

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FILM PRODUCTION WORKERS & LOCAL BUSINESS VENDORS CALL ON GOVERNOR & NYS LEGISLATURE TO REINVEST IN EMPIRE STATE FILM PRODUCTION TAX CREDIT & MAKE THE SUCCESSFUL PROGRAM PERMANENT

New York, NY (March 2, 2009) – At a press conference that took place at the Kaufman Astoria Studios “Life On Mars” set today, film and television workers, union crew members, truck drivers, gaffers and shop craftsmen, set designers, set dressers, maintenance workers, location managers, production assistants, editors, actors, local business vendors and NYS AFL-CIO President Denis M. Hughes called on the Governor and the NYS Legislature to keep good paying jobs with benefits and economic development in New York State by reinvesting in the Empire State Film Production Tax Credit and making the successful program permanent.

The program has demonstrated a clear and highly profitable financial return for New York State and local communities. According to one study the state and city combined have allocated \$690 million in tax credits and have collected \$2.7 billion in taxes. The study also found that during 2007, New York’s movie and TV industry created 7,031 jobs directly and an additional 12,481 indirectly. The program is fiscally responsible, pays for itself and makes money for the state.

“We are here today to urge the New York State Legislature and Governor Paterson to make the Empire State Film Production Tax Credit a permanent program and uncap the funding to sustain and create thousands of jobs and continue to build a vibrant entertainment industry in New York,” said New York State AFL-CIO President Denis M. Hughes. “The program has run out of money and the governor’s proposed budget does not include an extension of the program. As the legislature debates the 2009 budget, it is imperative to give this program certainty for thousands of workers. We are at critical juncture. We are losing jobs right now, good paying, union jobs with benefits are leaving New York as we speak because of the lack of funding of the program for the highly successful economic development program that is a proven economic stimulus package over the last four years.”

If New York abandons or modifies the film and television production tax credit, it would have tremendous negative economic consequences. The highly mobile industry and the work will leave if the production tax credit program is not renewed. This important decision not only affects the union workers, but thousands of other workers who support this industry such as dry cleaners, hotel workers, restaurant workers and lumber yards.

“Popular TV show 'Fringe' already announced it will relocate because of uncertainty of the tax credit,” said Mike Easter, Teamster Driver and Transportation Captain. “The current economic climate is forcing everyone to make hard choices. But this is not a hard choice. The Program creates jobs and provides significant tax revenue to the state treasury. It is just the kind of economic push New York States needs right now. Nobody is asking for a favor or for special consideration. It just makes fiscal sense.”

“Since its inception, this program has more than demonstrated its ability to retain and strengthen our state’s already vital professional talent pool and crew base, by attracting thousands of jobs to New York State,” said Mary Rae Thewlis, DGA Unit Production Manager. “It’s in our state’s interest to sustain the production levels and to remain competitive with other states.”

“With the success the program, New York has seen capital growth in its infrastructure,” said Hal Rosenbluth, President of Kaufman Astoria Studios. “These incentives have kept local movie studios like Kaufman Astoria Studios fully booked, and have brought steady work to thousands of people in the industry. If productions continue to leave New York, not only will the state lose revenue, but it will return to the days of simply being a ‘hero shot’ state.”

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NYS and NYC now offer Film Production Tax Credit programs, which combined can provide qualifying film and television productions a fully-refundable tax credit equal to up to 35%. There are no tax credits for any cost for salaries for actors, writers and producers. The incentive applies to production costs incurred in NYS and/or NYC eligible productions: feature films, episodic television series, television pilots, television movies and miniseries.

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