILMS, INC.

February 6, 2020

Maryland State Senate
Budget and Taxation Committee
James Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

**SUBJECT: INCOME TAX – FILM PRODUCTION ACTIVITY CREDIT – ALTERATIONS –
AS INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 3, 2020**

Dear Senators:

Buccaneer Films, Inc. supports SB 718, as scheduled to be heard on February 19, 2020, which would increase the Film Production Activity Tax Credit vital to keeping job opportunities in Maryland and would strengthen Maryland’s position as a sought-out location in the film and television industry.

A Maryland resident since relocating my production company (and my family) to Baltimore in 2002, I became aware of the potential of this state to have a robust film industry after I spent several years in Baltimore as a Producer on the award winning HBO miniseries, *The Corner*, and series, *The Wire*, as well as Production Manager on the Baltimore/ DC portion of the film *Die Hard IV*.

For the past 5 years I’ve produced programs whose stories could have easily been filmed in Maryland, but because of the financial incentives available in New York and New Jersey, were located there. I support SB 718 because I understand what a vibrant film industry can do in Maryland to improve the quality of life for residents in so many ways, and with no net cost to taxpayers. I would welcome the opportunity to bring one or more of the projects we are currently developing to my home state, and to help in revitalizing the excellent crew base I had a part in creating.

You will undoubtedly hear a lot about the economic benefits of the film industry, job creation and support for small businesses, all of which is true, but today I would like to illuminate the social and educational benefits an industry like ours provides:

We are fortunate to have some excellent film programs in our state- at Towson University, Morgan State, Stevenson, Johns Hopkins and other institutions students are learning the craft. But without the field experience that will prepare them for jobs, they are at a distinct disadvantage. And without continuous production here, they will be forced to take their talents elsewhere upon graduation. The presence of an active film set provides a unique learning opportunity, not only for field trips and internships, but for classroom visits and master classes with industry professionals.

In addition to highly motivated college students, the film industry provides opportunities for others for whom college is not an option. For the past 15 years, we have run internship programs on all our shows, for people with no experience and no industry connections. In addition to exposing them to the wide range of employment possibilities,

it is also a chance to witness a business where people are judged by the quality of their work, rather than by race, gender, or class. To see individuals from vastly different backgrounds coming together to achieve a common goal. In today's world where so many of our young people are frustrated and struggling to find a place where they can feel useful and respected, we need these opportunities which the film industry can provide so well.

When the production finishes, there are thousands of dollars worth of leftover furniture, clothing, built sets, office supplies, etc. that is donated to schools, homeless and domestic violence shelters, and many other non-profits. As green initiatives have become standard in our industry, nothing is thrown away if we can find an organization that can use it.

If you are still unsure about supporting this bill, here's another thought to consider:

In New York after 9/11, before FEMA could organize and deploy rescuers, it was the film industry- members of the IATSE Local 52, and suppliers of movie lights, generators, vans, catering trucks, etc. who were the real first responders. In New Orleans, the local Red Cross contacts each new film production to determine assets and willingness to help if needed. Though here in Maryland we are fortunate to be at low risk for natural disasters, when you think about it, a film shooting unit has everything required for initial disaster response: assistant directors, location managers, and production coordinators who are masters of logistics and communication. Large warehouses suitable for temporary shelter, fully stocked mobile catering facilities, lights, generators, vans for evacuation, bedding, clothing, etc. The presence of these resources in the state is a definite advantage.

Planning for motion picture and television productions typically occur several years in advance, and our productions, consider tax credits and incentives available as location and budgetary decisions are made. We are now developing several projects which are suitable for filming here. SB 718 increases the Film Production Activity Tax Credit available up to \$20M, which would support multiple film productions and insure the continued presence of an industry which has unique advantages for Maryland.

Sincerely,



Nina K. Noble, Executive Producer

Buccaneer Films, Inc.