

Hi,

My name is Sean Rawls. I am a Portland, OR native and have lived here my whole life. In 2008 graduating from college with not a lot of job prospects because of the Financial Crisis, I was able to participate in a 6 month internship program at Picture This Production Services. Working on many local commercials and documentary productions I learned hands-on about video and film production and learned that I wanted to work in the camera department. This internship changed my life. I have been able to start a family, buy a house, and start a small business all thanks to this program. 2008 was a horrible time in our country economically, but it was actually an exciting time in Portland film. Productions like, Leverage, Librarians, Grimm, Portlandia, The Departed, and the first Twilight film, grew Portland's reputation as a viable place to shoot, but also our capacity to support productions. Before movies and TV shows will shoot in a "small market" they need to know that they can rely on experienced, professional crew, and access to the same equipment they would expect in LA or NY. As more productions came here, we grew as a community with experience and equipment to where producers could be confident bringing their national productions here.

I bring up this internship because I believe that previous tax incentive programs were critical in bringing the productions here that allowed me to stay here and pursue a job in the camera department, and not be forced to move to LA, as so many had before me. I deeply love Oregon, Portland, and the Pacific Northwest, so I did everything possible to stay here. I believe that even five or ten years before my career started in 2008 I would have been forced to move to a bigger market as there simply wasn't enough work here. Before, Portland film was a market dominated by local commercials and info-mercials. These genres are perfectly acceptable work, but they require so many fewer crew people than a movie or TV show. From accountants, to van drivers, to caterers, to set carpenters and everyone in between each movie and TV show employees hundreds of Oregonians. It also has a ripple effect wherever we shoot: we rent locations for shooting, locations to eat lunch, locations to park cars. Even simple things like the crew all getting dinner at a local restaurant wherever we happen to be shooting seems to have a huge impact on local businesses. This is why I would advocate for the increase to the tax incentive. For a relatively modest increase, the legislature can lift up hundreds (and probably thousands) of Oregonians.

In addition to the quality jobs, the economic growth of film production ripples throughout our communities. In 2011 I started a small business named Cinema Data Solutions to rent camera-specific equipment to productions. This business, while small, has continued running and I was able to rent a significant amount of equipment to the Amazon show Criminal while it shot here in 2024. Film production is built on a model of

owner-operators that maintain their own equipment, so it naturally creates small businesses run by the same people that are working on the shoots.

Our state has so much to offer photographically. We tell out-of town producers that if you drive two hours from Portland in any direction you can shoot any terrain you want: Urban chic in Portland, stunning beach, world-class mountains, rugged desert, some of the most beautiful forests in the country, and the truly spectacular Columbia River Gorge. People already want to shoot here. They want to come and sample our incredible restaurant scene after they wrap. They want to visit places that Portlandia made fun of. Unfortunately film production seems to have become a race for tax incentives. It's understandable that producers are motivated by their bottom line but in this environment Oregon has fallen behind states like Georgia and Michigan that offer over 80 million in incentives from what I've been told.

Much of this information you may already know. What I really want to emphasize is the huge impact this increase would have on my family's life. I worked as a Digital Imaging Technician on the Amazon show Criminal that shot in Portland in 2024. This show allowed my wife and I to start planning for a second child and make necessary repairs to our house in St. Johns and my wife's car. It is a tight time financially for everyone, and this show was a lifeline of good paying union work. Along with union work, comes healthcare, a safe work environment, and pension contributions. I have also heard that if this incentive increase doesn't pass Criminal will be forced to shoot elsewhere. This would be devastating for my family. I have been working as a Digital Imaging Technician since about 2009, it is a specialized position in charge of the safety of all exposed footage on a shot and if Criminal doesn't bring season 2 back to Portland I may have to move to a bigger market to have enough opportunities as a Digital Imaging Technician to support my family. This would devastate us as we love our community in St. Johns and my wife and I are both native Oregonians. Criminal also shot extensively in downtown Portland, Chinatown, around 82nd ave in SE and other areas that could use economic activity. It was great to once again be spending time downtown and even better to be working there.

This increase can provide a vital lifeline to working Oregonians. The film work it supports generates good paying union jobs that are so hard to come by in our current economic climate. I don't like the idea of excessive tax incentives for corporations, but this type of film work truly generates life-changing jobs for middle class Oregonians like me. I know you must be responsible with our states' budget, but I would implore you to consider the jobs and economic growth that this increase will generate.

I would be happy to elaborate on any of these points, sincerely,

Sean Rawls