



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jeremy Cooney

NYS Senator Jeremy Cooney & Community Leaders Announce Support for the Empire State Digital Gaming Media Production Credit

JEREMY COONEY March 4, 2022

| ISSUE: **NYS SENATOR JEREMY COONEY, ROCHESTER, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND JOBS, VIDEO GAMES, DIGITAL GAMING**



(ROCHESTER, NY) - Today, Senator Jeremy Cooney (D-Rochester), The Greater Rochester Chamber of Commerce, Greater Rochester Enterprise, The Rochester Institute of Technology and community partners announced support for establishment of the Empire State Digital Gaming Media Production Credit.

NY Senate Bill S.4107A is designed to incentivize investment into video and digital gaming production. Currently New York accounts for only a small percentage of the \$43 billion U.S. market, with the industry projected to grow by 27 percent by 2026. Similar programs have been implemented in Montreal and Texas with positive results; generating jobs and increased investment.

If passed and signed into law, the credit covers 25 percent of the production costs of a digital gaming media production, additional 10 percent if the company is located in upstate. The available funding is up to \$50M per year..

S.4107A can be viewed in its entirety here:

<https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/bills/2021/S4107>

Senator Jeremy Cooney:

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Rochester is ready to begin the next chapter in our history of innovation. Thanks in large part to our world class universities, our region is home to some of the most talented designers, developers, and producers in the nation, and is uniquely qualified to become a new hub for video and graphic gaming production. We have the talent eager to get to work, now we need the companies to invest. This tax credit will spur the next generation of economic revitalization here at home, and will make New York State a friendly base for one of the largest growing industries in the world. I am proud to support this legislation, and will continue to advocate for its passage in the legislature.”

Senator Neil Breslin, Bill Sponsor:

“New York is home to some of the most creative individuals in the digital gaming industry. We need to find ways to further drive its expansion throughout New York State. The creation of the empire state digital gaming media production credit will help to foster an

economic environment conducive to this growth.”

Bob Duffy, President & CEO, The Greater Rochester Chamber of Commerce:

“Video and digital gaming production is an incredibly lucrative industry, and Rochester is already leading the charge in New York State and beyond. Our colleges and universities equip creative minds with the innovative skills and resources they need to launch successful ventures and create excellent jobs. The Empire State Digital Gaming Media Production Credit will make the upstate region an even more attractive place to do business, while organizations like RIT MAGIC Spell Studios and ROC Game Dev, thriving companies like Workinman Interactive and Aesthetician Labs, and a score of talented independent creators make up the Greater Rochester/Finger Lakes region’s strong digital game production ecosystem. We thank Senator Jeremy Cooney for his support of this strategic investment.”

Matt Hurlbutt, President & CEO, Greater Rochester Enterprise:

“The Greater Rochester, NY region has the well-trained talent and creative, entrepreneurial spirit essential to support its burgeoning digital gaming media hub. Couple Rochester’s long history of game-changing innovation with the proposed Empire State Digital Gaming Media Production Credit legislation will deliver a comprehensive suite of benefits to fuel the growth of this sector and attract new businesses to the region.”

Jennifer Hinton, Associate Director, RIT MAGIC Center:

“RIT students represent the future talent of the video game industry. These students, coupled with this necessary production credit will help to ensure that Rochester and New York State continue to be recognized nationally as a hub for digital game development. Without this credit, New York State could miss an opportunity to contribute to, and see economic impact from, a growing and thriving industry that generates upwards of \$140

billion annually.”

Victoria VanVoorhis, CEO, Second Avenue Learning:

Not that long ago, a video game called Pong was a novel idea that you could try out for \$0.25. Today, the video game industry has far surpassed the revenue generated by Hollywood. As a women-owned business, I've learned that this market is accepting of anyone that can produce engaging, quality games. The one thing you do need, however, is capital to fund development and distribution. This bill will help level the playing field so that New York State, and particularly upstate New York, can compete with well-funded tech hubs like Austin and Montreal. Success for us is not just profit. It's creating meaningful, rewarding jobs and bring economic growth to our entire community.

Noah Ratcliff, Co-Founder & Lead Developer, Aesthetician Labs:

“Finding funding in the games industry can be an uphill battle especially for new businesses. Teams like ours are often just scraping by project to project, and unfortunately we must dip into our own personal savings from time to time. The Empire State Digital Gaming Media Production Tax Credit will not only encourage investment and growth of the games industry at large in New York, it is the type of support that is absolutely crucial to the success of small businesses like ours. It will help us by giving us more wiggle room in our budget that we can use to build greater security for our members and grow our team in Rochester.”

Justin Wilcox, Executive Director, Upstate United

“Upstate United strongly supports this important and innovative proposal. The Upstate region is home to numerous digital gaming companies and some of the best higher education programs in the nation. Statewide, the digital gaming industry supports more than 10,000 good-paying jobs and has the power to develop a talented and diverse workforce.

Passing this measure will send a strong signal to digital gaming companies that New York is ready to level up its support of this growing sector. We encourage legislators and Governor Hochul to get in the game and enact this legislation."

Guha Bala, President, Velan Studios:

"New York's creative industries can be major economic engines for our metros throughout the State. In Upstate New York, our growing base of developer talent, entrepreneurs, and university graduates have helped to produce some of the biggest global gaming hits. Video gaming tax credits are a proven way to build on these strong fundamentals to retain New York's workforce, and attract top creative talent from around the world."

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RELATED LEGISLATION

2021-S4107A

- Introduced
- - In Committee Assembly

- In Committee Senate
- ◦ On Floor Calendar Assembly
- On Floor Calendar Senate
- ◦ Passed Assembly
- Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
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Creates the empire state digital gaming media production credit; creates the empire state digital gaming diversity job training development fund

February 02, 2021

In Senate Committee **Budget and Revenue**

Sponsored by **Neil D. Breslin**

Do you support this bill?