

EXHIBIT 12
DATE 2.16.05
HB 584

February 14, 2005

To: The Montana House Taxation Committee

From: Betty Ann Conard – Montana Film Professional
Manhattan, Montana

Re: HB 584

Dear Legislative Members,

I am writing this letter in support of the film industry tax incentive and jobs creation bill. With all of the “runaway production” to Canada, the film industry in Montana and the United States has lost billions of dollars that could be fueling the American Economy. As a result, numerous states have passed economic incentives to entice film projects and commercials to film in the United States. Such economic incentives have proven very successful in the states that have been proactive in this matter. Unfortunately, Montana has fallen behind other states in this regard and the economic downfall for Montana is both documentable and tragic.

Each year, as a film professional that lives in Montana, I find myself increasingly traveling out of state to work on national commercial projects. Additionally, fewer film projects are filming in Montana. It’s not that the producers don’t want to bring their projects to Montana, it’s just not as financially attractive as other states that have enacted economic incentives for the film industry. In the past 6 months, I have read 5 scripts for movie projects that want to film in Montana but are actively considering other states in the U.S. because they have existing film incentive programs.

For all of it’s perceived glamour, the reality of the film and commercial production industry is that it is a business first and that it carefully examines the overall economics of filming costs. In other words, the producers shop for cost effectiveness for each dollar invested in their projects. In this regard, economic incentives are critical to bringing more projects to Montana as well as producing projects that originate in Montana. Additionally, the dollars spent in Montana benefit a wide variety of businesses in the local areas where filming takes place and this in turn contributes to the overall economy of Montana.

I am a graduate of Montana State University in Bozeman and have earned a Bachelor’s, Master’s and Doctorate Degrees. As a resident of Montana for 30 years, I have 20 years of experience as a professional educator and counselor as well as years of experience in the construction industry.

More importantly, I am a Montana Film Professional who has worked in the industry for 20 years. My film and commercial industry experiences are varied and include Script Supervising, Production, Casting Director, Art Department, Animal Trainer, Wardrobe, Locations and Acting. I am a member of the Screen Actors Guild and IATSE Local 871 in Los Angeles. Yet, with all of my professional experience, I still have to travel out of state to work on film and commercial projects in order to make a living and continue residing in Montana. It appears to me that it is now time to reverse the trend of sending Montana's graduates out of state.

When HB 584 is passed by the Legislature and signed by the Governor, it will act as a stimulus to create jobs. This will improve the economics of the film and commercial industry as well as that of general businesses and communities in Montana. It will also foster improved opportunities of employment for cast and crew members as well as internship opportunities for Montana State University film students. The climate for economic development will increase and this in turn will produce a positive economic impact for the State of Montana.

Please feel free to call me if I can be of assistance or answer any questions. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Betty Ann Conard

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