



FTA-PP-09: INCENTIVES FOR FILM, TELEVISION, AND DIGITAL MEDIA

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Adopt

PROPOSED POLICY: SUPPORT a state funded economic development program for Film, Television and Digital Media Industry.

BACKGROUND: Florida is the only state in the Southeast, and one of just sixteen states in America, without a program to compete for film and television projects which puts us at a major competitive disadvantage. Just two decades ago, Florida was #3 in the country (behind California and New York) for film and television production. The last program for the film, television and digital media industry sunset in 2016. Since that time, Florida has lost close to 100 major film and television projects that would have spent over \$1.5 BILLION statewide, created 125,000+ cast and crew jobs, and booked more than 250,000 hotel room nights. Florida has great potential for filming and has shown what it can do with the proper support. We are committed to working with legislators and stakeholders to send the signal that despite the recent losses, Florida is open for business and competing for high wage jobs in the film, television and digital media industry. Putting Floridians back to work at home, generating new revenues and increasing tourism is an important step toward growing and diversifying our economy. During the 2021 Legislative Session, Senator Joe Gruters filed SB 704 and Rep Dana Trabulsy filed HB 757. These bills contained the framework for a targeted program that would allow Florida to compete with other states (and countries) in attracting film and television production work. The pair of bills had more co-sponsors than almost any other bills in session. The bills received bi-partisan support and had the backing of the Florida Chamber, Florida TaxWatch, and Associated Industries of Florida. SB 704 passed favorably out of its first committee by overwhelming vote. Unfortunately, Florida House Leadership would not allow HB 757 to be heard in committee, killing the bills.

ANALYSIS: This is a state wide industry. There is a massive economic impact when a television series and/or feature film sets up in a location. When an average feature film or television series films in a location, they spend \$20 million in the local community while hiring 1,500 Floridians. One single production can put \$150,000 per day directly in the pockets of citizens and small businesses. This also generates significant local and state tax revenues. In 2020, the average annual wage for a film and entertainment industry professional in Florida was \$89,390, exceeding the state's average annual wage for all industries of \$55,845 by 60.1% (according to DEO's Bureau of Workforce Statistics and Economic Research). Our industry produces high-wage jobs, the type of jobs we believe have a positive impact on our state. Additionally, a 2013 VISIT FLORIDA survey showed 22.7% of domestic tourists in Florida said something they saw on film or television contributed to their decision to visit our state. A study from the Association of Film Commissioners International (AFCI) showed 20% of worldwide tourists are influenced by film or television when choosing their destination. In the decade since Dolphin Tale was released, attendance at the Clearwater Marine Aquarium has skyrocketed from less than 200,000 per year



to a peak year of nearly 800,000 while the additional tourism in Pinellas County supports 11,000 permanent jobs in the area. The Clearwater Marine Aquarium recently completed an \$80 million expansion made possible in large part due to the success of Dolphin Tale and Dolphin Tale 2. Over the next decade, CMA is projected to have a \$7.1 billion economic impact in Pinellas County including \$437 million total state and local taxes generated and 4.7 million hotel room nights generated. According to the Monroe County Tourism Development Council, after Season 1 of Bloodline was filmed in the Florida Keys, more than \$65.5 million in incremental tourism spending was attributed to the Netflix series from people that watched Bloodline and decided to visit the Keys. The Netflix series filmed 3 seasons in the Keys before being cancelled prematurely due to the state's refusal to extend a previous incentive program for the industry. Every year an estimated 5,000+ students graduate from Florida-based colleges and universities with film or digital media degrees. Those students, many of which attend state-funded institutions, are taking their degree and moving to other states to find jobs. Florida is home to 30+ colleges and universities with film and/or digital media degree programs. Graduates from Florida-based institutions are some of the most sought-after talent in the world. Those students are graduating and leaving our state to find jobs because of the lack of jobs in Florida.

FISCAL IMPACT: The "Targeted High Wage Production Program" would bring more high-paying jobs (\$89,390 per worker), widen the industry's impact on the state by giving a bonus for underutilized areas, enhance tourism by choosing projects that encourages visitation to the state, and encourage more family-friendly productions to the state – the kind of projects we'd be proud of. Selection of projects (vetted by Florida Film and Entertainment Advisory Council, members appointed by Governor, President of the Senate, and Speaker of House) will be prioritized to those offering the highest ROI and economic benefit. The ROI will be at least 1:1, meaning the state makes money while creating at least \$5 of in-state spending for each dollar. That's better than any similar program in the country. This program is performance-based– awarded to a project after all spending has been made in the state and verified, safeguarding the program.

SUBMITTING COUNTY: Film Florida

ASSIGNED COMMITTEE: FTA

BOARD SUPPORT: Yes

UNFUNDED MANDATE: No

PROTECTIVE OF HOME RULE: N/A