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On Behalf Of:

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My name is Christina Kortum, and I would like to share my boots on the ground perspective on how important the film industry is in Portland.

I did not start in the film industry. For many years I was did IT support for manufacturing, and the company I was working for brought me to Oregon. I got involved in the Oregon film industry by accident, assisting a friend with a music video in 2006. My hobby turned into a full fledged career thanks to shows like Grimm and the Librarians, and I have gone on to win several industry awards because of my training here in Oregon.

What I have experienced and observed as both a worker and citizen is that film is an exciting and specialized manufacturing industry staffed with highly skilled, hard working creatives and technicians that then reinvest in the industry and the state. It brings revenue that offsets investment, and also brings positive attention and goodwill to the state of Oregon that is almost as important. People love film, and they are excited to learn about and visit the state where a favorite show or movie was shot.

Before I worked in the film industry, I did not know any small business owners on a personal basis. As the years went by, I watched as crew members around me started small businesses both in the industry and outside of it. My personal theory is that the film industry pays better wages than many employment opportunities in Oregon, the people involved are creative and not afraid of challenge, and this leads to entrepreneurship. In fact, I personally was able to open a special effects makeup studio without outside investment or a loan just by customer demand. For several years, I was one of the only woman owned fx studios in the United States.

That business in turn allowed me to open a second business not in the industry. During both the recession and pandemic, working in film industry saved our home and kept our family fed. It provided health insurance. The skills I have learned within the industry are transferable to other industries, and I have assisted other small businesses in the Pacific Northwest with technical training or advice.

The state film program made this possible. When the ceiling was raised, the customers come and I have witnessed this repeatedly over the years. My small businesses and others are testament to the fact that the program works and adds to Oregon revenue.

I have also traveled widely due to this career, and have observed first hand the incentive programs being offered to productions in other states. I am very proud of how Oregon has structured its rebate program to avoid pitfalls other states have experienced. It's smart. It works when it has funds attracting production to Oregon. However, I also see that it is limiting business growth with its current cap.

I recently had a meeting in which a production was excited that our state had crew, infrastructure, and companies like mine. They were thrilled that they could find everything they needed locally. The only thing stopping them from setting up for production in Oregon was worry about our film rebate running out before they could have their application reviewed.

Please allow the film industry to continue to grow and thrive in Oregon by increasing the amount of total tax credits. This is a industry that pays well, creates small businesses, and allows families to thrive.