**Ohio Senate Finance Committee**

**HB 166 Interested Party Testimony**

**Greater Columbus Film Commission**

**May 23, 2019**

Chair Dolan, Vice Chair Burke, Ranking Member Sykes, and Members of the Senate Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide interested party testimony on HB 166 as it relates to the Ohio Motion Picture Tax Credit. My name is John Daugherty and I am the Executive Director and Film Commissioner of the Greater Columbus Film Commission.

The Greater Columbus Film Commission, also known as Film Columbus, is a specialized office under the authority of the City of Columbus with the purpose of promoting the region through the development of film, video, multimedia production, gaming, and commercial production. Film Columbus strives to enrich our community through the art and business of film by convening and empowering individuals, organizations, and businesses in the spirit of collaboration so that film has a measurable impact on the economy, individuals and community.

I would like to thank Senator Schuring and the Senate for the continued legislative leadership related to promoting the Ohio Motion Picture Tax Credit Program. Studies show that for every dollar invested in the Program there is a return of approximately $1.90. Ohio’s Motion Picture Tax Credit Program is an important state economic development program and I ask the Senate to support the continuation of the tax credit in HB 166.

In the House Passed version of the budget, the House aims to repeal the Ohio Motion Picture Tax Credit. The Greater Columbus Film Commission opposes the proposed repeal. Elimination of the Ohio Motion Picture Tax Credit would affect thousands of jobs statewide. Specific to Columbus, I have attached to this testimony a list of the more than 300 individuals and over 90 businesses in Central Ohio that would be DIRECTLY affected if the tax credit is eliminated.

The Greater Columbus Film Commission goal is to grow the film industry in our state and the positive economic impact it provides to the residents of Ohio…many of which are here today. And with the increasing number of brick and mortar facilities related to the motion picture industry in Ohio, including Ohio Film Group right here in Columbus and newly relocated-from-Los-Angeles Good Deed Entertainment in Ashland, the Commission sees the exponential growth of the local film industry on the approaching horizon.

The Ohio State University, Columbus College of Art & Design, Kenyon College, Ohio University, Wright State University, Capital University, and other institutions of higher education throughout Ohio will be graduating thousands of film and media students in the next five years and beyond. A repeal of the tax credit would send a negative message to these students that Ohio is no longer a place they can call home. Doesn’t it make sense to encourage Ohio graduates to stay to live and work in Ohio? I personally receive dozens of calls per year from industry professionals that once called Ohio home and want to move back to Ohio from California, Georgia, and Louisiana and beyond. They want to raise their families in Ohio.

The Commission’s recommendation is to not only keep the Ohio Motion Picture Tax Credit but to expand it and further improve the implementation of the Program to ensure Ohio is maximizing the positive economic impact of the Program in Ohio. The current demand for funding is high. Expansion of the program would create even more demand and spur even greater economic development statewide.

In conclusion, the Greater Columbus Film Commission believes that the Ohio Motion Picture Tax

Credit should be maintained and expanded to grow the industry whereby benefiting those companies that live in Ohio, pay taxes in Ohio, and recruit, hire and retain talent in Ohio. Promoting Ohio as a viable state for visiting local film productions and building local infrastructure, the state will become more attractive to year-round production projects from local production companies.

Chair Dolan and Members of the Senate Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I am happy to answer any questions you have at this time.