

Dear Senators of Alaska,

I thank you immensely for all you have done for our great state & for the film incentive thus far. I understand the seriousness of our state's current fiscal crisis. I can't help but take extreme concern if the film incentive program becomes obsolete, as my career & livelihood will also become obsolete. I have had a freelance styling business in our state since 2010 thanks to the program & all the productions that have come up because of the program have been my entire source of income & means of living. I have spent hours upon hours training a plethora of Alaska Residents who are interested in the film industry. These residents are eager and ready to work, many have recently taken a training class in Whittier that was hosted by IATSE 918 & Relativity Media Training in hopes of working on the film, Hunter Killer.

As someone who has worked on both Big Miracle & Frozen Ground productions, I can tell you first hand the millions of dollars spent locally within the Costume Department budget. The amount of money I have spent in our local economy in regards to shopping for productions makes me so proud. I do my best to shop with local small businesses and I can't tell you the sense of accomplishment and pride local business owners feel when I leave their store with multiple vehicles full of merchandise.

The possibilities of economic and employment growth with a film incentive is endless. My film family and I have invested so much time and education into a wonderful reputation that greatly appeals to production offices around the world. Please, don't kill our industry and our means for living. The incentive and the industry works and has immense potential for even greater growth.

I thank you for your time.

Best,

-Tess Weaver | www.tessiestyle.com

February 19, 2015

Dear Senator Costello,

I work in the Alaska film industry and am adamantly opposed to SB 39 which would repeal the Film Production Tax Credit Program!

I understand how serious our current state financial crisis is and why the governor has suspended the program but to make that next great leap to repeal the program all together would be a costly mistake. Our financial situation is exactly the reason we need to continue the Film Production Tax Credit Program.

The film industry brings much needed revenue and new monies into Alaska. I worked on the movie, Big Miracle. A smaller budget film, Big Miracle, spent \$16 million in Alaska during filming. A much bigger budget film like Hunter Killer, scheduled to film in Whittier in the spring, has the potential to bring in many more millions of dollars than that while providing Alaskan jobs and economic opportunities for Alaskan businesses.

In 2014, \$800 million dollars was added to the state economy in Louisiana from film and television production in the state. That kind of revenue would go a long way to improving the financial health of Alaska. But if the Film Production Tax Credit Program is repealed, producers will not come to Alaska to film their projects and we lose out on millions of dollars and any chance of building a viable, sustaining industry at a time when we need to diversify our economy in Alaska.

SB 39 is unnecessary and short- sighted. The Film Production and Tax Credit Program has already been sunset for review and reconsideration. Representative Steve Thompson's HB 306 "sunset bill" or "indirect expenditure" bill from last session sunsets the program in 2018. No applications are currently being pre-approved and any transferable tax credits that have been issued may be years away from being cashed in. Before each tax credit is issued, three audits and verifications are conducted. The entire program is audited! There is an audit from the Alaska Division of Legislative Audit due to the Alaska Legislature in 2017.

The Film Production Tax Credit Program was improved and further “Alaskanized” by now Senator Mia Costello and the House Finance Committee during the 27th Alaska Legislature. Her improvements included provisions for more Alaska hire and more oversight of whether each production is in the best interest of the state with the creation of the Alaska Film Incentive Review Commission.

Tax credits are prospective. The tax credits are not awarded until a production has spent the dollars in our state and the spend has been audited, verified, and voted on by the four commissioners.

As of right now, Governor Bill Walker has suspended the Alaska Film Production Tax Credit Program. The best course of action is to leave the program on the books as it has been working! To repeal the program now would kill a growing industry that brings millions of dollars of revenue into the state, diversifies our economy, and provides jobs and additional economic opportunities for Alaskan companies. Without the Film Production Tax Credit Program, I am out of work and can't support my family. Kill SB 39, don't kill the Alaska film industry!

Sincerely,

Karen Tallent

Dear Senator Mia Costello,

Thank you for taking the time to read and consider my letter. Your time is much appreciated. I am a film student at the University of Alaska Fairbanks and I am in my first year of college. When I heard about the issues going on with Alaska's state tax incentives and how it is affecting the film industry and programs here in Alaska, my heart broke.

Since my senior year of high school I have committed and dedicated my future career to the film industry. My goal is to direct and write. I desire to create films that impact people through social relevance. I hope to allow people to visually gain new perspectives and ideals on life. Besides the amount of inspiration and thoughtful perspectives that film gives us, it also creates jobs in Alaska.

I worked on my first professional film set at the age of 17, a week after I graduated from West Valley High School in Fairbanks, AK. I have never heard of another young person my age being able to work on a film set anywhere else, other than Alaska, as a respected and equal crewmember. This is the opportunity that only the Alaskan film industry has provided me with. Not only have I received crew jobs within the last year, I have also received acting gigs. Not only does this aide me in paying for college, it also allows me to work with people from different background and cultures, helping me to appreciate the diversity of Alaska. These opportunities are also helping me to build my resume in college rather than waiting till I graduate to start working. The film industry here in Alaska is my future. Without the film industry here in Alaska, many people will be without jobs. Without film, it is difficult to educate people on the unique aspects and stories of Alaska on a global scale. Please support the film industry and programs here in Alaska as you gather to discuss the tax incentives tomorrow. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Kirsten Michelle

Dear Senator Costello,

I am writing concerning the Alaska Film Production Tax Credit Program. Please accept my comments in favor of the program and encouragement to keep the program intact.

Of course, we Alaskans, understand the difficult fiscal situation the State of Alaska faces. That is why programs like the Film Production Tax Credit are so important. This is an opportunity to provide jobs, income, and revenue to many Alaskans across many different sectors and industries.

My husband and I run a charter business and cafe in Whittier Alaska. Over the years we have had several opportunities to work with film projects of all sizes (commercials, reality programs, and feature film productions). Much of the work has come during the winter and early spring before our normal seasonal operation begins. That means I make payroll in months there would normally be no payroll, I pay City taxes in months when there would normally be no tax revenue, I order goods and services for our operation in months there would not normally be need. To our small business this may equal business in the “thousands” of dollars. But to our employees that means making rent, maybe eating out at a local restaurant, or buying a new pair of shoes – in other words, commerce.

Our vessel was used in one episode of “Alaska the Last Frontier.” We have received numerous reservations after seeing our unique landing craft vessel on the program and still today, after two years, field calls about that program. We took some of the cast from Frozen Ground on a sightseeing cruise and received a listing in the credits. I didn’t even realize we were in the credits until I received an inquiry letting me know they saw our company listed.

I understand the philosophical differences of the tax incentive – Is it good for State Government or is it good for the State. I believe there is no denying that millions of dollars coming into the State and being spread across many different sectors – is very good for the State.

In a time when oil revenue and jobs are questionable, it is responsible and prudent to look for ways to diversify our economy. The film industry offers those opportunities. I would also like to point out the marketing value the film industry offers Alaska, show casing our State for future tourism.

I appreciate your time and consideration.

Kelly Bender

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Hello,

Please retain the existing film bill i.e give it a chance to work. If after a period of time and careful analysis, it subsequently does not support the best interests of Alaska, let it expire. Please do not kill the film incentive program outright, suspend if necessary. As Jay Hammond articulated in his autobiography (referring to state income tax) "suspend it but don't take it off the books". If the film incentive program is killed we'll never get it back essentially killing a nascent industry. I'd certainly call to testify however I'm unable as I'm in Washington DC on business (where it is colder than Anchorage).

Thank You

Jim Robinson

Dear Senator Costello,

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter. I realize that your time is very valuable.

I'm Michael Downing, a senior at Homer High School. I am asking you to vote against Senate Bill 39 to repeal the film production tax credit. I realize that our state's income has suffered with the recent decrease in oil prices, but this bill will hurt the economy even more. By eliminating the tax credit, our growing film industry will come to a sudden stop, destroying any chance of creating new Alaska-based film companies and forcing the new generation of Alaskan film enthusiasts to leave our amazing state. I am an aspiring film maker, who is only a few short months from graduating high school, and leaving for college, probably in California. I am going to California, because I know that there the film industry is strong and it saddens me that I have to leave my home in beautiful Alaska in order to train for a successful career. I hope to be able to return home and achieve that success in the breathtaking environment of Alaska and share the magnificence of our home through film and television.

In the past six years since the introduction of the tax credit 18 new TV series have been created in Alaska proving that these reality shows have clearly established a large audience that is fascinated by the lifestyle (regardless if they are obviously staged and inaccurate portrayals of everyday life). In the past few years, two new popular TV dramas, *The Americans* and *Allegiance*, have gained popularity for their plots of Russian spies in the United States due to Russia's aggressive activity in neighboring countries. If our new Cold War continues, this genre is sure to grow in popularity making Alaska the go-to location. This is already happening with the film being produced and filmed in Whittier this summer. What an impact on that community's economy and for the many Alaskans who are working on the film. We have suffered the embarrassment over the years of "Alaskan" film like *The Grey* with Liam Neeson shot in Canada (and grossing \$50 million).

Alaska has world-wide appeal and our new film industry is just getting started. The film production tax credit is pro-business and an investment that will far exceed the loss of income from a higher tax. Maybe I will be able to afford filming a major motion picture here one day.

Michael Downing

Homer, Alaska