

I write today in support of HB 3329.

When I moved to Portland in 1993 as a working SAG-AFTRA voice actor and on camera actor, I was delighted to find the wealth of work here for union actors like myself. My ability to be employed in my field allowed me to put my daughter through school, cared for her after I became a single mother when she was in high school, and kept us both in our home. I was able to own safe cars, provide medical care and dental care for my daughter and myself when we needed it, and essentially live a comfortable, middle-class life.

Early in my time in Portland, I helped open the SAG office and begin my long service as Portland's national board member representing the union in this town. This is a role I still hold today,

My position on the local and national board has allowed me the long view of work in this market, and what it provides the men and women in this industry. Well past the performers that work on these projects there is the crew: everyone from the man holding the boom mic on set to the woman in the costume trailer; from the gang in catering, to all those driving the trucks and vans. These are citizens of Oregon. Average everyday men and women who work long hours, and often in very challenging situations... certainly quite often in the rain! Like me, these jobs allow them to care for their children, care for their parents, if necessary, and keeps them in their homes, whether owners or renters.

Show business is not sexy. It's hard, physical labor, broadly speaking, with long hours, and the ongoing threat of long downtimes. The people who work in this business do it because they love it. They work so hard, and devote themselves to creating the best shows they can on behalf of their own personal work ethic, and in the long run, on behalf of Oregon: because every film or television series that works here is an opportunity to bring more work to Oregon. This means the population that's employed spends money at the grocery store, the orthodontist, and restaurants, and on vacations to the coast. It's important to understand that well past the income of people working in this industry, the "stone in the pond" effect means that that income is dispersed throughout the city and state. If my industry is doing well, many other businesses, do well at the same time. This is one of the best revenue sources Oregon has. It is sustainable, low impact, and high return.

What our state currently offers interested filmmakers is not competitive on a national level with other states currently enjoying high production levels, and employing thousands of people as a consequence. Please vote up this bill, and let's put Oregon at the very top of the list when filmmakers are making their financial decisions about where they're going to shoot next.

When I moved here in 1993, this state was buzzing with film and television work. Let's bring back the buzz. Vote up HB 3329.

Mary McDonald-Lewis