

MID-ATLANTIC STUDIO MECHANICS & BROADCAST TECHNICIANS

I.A.T.S.E. LOCAL 487
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February 18, 2026

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

RE: SB388/HB898

I am Sarah Fales, Secretary-Treasurer of I.A.T.S.E. Local 487, the union behind entertainment in Maryland. On behalf of our members, we are writing to express our strong support of HB898. This legislation is imperative to the survival of our beloved film industry in Maryland and for the future filmmakers currently being trained at our higher education institutions.

Maryland's Film Incentive Program has been significantly constrained by the 10 million dollar per project cap. As surrounding states have recognized the powerful economic impact of film and television production and strengthened their own incentive programs, Maryland has unfortunately fallen behind. By removing the per project cap, we can restore our competitiveness and once again position Maryland as a premier destination for film and television production.

Eliminating the 10 million dollar per project cap would allow us to reclaim our proud 30 year standing in the film industry and bring back productions that generate thousands of jobs and hundreds of millions of dollars in economic impact. According to the Maryland Department of Commerce, from 2011-2025 Film and Television Productions had an economic impact well over 1.5 Billion dollars. This economic boom is felt across the state and throughout different industries such as: textiles, construction, hospitality, transportation and so many more. This is not about Hollywood, it is about the hardworking people of Maryland who built this industry and are committed to seeing it thrive so that future generations can continue the legacy.

I am a graduate of Towson University's Electronic Media and Film program and have been a member of I.A.T.S.E. Local 487 for 20 years. For the last decade, I have witnessed firsthand how Maryland's incentive instability has dramatically diminished the number of productions coming to our state. As Secretary-Treasurer for the past two years, I have heard from countless members who have lost their homes, depleted their savings, and lost their health coverage due to the lack of consistent work. The losses our members have endured are heartbreaking, unacceptable, and frankly unbearable. Creating stability and predictability in the program is crucial in ensuring a solid business climate.

We are hopeful that with the passage of HB898, Maryland can once again attract major productions and allow our members to return to work doing what they love while also contributing to the growing creative economy of our state. We look forward to building a stable future not only for our members, but also for our colleagues in SAG-AFTRA, the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, as well as the students who will depend on production work for their livelihood, healthcare, and building retirement security.

HB898 represents stability, opportunity, and a pathway back to a thriving industry that supports thousands of Maryland families. We respectfully urge you to support this critical legislation and stand with the workers who make Maryland's entertainment industry possible.