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August 12, 2020

Request from NJ Film Commission

Dear Mayor:

I write to you today as a Mayor, the 1st Vice President of the League, and a member of the New Jersey Film Commission.

As you may know, the New Jersey film and television industry has blossomed in recent years, creating over \$400 million of revenue for the state and its municipalities in 2019 alone. Production totals and revenues are expected to continue a dramatic rise in the years to come, creating commerce for our businesses and thousands of jobs for our residents. Moreover, the industry is bringing much excitement to the state and enhancing the cultural climate, as motion pictures and television series film on attractive and interesting locations from Sussex County to Cape May.

Governor Murphy signed into law the Garden State Film and Digital Media Jobs Act in July of 2018, creating a robust incentive program for filmmakers, and that has played a major role in the renaissance of production that we are now enjoying. The state has hosted such major motion pictures as “Joker” and the soon to be released “West Side Story,” “The Trial of the Chicago 7,” “Army of the Dead” and “The Many Saints of Newark.” Television series filmed here in the last two years include NBC’s “The Enemy Within” and “Lincoln Rhyme: Hunt for the Bone Collector,” ABC’s “Emergence,” CBS’ “FBI: Most Wanted,” HBO’s “The Plot Against America” and the Apple TV+ anthology series “Little America.” And many new projects are in the works.

The incentive has leveled the playing field with other states and helped to make New Jersey a very desirable destination for film production. But the state has many other important assets that are attractive to filmmakers, among them the wide variety of locations available, our deep talent pool, and most importantly, the cooperation offered by the state and its municipalities. It is essential to any successful production.

The COVID-19 pandemic has hit New Jersey very hard, and altered the way we live. The economic hardship our state has endured (like every other state) is almost unfathomable.

But we are resilient and we will rebound. Moreover, we believe that the film and television industry can contribute substantially to our economic recovery. Studios, networks, and streaming services are very anxious to resume work in the state, and will likely be returning in record numbers. In fact, small productions have already begun filming once again, and big-budget projects will start production within the next couple of months. New Jersey is ready to welcome them, and we are working with the industry to ensure that they are adapting to the “new normal” by following accepted COVID-19 safety protocols – those required by the state, and those instituted by the production industry itself. The safety of casts, crews and the public is paramount.

We are hoping that you will assist the New Jersey Motion Picture and Television Commission in enabling crews to work within in your jurisdiction. Production companies can provide a much-needed boost to your businesses, and put people back to work. Last year, the industry created well over 10,000 jobs in the state, and that number will continue to rise. Moreover, the image enhancement that the state and its communities receive, thanks to widespread exposure on movie and television screens throughout the world, has value that is incalculable.

Commission staff members would be happy to speak with you and other officials from your town should you have any questions, or need further information. Although our physical offices remain temporarily closed, you can reach us at our email address, njfilm@sos.nj.gov, and we will get back to you right away.

Please know that your cooperation and support are essential to the continued revitalization of the film and television industry in New Jersey, and the state’s overall economic recovery. We look forward to bringing production work to your town in the near future.

Very truly yours,

Janice Kovach

Member, NJ Film Commission
Mayor, Clinton **Town**
NJLM 1st Vice President



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