

Joint Tax Credit Committee

Hearing on HB 2167

4/21/2011

Co-Chairs Burdick, Bailey and Berger; Members of the Committee:

My name is Lana Veenker, owner of Lana Veenker Casting, established in Portland in 1999.

I'm here to talk to you today about some of the benefits of film incentives that are *not* reflected in the numbers provided by the Film Office, but which demonstrate the economic ripples of our investment program.

- Firstly, I am one of only two or three US-based casting directors to have been inducted into the International Casting Directors Network, which meets yearly in Berlin, thanks to the high-profile projects I've cast in Oregon.

This has given my company an international profile, so I'm now looking to add new services to attract business from around the world. In fact, I'm in the beginning stages of developing a feature film by a local screenwriter that will require an international cast. I have already engaged a local, professional script analyst to help polish the screenplay, and a designer to craft new branding that will reflect our expanded services.

- Secondly, in the years since we cast *Twilight* in Oregon, I have earned income from *Twilight* speaking engagements, appearances, conventions, and workshops.
- Last February, I hosted an acting and stunts "Boot Camp," in anticipation of the needs of *Leverage*. That weekend workshop attracted over 200 attendees, bumping the Super Bowl off the front page of the Oregonian by the next morning. I engaged 14 instructors, a catering company, and event space from the University of Oregon, providing employment for IT experts, event coordinators and security guards.

A few months later, over 500 people attended a *Leverage* convention in Portland, with more than 900 at closing ceremonies. Fans from around the world stayed in hotels, ate in restaurants and spent money in local businesses. This event was so successful that *Leverage* producers are hosting another one this June.

Income sources such as these are not reflected in film & television payroll reports. But when I account for all the work my company generated in 2010 from casting *and* these related activities, our revenues were 229% higher *with* OPIF than they would have been *without* it.

If this program goes away, so will all of these revenue possibilities. As it stands now, OPIF funds only keep my company really busy six to nine months out of the year. The Governor's recommended budget would keep us fully booked year-round, providing more income for my staff, local businesses, our vendors, and actors.

Because I believe in this industry and the jobs potential it holds, I took a risk in February and invested in new casting studios, hiring local painters, designers, and handymen to get it off the ground.

I know that producers are desperate for new places to shoot, now that a few states have cut back on their incentives, and Oregon is ideally poised to swoop up these high-paying jobs—and the other revenue streams that come with them—*if* we support and expand the program.

So, despite my own fears about the economy, I'm investing in film, and I hope you will do the same.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

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