



**2023 Joint Legislative Budget Hearing – Economic Development
February 9, 2023**

***Testimony by: Tim Clark, Regional Film Commissioner
Buffalo Niagara Film Office***

I'd like to attest to the enormous impact of the New York State Film Tax Credit Program in Western New York State. I believe I can provide a pretty unique perspective as film commissioner in a region that was never a traditional production center and as the immediate past chair of the Association of Film Commissioners International (AFCI) – an organization which allows me to interact with colleagues around the world.

Film tax incentives absolutely drives where movies and scripted television shows are made. I hear that from both foreign and domestic film commissioners, studio executives and independent film makers. The states and territories without incentives are usually ruled out when making decisions on where to shoot. In fact, before a competitive tax incentive was created here in the Empire State, movies that were set in Buffalo were shot in places like Winnipeg, Toronto and Southern California. Now Buffalo has doubled for cities such as Los Angeles - Hartford, Connecticut – Clarksdale, Mississippi – and even Martha's Vineyard.... I'd say that is quite a reversal of fortune for our community.

We are now a movie making destination... something even I never envisioned when I became film commissioner 17 years ago.

Motion picture production has become an important component of our new sector economy in Western New York. Hundreds of good paying jobs have been created, new soundstages and movie related businesses continue to sprout up in our region and a prideful community has been able to see our towns and cities shown worldwide on the silver screen and beyond.

Motion picture union ranks have exploded their membership. When I first started my job, there were a dozen or so members of IATSE – the movie mechanics union... now there are nearly 200 members. The theatrical teamsters local 817 have partnered with a teamster local in Buffalo to provide dozens of drivers for the many movie trucks that now dot our landscape... and the Screen Actors Guild, the Director's Guild and Producer's Guild have all increased their numbers dramatically in our region.

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I'd like to briefly tell you about a movie that was shot just before the Covid shutdown. The year was 2019 and we played host to Paramount Pictures and a motion picture entitled "A Quiet Place 2" which had a staggering impact on Western New York.

- They shot in Erie, Niagara and Chautauqua counties.
- They spent nearly 61 million dollars in our region... and that's new money from out of town – not local money recirculated.
- They hired about 600 people locally as crew, cast and extras in the movie – all making top dollar salaries.
- The traveling crew occupied hotels – an astounding 16, 480 hotel room nights. That kind of impact is bigger than most large conventions.
- They spent 4, 200 nights in area Airbnb rental properties.
- They rented houses, apartments, office spaces, soundstages, construction spaces, etc.
- They spent millions of dollars with local businesses like lumber yards, paint stores, caterers and the like.

The producers of "A Quiet Place 2" came for the tax credit first and foremost – and then the architectural assets of our region closed the deal.

The sum total spend of this project was 61 million but the impact was even more once you consider the travelling crew spending new money in our restaurants, stores, attractions, etc.

While there are some tweaks that need to be made for upstate areas from Albany westward, the New York State Film Tax Credit is making a solid and long-lasting impact from Long Island to Lackawanna...

I'd like to thank all of you on behalf of the thousands of Western New Yorkers affected by this new industry for your continued support in strengthening our economy through the state's film tax credit program.

It's been my privilege to testify here and let you know just what a difference you've made as Hollywood continues to take notice of every single part of this great, diverse and unique State of New York.

end of testimony