



PRODUCTION INITIATIVES ASSOCIATION

Re: Testimony Before the Joint Legislative Budget Hearing – Economic Development

New York State Legislators,

Respectively, we the members of the Production Initiatives Association, write to express our support for the Governor's proposed extension and enhancements to the New York State Film and TV Production Tax Credit program. PIA is a group dedicated to empowering small businesses, vendors, and freelancers who are the backbone of the film and television industry.

Our membership—made up of vendors, small business owners, and freelancers—has been deeply impacted by the decline in production work. As tax credits expand globally and lower costs abroad make international markets more attractive, our industry faces increasing challenges. Coupled with the recent contraction of the domestic production landscape, the need for strong tax incentives has never been more critical.

To protect film and television jobs and sustain the production industry in the United States—especially in New York—these incentives are essential. Productions depend on them to stay competitive, viable, and to continue creating opportunities for the countless professionals who make this industry thrive.

New York's film tax credit program is a proven economic driver, generating billions of dollars and sustaining thousands of jobs across the state. We strongly support the proposed budget measures to strengthen and extend this program, including:

- Remove the tiered payout structure for new applicants when paying tax credits;
- Ensure credits are paid to applicants within one year
- Extend the program an additional two years through 2036;
- \$100 million incentive for independent studios;
- Make several enhancements to the post production credit;
- Provide a 10 percent credit rate benefit for long-term studio partners; and
- Remove certain restrictions on above-the-line qualified costs.

Additionally, we strongly urge extending the qualified programs to include non-fiction programming—such as talk shows, long-form comedy, music, variety, current events, and award shows—as qualifying productions. Expanding eligibility will further strengthen the state's competitive edge and support a wider range of industry professionals.

Thank you for your partnership in supporting the film and television production community and for your commitment to keeping jobs in New York. We appreciate your ongoing collaboration and dedication to maintaining New York's position as a premier hub for entertainment production.

Below, we have included testimony from our members, whose businesses and livelihoods rely on these essential incentives.

Sincerely,
Production Initiatives Association



PRODUCTION INITIATIVES ASSOCIATION

Membership Testimonials



Edge Auto was founded in New York in 2006 by two native New Yorkers with a vision: to become the premier car and truck rental company for the film industry.

What started with just one SUV and two employees has grown into a thriving business with a fleet of over 1,000 vehicles and a team of over 100. In 2023, we proudly became an ESOP (Employee Stock Ownership Plan) company, giving our employees a stake in our success.

Our growth and success have been made possible by one crucial factor: the New York State Film and Tax Incentive Program. Film tax incentives exist in nearly every state and over 100 countries, and for New York to remain competitive in the U.S. and global marketplace, we must strengthen our program.

While progress is being made, more needs to be done. States like New Jersey and Georgia offer significantly better incentives, making it harder for New York to attract and retain film productions.

The livelihoods of hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers—and the survival of countless small businesses like ours—depend on a strong, competitive film tax incentive. Without it, we risk losing jobs, businesses, and a vital industry that fuels our state's economy.

Rudy Callegari, Founder Edge Auto Rental.

Rudy Callegari
rudy@edgeautorental.com
360 Kingsland Ave
Brooklyn NY 11222
212 947 3343

NEWEL

Hello everyone,

My name is **Jake Baer**, and I'm a proud member of the **Production Initiatives Association (PIA)** as well as the fourth-generation owner of **Newel and Newel Props**. My family's business, founded in 1939, has been woven into New York's cultural fabric for over eight decades—providing antiques, furniture, and props to the film, television, and theater industries.

I'm reaching out today because our very survival depends on the **NY Film Tax Credit Program**. Like so many other local businesses, Newel was **incredibly hurt by the impact of COVID and the massive industry strikes**, which nearly forced us to close our doors. When productions shoot here in New York, it creates a **ripple effect** across countless small businesses and workers—from skilled craftsmen restoring antiques, to logistics teams delivering props, to set decorators, truck drivers, caterers, and everyone else who helps bring these productions to life. If these incentives were to vanish, productions would simply move out of state—taking all those jobs, revenue, and opportunities with them.



PRODUCTION INITIATIVES ASSOCIATION

We see firsthand the “**butterfly effect**” these incentives have on local businesses like ours. When productions choose New York, they inject resources directly into our communities, stimulate the local economy, and sustain family-run companies like Newel that have been contributing to New York’s creative and cultural heritage for generations.

Other states and countries have aggressively pursued the film and television market with their own incentive programs, and without a competitive NY Film Tax Credit, New York risks losing its edge as a global production hub. We’ve already experienced how powerful this credit can be: it allows us to hire locally, collaborate with other New York vendors, and continue innovating—ultimately keeping the entire creative ecosystem strong.

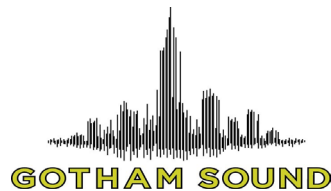
As both a long-standing New York business and a **PIA** member, I’ve seen just how crucial these incentives are to our shared industry. Without them, the future of Newel—and many other family-run businesses—would be in serious jeopardy, especially after the hardships brought on by recent events.

We ask for your support in **extending and expanding** the NY Film Tax Credit. Together, we can ensure New York remains a premier destination for film, television, and theater—protecting thousands of jobs and preserving the legacy of businesses like mine, which have proudly served our state and its thriving arts community for over 80 years.

Thank you for standing with us. Let’s keep New York’s production community strong—now more than ever, and for generations to come.

Warm regards,
Jake Baer

Fourth-Generation Owner, Newel and Newel Props
Proud Member, Production Initiatives Association (PIA)
32-00 Skillman Ave
Long Island City, NY 11101
718-395-1955
Jbaer@newel.com



Sound and Communications for stronger film incentives in NY

Gotham Sound and Communications supports stronger tax incentives for New York to help revitalize the state's film and television industry. Over the past five years, we have shifted from steady growth to financial struggle, forcing staff reductions due to the decline in local productions.

While Gotham Sound does not directly receive funding from these incentives, our business is deeply connected to the number of productions filmed in New York. Stronger tax incentives would encourage more productions to stay in the state rather than relocating to other regions with better financial



PRODUCTION INITIATIVES ASSOCIATION

advantages, ultimately benefiting the entire local industry.

GRANT WILFLEY CASTING, INC.

Hello, my name is Grant Wilfley. I'm here today to show my support for the Extension and Enhancement for the NY Film Tax Credit Program.

I was raised in Port Dickinson, a small village just outside of Binghamton, New York. My father, Jake Wilfley, was the mayor of our village. He always believed it was important to give back to your community in any way possible.

I'm here today as the proud owner of Grant Wilfley Casting, one of the large casting companies in New York specializing in casting background performers, also known as extras. I have a team of 22 employees who work diligently as casting professionals.

For the past 32 years, I've had the honor to work with many distinguished directors, such as Martin Scorsese and Steven Soderbergh, and currently with Steven Spielberg and Bradley Cooper.

I worked on the Amazon hit series The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel, which gave me the opportunity to return home to Binghamton and hold an open casting call for locals to appear as extras in many scenes that we shot in the Broome County area. That same show also filmed the largest TV background scene in the history of NY State television production when we cast more than 800 people for a USO scene shot in Long Island.

Grant Wilfley Casting has more than 55,000 NY state residents on file. Background performers make a living doing extra work. Many subsidize their income between stage productions and commercial work. These jobs are both Union and Non-Union and are so important for an actor's livelihood.

We recently completed the film Happy Gilmore 2, starring Adam Sandler. For this film we cast 15,000 extras to film at various golf courses in the state of New Jersey. This film was shot in New Jersey because the New Jersey tax credit was better than the NY tax credit. That's 15,000 jobs that could have gone to NY residents.

AVALON

We are a small, independent studio producing independently owned television series. I write to express my whole-hearted support for the New York State Film and TV Production Tax Credit program. We primarily produce comedy and have recently moved all of our productions with the exception of one out



PRODUCTION INITIATIVES ASSOCIATION

of NY State. This is due to the lag in the State's rebate turn around compared to our neighboring States, the more favorable tax incentives and lower costs abroad, and the lack of qualifiable shows.

Our indie studio currently has three outstanding tax rebates with NY State totaling \$7,729,440 and dating back to 2019. This is large sum for an independent studio and a financial loss having to pay interest on loans over a six- year span. All three of our series were half-hour, scripted comedy programs. In 2019 we produced a series for Netflix entitled, *Iliza Shlesinger Sketch Show*. We filed for the credit on 5/18/2020. The outstanding rebate for the series is \$1,024,566. In 2021, we produced *Flatbush Misdemeanors* Season 1 for Showtime. The completion date on our certificate is 7/23/2021. We filed on 2/7/22. The outstanding rebate is \$3,171,112. In 2022 we produced Season 2 of *Flatbush Misdemeanors* for Showtime. The completion date on our certificate is 5/11/2023. We filed on 7/18/23. The outstanding rebate is \$3,533,762.

Further, we produce variety, sketch shows and multi-cam Stand Up Specials which currently do not qualify in the State of NY but do in NJ, CT and GA, not to mention Canada which borders NY State and is a significantly less expensive location to produce.

Please support the Governor's proposals to help small, independent companies, remove the tiered payout system and qualify more content!

Gratefully,

Jackie Stolfi

SVP Production

jstolfi@avalon-usa.com



Be Electric Studios began as a small loft space in Brooklyn, built from the ground up with a vision of creating an affordable, independent space for filmmakers, photographers, and crew members to create. Over the years, it has grown to operate 12 soundstages, a full-service equipment rental house, and a virtual production division. This growth has not only created opportunities for our 30 dedicated employees but has also provided steady work for the thousands of freelance crew members who pass through our stages each year—grips, gaffers, camera operators, production designers, and countless others who rely on the strength of New York's film industry to make a living. The Governor's proposal to reinforce the state's film tax credit is crucial to sustaining this ecosystem. Without it, productions will seek more favorable incentives in other states, leaving our stages empty and putting jobs at risk. This isn't just about business—it's about the people who make New York one of the world's most vibrant production hubs, from our employees who keep Be Electric running every day to the thousands of crew members who bring their talent and expertise to our stages. Strengthening the film tax credit means protecting their livelihoods, ensuring that New York remains a premier destination for filmmaking, and allowing businesses like Be Electric to continue creating opportunities for the next generation of production professionals.



PRODUCTION INITIATIVES ASSOCIATION

Thank you!

Andrew Stern, founder & CEO
andrew@beelectric.tv



Motion Picture Enterprises, Inc.

My name is Julia Pilzer, and I am proud to represent Motion Picture Enterprises (MPE), my family-owned post-production house that has been serving New York's film and television industry since 1948. Founded by my grandfather, MPE has grown into a premier destination for post-production, providing top-tier editorial, color, sound, and finishing services for some of the most celebrated films and television shows. For over 75 years, we have remained committed to keeping our legacy alive—supporting filmmakers, networks, and production companies with the highest level of craftsmanship and innovation.

Post-production is a critical part of the filmmaking process, yet it is often overlooked when discussing the economic impact of the film and television industry. Every project that chooses New York for production generates significant work for post houses like MPE. When productions leave the state due to stronger incentives elsewhere, it doesn't just effect on-set crews—it impacts the entire ecosystem, from editors and sound mixers to colorists, visual effects artists, and finishing teams. Without a competitive tax credit, these essential post-production jobs, and the businesses that sustain them, are at risk.

It is important to note that MPE does not directly receive tax credits. Instead, it is the production companies that hire MPE and other post-production vendors that benefit from these incentives. When those production companies are able to take advantage of New York's tax credit, they are far more likely to keep their entire workflow—including post-production—within the state. This creates jobs, sustains businesses like ours, and ensures that New York remains a competitive hub for film and television.

Over the years, we have seen firsthand how the NY Film and TV Production Tax Credit has played a vital role in keeping work here, supporting not only our business but also the many freelancers, technicians, and artists who depend on a thriving industry. However, as neighboring states and international markets continue to offer more attractive incentives, New York must take action to remain a leader in entertainment production.

We strongly support the Governor's proposed enhancements to the tax credit program, especially improvements to the post-production credit. Strengthening these incentives will ensure that



PRODUCTION INITIATIVES ASSOCIATION

productions don't just start in New York—but finish here, too. By keeping post-production in-state, we can protect jobs, sustain small businesses, and continue to grow New York's reputation as a world-class hub for film and television.

Additionally, we enthusiastically support extending the list of qualified productions to include non-fiction programming—such as talk shows, long-form comedy, music, variety, current events, and award shows. Expanding eligibility will further strengthen the state's competitive edge and support a wider range of industry professionals, ensuring that New York remains a premier destination for all facets of media and entertainment.

We urge our legislators to recognize the full scope of our industry and the importance of supporting every stage of production—including post. With these improvements, we can continue our family's legacy, keep work in New York, and secure the future of post-production for generations to come.

Sincerely, ^L_{SEP}

Julia Pilzer

Vice President, Sales & Business Development

Motion Picture Enterprises (MPE)

Julia@mpenyc.com



EMERALD GREEN
IS THE NEW GREEN

Emerald Green Trailers is the first solar & battery powered trailer company servicing the film & television industry. We represent the fruit being borne from the New York's film tax incentive. As a new, high-tech startup, we chose to put down roots in New York state because the tax incentive helps draw the studios to produce content here. It cannot be overstated how important the film tax credit is in the decision-making process for producers when choosing a place to film. The financial incentives draw the productions, which create a gravitational pull for vendors to open and continue the job creation and local spending that help uplift the New York economy.



**PRODUCTION
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Please support the New York State film & television tax credit. The livelihood of many New Yorkers depend on it!

Keith Gordon

VP – Operation

Emerald Green Trailers

M: (917) 968-3177

E: keith@emeraldtrailers.com

www.emeraldtrailers.com