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RE: SB569

Commerce Committee Hearing 12/1/11

Good morning, Representative Schmidt, and Commerce Committee members. Thank you so much for your time today.

Because I am a Michigan native, and because I've worked in the film and television industry in Detroit, NY, and Los Angeles for many years, I'm here to offer my perspective on this bill, and on the film industry in Michigan. I am currently serving on the Advisory Board of the Media Arts Coalition of West Michigan, and I am the Director of Regional Operations at IE Effects, in Traverse City. We are a visual effects company serving the entertainment, commercial advertising, and themed attraction industries.

569 is a bill that gives you the opportunity to make it clear to the international film industry, that Michigan is still open for business. One thing it does, is address the needs of a very important and typically the most lucrative phase of the film, tv and commercial production process, which is *postproduction*. This includes -but is not limited to- editing and visual effects.

Our company has goals to employ between 100-150 people in our Traverse City facility by 2013, *if* our clients can be given the budgetary breaks that our *competitors* will give them. Our competitors do this by outsourcing their work to Canada, Japan, China, India and Australia. Those have become the visual effects capitols of our global industry. We choose to outsource to Michigan.

Here in Michigan, colleges and universities have come to us asking, "How can we create a seamless flow between our digital arts curriculum and your business?" They know that their students are getting the skills necessary for good paying hi-tech jobs. Their wish is that these students could stay and work in Michigan, and this is in complete alignment with your economic development goals.

We had 13 visual effects technicians working on the films Green Lantern and also on Harry Potter and the Deathly Hollows Pt. 2 last winter, and a couple of them were paid interns. Imagine, a northern Michigan high school kid learning how to convert a 2D film to 3D film on cutting edge software in Traverse City. That's the future of this industry in Michigan. That's creative technology putting its kids to work here in Michigan, the capitol of technological innovation.

The most important thing I'd like for you to come away with today, is that the reality about the film industry is that it is nothing short of hi-tech *manufacturing*, which means it's about creating good jobs. Most cameras used on films, tv shows, and commercials, are digital, which means electronics, and skilled technicians to operate them. In postproduction, we use hardware, and software, and highly skilled editors and visual effects artists. And together they manufacture a globally distributed product in a multi-billion dollar industry. An industry that does not experience down turns in ANY kind of economy.

Plus, we are a GREEN industry which requires little to no freight, no pollutants, no chemicals, or toxic waste disposal. We are and will always be easy on Michigan's landscape. Actually, aside from lumber for sets, the film industry uses almost no natural resources.

With your help, it will be industries like the film industry along with other hi-tech industries that will keep Michigan innovating and thriving for generations to come.

Thank you very much.