Montana State Legislature

Exhibit Number: 11

The following exhibit has several letters from several different agencies and individuals regarding HB 584. These exceed the 10-page limit therefore it cannot be scanned. A small portion has been scanned to aid in your research for information. The exhibit is on file at the Montana Historical Society and can be viewed there.

Montana Historical Society Archives, 225 N. Roberts, Helena, MT 59620-1201; phone (406) 444-4774. For minutes in paper format, please contact the Montana State Law Library, Justice Building, 215 N. Sanders, Helena, MT 59620; (406) 444-3660. Tapes and exhibits are also available at the Historical Society (tapes are retained for five years). Scanning done by: Susie Hamilton

EXHIBIT 11
DATE 2-16-05
HB 584

City Manager
Steve Golnar

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City of Livingston

Incorporated 1889

Chairman
Vicki Blakeman
Vice Chairman
Robert Ebinger
Commissioners
Mary Beebe
Steve Caldwell
Patricia Grabow

February 11, 2005

Representative Karl Waitschies
Chairman House Taxation Committee (HD 36)
Montana State Legislature
State Capitol
Helena, MT

Dear Representative Waitschies:

The City of Livingston supports House Bill No. 584 introduced by Representative Harris by request of Governor, Brian Schweitzer. The Film industry is active and present in the City of Livingston and we as a community and government are sensitive to the benefits that motion picture and television productions can have on our City and State. For the past three (3) years, Livingston has been the site of the Montana Film Centers Film Rendezvous which has brought professionals from the motion picture and television industry together to share information and also to identify ways of improving the industry and its presence in Montana.

The City of Livingston supports House Bill No. 584 which creates incentives to the motion picture and television industries to work in Montana and to employ Montanan's. This incentive will bring business that otherwise would not have come to our community and/or State and it will hopefully create an environment which inspires local productions and the return of film productions and crew members to our State.

We heartily support a "do pass" recommendation from the taxation committee for House Bill No. 584.

Sincerely,

Steve Golnar
CITY MANAGER

Cc: Bob Ebinger, Montana Film Center
Pat Wagman, House District No. 62
Senator John Esp, Senate District No. 31
Representative Bruce Malcolm, House District No. 61
Governor Brian Schweitzer
Sten Iverson, Montana Film Office, Department of Commerce
Livingston City Commission
Park County Commission

LOOKING GLASS films

February 15, 2005
House Tax Committee

Dear Members of the House Taxation Committee:

I have worked in the film industry since 1971. From 1988 to 2000 I worked on films in Montana until the bottom fell out of the market with run away production to Canada.

I was able to transition to network television videography and Forest Service productions, but many of compatriots were not so lucky. They either sought work out of state or filled out their time as construction workers and such between the infrequent TV commercials or low budget art films that still came up here.

I would like to see some state support of this "clean" industry; and providing incentives is the way to go. The nature of the film industry is fickle in choosing the lowest cost locations. Other states have been able to ramp up film productions by offering incentives. We need to play the game if we are ever going to provide work for the film professionals and small businesses that can benefit from more work.

Thank you,

Stephen Slocomb

Steve Slocomb
376 Zimmerman Lane • Hamilton, Montana • 59840
PHONE: 406-363-6196 •E-MAIL: video@montana.com

TJ Lynch
10782 Terecita Rd.
Tujunga, CA 91042-1465

- phone: (818) 352-0109
- fax: (818) 293-1693
- email: thinkzippy@comcast.net

January 24, 2005

Dear Montana Legislature,

I am writing to you today in support of the "Big Sky on the Big Screen Act." I am the writer of a screenplay entitled "The Beginning of Wisdom," a story set in and about Montana. Sten Iverson and the Montana Film Office has been working tirelessly with our producers in an effort to bring the production to Montana this Summer. As a native Montanan and graduate of Montana State University film school, nothing would please me more. If the Act passes, it's a near certainty the film will indeed shoot there. Should it not pass however, budgetary realities will most likely make it necessary to shoot across the border in Saskatchewan as was originally budgeted.

I have a second script entitled "The Froggy Doo Show" that is scheduled to go into production this Summer as well. Also set in Montana, it's a story based on legendary Billings kiddie's-show hosts Happy Herb and Froggy Doo, specifically the incident in 1969 in which string puppet Froggy Doo was actually kidnapped and held for ransom. It's being cast as I write. Unfortunately, it too will likely shoot in Canada, or perhaps in Louisiana where they've instituted their own film tax incentives, should the "Big Sky on the Big Screen Act" fail to pass. I have two other projects in various states of development as well, both based on historical incidents in Montana, both with name producers attached. And at this moment I'm writing my fifth Montana-themed story.

Indeed, my home state has been a treasure trove of both inspiration and material. I draw my work from its people, from their stories, from their way of life. I set my films on its snow capped mountains, in its little towns, on its trout streams and under its vast blue sky. It only seems fair, does it not, that the people and the places I write about should be the ones to benefit from their own stories.

I know there are those who consider tax credits for the film industry a giveaway to the rich. But contrary to what some may think, the majority of movies actually lose money. It's an incredibly competitive and capital intensive business. However, the communities in which films are shot, by way of both employment and economic stimulus, always make out in the black. Let us be pragmatic for a moment. Would Canada, Louisiana, and now New Mexico grant film tax incentives if it weren't a net positive?

Isn't it an irony that MSU graduates a raft of film school students each year, and almost to a person they're forced to pack up and head for the coast because there's no appreciable film activity in the state anymore? I believe that, if the "Big Sky on the Big Screen Act" were enacted, Montana would indeed again reign as Film Capital of the West as Governor Schweitzer suggested in his State of the State Address.

Like all the others, upon graduation I was forced to relocate to Los Angeles where I reside today. But Montana is and always will be my home. Our state is rich in history, strong in spirit, but at times has been short sighted to the detriment of its own citizens. I respectfully suggest it's time to stop outsourcing our stories, our college graduates, and our economic benefits to other states and foreign lands.

Thank you for your time.

TJ Lynch
Screenwriter - "The Beginning of Wisdom "
"The Froggy Doo Show"

Brandon L. Hanson
22 Tai Lane #14
Bozeman, MT 59715
February 12, 2005

Members of the House Taxation Committee
PO Box 200400
Helena, MT 59620-0400

Dear House Taxation Committee Members:

In lieu of my being with you in person on Wednesday, February 16th, 2005, I would like to submit this letter of testimony for your consideration.

I have lived in Bozeman for only 3 ½ years now, moving from Minnesota to pursue a degree in film at Montana State University. As with many local film school students, my plans after graduation did not include staying in Bozeman, let alone Montana. The general consensus among the student filmmakers is that Los Angeles is the place to be–after all, that's where the work is at.

Within the last 9 months, my career plans have changed drastically. I don't want to move to California, nor do I want to leave Bozeman. Two key people who have influenced me to the point of which Bozeman is an option for my future are Patrick Markey and Dave Goodwin. I have had the extreme pleasure and unprecedented opportunity to work with these two professionals that most people in the entertainment industry twice my age and experience would envy. Through these two generous individuals, my interest in staying in Bozeman has surpassed any other options that I was considering after graduating this May. Seeing their dedication to do great creative endeavors and helping to keep the next generation of artists, filmmakers and musicians here in Montana has been an inspiration to me. One such example is the tax incentive plan that countless people have worked so hard to put together. This plan would help to keep young creative minds in Montana and put the state back on the entertainment map. Two things that I feel are vital to the future of this state and its residents.

The bottom line is that I had no intention of staying in Montana because I knew the work I wanted to do was elsewhere and I didn't want to be forced to work minimum wage jobs around occasional film-related activities. Now I have hope. All of those hard workers behind this plan have given me, and every other film student to come, a glimmer of a future that not only makes it possible to stay in Bozeman and make it home, but to be able to pursue my chosen career as well.

I cannot stress enough this bill's importance to a lot of people, whether they now know it or not, and it is in the best interest of a young film industry as well as the notoriety of Montana to pursue it to the end. I hope that this and many more letters and testimonies will show you how great this is for Montana. Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Brandon L. Hanson

1117 North Emmett
Butte, Montana 59701
(406) 782-4149

February 14, 2005

House Taxation Committee Members
PO Box 200400
Helena, Montana 50620 0400

Dear House Taxation Committee Members:

Please support House Bill 584.

The TV and movie work that I do as a camera operator and camera assistant has been the main source of income for my wife and I for the last five years. Working for TV and movie projects, my wife and I have been able to buy our first home and help pay for my wife's teaching certification at UM-Western. I am proud to say that my wife, Amanda is a first-year high school science and math teacher. Without the work in TV and movies, we would have been forced to move out-of-state just to pay for Amanda's school loans from her first degree in biology. Jobs in TV and the movie industry are not good jobs; they are great jobs with pay that you wouldn't believe, but, in Montana, they are few and far between.

HB 584 would help create more opportunities in Montana for my family and others just like ours to stay, work, and raise families in this great state.

Please support House Bill 584.

Sincerely,

Kevin Curtis

Sandie Sharkey-Knox and David T. Knox
800 Schoolhouse Lake Rd
Troy, MT 59935
406-295-9536 email: sandie.david@frontiernet.net

February 14, 2005

Dear House Tax Committee Members,

David and I chose to move from Kansas to Montana nearly 23 years ago. We have raised 3 awesome daughters here, worked with teens in trouble, done family counseling, produced children's CD programs, consulted with the State of Montana on several projects involving teens and their families, worked in the school system and run a shelter care/group home. We have done all these things to make enough money so we could remain in Montana. In 1989 Steven Spielberg came to Libby with his crew to make the movie "Always" - this is where we began our most profitable jobs. I am an R.N., and I was hired as a construction/set nurse. At the time, I didn't even have a clue about the film business. This opportunity came along at a time when we were sure one of us would have to leave the state because our cash flow situation was critical! Since that time we have worked on 9 feature films, here in Montana, in Oregon, Idaho and in LA. David is in LA right now replenishing the cash flow situation once again.

I give you this background so you can get a handle on the idea that bringing film business to Montana is good business for the residents of the state. We have a lovely home and an awesome lifestyle - and a lot of the credit for this goes to the film industry. We do ask that you do whatever is necessary to help bring more film opportunities to Montana. This business is clean and does not rob our precious natural resources. The crews spend a lot of money on incidentals, gifts and even real estate. Please give this idea serious consideration.

If you have any questions about our experiences, please give us a call. We're most happy to do what we can to insure more filming opportunities are brought to Montana. Thanks for your time and energies.

Peace,

Sandie Sharkey-Knox and David T. Knox

February 15, 2005
Montana Film Commission

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter to express my interest in bringing "The Beginning of Wisdom" to Montana. Since I first became involved with this project, I have hoped that this film would be made in the state it was written for. And as a part-time resident, and full-time fan of Montana, it is my intention to maintain as much of the script's integrity as possible. I know I can speak for all involved when I say that this is an exceptional script that we all have the highest hopes for. We want it to look, feel, sound, taste like Montana in the summer of 1969.

Both John and Matthew Perry feel that Montana is not only the location of this story, but also a character in and of itself, and they would do anything to bring this project to its rightful home.

We simply cannot turn down an offer from out of the country that will save us money enough to put into other aspects of the film. Our aim is, of course, to make the best possible movie with what money we have, and what is *not* spent on the logistics of production can, for example, be put into one more day of shooting, those expensive but exceptional aerial shots of the countryside, or securing precise period vehicles

Help us bring the American western back to America.

Hopefully,

Howard Deutch
Director

February 15, 2005

Dear Members of the House Taxation Committee:

My name is Karen Thornburg and I am a Business Management Consultant in the automobile industry. I was the previous owner of Connell Auto Center in Bozeman, as well as the previous owner of Budget Rent A Car at the Gallatin Field Airport in Belgrade. My experience in the business industry spans 28 years.

I'm sure you've heard already about the economic boost the Film Industry can provide the State of Montana, therefore I would like to address another aspect of revenue to this State.

Every rental car agency pays a 4% use and sales tax for the entire revenue from a rental vehicle. This 4% is figured on the time and mileage, as well as an additional driver charge, child seat and ski racks. When a film production comes into a city, upwards of 125 vehicles are usually rented for the period of time they are here. In the past, we have rented vehicles for months at a time.

Using an extremely conservative estimate: 100 vehicles for 20 days at $39 per day rental is $78,000 in revenue - depositing $3,012 directly in the bank account of the Department of Revenue.

Please keep in mind the example given here is extremely conservative. It is my belief that Film Productions generate three to four times this amount - and please remember - this money goes directly to the Department of Revenue.

Sincerely,
Karen Thornbur