



Rhode Island Film & Television Office

May 20, 2024

House Chairman Marvin L. Abney
Rhode Island State House
Providence, Rhode Island
02903

Re: R.I Film & TV legislation (H8180/S3004 and H7994/S2959 & H7339/S2327)

Dear House Chairman Abney,

Warmest greetings from the Rhode Island Film Office. Once again, we are grateful to you and your top-notch staff for your amazing support of the new James L. Brooks movie, "ELLA MCCAY". Your flexibility and leadership were immeasurable. Thank you!

I'm writing today to ask for your strong support behind House Bill 8180 (and its companion Senate Bill 3004), which will ensure that Rhode Island's Motion Picture Tax Incentive is fully competitive with the vast majority of other states offering incentives to the film/TV industry. This includes our competitor to the north, Massachusetts.

As you know, we have been working tirelessly for our Ocean State by bringing in high-profile productions like "HOCUS POCUS 2", "GOOD BURGER 2", the Emmy-winning HBO series "THE GILDED AGE" and most recently "ELLA MCCAY". These shows not only bring direct and indirect jobs, but they raise our beautiful location onto the global stage while also lifting our citizens' self-esteem. Furthermore, these programs play in perpetuity world-wide and provide ongoing tourism as witnessed with the new behind-the-scenes HBO's "The Gilded Age tours" at the Newport mansions.

For this to work and to be competitive with the thirty-nine other states across the U.S. with film incentives as well as competition from Canada and more than 100 other countries, Rhode Island's Motion Picture Tax Incentive program must be predictable, transparent and film friendly. Sadly, we have recently witnessed challenging issues confronting our production company clients during arbitrary secondary audits with Taxation after an initial audit was conducted by an independent R.I. State Certified Accountant who certified an opinion as stated by law. The Hollywood studios and networks have grown frustrated and loudly echoed that "The Rhode Island Division of Taxation is hostile to the motion picture and television industry!" These are their words which have unfortunately resonated throughout the Hollywood community.

STEVEN FEINBERG
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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That is why it is essential that House Bill 8180 passes, along with its companion Senate Bill 3004. We fully support House Bill 8180 and Senate Bill 3004, They match our Ocean State with our competitor jurisdictions, including Massachusetts. We can no longer be an outlier. It was mentioned by the Division of Taxation that we should emulate two outlying states—Maryland and Virginia. We disagree wholeheartedly. Those states are barren! They have minimal film production. It's like Death Valley. We should never be looking toward those desolate states as examples of film success. They are not! Please understand that we need to pass House Bill 8180 and Senate Bill 3004 or it will send a negative shockwave throughout Hollywood that Rhode Island is no longer film friendly and an outlier.

I am providing you with fifty-one letters of support of House Bill 8180 and Senate Bill 3004 as well as additional written testimony for the other legislation introduced. The Teamsters Local 251 testified in person of their support, along with myself and the Motion Picture Association representing the major studios, streamers and television networks. Some of these letters of support include our homegrown Farrelly Brothers, the executive producers of The Gilded Age, Hocus Pocus 2, Good Burger 2, award-winning actor Mark Ruffalo, Chambers of Commerce, various tourism boards as well as many crew, vendors and unions representing 1300 members, etc.

Please note that this is an important moment in Rhode Island's film and television production history and impactful on our future. We have great opportunities ahead but we need to act decisively now. I strongly ask for your support in this matter and legislation which will help us boost our film and television industry.

Warmly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the name 'Steven', written in a cursive style. The signature is positioned above the printed name 'Steven'.

Steven