



February 5, 2024

RE: HB771

I'm Tracee Wilkins. I currently serve as President of the Washington-Mid Atlantic Local of SAG-AFTRA, the union of professional performers. On behalf of the more than 1,400 SAG-AFTRA members who live in Virginia, I urge you to support the Lights, Camera, Jobs Act and HB771 which seek to increase the film and television annual incentive funding cap in the Commonwealth to \$50 million.

A film or television production generates work for thousands of people who live here. That means jobs for local actors, and also for crew to build the sets, move the gear and transport the cast. It means hotel rooms, rental cars, catering, and security details. The Motion Picture Association estimates that a good-sized production spends about \$250,000 a day when filming. That money has a direct effect on the local economy.

For actors, working on a film or television production as a principal performer, even for a day, results in a nice credit and good pay. It also means residual payments for years to come when the film is streamed, distributed in foreign markets or shown on cable television. That's money in our pocket that continues to grow and an ongoing tax revenue stream for Virginia. Even background work is coveted because it helps our members make their health insurance and pension minimums, thereby reducing the impact on state programs.

Tax incentives have changed the way that film and television production is done in this country. The success of film incentives in Georgia, which has no cap, is well documented. It's the reason you see the Georgia peach at the end of so many films. More than 300 productions filmed there in fiscal year 2021. Massachusetts, also with no cap on its film incentive program, has seen productions soar in recent years. I'm told it was the first industry back during the pandemic and enabled many unemployed people who had never before worked in film to apply their skills building sets and sewing wardrobe, for example.

Bolstering Virginia's production incentives will encourage new investments in infrastructure, create more jobs, and allow the many workers who make their living in the film industry to stay and thrive in Virginia. It gives students a career path to pursue. Growing the television and film industry positively impacts the state's tourism as well.

For the many taxpayers who are part of the creative community in Virginia, SAG-AFTRA actors, IATSE production crew members, Teamster drivers, DGA assistant directors, small business owners and other workers, I urge you to support HB771. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Tracee Wilkins
President, Washington-Mid Atlantic Local
SAG-AFTRA