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Dear Members of the Committee,

My name is Ime N. Etuk, and I am a local filmmaker as well as the Executive Director of the nonprofit Lion Speaks. I was born and raised in Portland, Oregon, but my career in the entertainment industry began in Los Angeles, California. Years ago, my wife and I made the decision to return home to raise our family in the place where we had roots.

At that time, the lack of consistent production in Oregon meant that I had to travel out of state for work, spending long periods away from my family. However, as Oregon's film incentive program expanded, so did opportunities for filmmakers like me. The growth of the incentive was a game changer—not only did I find consistent, high-caliber projects here, but I was also able to transition from being a crew member to a producer who now directly utilizes the OPIF to bring work to our state.

A couple of years ago, I directed and produced *Outdoor School*, a feature film based on a true Oregon story. The production created jobs for Oregon's talented crews, but it also did something more—it provided career-launching opportunities to individuals who are often excluded from the entertainment industry. Through a partnership with my nonprofit, Lion Speaks, we were able to:

- Provide over 20 individuals with hands-on industry experience, totaling more than 1,600 hours of work on a professional set—many receiving their first official credits.
- Mentor seven individuals into union eligibility and industry networking, ensuring that this was not a one-time opportunity but a true career pathway.

- Help five individuals secure paid work in their chosen career paths, landing jobs with organizations such as Travel Portland, Oregon State University, and the American Heart Association.

These are just a few examples, but the impact goes beyond the numbers. Kavita Parekh, for instance, was able to transition into the script supervisors' union and land a job on a Netflix feature right after *Outdoor School*. Abibat Durosimi, a commercial hair & makeup artist, was finally able to join the union, which led her to work on a Netflix feature and secure new commercial opportunities with Nike. Lorenzo Lowe III, a filmmaker who once struggled to break into the industry, went from being a production assistant to a Director of Photography on his first feature film.

This is what investing in Oregon's creative economy can do. These individuals—who previously lacked access—are now working professionals contributing to the state's growing film industry.

The proposal to increase the OPIF cap from \$20M to \$28M is more than just a budget adjustment. It is an investment in Oregon's workforce, economy, and local businesses. It means fewer Oregonians having to leave the state for work, more high-quality productions choosing Oregon, and a broader, more diverse workforce thriving in the creative sector.

Oregon has already proven that investment in film and television creates jobs that extend far beyond the set—into hospitality, transportation, catering, and beyond. Raising the cap will ensure that Oregon remains a competitive and desirable place for filmmakers.


I urge you to support HB3329 and the increase of the Oregon Production Investment Fund. This program has already changed the trajectory of my career, the careers of many others, and the economic landscape of our state. Let's continue that momentum and build an even stronger future for Oregon's film industry.

Sincerely,

Ime N. Etuk

Filmmaker & Executive Director, Lion Speaks

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