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# DAVE ARMSTRONG

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STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 67<sup>TH</sup> ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

## Testimony on Assembly Bill 231 May 7, 2025

Thank you for the opportunity today to testify on behalf of Assembly Bill 231.

How many of you, like me, flinch when you see the Georgia Peach logo in the credits after a movie or TV show? The fact is that Wisconsin is one of only thirteen states that don't offer tax incentives to film or TV productions. Meanwhile, a 2023 study suggests that Georgia realizes \$6.30 in economic benefit for every \$1 of incentives.

While Wisconsin has had some recent success in attracting productions like Season 21 of *Top Chef* and the film *A Cherry Pie Christmas*, which recently wrapped in Door County, their direct and indirect benefits to Wisconsin's economy should make us wonder what would be possible if Wisconsin had a dedicated state film office and an incentive program. Do we want Illinois or Minnesota – or Georgia – to poach productions that could just as easily be shot in Wisconsin?

Assembly Bill 231 establishes a State Film Office within the Department of Tourism and creates two credits, one for film and TV *productions* filmed in Wisconsin, and one for production *companies* that set up shop here.

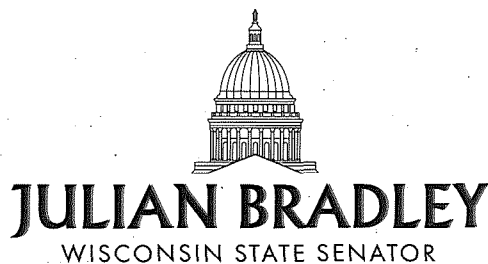
The Film Production Services Credit allows production companies to claim credits equaling 30% of salary and wages paid to employees for services rendered in Wisconsin and to employees who live in Wisconsin, 30% of production expenses incurred in Wisconsin, and Wisconsin sales and use taxes for good or services used during production.

The Film Production Company Investment Credit allows a production company, for its first three years of doing business in Wisconsin, to claim a credit equal to 30% of what it spends on personal and real property related to establishing itself in Wisconsin.

AB 231 caps the total credits the State Film Office may allocate in a given fiscal year at \$10 million. It also caps the total credits an individual may claim in a given fiscal year at \$1 million. AB 231 also requires the State Film Office to make annual reports to the Legislature about credit applications and allocations, as well as suggestions for improving the incentive program. AB 231 appropriates \$453,300 across the 2025-2027 biennium to fund 3.0 positions in the State Film Office.

Governor Evers has included a similar proposal in his budget bill, no doubt inspired at least in part by the legislation Senator Bradley and I introduced last session, and it has been great to see the bipartisan support for AB 231 so far.

Thank you for your consideration.



**Assembly Bill 231**  
**Assembly Committee on Way and Means**  
**May 7, 2025**

Thank you, Chairman O'Connor and members of the Assembly Ways and Means Committee, for accepting my written testimony on Assembly Bill 231 (AB 231).

Earlier this year, some of you may have seen the film "Green and Gold," starring Craig T. Nelson—a heartwarming tale about a farmer's deep connection to his land, family, and the Green Bay Packers. Director Anders Lindwall chose Wisconsin as his filming location, but this decision came with considerable financial sacrifice. When a major studio offered to purchase his film contingent upon relocating production to Alabama for tax incentives, Mr. Lindwall faced a tough decision. Ultimately, he turned down the offer to keep his project authentically Wisconsin. Unfortunately, not all filmmakers make the same choice.

AB 231 seeks to stimulate our economy by establishing a dedicated film office and offering film production tax credits. This bill aims to make Wisconsin competitive by attracting filmmakers and productions through meaningful incentives, which in turn support local businesses, job creation, and increased tourism. Simply put, it would encourage filmmakers like Mr. Lindwall to choose Wisconsin, bringing their stories—and economic activity—to our state.

Wisconsin remains one of just five states without a film office or commission, and among only ten states that offer no film production incentives. As a result, we continue missing out on economic opportunities. Nearby states, including Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, and Minnesota, are successfully leveraging these incentives to attract substantial investments.

Importantly, AB 231 ensures fiscal responsibility by disbursing state funds only after production spending has occurred and been documented. Additionally, minimum spending requirements will guarantee that a significant portion of each production's budget benefits local businesses across multiple sectors, including hospitality, transportation, construction, and catering.

One positive that can't be overlooked is this bill's potential to boost tourism. We all know that Wisconsin has a lot to offer, but people in other states and countries may not. Film tourism has exploded in recent years, with folks travelling to the filming locations of their favorite movies and TV shows to take pictures and experience the local culture. That includes eating in local restaurants, filling their tanks at local gas stations, and spending the night in local hotels.

Establishing a state film office would proactively market Wisconsin as an ideal filming location globally. AB 231 represents an investment in Wisconsin's communities, economy, and talent.

Thank you for your time; I encourage you to join me in supporting this crucial bill.

## **Testimony of Secretary Anne Sayers**

Assembly Committee on Ways and Means

May 7, 2025

### **In support of Assembly Bill 231**

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Dear Representative O'Connor,

Happy National Travel and Tourism Week. I am sorry I am unable to appear before the committee today in support of creating a film office and associated film tax credits. In his budget, Governor Tony Evers also proposed the creation of an Office of Film and Creative Industries. Film in Wisconsin means big bucks and every time a film or television production chooses to roll tape elsewhere, Wisconsin loses out. Wisconsin is one of five states without a film office and one of ten states without a film tax incentive program. Wisconsin trying to woo Hollywood without these tools is like stepping up to the plate without a bat in our hands.

According to the Motion Picture Association, the film and TV industry supports 2.32 million jobs, pays out \$229 billion in wages and comprises more than 122,000 businesses. A major motion picture spends an average \$670,000 per day during filming. Every day Wisconsin isn't competing in this marketplace, we are missing out on big revenue.

Wisconsin has had some success recently. Most notably, Bravo's Top Chef put Wisconsin on the map with television and movie producers. During filming of 12 episodes in Wisconsin, producers estimated 6,000 – 7,000 hotel room nights occupied by film staff and on-camera talent over more than six weeks of production and an estimated \$5 million to film the season, much of which was spent in Wisconsin. This investment far exceeded the \$1.3 million the Department of Tourism raised to bring the show to Wisconsin. Moreover, six months after the show premiered, Milwaukee had already seen \$1.5 million in hotel room bookings from people who watched the show and then visited Milwaukee. We know this impact to be even larger when accounting for other visitor spending beyond just hotel stays and dating further out from this six month window.

The Department has had smaller victories negotiating the filming of five episodes of Bar Rescue, three episodes of The Fowl Life and others as well as the recent filming of a Door County Christmas movie with the working title *Cherry Pie Christmas*. The Christmas movie's budget was about \$1 million, more than \$600,000 of which was estimated to be spent in Wisconsin over three weeks of filming.

While we have seen some recent success, Governor Evers put a film office and film incentives in his budget and the authors of this bill created a stand-alone bill because they know that we've lost out on much more than we've won recently. In the last biennium, the Department has, with its limited resources, promoted Wisconsin projects directly with Hit & Run Productions, NBC Studios, ND Agency, IW Productions, Team

**Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers**

**Wisconsin Department of Tourism Secretary Anne Sayers**

3319 West Beltline Hwy P.O. Box 8690 Madison, WI 53708-8690 Telephone: 608.266.2161

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Coco, Warner Media, ABC/Disney, PBS, Netflix and Homemade. Unfortunately, nearly all projects pitched have not come to fruition due to lack of incentive funding and/or fundraising capacity. Film attraction is a very competitive industry and most states are landing more opportunities than we ever even knew were possible because Wisconsin fell out of the consideration set for most producers when tax credits and the film office was eliminated more than one decade ago.

Wisconsin, with her 15,000 freshwater lakes and beautiful scenery and architecture, deserves to shine on as many big stages as possible. We've had a tremendous run of televised opportunities, with the DNC Convention (2020), Ryder Cup (2021), RNC Convention (2024), Bravo's Top Chef (2024), US Senior Open (2024), Indy Car (2024) and NFL Draft (2025). Now is the time to strike while the iron is hot to continue to increase national awareness of what Wisconsin has to offer and improve the perception of Wisconsin as a great place to visit, to live and to work. Film is critical to tourism because "set jetting" is becoming a more and more important driver of tourism in America, with Hawaii attributing \$1 billion in 2022 from visitor spending to travelers choosing Hawaii because they saw it on TV or in a movie.

The immediate economic impact of attracting high-valued productions to Wisconsin coupled with the opportunity to capitalize on additional visitor interest in Wisconsin because of these productions makes creating a film office and associated tax credits a slam dunk for Wisconsin's economy.

**Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers**

**Wisconsin Department of Tourism Secretary Anne Sayers**

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**To:** Assembly Committee on Ways and Means  
Representative Jerry O'Connor, Chair

**From:** Bill Elliott, CAE  
WHLA President & CEO

**Date:** May 7, 2025

**Re:** Support for AB 231 - Relating to: creating a tax credit for expenses related to film production services and for capital investments made by a film production company

On behalf of the Wisconsin Hotel & Lodging Association and the broader hospitality industry, I write to express strong support for the proposed bill establishing income and franchise tax credits for film production companies, as well as the creation of a State Film Office within the Department of Tourism. We commend the Legislature for considering this innovative and economically sound proposal.

This legislation offers a timely and strategic opportunity to stimulate economic growth across multiple sectors, including our own. By providing a 30 percent tax credit on qualified wages and production expenditures, the bill is designed to attract significant film and television productions to our state—productions that directly drive increased demand for hotel accommodations, event services, catering, transportation, and other tourism-related industries.

Our industry has long recognized the positive economic ripple effect that accompanies film productions. When production crews and cast members operate on location, they rely on local hotels for extended stays, meetings, dining, and amenities. Furthermore, the indirect exposure generated by showcasing our state on screen translates into long-term tourism growth, destination branding, and increased convention business. From the recent *Top Chef Wisconsin*, to *Transformers*, to *Public Enemies*, to a holiday show recently recorded in Door County, we have seen positive results from film production in the state, and it makes sense to incentivize those who want to bring their business to Wisconsin.

The establishment of the State Film Office will provide much-needed structure and coordination to administer these incentives, while promoting our state as a premiere destination for film production. This is an exciting and strategically valuable development for all tourism-related sectors, including hotels, motels, resorts, and other lodging facilities throughout the state.

These film productions provide a wide range of valuable benefits to both our state and local communities. In addition to generating sales tax revenue and stimulating increased activity for retail businesses, they also serve to promote Wisconsin as a desirable destination for visitors, prospective residents, and business investment. We should take great pride in the opportunity to present the many strengths and attractions our state has to offer.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge your support of this legislation. The hospitality sector stands ready to partner with the state and the film industry to maximize the economic and cultural benefits this bill is poised to deliver.





Further, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), *“Since 2021, with the economy well on the rebound after the pandemic, at least 18 states have enacted measures to implement or expand film tax incentives<sup>3</sup>”*.

### **What are State Film Offices \ Commissions?**

State film offices \ commissions play a critical role in stimulating film\entertainment-based investment by providing valuable production assistance; identifying and pursuing productions that can best serve and brand the state; and, effectively facilitating state film incentives.

In short, state film offices are the one-stop-shop state resource for film and television productions. Film offices leverage their partnerships with the film industry and local production resources to provide support with location scouting, film and other permits, and connecting productions with local crew hiring opportunities and other local resources (i.e. equipment, restaurant, catering, hotel\lodging, etc.).

By effectively managing a state’s production incentive program, film offices \ commissions are able to better target to bring successful opportunities that will in turn boost local economies.

### **Film Production Incentives**

Film production tax credit incentives are meant to generate new economic development. This is achieved through effective branding, attracting tourism, generating local in-state spending and creating jobs. Further, it’s through the film production incentives that Wisconsin can attract consistent film and television production that will attract further private investment to build infrastructure filmmakers are seeking – thereby leading to consistent \ continuous job opportunities in Wisconsin’s film industry.

As explained in a 2024 article by the Nation Conference of State Legislators<sup>3</sup>, *“Film tax incentives typically come in the form of tax credits equal to a percentage of a film or television production’s qualified in-state spending and/or exemptions from sales tax on qualified transactions. The credits are often refundable—eligible for refund without any tax liability, or transferable—if the value of a company’s credits is higher than its tax liability. A company can sell the excess credits to another taxpayer who owes the state taxes.”*

### **Policy Guidelines to Promote Return on Investment & Accountability**

Assembly Bill 231 includes policy provisions meant to promote return on investment and fiscal accountability by ensuring the credits are used for in-state Wisconsin expenditures; capping the total annual amount of incentives; capping the annual amount per production; implementing minimum spend requirements; requiring the state provide tax credits only after a film production has documented and the state has verified those expenditures; and finally, AB-231 requires the Legislative Audit Bureau to biennially prepare a performance evaluation audit of the accreditation program implemented by the State Film Office.

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<sup>3</sup> National Conference of State Legislatures: [Watch Out, Hollywood! States Want a Piece of the Moviemaking Action](#) (March 19, 2024)

# ACTION!WISCONSIN

To: Representative Jerry O'Connor, Chair  
Members of the Assembly Committee on Ways & Means

From: Suzanne Jurva, Steering Committee Member, Action! Wisconsin

Date: Wednesday, May 7, 2025

**Re: Support Assembly Bill 231  
Film Production Incentives and Establishing a Film Office**

I would like to thank Chairman O'Connor and members of the Committee for the opportunity today to testify. And, on behalf of "Action! Wisconsin" we are asking for the Committee's support of 2025 Assembly Bill 231 relating to creating film production incentives and establishing a state film office.

Action! Wisconsin is a statewide coalition consisting of trade associations, businesses, municipal organizations and other interested stakeholders. Please visit [www.actionwi.org](http://www.actionwi.org) to learn more and to see the list of supporting organizations. Action! Wisconsin is a statewide coalition with members not only in Madison and Milwaukee, but Kenosha, Beloit, La Crosse, Green Bay, Sheboygan, Oshkosh, Eau Claire, Superior, Burlington and Bayfield.

As a film producer and director, former studio executive at DreamWorks, tech entrepreneur (I co-founded the first company to bring Hollywood content to the mobile phone), I am writing to express my strong support for the legislative proposals currently under consideration that would establish a Wisconsin State Film Office and provide \$10 million per year in tax credit film production incentives. As a dedicated advocate for economic growth and the creative industries in our state, I urge the Committee to advance these measures for the benefit of all Wisconsinites.

## Economic and Community Benefits

Film production incentives have proven to be a powerful tool for economic development. By attracting film, television, and media projects to Wisconsin, these incentives generate significant local economic activity, including job creation in hospitality, transportation, and skilled trades. A recent Hallmark film shot in Door County spent \$600,000 on the local community during a slow tourist season.

## Role of a State Film Office



As a producer with projects that can be filmed anywhere and a former studio executive at DreamWorks, I know that the first step towards making a film in a state is to visit the Film Office online and learn about the film tax incentives.

Think of the elements you need to make a film: A State Film Office will serve as a centralized resource for filmmakers, assisting with location scouting, permitting, and connecting productions with local talent and businesses. This one-stop solution will streamline the process for producers, making Wisconsin more competitive with other states that already offer robust incentives and support services. Furthermore, a film office will foster workforce development, promote our state's unique cultural and natural assets, and ensure that Wisconsinites tell Wisconsin's stories. The Film Office is the state film program's marketing and administrative branch, pursuing the best filmed productions and promoting the state. The Film Office/Commissioner facilitates the film tax incentives by effectively managing a state's production incentive program.

I respectfully urge the Committee to support the establishment of a Wisconsin State Film Office and the proposed film production tax incentives. These measures will position Wisconsin as a leader in the creative economy, drive job creation, and showcase our state's unique character to the world. Wisconsin is one of only a few states that does not have a state film office or commission. Wisconsin is only one of 13 states that do not provide film and television production incentives.

#### Film Production Incentives

Film production tax credit incentives are meant to generate economic development. This is achieved through effective branding, attracting tourism, generating local in-state spending, and creating jobs. Further, through the film production incentives, Wisconsin can attract consistent film and television production that will attract further private investment to build infrastructure filmmakers seek – thereby leading to consistent \ continuous job opportunities in Wisconsin's film industry.

I have seen the creative brain train of highly educated and talented filmmakers leaving the state for work in states with film tax incentives. We have the talent here who go off to live and work, and pay taxes, anywhere but in Wisconsin. It is time to stop that.

Assembly Bill 231 includes policy provisions meant to promote fiscal accountability by ensuring the credits are used for in-state Wisconsin expenditures; capping the total annual amount of incentives; capping the annual amount per production; implementing minimum spend requirements; and, requiring the state provide tax credits only after a film production has documented and the state has verified those expenditures.



# THE EISLEY COMPANY

Representative Jerry O'Connor  
Room 109 West  
State Capitol  
PO Box 8953  
Madison, WI 53708

Dear Chairman O'Connor and members of the Assembly Committee on Ways & Means:

My name is OJ Aguilar, and I'm the Executive Producer and co-founder of The Eisley Company — a production studio that began in Kenosha, Wisconsin, and has since grown into a nationally recognized creative force in film, television, and branded content. Today, we produce high-caliber content for some of the world's most respected franchises and agencies, including work connected to *Star Wars*, as well as original programming and experiential content for national brands.

We're writing in strong support of Assembly Bill 231 that can bring major creative and economic opportunities back to the state. As a company that started in Wisconsin, we've seen the incredible talent and passion here — but we've also seen how work is often forced to leave the state in search of more favorable production environments.

Recently, we produced a proof of concept for a new kids' program, filmed entirely at Backyard Dreams Studios in Kenosha. It's a clear example of the kind of high-quality content that could be created right here in Wisconsin — and at scale — if the right incentive structures were in place.

Wisconsin has the creative muscle, facilities, and work ethic to become a key player in the national production landscape. A film incentive would not only attract new projects — it would empower local crews, inspire young talent, and bring long-term investment to the region.

We're grateful to Alex Kudrna and the Backyard Dreams team for leading the charge on this effort, and we fully support their work to help make Wisconsin a home for world-class content creation.

Sincerely,

*Osmar Aguilar*

Osmar "OJ" Aguilar  
Executive Producer The Eisley Company  
[OJ@theeisleycompany.com](mailto:OJ@theeisleycompany.com) | 262-308-0621

March 6, 2025

Representative Jerry O'Connor  
Room 109  
West State Capitol  
PO Box 8953  
Madison, WI 53708

Dear Chairman O'Connor and members of the Assembly Committee on Ways & Means:

I am writing to express my strong support for Assembly Bill 231, which proposes the establishment of film production incentives in Wisconsin. I believe this legislation is a crucial step towards fostering economic growth, creating jobs, and enhancing the cultural landscape of our state.

The film industry has a proven track record of generating significant economic benefits in regions that actively support it. As a filmmaker, small business owner, and former resident, I believe this bill represents a significant opportunity to stimulate economic growth and enhance the cultural landscape of our state. By attracting film and television productions to Wisconsin, AB 231 will stimulate local businesses, including hotels, restaurants, and equipment suppliers. This influx of spending will create a ripple effect, boosting revenue across various sectors and contributing to a stronger overall economy.

The film and television industry is a significant driver of economic activity in many states. For example, Oklahoma's "Filmed in Oklahoma Act" has generated over **\$531 million** in direct economic impact and created **22,000 jobs** between FY 2021 and FY 2024. Even a recent three-week film shoot in Door County, Wisconsin, for "A Cherry Pie Christmas," resulted in approximately **\$600,000** in local spending.

While the film "Green and Gold" was a smaller independent film shot entirely in Wisconsin, its production still contributed to the local economy through spending on locations, crew, and local services in Door County and the Green Bay area. Although its budget was modest compared to larger studio productions, "Green and Gold" serves as a testament to the kind of authentic Wisconsin stories that can be told when filming in the state is feasible, and it garnered over **\$1.7 million** at the US and Canada box office, demonstrating the audience interest in Wisconsin-based narratives.

As former director of Film Wisconsin, I educated over 300 potential filmmakers and instructed entry level students in statewide seminars. The desire to learn about this industry exists and people want to become a part of it. Additionally, as part of my duties, I was a resource for many well-known filmmakers who wanted to film in Wisconsin, but without incentives, many passed on filming here and choose to spend their money elsewhere where the industry was friendlier in terms of incentives. I can specifically cite a filmmaker who was willing to spend \$2 million locally and was also willing to discuss incentives with any politician that would listen. That didn't happen and the filmmaker went elsewhere.

As a present resident of Ohio, the Ohio Motion Picture Tax Credit has recognized the significant benefits of incentivizing film production. Since its inception in 2009, the Ohio Motion Picture Tax Credit is credited with generating over **\$1.4 billion in gross economic output** and creating over **7,100 full-time jobs**. Major productions like "The Avengers" and "Captain America: The Winter Soldier" chose Ohio due in part to these incentives, resulting in tens of millions of dollars spent within the state and showcasing Ohio's diverse locations. The success of Ohio's program serves as a compelling example of how strategic film incentives can translate into tangible economic growth and increased visibility for a state.

By implementing competitive incentives, Wisconsin can attract productions that will lead to significant direct and indirect spending. When a movie films on location, it can add over **\$670,000 every day** to the local economy, and major productions can inject as much as **\$1.3 million daily**. This spending benefits local businesses such as hotels, restaurants, equipment rental houses, and catering services, providing a vital boost to our communities. Moreover, these productions create valuable, often high-paying, job opportunities for Wisconsin residents, both in front of and behind the camera. The average film and TV industry wage in Oklahoma, for instance, is **\$79,450 annually**.

Beyond the immediate financial gains, a thriving film industry can significantly enhance Wisconsin's visibility and attractiveness for tourism. The economic impact of Wisconsin's broader arts and cultural sector is already estimated at **\$11.9 billion annually**, supporting over **89,000 jobs**. Film incentives can amplify this impact by showcasing our state's diverse locations and rich culture to a wider audience.

Senate Assembly Bill 231, with its proposed **\$10 million annual cap** on tax credits (as outlined in both Governor Evers' budget proposal and the bipartisan bill), represents a measured and strategic approach to investing in Wisconsin's economic future.

As a film educator watching future filmmakers move to better industry conditions in Los Angeles and Atlanta, you know that this bill will create valuable job opportunities for Wisconsin residents hindering the brain drain and create a more robust economy for residents. From skilled technicians and craftspeople to actors and production assistants, the film industry offers a wide range of employment possibilities. These are not just temporary jobs; they often lead to long-term careers and the development of a highly skilled workforce within our state.

Should AB231 be passed, I can return to Wisconsin and work diligently to maintain a creative community for the industry.

Finally, and most importantly, AB 231 will also showcase the beauty and diversity of Wisconsin's landscapes and communities. Film productions will capture our state's unique character, promoting tourism and attracting visitors from around the world. This increased exposure will enhance Wisconsin's reputation as a desirable destination, further contributing to our economic well-being.

I urge you to support Assembly Bill 231 and make a sound investment in Wisconsin's future. This legislation will not only provide immediate economic benefits but will also lay the foundation for a thriving and sustainable film industry in our state for years to come.

Sincerely,

Nella Citino  
1162 Rockport Ct  
Columbus, Ohio 43235



Assembly Bill 231

Representative Jerry O'Connor  
Room 109 West  
State Capitol  
PO Box 8953  
Madison, WI 53708

Dear Chairman O'Connor and members of the Assembly Committee on Ways & Means:

My name is Ken Stouffer, a three-time EmmyAward-winning producer and Wisconsin resident with three decades of experience, primarily in Chicago. I'm a passionate advocate for reinstating film incentives in Wisconsin not just for the film industry, but for the significant economic boost it provides our communities.

Many misunderstand the impact of film tax incentives, assuming they only benefit production companies. This is a misconception. I'll illustrate with a personal example. For over 20 years, I worked with a Chicago-based client on a nationally syndicated, Emmy-winning television program. During the pandemic, they sought a smaller production location. My Kenosha studio, ideally situated between Milwaukee and Chicago, seemed perfect. This production, with a live audience of 30, a crew of 20, and additional staff of 10, would have brought 60 people to Kenosha per production day. Considering meals, two-night minimum hotel stays, and a six-day-a-month shooting schedule, this translates to an estimated \$75,000 in monthly revenue, or roughly \$900,000 annually—a conservative estimate that excludes travel, tourism, and additional spending.

We had secured all necessary arrangements for the production's relocation. Then, during negotiations with California executives, we hit a roadblock: Wisconsin's lack of film tax incentives. Upon learning this, they immediately withdrew their interest. This resulted in a lost opportunity, leaving our community with nothing but unrealized potential.

This experience underscores that film incentives aren't just about supporting the arts or giving handouts to Hollywood. The economic ripple effect on tourism, hospitality, and food services is substantial, making the ROI of passing this bill undeniable. The potential economic benefit to Wisconsin is significant. This is why I strongly urge the passage of this bill.

Kenneth A. Stouffer  
Backyard Dream Productions  
5800 7th Ave  
Kenosha WI, 53142

Assembly Bill 231

Representative Jerry O'Connor  
Room 109 West  
State Capitol  
PO Box 8953  
Madison, WI 53708

Dear Chairman O'Connor and members of the Assembly Committee on Ways & Means:

I urge you to support the creation of film and television incentives in Wisconsin. These programs are proven economic drivers, creating jobs, attracting out of state spending, and supporting local businesses from hotels and restaurants to contractors and equipment rentals. These incentives are an investment in our economy, our workforce, our small businesses, and our future. Please support legislation that brings film production and its many benefits back to Wisconsin.

Michael T. Determan  
Backyard Dream Productions  
5800 7th Ave  
Kenosha WI, 53142



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Website: [lwm-info.org](http://lwm-info.org)

To: Assembly Committee on Ways and Means  
From: Toni Herkert, Government Affairs Director, and Evan Miller, Government Affairs Specialist  
League of Wisconsin Municipalities  
Date: May 7, 2025  
RE: Assembly Bill 231 - Film Production Tax Credit and State Film Office

Chairman O'Connor, Vice-Chair Kaufert, and Committee Members,

The League of Wisconsin Municipalities is a nonpartisan, nonprofit membership organization that advocates for the interests of our over 600 member cities and villages, large and small, urban and rural, throughout the state.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today in support of Assembly Bill 231. Wisconsin stands out as one of only five states that does not have an office dedicated to film production and one of ten states that does not provide tax credits for the production of film. This legislation looks to make Wisconsin competitive with our neighboring states and other states across the country as a filming destination by creating a State Film Office and implementing three tax credits, collectively capped at \$10.0 million per year, for the production of film and for hiring Wisconsinites to work on the set.

While Wisconsin does not presently have statewide policies looking to promote the production of film, we have still benefitted from some activity in our state. Most recently that includes Top Chef, but our members remember and often mention to us the production of films in their community dating back even further including Public Enemies, Bridesmaids, That '70s Show, Major League, and others.

League members support this legislation because they recognize all that Wisconsin has to offer visitors, from scenic beauty to delicious food to engaging attractions and quaint downtowns. This is not only a destination piece of legislation, but also workforce driven. Cities and villages understand that displaying Wisconsin's many positive attributes on the big screen or on a household's television has been proven in states throughout the country, including our own, to drive growth in the places featured.

We'd like to thank Representatives Armstrong, Callahan, and Hurd and Senators Bradley and Testin for authoring Assembly Bill 231. The League and our members in cities and villages of all sizes throughout the state believe this initiative could help to bolster Wisconsin's economy and get more Americans thinking of Wisconsin as a place to visit, work, play, and live. We ask for your support to place Wisconsin on the map for film producers.

Thank you for your consideration of this legislation and the League's comments on Assembly Bill 231. If you have any questions, you can contact Toni Herkert at [therkert@lwm-info.org](mailto:therkert@lwm-info.org) or Evan Miller at [emiller@lwm-info.org](mailto:emiller@lwm-info.org).

*To the members of the Ways and Means Committee:*

*I urge you to support Assembly Bill 231 to create income and franchise tax credits for film production companies and create the State Film Office, attached to the Department of Tourism, to implement the tax credit accreditations and allocations.*

*Create Wisconsin, as the state's creative economy development organization, is supporting this bill as an integral part of our 2025 Legislative Agenda, because the development of a statewide film and TV infrastructure will be good for Wisconsin's economic and civic health. This program will benefit all corners of the state, enabling film industry workers to live and work in any community and showing off Wisconsin as a creative location for production.*

*Wisconsin's arts and cultural assets are more important than ever to revitalize the economy, develop a 21st century workforce, and incubate, attract and retain talent, provide opportunities for all, and help our communities, large and small, thrive. Investment in the creative sector helps grow and stabilize Wisconsin's economy, workforce, and communities.*

*Here's why investing in the statewide film industry is a good investment for Wisconsin:*

#### **Importance of investing in the creative sector**

- Investing in the creative sector can help grow and stabilize the state's economy, workforce, and communities, and help Wisconsin compete in the regional and global economies.
- The creative sector is a major industry in Wisconsin, with a \$12.4 billion economic impact and 95,000 jobs, employing more people than the beer, biotech, and papermaking industries.
- The nonprofit arts and culture industry in Wisconsin generated \$933.3 million in economic activity in 2022.

#### **Making the arts available and accessible**

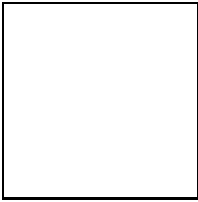
- Increasing investment in arts programs makes the arts accessible for all.
- Investment in creativity helps attract visitors and residents, and strengthens Wisconsin's brand as a creative and artistic state.

#### **Supporting the creative economy statewide**

- Investing in programs and services that grow Wisconsin equitably and creatively benefits everyone, everywhere in the state.
- Creating film and television production incentives and a state film office can support the creative economy.
- Investing in integrated arts and creative education provides opportunities for all Wisconsin students.



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[Support Create Wisconsin](#) and help grow Wisconsin creatively!

Anne Katz, Director (she/her)

Create Wisconsin

[akatz@createwisconsin.org](mailto:akatz@createwisconsin.org)

[www.createwisconsin.org](http://www.createwisconsin.org)

*Wisconsin is home to the largest number of Native American tribes east of the Mississippi River, encompassing 11 sovereign Tribal nations that abide by their own constitutions: Bad River Ojibwe, Forest County Potawatomi, Ho-Chunk, Lac Courte Oreilles Band of Ojibwe, Lac du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, Menominee Nation, Mole Lake Sokaogan Chippewa, Oneida Nation, Red Cliff Band of Ojibwe, St. Croix Band of Ojibwe, and Stockbridge-Munsee Band of Mohicans.*