

Honorable Delegates:

My name is Bunt Young, and I am a professional cinematographer with forty-four years' experience, having started as a camera operator recording City Council Meetings for WCVE Channel 23 at age fifteen. I am also a professor of cinematography in the Cinema Department in VCU's School of the Arts. I've had the privilege of working for some of the film and television industry's best-known and most respected producers and directors. I've worked around the world, and in many states within the U.S., in places which understand the economic value and advantages of having strong and SUPPORTED film industries which leverage tax incentives to gain back millions in sales tax, small business growth and support, income tax from residents employed in the industry, and tourism-related dollars resulting from interest generated by the productions shot in those states.

While Virginia has in the past done a good job of offering tax incentives, which in turn translate into hundreds of jobs for each project shot in the Commonwealth, we in Virginia lose too much work and economic opportunity every year to states which have been more canny in their incentive offerings. HB-771 would put Virginia in a strong position to attract (and bring back) several major series to Virginia, in turn generating millions in revenue for the commonwealth, and providing employment to tens of thousands of Virginia residents and taxpayers.

When a movie or television show shoots on location, it brings jobs, revenue, and related infrastructure development, providing an immediate boost to the local economy. Our industry pays out \$21 billion per year to more than 260,000 businesses in mid-sized cities and small towns across the country. The industry itself is comprised of more than 122,000 businesses, 92 percent of which employ fewer than 10 people. As much as \$250,000 can be injected into local economies per day when a film shoots on location. In some cases, popular films and television shows can also boost tourism.

For example, Marvel's Black Panther involved more than 3,100 local workers in Georgia who took home more than \$26.5 million in wages, while 20th Century Fox's popular television series This Is Us contributed more than \$61.5 million to the California economy. And in New York, productions contributed more than \$108 million to the state's local economy. Virginia deserves to benefit in the same way. Virginia workers deserve to benefit from those jobs.

We have been fortunate, thanks to incentives, to recently attract such marquee-level series as Showtime's Homeland, two seasons of Apple TV's Swagger, several seasons of AMC's Turn and The Walking Dead franchise. Those productions brought millions in revenue, in purchases from small businesses ranging from office supply companies, florists, hotels, restaurants, antiques dealers, hardware stores, fabric shops, greenhouses, art supply stores...the list is long. Hundreds of local and state industry professionals found employment, keeping their spending dollars and all their income in Virginia. Unfortunately, if the incentives go away, or are not increased to be competitive with states like North Carolina, Georgia, New Mexico, etc., so do the series, and with them, all the money flowing into the local and state economies. Virginia film and television professionals will be forced to leave the commonwealth for employment; a sizable percentage may never return.

As I mentioned, I also teach at VCU. The Department of Cinema is the fastest growing program at VCU, and my students, most of whom are from Virginia, will carry our industry and its exciting emerging technologies, decades into the future. If our industry is allowed to die, the brain and talent drain will be immense. Virginia's best, most talented and most innovative will simply follow the work, handing other states the opportunity to lead in one of the still fastest-growing industries in the U.S., and one which garners incredible interest, press and positive attention.

I urge you to support the tax incentives, pass HB-771, and in doing so, build and strengthen a growing industry in Virginia with the ability to generate hundreds of millions in revenue, and tens of thousands of jobs, a year.

Thank you for your consideration, and for your support for small business and employing Virginians across the Commonwealth.

Warm regards,

William L. R. "Bunt" Young