

JULIAN BRADLEY
WISCONSIN STATE SENATOR

Senate Bill 231
Senate Committee on Utilities, Technology, and Tourism
May 20, 2025

Thank you for your attention as we discuss Senate Bill 231 (SB 231), and the dollars this bill could bring to our state.

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.

SB 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.

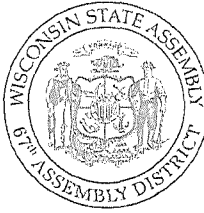
Wisconsin remains one of just four states without a film office or commission, and among only a handful that offer no film production incentives. As a result, we continue missing out on economic opportunities. Nearby states, including Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, and Minnesota, are successfully leveraging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

Importantly, SB 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. SB 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.



DAVE ARMSTRONG

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 67TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Testimony on Senate Bill 231

May 20, 2025

Thank you for the opportunity today to testify on behalf of Senate 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?

Senate 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.

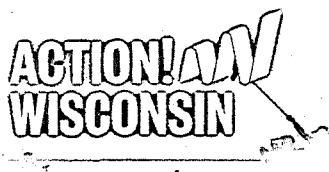
The Film Production Services Credit allows production companies to claim credits equaling 30% of salary and wages paid to employees for services rendered in Wisconsin and to employees who live in Wisconsin, 30% of production expenses incurred in Wisconsin, and Wisconsin sales and use taxes for good or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

SB 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. SB 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. SB 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 SB 231 so far.

Thank you for your consideration.



To: Senator Julian Bradley, Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Utilities & Tourism

From: Jeffrey Kurz, Steering Committee Member
Suzanne Jurva, Steering Committee Member

Date: Tuesday, May 20, 2025

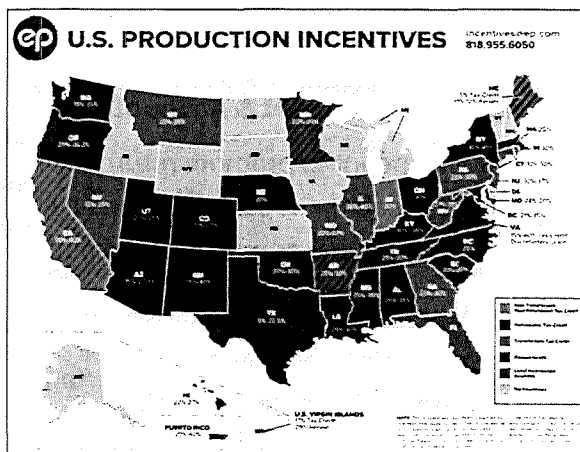
**Re: Support Senate Bill 231
Film Production Incentives and Establishing a Film Office**

First, we would like to thank Chairman Bradley 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 Senate 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 to learn more and to see the list of supporting organizations.

Wisconsin is one of only a few states that does not have a state film office or commission. It’s important to note that in March, the Governor of Kentucky signed legislation creating a state film office¹. In addition, last year the Minnesota State Legislature and Governor created their own state film office and at the same time increased their existing film production credits incentive to \$25 million annually from \$5 million that was established in 2021².

Wisconsin is also one of only 13 states that does not provide film and television production incentives.



¹ [Kentucky 2025 Senate Bill 1, Signed by Governor \(Acts Ch. 91\) on 03-26-2025.](#)

² [Explore Minnesota website: The Minnesota Film Production Tax Credit](#)

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 incentives³”*.

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 Legislators³, *“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

Senate 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, SB-231 requires the Legislative Audit Bureau to biennially prepare a performance evaluation audit of the accreditation program implemented by the State Film Office.

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

Good morning members of the Senate Committee on Utilities and Tourism. It is an honor to stand before you today. My name is Rachel Harrison, and I am a professional stunt performer and a member of SAG-AFTRA for almost 10 years now. I am also a lifelong Wisconsin resident. Throughout my career, I have had the pleasure and opportunity to work on some incredible and successful productions, alongside many talented people.

Throughout the past 10 years, I would estimate that 98% of my work has been down in Chicago and surrounding Illinois suburbs. There are many other stunt performers and industry professionals I know who also work in Chicago, while living in Wisconsin. I love my work, and I also love living here, which is why I commute back and forth when I'm needed on various productions. I would love to one day be able to say that 98% of my work is now in my home state.

When I first started in the industry, I was basically thrown into the action right away (literally and figuratively). I learned everything by experience. I never went to film school, I didn't have any family members or friends already in the industry. I had a chance, and I took it. Once I stepped onto my first set, I remember being shocked and amazed by how many people it takes to create one scene for one episode for one TV show. It's pretty amazing to see. All the people, all the various departments, every one of them important in their own way. It's one of those things where unless you're a part of it, you don't always understand the full scope of how it works. It is magical in that way. Think about how long movie credits can be. Most people don't sit through them because they are so long. They're that long because every single person within every single department is named. I now sit through all movie credits out of respect to everyone who worked on that project, because I know first hand how much talent and hard work goes into something like that.

If Wisconsin had a film office and tax incentives, that would attract so much financial opportunity. Opportunity for Wisconsin residents, Wisconsin businesses, and the state of Wisconsin in general. The film industry is a rare industry that is constantly expanding to keep up with the demand for more movies, TV shows, and advertisements. Attracting productions would create thousands of jobs and the opportunity for Wisconsin to get involved in the multi-billion dollar industry that is the film industry. As of now, we are one of the very few states that does not have a film office or tax incentives. We've missed out on a lot of opportunities so far. This is an amazing time for Wisconsin to finally be part of the action. I hope you all consider the benefits and potential growth opportunity for the state of Wisconsin.

Thank you for your time and consideration on this important issue and historic opportunity for our beautiful state.



Testimony for Mark Roling at Wisconsin Senate Committee on Utilities & Tourism in support of Senate Bill 231 - tax credits for film production

Hello, my name is Mark Roling and I'm President of Creative Wisconsin Filmmakers with our offices located in Delavan, Wisconsin. After nearly 40 years in Hollywood as a screenwriter, producer and studio executive at Universal Studios, and over 20 years at Warner Bros. Studios as Vice President of the Entertainment Group, I moved back to the Midwest three years ago to be closer to family and help bring more filmmaking to my original home state. I grew up in Delavan, and the beautiful landscapes, countrysides and lakes of Wisconsin have always struck me as the perfect backdrop for film and TV. This passion of mine compelled me to start this non-profit to attract more professional filmmakers to the area and help boost our local economy and help develop young local talent by giving them the opportunity to get hands-on film set experience that they rarely have the chance to participate in living in a smaller, rural town. Along with my board members, I wrote, produced, and directed a 40-minute short film called "Visions of Her" in September of 2024 to act as a proof-of-concept to show we could shoot the entire film right there in our beautiful and historic hometown.

So far, our little film has garnered over 30 best film awards, best screenplay, and best actor from film festivals all over the world. It has also led us to recently signing a deal with ROKU, where now 'Visions of Her', a Delavan Wisconsin homegrown project, can now be seen worldwide on their film streaming platform.

Funded by a grant from the Delavan-Delavan Lake Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Board, along with additional funding from Delavan Township, we used local and high school actors, plus student crew from the UW Milwaukee film program, and shot the entire film in our area, making Delavan an actual character in the film. We showcased businesses on our beautiful brick road downtown, featured Lake Lawn Resort, and shot at the historic Penwern Estate – a Frank Lloyd Wright mansion on Delavan Lake, as just a few locations. Our Mayor, Ryan Schroeder, is a huge supporter of ours who believes, like we do, that filmmaking can bring a great deal more commerce to Delavan, Walworth County, and the surrounding area.

Our short film's popularity and awards have also opened the door and attracted two mainstream film distributors and streaming platforms to explore the opportunity of making a full-length feature version of the film. I was brought this opportunity by a Warner Bros. colleague of mine who was Clint Eastwood's executive producer for over 15 years that I worked with closely while at Warner Bros. during the production of "The Bridges of Madison County." That hit movie was filmed in small farming town of Winterset, Iowa in 1995, and that location is still a popular tourist destination 30 years later.

But here's where we are with that production negotiation: I've been very vocal about setting our film up back in Delavan again, but without the adequate tax credits in Wisconsin, I've gotten pushback from the funding group to seek filming in other states that make more sense to them due to budgetary reasons. At the top of their list currently is Missouri, where they start at a 30% tax credit, but by meeting other state bonus requirements, they can experience credits as high as 42%. That means Missouri will get the tax and local business revenue we will miss.

I'm sure this is just one example of what Wisconsin filmmakers must deal with that desperately want to shoot in our home state, battling it out with financiers who only look at the bottom line, and tax credits have become a huge, undeniable part of that consideration.

In my current situation, I am involved in a real-world film negotiation that was inspired by Wisconsin; however, we are forced to film in another state where they will try and copy Wisconsin locations, instead of simply shooting here.

Wisconsin is a beautiful backdrop for films and has the potential to attract many other filmmakers to set up their feature films and TV shows here. The film "Green and Gold" was a testament to our unique Wisconsin beauty and culture, and I can only imagine what other Wisconsin-based films could do if they just get the chance to do it here where they want to... but with this new bill, we will now have the ammunition we need to win the good fight against the ravenous bean-counters.

I respectfully ask you to pass Senate Bill 231 to attract filmmaking to our beautiful state, to boost tourism and our local economies, while at the same time creating more jobs in our great state of Wisconsin. Go Packers!

Testimony of Secretary Anne Sayers

Senate Committee on Utilities and Tourism

May 20, 2025

In support of Senate Bill 231

Dear Senator Bradley,

I am unable to appear before the committee today in support of creating a film office and associated film tax credits. Please accept this written testimony in my absence. 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 were 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: Senate Committee on Utilities and Tourism
Senator Julian Bradley, Chair

From: Bill Elliott, CAE
WHLA President & CEO

Date: May 20, 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.

Tuesday, May 20, 2025

Senator Julian Bradley
Chair, Senate Committee on Utilities & Tourism
Room 316 South, State Capitol
PO Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707

Dear Senator Bradley and Members of the Senate Committee on Utilities and Tourism:

I am sorry I can't be with you in person today, but I appreciate you considering my thoughts on Assembly Bill 231.

I'm a stand up comedian from Wisconsin. A couple years ago, I got the chance to write a pilot for a major TV network about a family in Sheboygan. Throughout the pitching process, I insisted the series should be shot in Wisconsin. The network said that may not be possible because Wisconsin doesn't have tax credits or even a film office. Then a producer asked, "Do you think we'd be able to just shoot it around Chicago?" That felt like a swift kick to the cheese curds.

It wasn't the producer's fault for suggesting we shoot in Illinois. He loved the show and just wanted to see it get made. Tax credits help things get made. But shooting a film about Sheboygan in Chicago? That's like asking the bartender for brandy and getting Malort.

Eventually the network passed on the show. This should have been heartbreaking for me. I poured everything I had into the pilot. But honestly my first reaction to the rejection was relief. I knew if the network picked up the show and said it had to be shot in Illinois, I'd have to back out. The story I was telling could only be told from this state.

That's because Wisconsin isn't just a backdrop in the stories we tell, it's a main character. From the waves of Sheboygan to the hills of the driftless, from the Apostle Islands to the lakes up north, you can't fake Wisconsin. And when someone tries to tell a Wisconsin story from someplace else, it steals the soul from the scene.

But this goes way beyond physical location. Encouraging films to be shot in Wisconsin keeps Wisconsin actors, writers, gaffers, grips, cinematographers, hair stylists and producers from leaving the state. A thriving film industry would also bring investment to local hotels, bars, tradesmen, restaurants and more.

This past year the film "Green and Gold" was released. It's one of only a handful of films I can remember being shot in Wisconsin. Anders and Davin Lindwall turned down an offer from a major studio to shoot the film in another state because of tax incentives. Anders and Davin chose to tell their story here even though the math didn't add up. I admire them for making that decision, but I wonder how many other filmmakers made another decision. How many filmmakers write Wisconsin out of their story because they don't see another way for their project to get made?

I hope the answer is none. But this bill would give us more than hope.

Thank your time. Watch for deer.

Charlie Berens

Support for SB 231 – Wisconsin Film Production Tax Credits & Film Office
Testimony from Visit Milwaukee
May 20, 2025

- Visit Milwaukee strongly supports SB 231 — especially once a staffing line is added to support Travel Wisconsin in administering the new State Film Office.
- This bill would be a game changer for Wisconsin's creative economy by:
 - Offering a 30% income and franchise tax credit on qualifying film and TV production expenses.
 - Providing a 30% credit on capital investment for companies establishing operations here in their first three years.
 - Introducing a sales and use tax credit on equipment and services related to production.
 - Creating a dedicated State Film Office under the Wisconsin Department of Tourism to proactively promote the state as a filming destination.
- We know the impact film and TV can have firsthand — just look at *Top Chef: Wisconsin*:
 - Filmed in Milwaukee, Madison and Door County.
 - Generated 2,080 flight bookings and 5,229 hotel reservations in Milwaukee alone.
 - Delivered more than \$1.6 million in direct tourism revenue to the city, surpassing the collective investment in the show by \$400,000.
 - Sparked national attention for our culinary scene, local businesses, and hospitality industry.
- This kind of exposure is priceless — and replicable if we have the right infrastructure in place.
- But a Film Office needs more than a name — it needs staff.
 - We urge the addition of a line item to fund staff within Travel Wisconsin to oversee and grow the program.
 - Visit Milwaukee has seen firsthand, through our work supporting Top Chef and The Real Housewives of Salt Lake City, just how essential it is to have dedicated staff coordinating between local resources and film crews.
 - From securing locations to navigating logistics with city departments and hospitality partners, staff capacity makes or breaks a production's experience in-market.
 - We strongly urge the addition of a staffing line within Travel Wisconsin to ensure the State Film Office is equipped to manage credits, support productions, and promote Wisconsin effectively.
- Thanks to the tireless work of many, including the state legislature, Wisconsin is already ready for its close-up! This bill will help ensure that producers choose us over other states with more competitive incentives.
- We urge the legislature to pass SB 231 and make a meaningful investment in Wisconsin's creative and tourism economies.



**University of
Wisconsin-Stout**
Wisconsin's Polytechnic University

Tuesday, May 20, 2025

Senator Julian Bradley
Chair, Senate Committee on Utilities & Tourism
Room 316 South, State Capitol
PO Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707

Dear Senator Bradley and Members of the Senate Committee on Utilities and Tourism,

My name is Colin O'Neill, and I am a lecturer at UW-Stout with 20 years of teaching experience and a background in feature film production. I write today in fervent support of Assembly Bill 231. I had the pleasure of addressing the committee in Hayward on behalf of Action! Wisconsin but am regrettably unable to attend the May 20th hearing in person.

While you've likely heard considerable testimony on the economic benefits of film tax incentives and a state film office, I would like to focus your attention on a crucial and often overlooked element: workforce development and the growing skills exodus we can reverse through this bill.

Every year, I teach talented, creative, and hard-working students who graduate with the skills to thrive in film, television, digital media, and related industries. Unfortunately, many of them leave Wisconsin almost immediately—not because they want to, but because the opportunities they've trained for simply don't exist here.

States like Georgia, Illinois, and New Mexico have cultivated vibrant and sustainable media economies through tax incentive programs. Wisconsin offers no comparable support, leaving our graduates with a difficult decision: stay and struggle, or leave for a state that values their talents.

Before returning to my hometown of Menomonie in 2020, I served as dean and lead film faculty at a small art college in Portland, Oregon, and sat on the stakeholder board for the state film office. Oregon has seen tremendous success with its tax incentive program. Shows like *Portlandia* hired more than 20 students per season. The TBS series *Leverage* and *The Librarians* employed 50+ of our graduates each year. These opportunities launched careers—not just for those in the credits, but for hundreds more who worked in supporting industries like catering, accounting, construction, apparel design, retail, and even law enforcement.

Since returning to Wisconsin, I've watched too many of my graduates leave for Minnesota, Illinois, or beyond—highly skilled, deeply rooted Wisconsinites who want to live and work here, but simply can't. They gain experience and refine their craft in other markets, while Wisconsin loses out on the cultural and economic value they could bring home.

AB 231 is our chance to change that.

With the proposed tax incentives and the creation of a State Film Office, Wisconsin could build a pipeline from education to employment. We could retain local talent, attract productions, and grow a self-sustaining ecosystem that connects higher education with real-world opportunities.

This bill isn't just about film production—it's about workforce retention, job creation, and showing our young people that they don't need to leave Wisconsin to succeed.

I urge you to support Assembly Bill 231. Let's give our students a reason—and a way—to stay.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Colin O'Neill", written in a cursive style.

Colin O'Neill
University of Wisconsin - Stout
2920 Plum Tree Circle N
Menomonie, WI 54751
oneillc@uwstout.edu

Tuesday, May 20, 2025

Senator Julian Bradley
Chair, Senate Committee on Utilities & Tourism
Room 316 South, State Capitol
PO Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707

Dear Senator Bradley and Members of the Senate Committee on Utilities and Tourism,

My name is Aaron Greer. I am a native Wisconsinite (born in Milwaukee in 1974), a professional filmmaker, and an Associate Professor in the Department of Communication Arts at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

I write to you today, informed by all three of these positionalities, to strongly encourage you to support the efforts to establish film and TV production incentives and a statewide film office in Wisconsin.

As you're undoubtedly aware, film and TV production and the media industry writ large is a major sector of the U.S. economy (bigger than tourism, for example). As a state we have historically ceded participation in this lucrative part of the economy by failing to develop an infrastructure and incentives to attract and retain media producers.

The lack of that infrastructure and support for media production generally means that fewer films, commercials, and TV shows are produced in this state than otherwise might be, causing us to lose out on the money that could be spent employing local crews, housing talent, leasing locations, paying for food and catering, renting equipment, etc.

The situation has only been exacerbated over the last two decades as many of our neighbor states have moved to enact incentives and actively court media production to their states, taking advantage of the increasingly decentralized nature of the media industry.

It's important to note that a film office and production incentives don't just serve big budget films and prestige television shows. The media ecosystem these help create serve to support all levels of media production: from the production of business-to-business marketing videos, to independently produced feature films, to music videos, to commercials, to documentaries, and more.

I have myself eschewed opportunities to film in WI over the last 20 years in favor of more fruitful options elsewhere. While I am proud to say that my first feature film, *Gettin' Grown* (2004), was filmed on location in the city of Milwaukee, I could only afford to make that choice because the film had an almost entirely volunteer cast and crew, was produced with a miniscule budget, and supported by the generosity of local businesses.

However, when it came time to produce my most recent feature film, *The Coming* (2022), I ultimately made the decision to film in Chicago, taking advantage of the significant tax incentives and institutional supports offered by the State of Illinois. Filming in Wisconsin would have meant importing cast and some crew, because I couldn't find sufficient sources of either in this state, negotiating with individual municipalities who had no infrastructure or guidance around things like permits, and effectively reducing my budget by almost 30% (the amount it was expanded by the IL tax incentives).

So, I chose to film in Chicago. Almost my entire production budget, including the 28% added through our utilization of the tax incentives, went to hiring three-dozen locals, paying for 25-days' worth of catering from Chicago restaurants, renting equipment from 3 different Chicago-based companies, and even paying for housing for the few out of staters (like me) who had to travel to Chicago for the film. All money that I would have preferred to go to tax paying residents and companies in Wisconsin.

The decision by producers like me to film in other states means that there are few jobs or opportunities in Wisconsin for young media professionals, leading to a talent and brain drain (which in turn is why it's harder to find crew and talent here). As a professor of media production, I see this on an annual basis as the vast majority of graduates from our program leave the state for work elsewhere. Not surprisingly (as a natural consequence), our department's alumni board is made up almost entirely of people who have lived and worked their whole adult lives outside of the state. In short, Wisconsin is a tough place to work (and thus live) for early, mid *and* late-career media professionals.

Finally, by failing to support local makers we are missing out on opportunities to showcase our state and its stories. Wisconsin artists, artistry, landscapes and lives are not being given the attention and assigned the value that they deserve.

I have written my next feature film, *Morning Moon*, to be set in Madison. I would love to produce the film in Madison in 2026, and for that to be a part of a burgeoning and burnishing of statewide media production. It is my sincerest hope that *Morning Moon*, and productions like it, large and small, will have the support of our state to stay in Wisconsin, pay in Wisconsin, and celebrate Wisconsin.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,



Aaron Greer
5109 Coney Weston Place
Madison, WI 53711
greerfilm@gmail.com or adgreer@wisc.edu

To: Senator Julian Bradley, Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Utilities & Tourism

From: Stacey Nash

Date: Tuesday, May 20, 2025

Re: Support SB-231: Film Production Incentives & Film Office

My name is Stacey Nash. I'm a three-time Emmy award winning documentary filmmaker and commercial director based here in Wisconsin. Over the past two decades, I've worked across the country producing and directing projects. I have experience in everything from commercials to documentary work to true crime to broadcasting live sports like the Olympics.

One thing is consistently true across all markets and forms of production: when a state has a well-supported film office and incentives in place, productions arrive. And they return.

I want to tell you about how a film office works and what the benefits would be if we had one here in Wisconsin so let me explain how I use offices across the country.

One show that I'm a producer for is A&E's top rated true crime show, Accused: Guilty or Innocent. When we arrive in, for example, Alabama, my very first call is to the Alabama Film Office. When you're filming true crime, you do a lot of shots with moody walking through trees or sadly looking at water so we do a lot of filming in state parks. I need to know if the show needs to pay a permit fee for the right to do that. Oftentimes, the answer is yes. It's also directing me to any other permits I need to pay for on the street shooting or city location fees. The film office has now directly funneled money to the state.

The other thing I want to know is where to find local crew. One call to the film office and I now have a database of local crew and all of their contact information. That means I'm not having to bring crew in from any other state, I can find exactly who I need locally. And most importantly, the film office is making sure that they're directing me to the right talents for my needs, not just the first google search with the best paid ads. This means I have a better experience filming because I have very quickly found the experts I need for the job.

And it's not just about the convenience of quickly finding that expert. It's the infrastructure. That office connects me to not just local crew but also hotels, caterers, and even small-town mayors who welcome productions and understand what a production can do for the town. It's a ripple effect of economic impact and it's one that benefits everyone from crew to local diners to equipment rental houses.

Because the experience is seamless, we go back. I've shot in Alabama So. MUCH. Honestly, Roll Tide. For that show, Alabama becomes not just a filming location, but a production partner. That relationship is built through the presence and leadership of a state film office.

Wisconsin, right now, cannot seamlessly give an out of state producer that same experience so we're being left out of the conversation of 'where should we go and film.'

I want to film here. I *do* film here. But without a film office or statewide incentives, I can't always advocate for Wisconsin to my clients with the same confidence I do for other states. We need a central hub that can answer questions, support visiting productions, and make it easy to say yes to Wisconsin.

With a film office and modern production incentives, Wisconsin can be competitive. We have the landscapes, the talent, and the hospitality. What we need is the infrastructure to match. Let's stop watching jobs, revenue, and opportunity go elsewhere.

Thank you for your time and for considering this important investment in Wisconsin's creative and economic future.

Stacey Nash

4445 S. 60th Street

Greenfield, WI 53220

staceynash@gmail.com

Tuesday, May 20, 2025

Senator Julian Bradley
Chair, Senate Committee on Utilities & Tourism
Room 316 South, State Capitol
PO Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707

Dear Senator Bradley and Members of the Senate Committee on Utilities and Tourism,

I wanted to start out this address by sharing my gratitude for this committee holding this hearing today. I am grateful to be able to speak on this industry I love, and on this great opportunity I see for the people of Wisconsin in the near future.

I also want to say thank you to each of you serving as state senators of the people in your districts. It takes a lot of courage to be in the public sphere, and also means having to sometimes make difficult decisions. Beyond political parties, I believe each of you stepped up into your specific roles with the desire to do good for your constituents, and the State of Wisconsin as a whole, and that takes courage. So thank you, each of you, for doing this.

For almost a decade now, I have been working fulltime in the world of film, TV commercials and corporate/industrial videos. If any of you attended the **NFL Draft** in Green Bay a few weeks ago I may look familiar. I'm on the cover of **Discover Green Bay's** Special Draft Edition.

The Wisconsin State Film Tax Incentives are very important to me. I caught my very lucky break in 2008 when **Public Enemies** came to Oshkosh, Wisconsin. As a college student at the time, I always believed I'd have to head to Hollywood for major opportunities. Instead, a Hollywood production literally came to us, and I was hired on the 2nd Team as Spencer Garrett's stand-in, who I have also been able to keep in touch with since. Besides the career boost and personal Hollywood connection, the nice paycheck I received that spring was most welcome, and helped pay for my next semester of college.

While I'm aware that the tax incentive plan of *then* was not perfect, which is why we're all here now, I do believe it made many positive impacts, and very strongly believe this new proposed bill would do many things even better.

Thanks to this foot in the door from the previous film tax incentives, this dream of mine found its footing as I know it did for a number of other fellow Public Enemies' stand-ins and background talent.

I've been incredibly blessed to pursue a career I truly enjoy. Since 2015, I've had a full-time career as an actor, producer, production coordinator, and art director (*minus the 2020 COVID19 pandemic*). It has brought me on to many productions in the Midwest, as well as out to New York, Miami, Las Vegas and a famous awards event in L.A. As each of you know, whether you are starting a business or starting a family, pursuing that dream takes everything you have and then some.

Here in Wisconsin, I have tried to use my craft and reputation to pay it forward. I have worked with numerous non-profits including **The Production Farm** which initially worked with foster teens, and evolved to working with young people and adults in the mental health sphere. I currently serve on the Board of the **Mental Health Warrior Film Festival** here in Madison as well as the **Door County Film Festival**.

While I travel a lot, Door County is my home. This past year in June 2024, at a filmmakers event, we discovered that there was a larger number of us living in the area who have careers in film and television. Besides myself and the Director of the Door County Film Festival, there are two major TV network producers, including the producer of **Wipeout** and **Fear Factor**, an editor from **Disney**, owners of two different local film production companies, a UW-Green Bay film acting professor, and three **SAG** actors--and that was just our starting point.

The question was raised from that initial meeting last summer: *"What could we do to help grow the film scene in Door County, attract more film projects this way, and pay it forward to future artists in our area?"*

We discussed the possibility of creating a Door County Film Office, not in any way to be in competition with the proposed Wisconsin Film Office, but rather something already assembled in-step with the Wisconsin Film Office.

Door County, as many of you know, is something right out of a movie set. If you haven't ever had the chance to visit, I recommend one of our famous trolley tours. Surrounded

by beautiful Lake Michigan and Green Bay, small town shops and marinas, we're called "the Cape Cod of the Midwest" for good reason.

In June 2024, our group formed an exploratory committee, made up entirely of volunteers, and worked the following months, putting together a database of all the production crew, acting talent, and film-friendly businesses we initially knew of to create a mockup of what the proposed Door County Film Office could offer.

We then presented this initiative to our local tourism bureau, **Destination Door County**, in December of 2024, in hopes they would host and expand on the database through their website. Destination Door County has contacts with every hotel, resort, restaurant, caterer and potential shooting location in the area as well as contacts to municipal leaders, emergency services, etc. They have been incredibly supportive with the initiative, and have been involved in our regular monthly meetings moving forward.

What we did not know while we were having that meeting, because the details of the production were kept quiet, is that a Hallmark-style holiday movie was already working with Destination Door County to film in the winter/spring months. The movie was appropriately named "**A Cherry Pie Christmas**".

Now for reference, this year was big for that reason! In Door County, despite being a versatile, gorgeous filming location, only a handful of films have been shot there since 2008, including "**Feed the Fish**" starring Tony Shaloub and "**Green and Gold**" starring Craig T. Nelson.

These are some insights that Mr. Jon Jarosh, Chief Communications Officer of Destination Door County made note of in regards to the positive impact of film to our local Economy in Door County as well as growth in tourism:

- **Boosts Local Economy:** Film productions inject money directly into local businesses—lodging, restaurants, transportation, catering, retail, and more.
- **Creates Jobs:** Temporary and freelance jobs become available for local crew members, extras, set builders, and other service providers.
- **Increases Off-Season Activity:** Productions often take place in slower seasons, driving economic activity during slower tourism months.
- **Promotes the Destination:** Films shot in Door County act as visual advertising, attracting film-induced travel and future tourism.
- **Supports Local Arts & Culture:** Incentives encourage creative industry growth, supporting artists, performers, and production professionals.
- **Strengthens Community Identity:** Involvement in a film fosters pride, creates shared experiences, and strengthens community ties.

- **Draws Future Investment:** Visibility from successful productions can attract other film, TV, or commercial projects to the area.
- **Maximizes Return on State Investment:** A small incentive at the state level can yield large returns locally, amplifying the impact in places like Door County with strong visual appeal.

"...the recent Christmas movie that was filmed in Door County in March and April of this year brought in around \$700,000 in economic activity in Wisconsin, of which \$600,000 of that was spent in Door County. Seeing how March and April are typically some of the slower months of the year in Door County, the economic activity, room nights, and food and beverage sales were a welcome addition.

Secondly, while it can't be quantified, the community pride that was shown during filming of the Christmas movie was substantial. We had nearly 400 people fill out an online application wanting to be an extra in the production.

The promotional aspects of the project, which won't be fully realized until the movie is released sometime later this year, should also be substantial. We will be working on a Christmas movie trailer promotion, and several of the locations that were featured in the film should also experience increased visibility thanks to exposure in the film.

With online streaming and other distribution channels for films these days, we also anticipate the promotional life of the Christmas movie to be more than just a few weeks when the film is released. We anticipate the project providing promotional support for Door County's holiday season for the next few years at the very least."

**Jon Jarosh, Chief Communications Officer
Destination Door County**

Please vote yes in support of Bill SB-231.

Sincerely,

**Kurt Krauss
211 West Pine Street
Sturgeon Bay, WI 54235**

**Phone: (920) 948-6737
Email: confessionsmovieinfo@gmail.com**

To: Senator Julian Bradley, Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Utilities & Tourism
From: Michael Graf, Producer & Writer/Director
Date: Tuesday, May 20, 2025

Re: Support SB-231: Film Production Incentives & Film Office

I'm an Emmy Award winning Producer & Director, member of the Director's Guild of America, I've directed two Super Bowl campaigns and I'm a produced screenwriter that lives here in Wisconsin, in Cottage Grove. I'm originally a New Yorker, but moved here from Los Angeles in 1990, thinking I'd only be here a year or two. I never left. I fell in love with the state, its people and its unique culture.

My most recently produced screenplay, GREEN AND GOLD, stars Craig T. Nelson, Brandon Sklenar and Charlie Berens. I wrote the screenplay as a love letter to all things Sconnie. It's about a desperate Wisconsin dairy farmer that bets his family's farm, and legacy, on whether the Green Bay Packers win the Super Bowl.

It is the rare movie project that is about Wisconsin and was also made in Wisconsin.

And it is a project I am most proud of. If the film's investors had their way, it would have been shot in Illinois, because of their film incentives. The ONLY reason it was shot here is because the producer and director had a long term business relationship with the primary investor and talked him into shooting here. This is the exception, not the rule.

Another recent movie, MY DEAD FRIEND ZOEY, was written by a Fitchburg native with the story taking place in Madison and Dane County. But the investors and producers insisted it be shot in Portland, OR, to take advantage of their film incentives. The setting for the story was changed to Portland and the film was shot in Oregon. It will live forever now as a "Portland, Oregon movie".

This is what normally happens. When it comes to show business, we often think of the show: the spectacle of lights, cameras and actors. We rarely think of the business side of show business. It is a business. A conservative business based on the bottom line.

What makes it unique is that it doesn't require a brick and mortar factory and doesn't have a warehoused inventory to store. It's creating and manufacturing unique IP. It's an engine that's fueled the largest export business in the United States, generating a positive balance of trade in every major market in the world by 3 to 1, running a trade surplus larger than each of the telecommunications, transportation, insurance and health related services sectors. That's 6% of the total US trade surplus in services.

Every film or TV show is a unique manufactured project, a one of a kind construction project costing millions of dollars to produce with dozens to hundreds of highly trained craftspeople, technicians, accountants, actors, artists and businesspeople. Most are small independent contractors working short term, on projects that may only employ them for weeks or months before they must book work on the next project.

Here are some interesting statistics, according to the MPAA regarding U.S. feature films that were shot on location in 2023:

- \$21.8 million average, spent on location costs
- \$11.7 million average local wages
- 1,483 average local hires
- \$670K average, spent per day
- \$10.2 million average vendor spend
 - \$802K on lumber/hardware
 - \$792K on hotels
 - \$660K on car rentals
 - \$425 on catering/food

Average location money currently spent in Wisconsin? Not much.

My wife likes to tell folks I'm a migrant film worker. For 26 years I owned a commercial production company here in Madison, my office was right across the street on King Street above the Topsy Cow. But I rarely ever worked here. Most of my work took me to Illinois, Texas, Louisiana, Georgia and Canada – all states and countries with strong production hubs and strong production incentives and well-managed film offices. Why? It was cheaper to do business there, than to do business here.

There's a stereotype that people don't want their tax dollars to leave the state to support "rich Hollywood elites". I certainly don't want that either. (And for folks paying attention, those Hollywood "elites" are in trouble because of all the work leaving Southern California looking to shoot elsewhere. What an incredible opportunity for us!)

The fact of the matter is, the film industry is made up of over 122,000 businesses located in every state in the country, with 92% being small businesses employing less than 10 people.

Also, what these folks don't understand is how film incentives actually work. They work like TIF districts do to spur real estate development. Incentives work on two main levels:

1. They are used by producers to help bring investors on board a project. Like any IP investment, it's risky but offers a large potential ROI on the back end. Film Incentives help mitigate that risk, encouraging investors to participate in a project.
2. Once the project is financed and greenlit, production money is mostly spent at the location where the project is to be filmed.

The MPAA reported in January that the industry generated \$38 billion in public revenues generated from sales taxes on goods, hotel taxes, state and federal income taxes, and corporate income taxes. How much of that \$38 billion pie does Wisconsin currently get?

Further, Forbes recently highlighted a growing trend in tourism: the impact of 'Movie Tourism' or "set jetting". Expedia reports in its "2025 Trend Report" that a whopping two thirds of travelers say movies and TV shows have influenced their trips. Film Tourism is one of the most effective tools to promote a destination, says Marga Soligo, the Director of Tourism Research & Professor of Tourism and Sociology of Leisure at the University of Nevada Las Vegas. Just ask the Tourism Director for the Georgia Dept. of Economic Development, Jay Markwalter, "The impact of film tourism extends long after the cameras stop rolling."

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/brittanyanas/2025/01/22/how-movie-tourism-and-film-industry-impacts-travel/>

Look no further than Dyersville, Iowa, where FIELD OF DREAMS was filmed over thirty-five years ago. People still visit the corn field made famous in the movie and is one of Iowa's biggest tourism draws.

Getting back to GREEN AND GOLD. At the premiere screening in Waukesha and Sun Prairie this January, I had dozens of people, young and old, men and women alike, come up to me, thanking me for telling their story. They came with stories about growing up on a dairy farm or in a small rural Wisconsin town, or how their parents and grandparents were dairy farmers and the sacrifices they made. And with tears in their eyes, or as Charlie Berens says in the movie, "with wind in their eyes", they thanked me for telling and sharing their experiences, *their* hardships, *their* hopes and *their* way of life with others.

I'm here to tell you that our stories matter. Our Wisconsin stories matter. And telling those stories here, in Wisconsin, matters.

There's an old Hopi Indian proverb: Those who tell the stories rule the world.

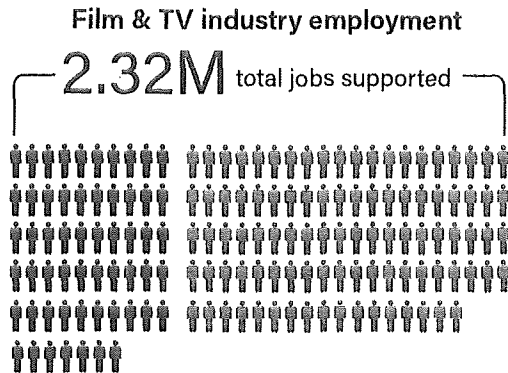
Please vote yes for these incentives. Thank you.

2023

THE AMERICAN MOTION PICTURE AND TELEVISION INDUSTRY
CREATING JOBS, TRADING AROUND THE WORLD



THE INDUSTRY IS A MAJOR PRIVATE SECTOR
EMPLOYER AND PROVIDES QUALITY JOBS,
WITH HIGHER THAN AVERAGE SALARIES



DIRECT JOBS

856,000

1 icon = 15,000 jobs

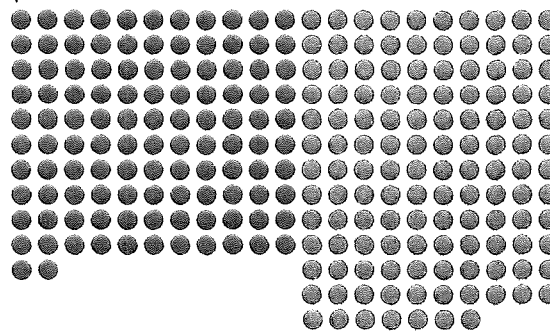
312,000 Direct jobs engaged in
producing, marketing, and manufacturing motion
pictures, television shows, and video content.

544,000 Direct jobs engaged in
distributing motion pictures, television shows, and
video content to consumers, e.g. at movie theaters,
television broadcasters, cable and pay TV
companies, and online video services.

Direct industry jobs employ more people than other
major sectors, including mining, oil & natural gas
extraction, crop production, and motor vehicle
manufacturing.

Film & TV industry wages

\$229B total wages



DIRECT WAGES

\$102B

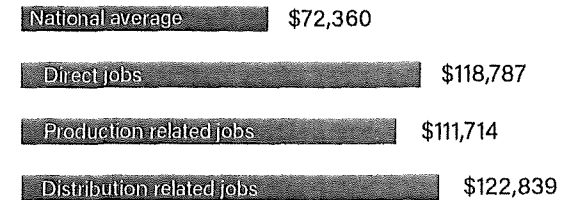
earned by workers
supported by the industry
around the country.

1 icon = \$1 billion

Total jobs and wages includes the jobs and wages
supported at thousands of companies relying on the
industry, such as caterers, dry cleaners, lumber
suppliers, and digital equipment suppliers, as well as
other industry related jobs, such as in consumer
products, video retailing, and theme parks.

64% higher salary than the national average
for direct jobs overall

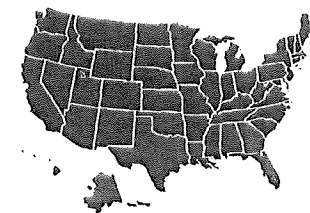
54% higher salary than the national
average for production jobs



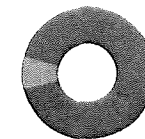
THE INDUSTRY IS A NATIONWIDE
NETWORK OF SMALL BUSINESSES

The industry is comprised of over 122,000
businesses in total, located in every state in the
country. These are mainly small businesses;
92% employ fewer than 10 people.

122,000 BUSINESSES



50 STATES



92%

Small businesses
employing fewer
than 10 people

Please note that the employment data was adversely impacted by the WGA and SAG-AFTRA strikes (May-November 2023).

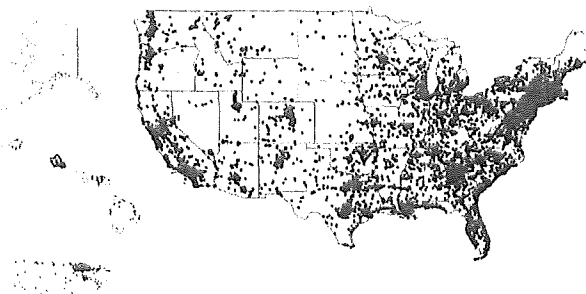
2023

THE AMERICAN MOTION PICTURE AND TELEVISION INDUSTRY
CREATING JOBS, TRADING AROUND THE WORLD



THE INDUSTRY SUPPORTS LOCAL BUSINESSES

\$21B IN PAYMENTS by MPA member companies to over **194,000** local businesses across the United states, in a variety of industries.



Each dot represents a business

THE INDUSTRY CONTRIBUTES SIGNIFICANTLY TO THE NATION'S OVERALL ECONOMY AND INCREASES THE TAX BASE

\$279B IN SALES

in 2022 (the most recent year available). If the industry was a country, its GDP would rank 48th in the world according to World Bank nominal 2022 data.

\$38B IN PUBLIC REVENUES

generated from sales taxes on goods, state income taxes, and federal taxes including income tax, unemployment, Medicare and Social Security, based on direct employment in the industry. \$6.2B in additional public revenues generated from corporate income taxes.

PRODUCTION BENEFITS LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Feature films - USA
Per location shoot

\$21.8M average total spend.

\$11.7M average local wages.

Local wages represent over 50% of a feature film's local spending.

\$10.2M average vendor spend.

\$802K on lumber/hardware

\$792k on hotels

\$660k on car rentals

\$425k on catering/ food, among other spending.

\$670K average spend per day.

1,483 average local hires.

Series - Global
Per location shoot

\$48.9M average total spend.

\$26.7M average local wages.

Local wages represent 55% of a series local spending.

\$475K average spend per day.

1,854 average local hires.

THE INDUSTRY IS HIGHLY COMPETITIVE AROUND THE WORLD

\$22.6B IN EXPORTS

\$15.3B IN TRADE SURPLUS

The industry generated a positive balance of trade in every major market in the world.

EXPORTS

3.1x

IMPORTS



The industry runs a trade surplus larger than each of the telecommunications, transportation, insurance, and health related services sectors.

6% of the total U.S. trade surplus in services

The production and distribution of motion pictures and television programs is one of the nation's most valuable cultural and economic resources.

Please note that the vendor spending data was adversely impacted by the WGA and SAG-AFTRA strikes (May-November 2023).

2023

THE AMERICAN MOTION PICTURE AND TELEVISION INDUSTRY
CREATING JOBS, TRADING AROUND THE WORLD



Methodology

Jobs & Wages Supported by the Industry

Sourced from detailed U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) employment data. Direct jobs are calculated from classification codes fully associated with the film and TV industry, as well as industry-related jobs and wages from codes partially associated with the industry estimated by using adjustment factors based on SIC-NAICS bridges, and other updates. Total jobs are calculated using the RIMS II economic model of the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA), which captures indirect/induced effects, i.e. jobs and wages that rely on the industry, and some additional film/TV employment in other industries (e.g. retail). The current analysis is based on their latest model (2017 U.S. Benchmark I-O Data and 2022 Regional Data). The national average comes from the BLS Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (2023 Annual Wages per Employee).

Businesses Making Up the Industry

Calculated based on Dun & Bradstreet 2022, the most recent year available, business listings data by SIC classification code.

Payments Made by MPA Member Companies

Aggregate of submissions received from seven major studios covering vendor payments in the U.S. for the applicable year.

Contribution to the Overall Economy

Sourced from Census estimates of annual revenues from employer firms for the applicable classification codes.

Tax Revenues Generated by the Industry

Calculated by applying the appropriate national and local tax rates to wages and taxable vendor payments. Corporate taxes calculated based on information in annual reports from companies within the industry (2023). Information on federal and state current and deferred income tax figures were used where available, or were estimated for the US based on total income tax if that was the only figure reported.

Local Production Spend

Sourced from production location spending data by major studios from 2017-2022 covering 90 unique film location shoots in the United States and 30 unique series location shoots globally. United States regional series average is not reportable due to small base size. Compiled from public sources and major studio submissions.

International Trade

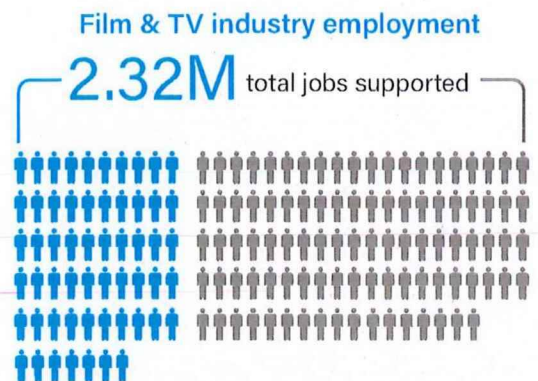
Sourced from the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) report on U.S. Trade in Services, By Type of Service. Includes licenses to reproduce and/or distribute, rights to use, and "audiovisual originals" categories for movies and television programming.

2023

THE AMERICAN MOTION PICTURE AND TELEVISION INDUSTRY CREATING JOBS, TRADING AROUND THE WORLD



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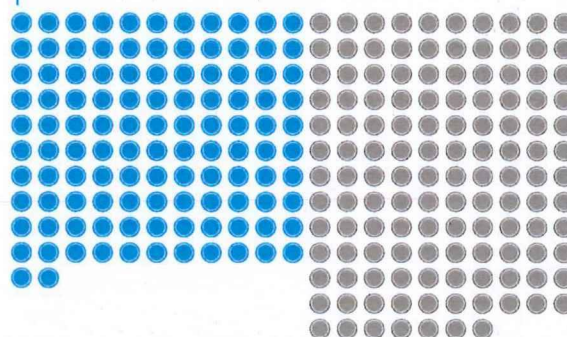
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Direct industry jobs employ more people than other major sectors, including mining, oil & natural gas extraction, crop production, and motor vehicle manufacturing.

Film & TV industry wages

\$229B total wages



DIRECT WAGES

\$102B

earned by workers supported by the industry around the country.

● = \$1 billion

Total jobs and wages includes the jobs and wages supported at thousands of companies relying on the industry, such as caterers, dry cleaners, lumber suppliers, and digital equipment suppliers, as well as other industry related jobs, such as in consumer products, video retailing, and theme parks.

64% higher salary than the national average for direct jobs overall

54% higher salary than the national average for production jobs

National average \$72,360

Direct jobs \$118,787

Production related jobs \$111,714

Distribution related jobs \$122,839

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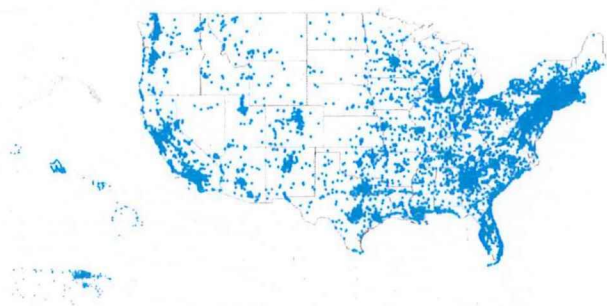
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Local wages represent **55%** of a series local spending.

\$475K average spend per day.

1,854 average local hires.

THE INDUSTRY IS HIGHLY COMPETITIVE AROUND THE WORLD

\$22.6B IN EXPORTS

\$15.3B IN TRADE SURPLUS

The industry generated a positive balance of trade in every major market in the world.



EXPORTS

3.1x

IMPORTS

The industry runs a trade surplus larger than each of the telecommunications, transportation, insurance, and health related services sectors.

6% of the total U.S. trade surplus in services

The production and distribution of motion pictures and television programs is one of the nation's most valuable cultural and economic resources.

Please note that the vendor spending data was adversely impacted by the WGA and SAG-AFTRA strikes (May-November 2023).

Methodology

Jobs & Wages Supported by the Industry

Sourced from detailed U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) employment data. Direct jobs are calculated from classification codes fully associated with the film and TV industry, as well as industry-related jobs and wages from codes partially associated with the industry estimated by using adjustment factors based on SIC-NAICS bridges, and other updates. Total jobs are calculated using the RIMS II economic model of the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA), which captures indirect/induced effects, i.e. jobs and wages that rely on the industry, and some additional film/TV employment in other industries (e.g. retail). The current analysis is based on their latest model (2017 U.S. Benchmark I-O Data and 2022 Regional Data). The national average comes from the BLS Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (2023 Annual Wages per Employee).

Businesses Making Up the Industry

Calculated based on Dun & Bradstreet 2022, the most recent year available, business listings data by SIC classification code.

Payments Made by MPA Member Companies

Aggregate of submissions received from seven major studios covering vendor payments in the U.S. for the applicable year.

Contribution to the Overall Economy

Sourced from Census estimates of annual revenues from employer firms for the applicable classification codes.

Tax Revenues Generated by the Industry

Calculated by applying the appropriate national and local tax rates to wages and taxable vendor payments. Corporate taxes calculated based on information in annual reports from companies within the industry (2023). Information on federal and state current and deferred income tax figures were used where available, or were estimated for the US based on total income tax if that was the only figure reported.

Local Production Spend

Sourced from production location spending data by major studios from 2017-2022 covering 90 unique film location shoots in the United States and 30 unique series location shoots globally. United States regional series average is not reportable due to small base size. Compiled from public sources and major studio submissions.

International Trade

Sourced from the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) report on U.S. Trade in Services, By Type of Service. Includes licenses to reproduce and/or distribute, rights to use, and "audiovisual originals" categories for movies and television programming.

RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF A FILM AND TELEVISION PRODUCTION INCENTIVE PROGRAM AND THE REESTABLISHMENT OF A WISCONSIN FILM OFFICE.

WHEREAS, Wisconsin is currently one of only 13 states in the nation without a film production incentive program and one of just three states without a designated film office, placing the state at a significant disadvantage in attracting film, television, and other media productions;

WHEREAS, the nationwide film and television industry is experiencing a geographic shift, with increasing numbers of productions moving away from traditional hubs like California and New York and seeking new locations in states with strong infrastructure, incentives, and community support;

WHEREAS, neighboring states such as Minnesota and Illinois have embraced this shift by creating or expanding their film offices and production incentives, resulting in immediate and measurable success;

WHEREAS, the re-establishment of a Wisconsin Film Office would provide critical coordination and logistical support to incoming productions by helping them locate in-state crew, infrastructure, locations, and permitting resources, ensuring that economic benefits are directed to local businesses and workers;

WHEREAS, a statewide incentive program would further catalyze growth in the film and television industry by encouraging investment and enabling Wisconsin to compete effectively with neighboring states;

WHEREAS, productions that come to Wisconsin inject substantial spending into the local economy benefiting hotels, restaurants, caterers, retailers, and other small businesses directly;

WHEREAS, there is a growing and sustained demand for modest-budget, family-friendly, and holiday-themed films, a market segment that aligns particularly well with Wisconsin's communities, natural landscapes, and seasonal backdrop;

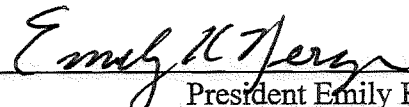
WHEREAS, Eau Claire's vibrant arts community, scenic environment, and hospitality infrastructure make it a prime location to benefit from renewed investment in Wisconsin's creative economy, especially with the support of a statewide film office and incentive program;

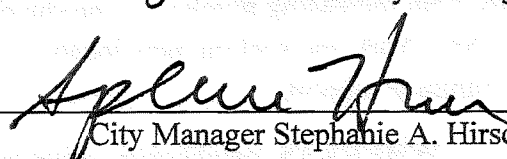
NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the City Council of the City of Eau Claire hereby expresses its strong support for the reestablishment of a Wisconsin Film Office and the creation of a statewide film and television production incentive program;

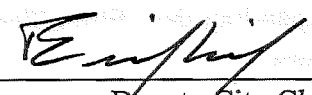
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City of Eau Claire urges the Wisconsin State Legislature to take swift action to fund and implement both initiatives, recognizing their potential to drive economic development, support local small businesses, and position Wisconsin as a competitive and welcoming destination for media production;

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution will be sent to Governor Tony Evers, members of the Joint Finance Committee, the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation, representatives of Action Wisconsin, and other pertinent parties.

Adopted,
May 13, 2025

(SEAL) 
President Emily K. Berge

(SEAL) 
City Manager Stephanie A. Hirsch

(ATTESTED) 
Deputy City Clerk Eric J. Gilge



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Email: league@lwm-info.org
Website: lwm-info.org

To: Senate Committee on Utilities and Tourism
From: Toni Herkert, Government Affairs Director, and Evan Miller, Government Affairs Specialist
League of Wisconsin Municipalities
Date: May 20, 2025
RE: Senate Bill 231 - Film Production Tax Credit and State Film Office

Chairman Bradley, Vice-Chair Feyen, 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 Senate 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, 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 a workforce driver. 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.

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'd like to thank Senators Bradley and Testin and Representatives Armstrong, Callahan, and Hurd for authoring Senate Bill 231, and we ask for your support to place Wisconsin on the map for more film producers.

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