February 6, 2023

Annette Porter
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Chair Atterbeary and Members of the
House Ways and Means Committee
6 Bladen Street, Room 131
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: HB270-SUPPORT

Dear Chair Atterbeary and Members of the House Ways and Means Committee,

I am writing to voice my strong support of HB270, which would increase the annual amount of tax credits available for film production in Maryland.

I am an independent documentary filmmaker and the Director of the Saul Zaentz Innovation Fund at Johns Hopkins, as well as Director of the JHU MICA Film Centre. At the Innovation Fund, every year we award approximately $500,000 to emerging filmmakers in Baltimore, and we spend roughly the same amount of money each year on training and development. The JHU MICA Film Centre houses two Graduate and two Undergraduate Film Programs and between us, we are preparing and supporting dozens of young people each year for roles in the film industry. Most of these talented individuals want to stay and work in Maryland.

I see, first-hand, what supporting the filmmaking community can do for our city and state. The film industry creates a myriad of jobs for creatives and ancillary businesses. The positive economic impact for Maryland of a healthy tax incentive program would be great, as clearly illustrated by the Georgia example. According to the Georgia Film Office, last year, the film and TV productions spent $4.4 billion across the state, compared to under $70 million in 2007 before the current incentive program took effect.

There is no reason we cannot meet or surpass the Georgia experience. We have a deep bench of talent, a wide range of attractive locations for filmmaking and some of the most exciting and promising voices in the American filmmaking world right now. All we need is a robust, sustained tax incentive program that supports large and small budget films.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Annette Porter