

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

----- X

TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON TECHNOLOGY

----- X

January 21, 2015  
Start: 10:11 a.m.  
Recess: 1:30 p.m.

HELD AT: 250 Broadway - Committee Room  
14th Floor

B E F O R E: JAMES VACCA  
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:  
Annabel Palma  
Mark S. Weprin  
David G. Greenfield  
Steven Matteo

## A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Cynthia Lopez, Commissioner  
Mayor's Office of Film, Theater, and Broadcasting

Luis Castro, First Deputy Commissioner  
Mayor's Office of Film, Theater, and Broadcasting

Dean McCann, Deputy Commissioner  
Mayor's Office of Film, Theater, and Broadcasting

Barbara Blair Randall  
Park Slope, Brooklyn Resident

Caroline Bell, Owner  
Cafe Grumpy, Greenpoint, Brooklyn

Dawn Skeete, Owner  
Jamaica Grill, Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn

Matthew LeSorcier  
Business Owner, Brooklyn Heights

Charlie Sahadi, Owner  
Sahadi Specialty Foods, Brooklyn

Josef Szende, Executive Director  
Atlantic Avenue Business Improvement District (BID)

Lori Raphael, Vice President, Strategic Partnership  
Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce appearing for:  
Carlo Scissura, President & CEO  
Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce

John Ford, President and Business Manager  
Motion Picture Studio Mechanics Local 52

Angela Mealy  
Motion Picture Association of America

Neil Dudich, Eastern Associate Executive Director  
Directors Guild of America

Terry Casaletta  
Teamsters Local 817

Dana Kuznetzkoff, Member  
New York Production Committee  
Directors Guild of America  
Producers Guild of America

J. J. Simmons, New York Executive Director  
Screen Actors Guild and AFTRA  
Co-Chairman of New York Production Alliance (NYPA)

Howard Kolins, President  
Boerum Hill Association

Judy Stanton, Executive Director  
Brooklyn Heights Association

Bridgett Pinnell  
Montague Street Business Improvement District

Richard Mazur, Executive Director  
North Brooklyn Development Corporation

Joshua Astrachan  
Independent Film Producer

Danny Gordon  
Location Manager/Brooklyn Resident

Rolf Carl  
Greenpoint, Brooklyn

Steven Shore  
Association of Independent Commercial Producers  
Board Member, New York Production Alliance (NYPA)

Bruce Silverglade, Owner  
Gleason's Gym, Dumbo, Brooklyn

Prudence Katze, Project Coordinator  
Reinvent Albany

Steve Sands  
New York Newswire

Eva Radke, Founder and President  
Film Biz Recycling

Abby Kash  
Rock and Wrap it Up

Jen Hensley, Executive Director  
Association for a Better New York

Stuart Suna  
Silvercup Studios, Long Island City

Louis Owens, Managing Partner  
Brazen Head Bar

John Salmon  
Energy Systems

Greenpoint, Brooklyn

Brian Papworth  
Assistant Director and Producer

Richard Mazur appearing for:  
Margaret Kostecki, Deputy Director  
Senior Programming and Property Management  
North Brooklyn Development

2 [sound check, pause, background comments]

3 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Okay. Everyone  
4 please take their seats. We'll get started.

5 [pause, background comments]

6 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Please turn off your  
7 cell phones and put them on vibrate. Okay. And I  
8 want to thank you all for coming. This is a great  
9 turnout. So I appreciate your being here, and I  
10 first want to introduce myself. I'm James Vacca and  
11 I'm Chair of the Committee on Technology, and I do  
12 apologize for being late, but you have to blame the  
13 MTA. The 6 train just did not come, and my hands are  
14 the witness. Freezing.

15 Today, we're here to examine the ways in  
16 which New York City's film and television industry  
17 impacts our city's communities and economy. And this  
18 hearing will consist of getting your viewpoints on  
19 Intro 84 of 2014 by Council Member Levin, a bill that  
20 would require monthly and annual reports concerning  
21 film shoots. This committee had been committed to  
22 ensuring transparency at many levels of city  
23 government, and Intro 84 seeks to bring important  
24 film and production data to light.

2           First, I want to stress that I believe  
3 the film and television production industry is  
4 incredibly important to our city, and we would like  
5 to do all we can to see that it thrives here. This  
6 is certainly evident in that the State offers a tax  
7 rebate, and the City offers several Made in New York  
8 incentives. I'm aware that the industry generates  
9 billions of dollars, and employed hundreds of  
10 thousands of people. And additionally, the prolific  
11 amount of film and television productions shot here  
12 in the city has innumerable positive impacts. In  
13 many ways, the film and television industry is so  
14 important to New York City. And the films here  
15 represent our great city to the rest of the country,  
16 and in many cases to the rest of the world. With  
17 that understood, it's important to examine the local  
18 impact that productions have on our neighborhoods.

19           Council Member Levin and I agree that the  
20 agencies that enable productions to be filmed in the  
21 city should be subject to a certain degree of  
22 transparency. Many of these productions are filmed  
23 in residential neighborhoods disrupting the daily  
24 lives of some residents. In many cases, certain  
25 neighborhoods are over-burdened with filming, and

2 other clash with productions over quality of life  
3 concerns. The Mayor's Office of Film, Theater and  
4 Broadcasting, a segment of the Mayor's Office of  
5 Media and Entertainment is the agency that oversees  
6 production issues and issues filming permits. There  
7 are currently several protocols in place that require  
8 a film on-- That's filmed in the streets of our city  
9 to have police assistance, parking privileges, and  
10 access to exterior locations that are provided  
11 without charge. Notification of the temporary  
12 removal of parking is required as far in advance as  
13 possible, and residents and businesses must be  
14 informed at least 48 hours ahead of time.

15           Lastly, it is recommended by not required  
16 for productions to work with the local community  
17 boards to address residents' potential concerns. In  
18 many cases, productions happen without incentive, or  
19 will quickly resolve issues brought to their  
20 attention. But there are cases where moratoriums on  
21 filming have been imposed at specific locations. But  
22 the criteria for such a moratorium is not clear, and  
23 the locations it has been enacted often need to be  
24 analyzed a little further. So without data to back  
25 up anecdotal evidence, it's difficult for this



2 committee to ascertain just how big of an issue  
3 filming can be throughout the city. Right now,  
4 simple information such as filming locations, the  
5 duration of permits issued for those locations, the  
6 disruption of parking as result of individual  
7 productions and the studio or company behind the  
8 production is not publicly available.

9 Intro 84 would require the monthly  
10 reporting of such information in addition to an  
11 annual report with more detailed economic and  
12 demographic information. I hope to gain insight into  
13 these issues from the Mayor's Office of Media and  
14 Entertainment, as well as with industry and community  
15 representatives throughout the hearing today. We're  
16 going to have a thoughtful dialogue. So I do want to  
17 introduce the members of my committee that are here.  
18 I'm thankful for their attendance as always. To my  
19 right is Annabel Palma from the Bronx. Mark Weprin  
20 from Queens. Steve Matteo from Staten Island, our  
21 Counsel Mr. Reed. And I will first call upon our  
22 Commissioner who's here, Commissioner Cynthia Lopez.  
23 She is the Commissioner of the Mayor's Office of  
24 Media and Entertainment. And joining her are Dean  
25 McCann, Mayor's Office of Film, and Luis Castro who

2 is also with the Mayor's Office of Media and  
3 Entertainment. So I have to swear you in  
4 Commissioner. Do you swear or affirm to tell the  
5 truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth in  
6 your testimony before this committee and to respond  
7 honestly to council members' questions?

8 COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: Yes, I do.

9 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Okay, Commissioner.  
10 Would you please proceed with your testimony?

11 COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: Good morning,  
12 Chairman Vacca and distinguished members of the City  
13 Council Committee on Technology. My name is Cynthia  
14 Lopez, Commissioner of the Mayor's Office of Media  
15 and Entertainment. Thank you for the opportunity to  
16 testify about the work that our Office of Film,  
17 Theater and Broadcasting does to attract new  
18 productions to the city, grow the number of jobs  
19 available to New Yorkers through workforce  
20 development and foster a mutually beneficial  
21 experience when productions shoot on location in our  
22 neighborhoods. I am joined here today by First  
23 Deputy Commissioner Luis Castro, and Deputy  
24 Commissioner Dean McCann.

2           The Mayor's Office of Film, Theater, and  
3 Broadcasting was founded in 1966 as the first film  
4 commission in the country. Over the past five  
5 decades our office has served as the one-stop shop  
6 for the entertainment industry issuing permits for  
7 productions, filming on public property, providing  
8 police assistance, and traffic coordination, and  
9 facilitating production throughout the five boroughs.  
10 We also promote the city as the ultimate filming  
11 location. Our office develops educational and  
12 workforce initiatives that help diversify the  
13 industry, and serves as the primary liaison for  
14 production and local communities.

15           According to an independent study  
16 conducted by the Boston Consulting Group, the  
17 entertainment industry generates a direct annual  
18 spend of \$7.1 billion. \$400 million in tax revenue,  
19 and employs 130,000 New Yorkers. The \$7 billion  
20 fuels economies throughout the five boroughs with  
21 money spent on everything from renting stage space to  
22 filming at private locations from the lumberyard and  
23 hardware needed to construction sets to the furniture  
24 and props purchased to decorate those sets. Costumes  
25 must be bought or made, and those costumes need to be

2 dry cleaned on a regular basis. Hair and makeup  
3 supplies need to be purchased, casting crews need to  
4 be fed. One production alone spent over \$630,000 on  
5 catering from New York businesses, and another. And  
6 another \$365,000 on wardrobe. In addition to  
7 supporting the local economy, productions provide  
8 jobs for New Yorkers. These include location  
9 managers, script supervisors, camera operators,  
10 makeup artists, carpenters, set decorators,  
11 production assistants among many others.

12           This past year, the City hosted 242  
13 films. So far, in 2004-2015--In the 2014 to the 2015  
14 season, New York has been home to 44 prime time  
15 episodic television and digital series, including  
16 Orange is the New Black, Madam Secretary, and the  
17 Black List. There has been an increase of nearly  
18 500% in the past 12 years setting a new record. This  
19 growth has been accompanied by private infrastructure  
20 investment and expanding studio and post-production  
21 capacity from studios such as Broadway stages,  
22 Kaufman, Silvercup and Steiner Studios.

23           All of this production activity means  
24 several things. First, it means that more New  
25 Yorkers are working in solid middle-class jobs behind

2 the scenes and aren't forced to move away from the  
3 city to find work elsewhere. Second, it means that  
4 thousands of local businesses are supported by these  
5 productions. Small businesses across the city have  
6 told our office that the increase in production has  
7 been to a boon to their business. Some even pointing  
8 out that without the money generated from the films  
9 and TV shows patronizing their shops, they wouldn't  
10 have survived the recent economic crisis. This  
11 exceptional growth in production has strengthened our  
12 office's commitment to lessen the impact that on-  
13 location filming has had on local residents and  
14 communities.

15 In addition, we have created a number of  
16 workforce development and related initiatives to  
17 introduce more New Yorkers to career opportunities  
18 and diversity. The Made in New York Production  
19 Assistant Training Program has helped more than  
20 500 New Yorkers who were previously unemployed or  
21 under-employed gain access to the entertainment  
22 industry. The program, which was developed in  
23 partnership with the non-profit organization Brooklyn  
24 Workforce Innovation provides free training to New  
25 Yorkers and prepares them for entry-level position on

2 film sets and in production offices. Approximately  
3 95% of the graduates are people of color. The Made  
4 in New York PAs have recently worked on a variety of  
5 sets such as the upcoming Netflix series *Dare Devil*;  
6 *Odyssey* on NBC; MTV's new *Eye Candy*; and the Golden  
7 Globe Award winning series, *The Affair* on Showtime.

8 We're eager to assist the next generation  
9 of filmmakers and creative talent, which is why we're  
10 working with the Brooklyn College Graduate School of  
11 Cinema at Steiner Studios, the nation's first public  
12 graduate school integrated into a working film lot.  
13 Funding for the school is a result of an extensive  
14 public-private partnership among notable Brooklyn  
15 College alumni, our office, the New York City  
16 Council, the Brooklyn Borough President's Office, the  
17 City University of New York, and Steiner Studios.  
18 We're very excited about--excited that applications  
19 are now being accepted. A ribbon cutting ceremony is  
20 scheduled for the fall 2015. Another way we're  
21 helping create opportunities for New Yorkers is  
22 through the Made in New York Media Center by IFP.  
23 Located in Dumbo, Brooklyn, the Center is an  
24 incubator space for storytellers, creative  
25 professionals, and entrepreneurs across multiple

2 disciplines to collaborate and create new business  
3 opportunities. The Media Center is the results of a  
4 partnership between our agency, the Independent  
5 Filmmaker Project and the New York City Economic  
6 Development Corporation to bring innovation to media,  
7 digital and entertainment industries.

8           We also host an ongoing career panel  
9 series entitled Made in New York Talks in which  
10 students and interested New Yorkers have the  
11 opportunity to hearing first hand from industry  
12 professionals about how they started in their  
13 careers. To enhance the city's competitive position  
14 as a global sensor for entertainment production, our  
15 office works diligently to attract production through  
16 several initiatives.

17           The Made in New York Marketing Program is  
18 a unique initiative that no other city provides, and  
19 that directly speaks to our commitment to help  
20 productions from script to screen. Any project that  
21 shoots at least 75% of its work in the city is  
22 eligible to receive co-sponsored advertising. As a  
23 requirement for participation, productions donate to  
24 an organization of their choice through a partnership  
25 with the Department of Cultural Affairs to further

2 advance the arts in New York City. Through this  
3 partnership, New York City films and television  
4 series have donated more than \$1 million to local  
5 cultural institutions. Among the recipients of this  
6 cultural credit are Broadway Cares, Boys and Girls  
7 Club of Harlem, the Queens LGBT Community Center, and  
8 Women Make Movies to name a few.

9           We continue to promote New York City as a  
10 prime location for film and television production  
11 through partnerships with film festivals including  
12 Tribeca Film Festival, New York Television Festival,  
13 Urban World Film Festival, the New York International  
14 Children's Film Festival, Yes to the Bronx Film  
15 Festival and the Queens World Film Festival. These  
16 events offer exposure to filmmakers and producers and  
17 provide a platform to promote our services. To  
18 further encourage the production industry to support  
19 the local economy, our Made in New York Discount Card  
20 Program connects productions to local vendors that  
21 offer a discount on their services. There are now  
22 approximately 1,200 participating vendors in this  
23 program.

24           While our efforts have led to tremendous  
25 growth in the city's film and production industry,



2 we're also aware of the impact these productions can  
3 have on the local community. And we have been  
4 working collaboratively with elected officials,  
5 community and production companies to respond to  
6 neighborhood concerns. Our office makes every effort  
7 to notify communities in advance of local productions  
8 coming to their neighborhoods. When a permit is  
9 approved for production to film and hold parking in a  
10 given neighborhood, an automatic notification goes to  
11 the City Council member and community board with the  
12 location, date, and time of the shoot. These notices  
13 are intended to help local officials, and community  
14 boards inform their constituents of film activity in  
15 their area.

16 We are also working on adding the borough  
17 presidents to these notifications. We also require  
18 productions to post signage in neighborhoods to  
19 provide residents with information on how to contact  
20 the production directly with any questions they may  
21 have. We require all productions to be good  
22 neighbors. We have revoked permits when productions  
23 have failed to adhere to our requirements. To ensure  
24 compliance with permits, we send out field  
25 representatives from our office daily to conduct set

2 visits and inspections on parking and safety. We  
3 respond to every call, letter, and email we receive  
4 so we can remedy issues promptly. And every year our  
5 staff invites community board, business improvement  
6 districts and city Council members to our office to  
7 discuss any questions or concerns.

8           This year's meetings are scheduled at the  
9 end of this month. While we host community  
10 appreciation screenings, working closely with council  
11 member offices and community boards so residents have  
12 the chance to see their neighborhood on screen after  
13 hosting a film crew on their street, and share in the  
14 pride of the finished product. And we encourage  
15 productions to give back to the communities in which  
16 they film. In the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy, one  
17 studio donated hundreds of thousands of dollars worth  
18 of goods to local relief efforts, even bought blocks  
19 of hotel rooms to provide housing for crews whose  
20 homes were affected.

21           Recently, we announced a landmark  
22 partnership with the Teamsters Local 817 [coughs] who  
23 is-- who are donating \$160,000 to our office through  
24 the Mayor's Office, the Mayor's Fund to Advance the  
25 City of New York to support community enrichment in

2 local neighborhoods. One component of this  
3 partnership is the community give back in which three  
4 neighborhoods will receive \$50,000 each--[coughs]  
5 excuse me--to improve a public library, school, or  
6 community-based organization in their area.  
7 Additional details about this initiative will be  
8 announced shortly.

9           Throughout the year, we continually  
10 evaluate production activity and work with  
11 productions to explore different parts of the five  
12 boroughs. We're also working with Staten Island and  
13 the Bronx Borough President Offices to curate  
14 additional site suggestions to help filmmakers  
15 understand all the locations that the city has to  
16 offer. [coughs] To assess the impact of our work,  
17 we are analyzing our agency's activities on an annual  
18 basis as well as the overall economic development and  
19 growth of New York City's media and entertainment  
20 industries. We will be releasing this data later  
21 this year.

22           Our agency is committed to transparency,  
23 but we also share some of the concerns that members  
24 of the film and television industry have expressed  
25 about the impact of Intro 84, the legislation under

2 consideration today. The amount of reporting called  
3 for in Intro 84 could be seen as inhospitable toward  
4 the production community. It is my belief that  
5 further discussion is needed of what information can  
6 be released, and what form that information will  
7 take. We look forward to working with you to move  
8 that conversation forward. The film industry is  
9 incredible mobile, and our agency has worked  
10 tirelessly to bring this business and these jobs to  
11 New York City. It is important to make sure that the  
12 release of such information would not have a negative  
13 impact on a thriving industry that contributes  
14 billions of dollars to the city's economy, and  
15 employs thousands of New Yorkers. In the end, we  
16 feel the best approach is to continue to work with  
17 the City Council and local communities to find ways  
18 to share information that advances the interests of  
19 the city and allows us to remain at the forefront of  
20 the entertainment industry. I appreciate the  
21 opportunity to address you today, and I look forward  
22 to answering any questions you may have. Thank you  
23 very much.

24 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you,  
25 Commissioner. I'd like to mention we've been joined

2 by Council Member Greenfield to my left, and I would  
3 like to call upon the sponsor who has joined us,  
4 Council Member Steve Levin to say a couple of words.  
5 Council Member Levin.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you very  
7 much, Chairman Vacca. Thank you Commissioner. Nice  
8 to see you.

9 COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: Nice seeing you.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Good morning,  
11 everybody. My name is Steve Levin. I'm a sponsor of  
12 Introduction 84 a bill that requires the Mayor's  
13 Office of Film, Theater and Broadcasting release  
14 monthly and annual reports to provide more  
15 transparency about filming in New York City. And I  
16 want to begin by thanking Chair Vacca for holding  
17 today's hearing, for his hard work on this issue.  
18 And Commission Lopez as well for her outstanding work  
19 and for partnering with the City Council on making  
20 our city a better place.

21 For neighborhoods in the district that I  
22 represent, neighborhoods like Brooklyn Heights and  
23 Boerum Hill, Dumbo, Williamsburg, Greenpoint and for  
24 neighborhoods throughout New York City, film shoots  
25 occur on a regular basis. And while our communities

2 are supportive of the many benefits that filming  
3 brings to our city, film shoots can sometimes cause  
4 headaches for residents of the community where  
5 filming takes place regularly. Communities that have  
6 film shoots scheduled in their neighborhoods one  
7 after another are often left frustrated by the  
8 frequency of these shoots. And the questioning of  
9 the fairness of how many permits are distributed, and  
10 where they're distributed throughout the city.

11 Film shoots impact New Yorkers in a  
12 variety of ways, and it's critical that the impact of  
13 the film industry--that the impact that the film  
14 industry has on our city both positive and negative  
15 are made transparent to all New Yorkers. My  
16 legislation, Intro 84, would require monthly reports  
17 detailing the locations of all film shoot permits in  
18 New York City broken down by borough, community  
19 board, Council district and street. In addition, the  
20 legislation calls for a fully detailed annual report,  
21 which would include the data compiled in monthly  
22 reports, detailed employment figures related to the  
23 filming industry, and the cost and benefit of filming  
24 in New York City. All reports will be made available  
25 online and available to the public. By providing as

2 much information as possible to the public about film  
3 shoots in New York City, we can create a more  
4 transparent city government. I want to thank  
5 Commissioner Lopez for testifying as well as the many  
6 community members and organizations and  
7 representatives from the city film industry, and from  
8 community organizations who have joined us today.  
9 And I will now turn it back over to our Chair, Mr.  
10 Vacca.

11 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: We have questions  
12 from council members. Council Member Levin, do you  
13 have two or three questions first and then I'll go to  
14 the list?

15 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you, Mr.  
16 Chair. Commissioner, thank you. I want to start by  
17 asking just about how the Mayor's Office of Film,  
18 Theater, and Broadcasting tracks data. So do--  
19 currently do you--does your office track how many  
20 permits are issued per neighborhood or per community  
21 board? So, if I were to ask like how many were in  
22 Community Board 3 in Manhattan in 2013, could you  
23 guys tell us that information?

24 COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: Just in terms of how  
25 the database, if you will, is set up in terms of our

2 permitting system. The system used for issuing  
3 permits is part of a citywide event coordination and  
4 management. And questions about how the city can  
5 extract that data or provide reporting for that data  
6 is something that we need to further look into  
7 because for instance, there is a way to track, as in  
8 the case of when we generate automatic notifications.  
9 Where once a permit is issued that council members  
10 and community boards get that information.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: [interposing]

12 Right.

13 COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: But there isn't a  
14 way that's generated that you basically can issue  
15 reports. Because the system is not set up to issue  
16 reports per se.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Okay. And is  
18 that--that's a software issue, or that's a-- Is that  
19 something that-- Because it--from our perspective,  
20 you know, it seems as if, you know, you could almost  
21 go back and see how many emails were sent out to  
22 Community Board 3 in Manhattan, and be able to go  
23 look at it that way. I mean, you know, you could--  
24 there could be a labor-intensive way of having an  
25 intern or a staff member go back and look through all



2 the permits and say-- You know, essentially you're  
3 checking boxes. This is in Community Board 1. This  
4 is in Community Board 3, Council District 15, et  
5 cetera. But there's--you're saying that right now  
6 the software does not exist to do that automatically?

7 COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: I would like to  
8 defer this question over to Dean to describe a little  
9 bit about how our system works.

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MCCANN: It's not so  
11 much a question of software. The system was created  
12 to generate permits. It's a citywide database. It  
13 works for the Parks Department, the Police  
14 Department, the Film Office, the Street Activity  
15 Permit office.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Uh-huh.

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MCCANN: It wasn't  
18 created initially to make reports. So what we've  
19 been discussing with our team it's more of a  
20 programming issue.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Uh-huh.

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MCCANN: But then we  
23 get into the case of what is our definition of a film  
24 permit. You know, the film permit that's issued for  
25 the show Blue Bloods is much different than the film

2 permit that's issued for the six kids from NYU doing  
3 a film project in Washington Square Park.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Right.

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MCCANN: So we need  
6 to be able to distinguish, you know, exactly what  
7 data is--

8 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: [interposing] Uh-  
9 huh.

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MCCANN: --that we're  
11 looking to try and capture.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: So for a--for a  
13 show a like--like Blue Bloods or any--any show that--  
14 that has an extended shooting period, is that then a  
15 single permit that's--that extends the period, the  
16 duration of the filming, or is it, you know, a series  
17 of permits that are issued?

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MCCANN: There is an  
19 application that Blue Bloods will file when they  
20 initially come in for say season 5.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Uh-huh.

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MCCANN: But every  
23 day, every permit request, every location--

24 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: [interposing]  
25 Right.

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MCCANN: --is a case-  
3 by-case negotiation executed by our office and the  
4 production.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: So each of-- So  
6 then each of those locations will be somewhere  
7 between a day and a couple of days? Is that right?

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MCCANN: No, we'll  
9 only issue rigging permits for multiple days. The  
10 shooting permits are specific days.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: [interposing]  
12 Today. Okay, so then that would be-- I mean because  
13 that's a piece of data that would then be helpful is  
14 having this--knowing how many shoot days then, you  
15 know, are happening in a particular neighborhood.  
16 Because the neighborhood impact, the impact the  
17 neighbors will feel is the number of shot days, and  
18 how many blocks of parking that might take up. Or,  
19 you know, how many blocks of filming that might take  
20 up. So, that's the type of data that we would be  
21 very interested in seeing. Is that the type of thing  
22 that you keep track of now?

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MCCANN: Well, we--we  
24 monitor the filming trends throughout the five  
25 boroughs of all the shows, feature films, everything.

2 Again, it's a programming issue. And, you know, the  
3 way the system is created to generate reports is  
4 being looked at right now. Not only in our agency,  
5 but by multiple agencies.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: How do you guys  
7 track it now? What's the process by which you track  
8 it now?

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MCCANN: Well, we  
10 have a team of production representative that  
11 monitor, you know, the trends of each one of their  
12 shows. We have field representatives that monitor  
13 the notifications that are sent out. And, you know,  
14 we also have a perpetual dialogue with many elected  
15 officials, community boards. You know, I know  
16 specifically in managing the shows that we negotiate  
17 with on a daily basis where they are. You know, some  
18 shows like Law and Order have recurring locations.  
19 You know, certain shows, feature films especially  
20 they may have a hero location where they're filming  
21 at for multiple days over the course of their 30 or  
22 45-day shoot. So we on a day-to-day basis, you know,  
23 monitor where everybody is--

24 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: [interposing] Uh-  
25 huh.

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MCCANN: --and follow  
3 those trends.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: So then do you--do  
5 you guys have--do you guys have some internal system  
6 by which you're tracking it?

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MCCANN: Multiple  
8 internal systems yeah.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Uh-huh. Currently  
10 what--do you have a--do you have a sense then of what  
11 neighborhoods are getting, are having the most film  
12 shoots?

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MCCANN: Absolutely.  
14 I mean, you know, we are always out asked where is  
15 the number one filming location in New York--

16 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: [interposing] Uh-  
17 huh.

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MCCANN: --and, you  
19 know, obviously Times Square, Central Park, you know,  
20 iconic New York City locations is always featured the  
21 most. But, you know, we can monitor the trends based  
22 on--depending on where the stages are, what is the  
23 creative is for certain shows.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: So there is--there  
25 is a policy then of-- Or, you know, your office will

2 at times, you know, quote, unquote "hot spot" a  
3 neighborhood or, you know, say that a neighborhood  
4 is--it's received too many shoots, ore there's been  
5 too many permits issued in a particular neighborhood.  
6 What then is the decision-making process for how to  
7 determine those instances, you know, for the--for the  
8 public's knowledge? I mean, how--how does--how does  
9 that--how does that process--

10 COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: [interposing] Sure.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: --evolve.

12 COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: I'll take a piece of  
13 this, and then we'll have the Deputy Commissioner  
14 elaborate. When we issue a temporary filming respite  
15 to a given area, it's based on impact not necessarily  
16 the frequency or the amount of shoots that happen on  
17 a particular street. Five small productions may film  
18 over a month, for instance, in a particular  
19 community. And have very little impact on that  
20 community depending upon how many people are at each  
21 of the shoots. That being said, we look at the  
22 frequency and the size of the production, and the  
23 activity. The footprint that that production has,  
24 and so there are several factors that account for  
25 when we decide if a community will go on hiatus.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Uh-huh.

3 COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: Some other factors  
4 that we take into consideration are any nearby  
5 construction, any roadwork. So that we're not over-  
6 taxing communities that have multiple projects going  
7 on in the city. There's a difference between-- You  
8 know, as our Deputy Commissioner just mentioned a  
9 three-person shoot that's an NYU shoot versus large  
10 trucks on many streets. So there isn't an exact  
11 science to how we decide when to put a community on  
12 hiatus--

13 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: [interposing] Uh-  
14 huh.

15 COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: --but we definitely  
16 feel that we want to do everything possible to lessen  
17 the impact that production has on local residents.  
18 So, we will take into consideration working with  
19 council members if they feel a community needs to be  
20 on that respite list. Dean, do you want to add  
21 anything?

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MCCANN: No, I mean  
23 it's really just a common sense approach. You know,  
24 we haven't sanctioned any production activity in any  
25 proximity to the Second Avenue Subway Project on the

2 Upper East Side because it's just overly burdensome  
3 to the community. We had a film a couple years ago  
4 called Tower Heights that we knew was going to shoot  
5 for multiple days in Columbus Circle at Trump Tower,  
6 but it was sandwiched between our broadcasting of the  
7 New York City Marathon, and then the Thanksgiving Day  
8 Parade. So from a common sense standpoint we  
9 proactively put that area off limits so it wouldn't  
10 be overly burdened by other productions coming in for  
11 a day here or a day there when we knew that they were  
12 going to have multiple days of activity in that  
13 residential community. So, you know, that's how we  
14 look at it. Proactively, we'll assess, you know  
15 areas that need to be basically placed off limits  
16 temporarily or in consultation or collaboration with  
17 community boards, block association president. You  
18 know, we'll have that dialogue and assess.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Uh-huh. Is your  
20 office right now in support of this Intro or not in  
21 support of this Intro?

22 COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: [coughs] I would  
23 say our concern with the bill in its current form is  
24 that it may send a very complicated message to the  
25 production industry that filming isn't welcome in New



2 York. So we have a concern about that. Particularly  
3 when this industry employs thousands of people and  
4 generates billions of dollars of revenue. So we  
5 would look for places in which we could work with you  
6 because we--we believe in government transparency.  
7 It is just a matter of we work very hard to keep this  
8 business here in New York.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Uh-huh.

10 COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: And one of the  
11 concerns I have is that, as I said before, the film  
12 and television industry is extremely mobile. We  
13 don't want to lose these jobs. We don't want to lose  
14 this revenue to Toronto, to Atlanta, or to other  
15 parts of the world. So, how we work strategically  
16 with you--

17 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: [interposing] Uh-  
18 huh.

19 COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: --both of you to  
20 come up with a solution that is both mutually  
21 beneficial is what I look forward to.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Right. I think  
23 that there is a desire on our part to work with your  
24 office. You know, one thing that we do a lot of here  
25 at the Council is we ensure transparency. We do a

2 lot of introductions, bills that ensure transparency  
3 from every agency in the entire city. If you asked  
4 the Department of Education how many transparency  
5 bills we've passed regarding their operations, they  
6 couldn't count them, the Police Department and so on  
7 and so forth.

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MCCANN: And we still  
9 don't know what's going on? [laughter]

10 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: But it's a--  
11 [background comments]

12 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: But it's --

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MCCANN:  
14 [interposing] I had to throw that in.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: But it's an  
16 important component to the functioning of our  
17 government, and obviously as you could see I mean for  
18 the public to know particularly where these things  
19 are happening or how long they're happening, how many  
20 parking spots they're taking up, you know, which--  
21 So there's objective sets of data. Because the issue  
22 right now is that while there's a process or there's  
23 multiple processes for your office to look at these--  
24 these issues, there's really no way for the public to  
25 know. So if somebody, a member-- If Dave that lives

2 on Monitor Street wants to know, Hey, I've  
3 empirically seen that there's been an uptick of film  
4 shoots in my neighborhood. There's no way for that--  
5 for Dave to be able to access that data--

6 COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: Uh-huh.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: --currently, and  
8 that's our concern is that we want to make sure that  
9 the public knows that you know as public officials.

10 COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: Uh-huh.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: And with that,  
12 I'll turn it back over to the Chair.

13 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you. Thank you  
14 Council Member Levin. You know, I told you to send  
15 the movies to the Bronx. You know I told you that.

16 COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: I know. I know, and  
17 we are trying--

18 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: [interposing] I  
19 told you to take them to my district.

20 COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: --to send them to  
21 the Bronx and to Staten Island.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Okay, I just told  
23 you--

24

25

2 COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: [interposing]  
3 Because we have an interest in making sure that all  
4 New Yorkers participate in this industry.

5 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: It's only because  
6 council members want to be discovered, but, you know  
7 [laughter] you never know, you know. When it rains.  
8 [background comments] When it rains it pours so Steve  
9 and I are very interested in our boroughs being  
10 included in movie shoots, although we don't want to  
11 be shot at. You know, whatever you can do. All  
12 right. I want to introduce my colleague now, Council  
13 Member Matteo.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: Thank you, Mr.  
15 Chair. Thank you Commissioner for your testimony.  
16 You know, I think I speak--I definitely speak for  
17 most of my colleagues, and probably all of them that  
18 we don't want to lose the industry either. There's a  
19 huge an economic benefit and a positive impact on my  
20 borough, my district, and the city as a whole. You  
21 know, with that, I have concerns, and I think that  
22 having the information to understand. There's a  
23 neighborhood in my district that's had a lot of film  
24 shoots, which probably, you know, to the surprise of

2 many I do get a lot of film shoots in my district and  
3 the notifications are great.

4 COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: [interposing] Uh-  
5 huh.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: So, you know, I  
7 get them and I have a bunch of them here. So my  
8 question about the notifications you send them out a  
9 day before. Is there--can we get a little bit more  
10 notice than that? Like I got Monday through Tuesday,  
11 Tuesday through Wednesday. I do have a Friday  
12 through a Monday, and all of us, you know, are savvy  
13 social media participants these days and I post them.  
14 As soon as you send them to me I post them. So my  
15 constituents can understand the impact in the city.  
16 But, I was wondering if there can be a--just a  
17 notification longer than--

18 COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: [interposing] 48  
19 hours.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: Yeah.

21 COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: [off mic]

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MCCANN: There is no  
23 doubt that we would love to have those notifications  
24 at your office a week to two weeks in advance. The  
25 challenge that we have, and it's part of the reason I

2 think this agency was created is the industry doesn't  
3 work that way. You know, the script that's going to  
4 be shot in the next episode for Law and Order hasn't  
5 been written yet. And by the time they write it, and  
6 then they scout the locations and the directors and  
7 the production designers sign off on that particular  
8 location. And then they scout it with the Teamsters  
9 to figure out what the parking footprint is going to  
10 be. Then they come back to us about availability,  
11 and then we're negotiating what they're actually  
12 going to get. No, we're not going to give you both  
13 sides of the street. We're only going to give you  
14 one side of the street--

15 COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: [interposing] [off  
16 mic] Or a quarter of the street.

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MCCANN: Or a quarter  
18 of the street, and those negotiations come down  
19 sometimes to the last day before the permit is  
20 issued. Our primary concern, and this is what we  
21 encourage and sort of mandate from productions, is  
22 that they post their notifications to the community  
23 five, six, seven days in advance when they can. Even  
24 though they're still negotiating with the city. So  
25 that our mutual constituents know well in advance

2 that the production is going to be there, and can  
3 reach out directly to the production or to our office  
4 to address any concerns with conflicts that they  
5 have. But the challenge for us is the notification  
6 that you receive is auto generated when press  
7 "approved" by the system. And we have to request  
8 that specially because the other agencies don't have  
9 that. When the permit is approved down to the wire  
10 depending on what the negotiations are, that's when  
11 the auto-generated notification to the councilmen and  
12 the community board office is set. Which is  
13 sometimes our fault because we may be nitpicking with  
14 the production about what we're going to let them do,  
15 which holds up the issuance of the permit. But it's  
16 really to the benefit of everyone. Our primary  
17 concern is that the constituents know as early as  
18 possible, which is usually about five, six, or seven  
19 days in advance.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: So is there a way  
21 then if you're, you know, just connecting the dots  
22 and crossing the Ts that you can send a pending  
23 approval to us that just says this is in the works.  
24 You know, a head up. Because I think that that is  
25 extremely helpful, you know. And I'll talk about a

2 specific area in my district, you know, New Dorp  
3 Plaza, and I have to admit you sent me, David Moore  
4 sent me the notification. I sent it out, and I had  
5 eight calls within 15 minutes say, again there's a  
6 high school right there. There's a shopping center.  
7 They're taking away our parking, and on Staten  
8 Island, which is, you know, car driven focused they  
9 lose customers. Because if they can't find a spot,  
10 they're not going to park, and just going to keep  
11 going. And there's one section in the New Dorp Lane  
12 and the New Dorp Plaza that were inundated for a  
13 while and losing spots. And the traffic along the  
14 New Dorp Lane was crazy and they saw a drop in sales.  
15 Now, obviously that's not what anyone wants, and I  
16 have to admit your office was great. We moved the  
17 parking, but this was within three or four hours.  
18 So, if we could do a better job of planning or at  
19 least have pending, we could start discussing these  
20 things internally. Because usually the council  
21 member and the community board we have an idea of  
22 where the issue is going to be. So if they're going  
23 to film something when the school is just getting  
24 out, it's better that I know earlier. So that we can  
25 discuss it. Maybe we could change the time. Maybe



2 we could change the time, you know, if they don't--  
3 If daylight and evening and nighttime is not an issue  
4 in a shoot, maybe we could change that time. So the  
5 impact is less because when there's a school and  
6 there's construction and the DOT is doing pothole  
7 repair, you have that whole nucleus of a mess. And  
8 then the shoot, you know, which is an economic  
9 benefit and we all want it, becomes a negative. And  
10 then the next time they go into that neighborhood,  
11 all those business owners they're economy is gone.  
12 [sic] And, you know, this is becoming the problem.  
13 So, you know, I think that we should have reports  
14 that show where they're shooting. I think it just  
15 helps in planning because at the end of the day, we  
16 just want to plan it right. If we plan it right,  
17 then it's win-win-win for everyone. So, I think, you  
18 know, having a little bit more notice so we can plan  
19 better especially when I understand the hot spots in  
20 my district is their calling, I think it helps  
21 everyone.

22 COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: I completely  
23 understand. Having a step-sister who lives right  
24 near there in Staten Island I would just say that let  
25 us look into this, and see as we're planning this

2 year what measures-- Just given the new  
3 administration, what measures can be taken because I  
4 understand what you're saying. It's about  
5 communication and planning. One of the things that I  
6 would encourage, though, because I find this as the  
7 Commissioner for Media and Entertainment that often  
8 they say we don't know. Local residents often say  
9 we're not sure who to communicate with. The signs  
10 that are posted locally have the location managers'  
11 cell phone numbers on those signs. So we would just  
12 encourage Council as well that we're doing everything  
13 possible to ensure that the communication is clear so  
14 that residents can communicate directly when the  
15 production when they're having an issue. We are also  
16 listed. Our office and OME is listed and our contact  
17 information is listed. So that there are two points  
18 of communication should there be an issue like this  
19 in the future.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: And I-- That's  
21 great, and, you know, on my notification and I'm sure  
22 on every council member's notification, you know,  
23 it's usually David. And so, is there a way to give  
24 us that information on who that-- That way off hours  
25 when David or anyone else is in that office, they

2 have someone to call. Because listen, you're right.  
3 It's there, but they call who they're comfortable  
4 with, and changing human behavior is not always-- If  
5 that doesn't work, they call me, and they'll call me  
6 or they'll email me after hours, and that's where we  
7 have the issue is after hours. Who we're contacting  
8 after hours. So you forward the contact to us to do  
9 a noise issue, parking issues. Issues that just  
10 arise during the shooting of a film or a TV shoot, I  
11 think that will be helpful. So, you know, there are  
12 local impacts that we I think that we just have to  
13 address with, you know, communication.

14           And my last point is does your office  
15 scout the location as well, or do they scout it and  
16 come back to you for an approval for a permit? And  
17 are they or your office are they visiting these local  
18 businesses to say, hey, by the way, you know, in two  
19 weeks we're thinking of coming here. Or do you have  
20 that? You said you have information on hot spots.  
21 So does New Dorp Plaza ring a--come up? You know,  
22 when someone applies for instance wow they've had ten  
23 permits over the last three months. Maybe we should  
24 go out there and just make sure that everything is  
25

2 running smoothly and there aren't issues that we're  
3 not seeing and so forth?

4 [pause]

5 COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: [off mic] --and stay  
6 on so that we could respond to accordingly. In terms  
7 of communications, I would say that currently the  
8 automatic notification that you get has all of the  
9 permit information when a production is requesting  
10 parking in that community. And it lists some-- You  
11 know, our contact information from our office. And  
12 then the local information is listing the production  
13 information. Who they can--who the residents can  
14 contact on a local level from the production side.  
15 We will have to-- I will have to look into it. You  
16 know, that is an easy request I have to say to add on  
17 who the location managers are for each of those  
18 permit sites.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: Yeah, because  
20 like in the sewer project we get the local rep and  
21 their cell phone every time that a new sewer project  
22 comes on board because--

23 COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: [interposing]  
24 Absolutely.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: --a lot of the  
3 issues are off hours when residents get home, and  
4 they water is shut off. So we--we have the cell  
5 phone of the local rep, and we handle those issues  
6 that way.

7 COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: Absolutely. So we  
8 can definitely-- This is I have to say an easy  
9 measure that we can take a look at that information,  
10 and see how we can add that to the automatic  
11 notification. Because again, we're looking for ways  
12 in which to work with you to make your life easier as  
13 a government official. Not to make it more  
14 difficult. So that we can do. In terms of the  
15 second question that you posed, which was dealing  
16 with in addition to communication how we map I  
17 believe the respite communities.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: [off mic]

19 COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: Oh, how we're  
20 currently scouting.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: [on mic] And if  
22 you're talking to residents, local business owners  
23 that are going to be encountered.

24 COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: Sure. My step-- Do  
25 you want to take that question?

2 [pause]

3 LUIS CASTRO: Dean, you may want to talk  
4 a little bit about what we do from the production  
5 team on the scouting side of things.

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MCCANN: Well, we  
7 have a-- You know, myself in conjunction with the  
8 Police Department and/or some of our field reps,  
9 David Moore and his team we will definitely scout  
10 locations. But it's more of a logistical issue. You  
11 may have a TV show that wants to blow up a cart, and  
12 we need to go out and scout that with the Fire  
13 Department and the Police Department to decipher  
14 what's the appropriate traffic diversion? Is this  
15 street even an appropriate street to have this car  
16 explosion on? What time are we going to let them do  
17 it? Is there a school in close proximity to wherever  
18 we want to do this? There are so many factors that  
19 come into those decisions. So we'll scout those  
20 locations based on those issues, but from a reach out  
21 standpoint to the local businesses, nobody wants  
22 local communities to be more film friendly than the  
23 productions themselves. Because they know that if  
24 they're not going to be back there in two weeks,  
25 another show is going to be there in two weeks. So

2 they are very diligent in their reach out to the  
3 local communities. They'll reach out to the local  
4 businesses if they think they're going to be  
5 impacted. They get them the contact info. Sometimes  
6 they reach out to the local BIDs. They'll reach out  
7 to the community board district manager, and  
8 introduce themselves. This is who we are but they  
9 want to make sure that when they leave any of their  
10 locations that they're filming at, that those  
11 locations are still very film friendly. Because  
12 they're colleagues are going to be coming to that  
13 same block potentially a week from now, a month from  
14 now. And their due diligence is what really keeps  
15 those neighborhoods, you know, film friendly.  
16 They're pretty good about that.

17 COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: The last aspect of  
18 this just regarding Staten Island and the Bronx.  
19 While Dean and his team, as he describes does that  
20 kind of scouting, I have had an interest as the new  
21 Commissioner to really look at how we ensure that  
22 productions are placed throughout the five boroughs.  
23 So I know someone in someone in my--on my teams has  
24 been in touch with Staten Island as well as, you  
25 know, we've been in touch with the Bronx. Because

2 I'd like to actually do a physical tour of unlikely  
3 places that we can bring productions. So, I've been  
4 scouting that, and doing some tours so that we can  
5 try to bring productions to areas that traditionally  
6 have not received any production.

7 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: But I don't think the  
8 Bronx is an unlikely area. [laughter] We're likely.

9 COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: [off mic] Right, I  
10 shouldn't say it because that's not right. [sic] I  
11 apologize.

12 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: You're going on too  
13 long. Please finish.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: Thank you,  
15 Commissioner, I just want to say the last thing that,  
16 you know, we appreciate the work. We appreciate the  
17 help. It's also--this is just about communication.  
18 Lastly, I have a new BID in my district two merchant  
19 associations. So if I can get that information to  
20 you so if you're doing anything in those three areas  
21 that you also have on-the-ground people to notify and  
22 to speak to. Thank you, Chair.

23 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you, Council  
24 Member. I would ask that everyone else try to be a



2 little brief. Not that you weren't brief, but you  
3 were not brief at all. [laughter] But that's okay.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: I admit I was  
5 not.

6 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: No offense, but you  
7 were not brief.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: I shouldn't have  
9 said that. [sic]

10 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: I know. I know. But  
11 we have tons of speakers here. Tons and I'm told  
12 that we have a line of people outside that we cannot  
13 admit yet because the room is-- We have a certain  
14 capacity. So, you know, they warned me when I got  
15 this committee how important it was, but I didn't  
16 know it was this important. So we've a-- We've made  
17 something out of it, but I appreciate your patience,  
18 and whatever we can do to accommodate everyone, we  
19 will. All right, Council Member Greenfield.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Thank you,  
21 Mr. Chairman. So I want to thank you. First off, I  
22 certainly think that on balance the Mayor's Office of  
23 Film, Theater and Broadcasting does good work. I  
24 think as Dean pointed out the purpose of why you were  
25 created was so that you could help a private industry

2 cut through bureaucracy. And certainly, we are  
3 appreciative and we support that. I don't want you  
4 to think that we don't. We're just trying to get a  
5 little bit of clarity and understanding. So can you  
6 just explain to us the permitting process in general.  
7 So do you effectively-- You know, I think Dean you  
8 mentioned when you press a button then it  
9 automatically sends that email. Do you effectively  
10 have unfettered access where you can pretty much shut  
11 down any street at will at any time in the City of  
12 New York? Is that how it works? Can you sort of  
13 give us a little more background on that?

14 COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: I hope not.

15 [laughs]

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MCCANN: I wouldn't  
17 say that? [laughter]

18 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: How would you  
19 describe it?

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MCCANN: With a  
21 common sense approach, and I'll use terminology from  
22 the Police Department: Time, place and manner.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Okay.

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MCCANN: So when  
25 Vanilla Sky years ago wanted to shut down both

2 Broadway and Seventh Avenue in Times Square, we  
3 facilitated that request for 45 minutes on a Sunday  
4 morning at 6:00 a.m. So, you know, and productions  
5 scout and look through their creatives with an eye  
6 towards that same common sense. You know, it's a  
7 very small community with very conscientious and  
8 experienced personnel.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: [interposing]  
10 Sure.

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MCCANN: So they will  
12 generally vet the requests themselves before it even  
13 comes to a presentation to the City. And then once  
14 it's presented to us, we will scout it with a  
15 supervisor from the NYPD Movie Unit. Maybe different  
16 agencies heads whether it's DOT, DEC depending on  
17 proximity to construction, and evaluate, you know,  
18 the viability of the request. But yes, there's the  
19 potential that the City of New York with the Police  
20 Department could close any street at any given moment  
21 for a film production.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Okay, that's--  
23 so that is a fair description, but you don't like the  
24 way I describe it. But it's a generally fair  
25 description that you do have the ability to pretty

2 much shut down at your discretion effectively, right.  
3 Your agency's discretion-- And I'm not saying this  
4 is a negative. I'm just trying to understand the  
5 operations of how it works, which is someone comes to  
6 you and says, Hey, we want to shut down the street.  
7 You say, okay it seems like it makes sense to us.  
8 Once you consult with whoever you consult with you  
9 say yes and the street is shut down.

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MCCANN: If it's  
11 appropriate, yes.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Okay. Good.  
13 So I just want to point out-- There's nothing wrong  
14 with that. I just want to point out that from the  
15 traditional bureaucratic standpoint of how things  
16 generally work in the city, right. So, for example,  
17 if I have an organization that wants to have a block  
18 party, right. It takes literally months for them to  
19 apply for the permit, go through street activities,  
20 go through the process, and have the considerations.  
21 The conversations go back and forth, and eventually  
22 maybe if they're lucky, and the person issuing the  
23 permit is in a good mood and it's the right hour and  
24 had breakfast, then they're going to get their permit  
25 to shut down the street. And so, I'm not being

2 critical. I'm just trying to explain to you sort of  
3 the--on the one hand what we have over versus on the  
4 other hand what we have by you. And I think that is  
5 also-- On the flip side that also leads to concerns  
6 from community and obviously council members who see  
7 a frequency and really in many cases what becomes  
8 sort of a last minute nature. So as far as  
9 communications, and I think that-- Honestly I think  
10 that you guys do very good work, but to be fair, even  
11 if you're doing good work, good work can always get  
12 better. Right? I mean so I want to just be fair  
13 about it. I don't think this is oh, my gosh, you  
14 guys are terrible and we're really upset. I think  
15 we're just trying to improve that. I found that when  
16 I communicate with your office, you're incredibly  
17 responsive. So I know that. I think Council Member  
18 Matteo actually pointed out that part of the issue he  
19 has is that there is a--there is a communication--  
20 there is a communication issue with his office. So  
21 what is the traditional point of communication or can  
22 we perhaps better formalize communication with your  
23 office and other council members or community boards?  
24 Can you explain to us how that actually works in  
25 terms of your system? Is it uniform across the city

2 or is just, you know, hey, if we have a relationship  
3 great and if not, not. How does that work?

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CASTRO: Hello. We  
5 actually have a variety of ways where we-- In which  
6 we communicate with City Council with members of the  
7 community, with community boards. As Dean mentioned  
8 and the Commissioner mentioned, through notifications  
9 when applications are processed and approved, we  
10 certainly make those notifications available  
11 automatically. We also are proactive in how we reach  
12 out to communicate with City Council Members and  
13 Community Board Members and others who are affected  
14 by this. We actually every year meet with City  
15 Council. We meet with community boards to take a  
16 look at the year ahead, to let everyone know what it  
17 is we are anticipating and looking at. To hear from  
18 you about any concerns you might have or questions  
19 you may have about what's going on in your  
20 neighborhoods and communities. So we are proactive  
21 on that. In fact, we are going to be holding our  
22 conversations and meetings with folks the end of this  
23 month. We're also going to be looking at having  
24 conversations with BIDs to do the same kind of work.  
25 Our interest, as the Commissioner has mentioned, is

2 really to be a partner with the community and share  
3 information about what it is that we are doing and  
4 the impact that our work is having on communities.  
5 And then gather your information and your feedback on  
6 that.

7           COUNCIL MEMBER GREENBERG: Thank you,  
8 Louis, and I will just correct for the record that  
9 it's Council Member Matteo. I didn't have breakfast  
10 either this morning. See what happens when at least  
11 we--we still issue-- Yeah, exactly. We still issue  
12 those permits, but let me ask you as a follow up. So  
13 I understand that you're not thrilled with this  
14 legislation, but in all fairness the legislation  
15 doesn't actually change any of your practices, right?  
16 I mean there's nothing that we're asking here that  
17 would say, hey, you have to now get this permission,  
18 or you have to ask us in advance, or you have to even  
19 notify us more than the 48 hours, which is just  
20 currently the minimum right. I mean it really is  
21 more of a data sharing. So I'm just a little bit  
22 perplexed as to why you think that this would send a  
23 negative message.

24           In fact, I think I was reading the other  
25 day that New York State is probably the most generous

2 state in the country. We provide some \$420 million  
3 in tax credits. As you pointed out, we've got this  
4 free New York City Made In New York City marketing  
5 program where you can actually get free advertisement  
6 on bus shelters and on trains, and on New York City  
7 TV. I mean it seems like we're pretty friendly. I  
8 would imagine you would probably say publicly,  
9 Commissioner, the most friendly city in the country.  
10 And I would also point out that, you know, with all  
11 due respect to Toronto and Atlanta, I'm pretty sure  
12 they don't have Times Square or Central Park the last  
13 time I checked. So I think you would say we're  
14 pretty friendly to the movie industry, and the film  
15 industry in general. Is that fair?

16 COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: I do not pretend to  
17 speak on behalf of the entire industry in terms of  
18 how friendly or non-friendly they believe us to be.  
19 I know what we are trying to do is really balance  
20 community concerns and equity, and ensuring these  
21 jobs remain in New York City. In terms of I guess  
22 the concerns that I've laid out regarding the pending  
23 legislation or the bill that's in front of us, some  
24 of the requirements of demographic information and  
25 income information, et cetera, I do understand that



2 the film and television industry sees that  
3 information as propriety information.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: [interposing]  
5 So that's fair.

6 COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: There have been  
7 requests for that information. Really in terms of  
8 the tax credit, given that the tax credit is issued  
9 on a state level, we would be compromised to ask for  
10 how-- You know, what they spend or who they employ  
11 per se. On a City level when it's on a State level  
12 that they receive the tax credit.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Okay. So  
14 just to break it down. Because I think this is  
15 actually helpful and we want to work with you, and I  
16 know certainly Council Member Levin is very  
17 responsive to this feedback. So what you're saying  
18 is effectively you're okay with the portion of the  
19 legislation that would give us the information on  
20 where the filming takes place. What the duration is.  
21 On-street parking. Approximate number of the spots.  
22 All that sort of stuff is-- Obviously, that doesn't  
23 impact the film industry because we're certainly not  
24 asking that of the industry. But you are concerned  
25 about the portion that actually requires us to ask

2 either the film or TV company for information? So is  
3 that sort of a fair description of where you're at on  
4 the legislation?

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MCCANN: No, she  
6 didn't say that. There are--there are industry  
7 concerns with parts of the bill and there--

8 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: It was worth  
9 trying, Dean.

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MCCANN: I know.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Yes.

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MCCANN: And I--I  
13 absolutely respect that.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Thank you.

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MCCANN: But it's  
16 still a conversation that needs to be had, but there  
17 are elements of the data that's being requested in  
18 the city that will not paint an accurate picture of  
19 the production activity citywide. And we don't want  
20 that data to be misconstrued and potentially used to  
21 maybe prohibit filming in certain communities. Which  
22 could be very detrimental to certain businesses.  
23 That's the concern. On the face of it, this bill is  
24 harmless. It's the next step with regard to what

2 people do with the data that is of extreme concern  
3 not only to the Mayor's Office but to the industry.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: So, I  
5 certainly give you credit for recognizing the way we  
6 operate here in the City Council, which is that we  
7 don't take information in a vacuum, and I hear you on  
8 that. However, I would once again-- And I'm going  
9 to end with this point because there are a lot of  
10 other folks who have questions and who want to speak.  
11 Which is to say overall you guys do good work. We  
12 value the work, and quite frankly, Dean, I appreciate  
13 the fact that the industry knows they can't come and  
14 ask for six blocks to get shut down because they know  
15 they're going to laugh them out of the office. And  
16 that's great, and honestly that's to your credit, and  
17 to the credit of the organization that does that.  
18 But at the same time, I know this sounds a little bit  
19 weird, you're still a government agency. And due to  
20 that fact, we as the government, the other half of  
21 the government, that your half may not necessarily  
22 love, we like information. And yes, to be frank,  
23 some of that information as the disclaimer goes on  
24 Law and Order will be used against you. But that  
25 does not mean that we should not have access to more

2 information. So let's try to find a happy medium  
3 where we can get more information. It doesn't really  
4 harm the work that you are trying to do, and  
5 certainly know that we are generally supportive of  
6 the work that you do. And I think that if we can improve  
7 communication between members especially the newer  
8 council members, I think that would go a long way in  
9 terms of solving a lot of the challenges that we  
10 have. So thank you very much.

11 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you for your  
12 brief questions. [laughter] Council Member Weprin.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER WEPRIN: Thank you, Mr.  
14 Chair. I will try to be brief. So Commissioner  
15 thank you for being here. I want to start out by  
16 disagreeing just a little bit with David Greenfield  
17 because the Mayor--

18 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: [interposing]  
19 He always disagrees with me about anything.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER WEPRIN: Yes, that's true.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: It's not  
22 special, yes.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER WEPRIN: Not always. Made  
24 in New York, which is a program that's done by the  
25 State may have single-handedly saved the broadcasting

2 and film industry here in New York City. We were  
3 hemorrhaging business to other states and into  
4 Canada. That was the first step. Since that time, a  
5 lot of other places have been undercutting New York  
6 State. And as wonderful as we all know New York City  
7 is, these days you don't need New York City to film  
8 New York City. And we are desperate to keep these  
9 jobs here, and we need to do more than that Made in  
10 New York program for those filmmakers to make sure  
11 they continue to film in New York. Because as great  
12 as Times Square is, David, a lot of the people just  
13 don't care about that any more when they save bucks.  
14 It's all about the money in the end. And so, as  
15 much as I love New York and I can't imagine being  
16 anywhere else, the filmmakers don't feel the same  
17 way. So with that in mind, Commissioner, I have to  
18 take umbrage with you a little bit in that I think  
19 you guys are being too nice to us. Because even when  
20 you gave your testimony, you ended with, "In the end,  
21 the best approach is to continue with the Council and  
22 local communities to find ways to share information  
23 in advance of interest." [sic] I asked Steven  
24 Matteo is she for it or against it. It wasn't clear  
25 to me, and then Steve Levin asked you and you said,

2 you opposed this bill. Obviously, the reason we have  
3 this bill is because the communities are concerned  
4 when we come into their areas they want as much  
5 information as possible. But I'll be honest with  
6 you. Looking at the bill, and with all due respect  
7 to Council Member Levin and the other sponsors, it  
8 seems like overkill to me. The information you're  
9 getting doesn't solve the problems for the  
10 communities. So what I'd like you to be is to be a  
11 little more blunt with us to tell us what problems  
12 this causes not only for you, but for the industry.  
13 Because I don't want to hurt that industry. I do  
14 think there's more you can do as an agency to inform  
15 Steve Matteo as much notice. If it can't be a day,  
16 you know, if you can't, whenever you can get that  
17 information to him-- He doesn't expect you to get it  
18 to him before you know, but get it to him as fast as  
19 possible. What can you do to make it better for us  
20 so communities can be informed without creating  
21 onerous burdens for people who are trying film here  
22 whose tax dollars we want.

23 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: And if I can--

24 COUNCIL MEMBER WEPRIN: A long question  
25 but that will be it.

2 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: I know. That's what  
3 you say now, but if I can go onto his question. I  
4 think Councilman Levin's district and many of the  
5 people from Councilman Levin's district feel that the  
6 movie industry is great for New York City. But that  
7 there is one community in the city that has become  
8 over-burdened by issues arising when movies are shot.  
9 So, our job then is to talk to the industry, and to  
10 review with them why they want to go where they say  
11 they want to. And how we can have other  
12 neighborhoods in this city used to shoot those films.  
13 So that on one hand we're not over-burdening a  
14 neighborhood. But on the other hand, we have an  
15 industry that we appreciate because from a tax  
16 perspective and from a nationwide pedestal  
17 perspective it's great for New York City.

18 So in every way I'm all for the film  
19 industry. But when you have a neighborhood--and I  
20 can imagine if this was my neighborhood. If this was  
21 my neighborhood, my people would say, Jimmy, we love  
22 these films. We watch these shows all the time, but  
23 why are they only here. Why can't other--why can't  
24 this be shared, and why are we the people always  
25 having parking issues and quality of life issues? So

2 I think this goes to the heart of what your agency  
3 does vis-a-vis working with these companies. Are  
4 they just getting any site they want? Are they  
5 allowed to go wherever they want and we say yes it's  
6 wonderful there. Go. Or, are we saying to them,  
7 Wait a minute. These people last week had problems  
8 because of inconvenience issues, and these people did  
9 sacrifice parking and other things. Can you look at  
10 other communities perhaps that have not been burned.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER WEPRIN: That was on top  
12 of my question?

13 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: [off mic] Yes.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER WEPRIN: Okay. [laughter]  
15 And well said in advance of mine.

16 COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: [laughter] I guess  
17 there are two issues from our perspective. One is  
18 that, you know, one of the questions that I ask  
19 myself everyday is how do we legislate a creative  
20 industry, right? So creators of content many of the  
21 producers and filmmakers that come to us come with a  
22 script, come with an idea, come with what they thing  
23 that idea-- How that idea could be executed on film.  
24 And so, the challenge becomes they have scouts that  
25 actually scout in addition to what our Deputy



2 Commissioner mentioned before, Dean, in terms of what  
3 areas we encourage them to use. So there is a  
4 balance that we have to strike between how do we  
5 ensure that when a creative comes to us with a  
6 particular aim or focus to fulfill for that  
7 television show or that film, how we assist them with  
8 accomplishing their creative goal? And so, yes we  
9 can look at additional locations to suggest. So, in  
10 answer to your question, Council Member Vacca, yes we  
11 can do that. In terms of, you know, asking me the  
12 question of do I support or not support this bill.  
13 As I expressed before, my concern with the bill is  
14 its current form, and how it could send a message in  
15 terms of the amount of information that it is  
16 requesting. How it could send a message to the film  
17 and television industry that New York City is not--is  
18 no longer film friendly. We've tried for the last 12  
19 years to ensure that productions feel that New York  
20 City is film friendly. Are there ways in which we  
21 can do more reporting, which is your question. More  
22 reporting. We believe in government transparency. I  
23 don't want us to leave with the notion that my agency  
24 does not believe in government transparency. And I  
25 know when Greenfield before mentioned has the right

2 to close down a street, you know, within 24 hours.  
3 Well, that's actually not true. That actually is not  
4 an accurate description. We do not yield that kind  
5 of power. We're working very closely with NYPD with  
6 several other agencies to make the best decisions  
7 possible that would have the least community impact.  
8 So I would hate for us to walk away from this hearing  
9 with an understanding that somehow our agency can  
10 sort of-- has a magic wand and can say this street is  
11 close or tomorrow that street is closed. And give  
12 community members 24-hour notice of that. That is  
13 absolutely not the way we operate. We're trying to  
14 operate very diligently in terms of working with  
15 other agencies to ensure that the film and television  
16 industry has what they need to create the products  
17 that they need to produce in New York City.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER WEPRIN: [interposing] Uh-  
19 huh, we're all for that.

20 COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: I also do feel like  
21 I need to express from my point of view when we talk  
22 business and I agree with you. Some of the  
23 conversations that I'm having with industry leaders  
24 it's not true that they don't have choices globally.  
25 I have to say I cannot tell you how many times I have

2 conversations with people in charge of large budgets  
3 that say, Cynthia, I'm making a decision between New  
4 York and Canada. And then I, you know, am trying the  
5 best I can to ensure that those jobs and that  
6 production comes to New York. So that's a--that's a  
7 real issue that we face everyday.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER WEPRIN: Okay. One  
9 statement just, and I'm done. So, I agree with you.  
10 We don't want to discourage the film industry. We do  
11 want to address the issues to the communities, which  
12 is giving us information. I don't need to know the  
13 median income of the employees. I don't need to  
14 know-- You know, all this information seems like  
15 overkill to me to be honest with you. Everyone cares  
16 about that individual street that week that's  
17 blocking traffic in their neighborhood or creating a  
18 parking lot problem. So figure out a way to inform  
19 these members who have a lot of shoots in their  
20 neighborhood better so their communities will feel  
21 like we know what's going on and how long it's going  
22 to last. And then you have more work to do, and the  
23 industry doesn't and doesn't have to worry about us  
24 trying to make it more burdensome for them to do work  
25 here. That's all with that statement. Thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: We've been joined by  
3 Council Member Lander and Council Member Crowley. So  
4 Council Member Lander has a question.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Thank you very  
6 much, Mr. Chairman, and I do think that your addition  
7 to Council Member Weprin's question really goes to  
8 the heart of my questions as well. I feel a very  
9 genuine and deep ambivalence. I don't know how else  
10 to say it. On the one hand I think, you know, the  
11 data that you've given I'm thrilled that the industry  
12 is as strong as it is here. Those jobs and economic  
13 vitality is enormously important. And I was pleased  
14 to see you referenced the Brooklyn workforce  
15 innovations Made in New York program. I was chair of  
16 the board when they PA Training Program got created.  
17 I know a lot of the people that have been able to  
18 move into those jobs. So all of that is important to  
19 me. At the same time, like Council Member Levin, I  
20 share a boundary with him. So Atlantic Avenue,  
21 Cobble Hill Boerum Hill, Park Slope.

22 It is absolutely and simply one of the  
23 most, you know, common calls in our office is the  
24 quality of life complaints that my office gets goes,  
25 this is at the top of the list. You know over--

2 repeated film shoots at the same sites. We actually  
3 had a lovely old mansion in Park Slope that  
4 essentially got converted into an unlicensed studio  
5 for, you know, a lot of shoots. And to be fair, that  
6 one you got to eventually, but not for a long time of  
7 residence and doing shoot after shoot after shoot.  
8 So, you know, the complaint. And then, of course,  
9 you know, there's a lot of on-street parking taken,  
10 and a lot of times it doesn't even look like it winds  
11 up being used on this shoot itself. So the quality  
12 of life complaints are real.

13           The frustrations, the inability to deal  
14 with what feels like an excessive amount of shooting  
15 and significant quality of life burdens is just very,  
16 very real. And we have not succeeded in figuring out  
17 how to deal with that better. And look, I get it.  
18 It almost sounds like lovely neighborhoods, and  
19 people want to shoot there, and, you know, boy of all  
20 the problems in the city, this is not some of the  
21 others. On the other hand, we do have to find a  
22 better and fairer way to deal with it. And I'll be  
23 honest. I mean that--It's not really the information  
24 that the communities want. They want a fairer

2 sharing and a diminishment of the quality of life  
3 burdens.

4           So honestly I mean I think this is pretty  
5 reasonable stuff and that we can find a way to work  
6 around the problems that you're having about  
7 intrusivity. But I guess what I think people really  
8 want is a better approach to not having repeated  
9 shoots in the exact same places that add to the  
10 quality of life burden. So if you could help us  
11 understand how we could do that, I think that's--  
12 You know, I think that the goal that we share is for  
13 addressing it while making it possible to continue  
14 and keep the industry here and grow strong and  
15 growing. To do something more than to address the  
16 quality of life issues in our neighborhoods that come  
17 from that. So how can we do that I guess is my  
18 question for you. And I know you've done a lot of  
19 things, but I don't want to hear, here are the things  
20 we've done. I want to hear, here is how we can work  
21 to make it better than it is today.

22           COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: In terms of planning  
23 for the future, just to understand your question, I  
24 know that you're saying how. One of the questions  
25 you have is what are the requirements for a respite

2 community or a community on hiatus? Is that what  
3 you're asking? How do we make certain communities  
4 not accessible to the filming?

5 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Do you believe  
6 that the hiatus or the respite program is currently  
7 sufficient to address people's quality of life  
8 concerns?

9 COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: Do I believe that  
10 it's sufficient?

11 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Yes,

12 COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: Okay. I do. I  
13 think that one of the areas in which we-- We  
14 understand and we concur that it is a balance between  
15 how do we keep these jobs in New York City, and how  
16 do we lessen the impact that local communities feel  
17 when these productions are in the neighborhoods. And  
18 so, we're looking for ways in which to work with the  
19 Council to come up with remedies for sure. I would  
20 say that currently it is not the amount of  
21 productions. What we find in certain communities  
22 that it's not the amount of productions, but actually  
23 the footprint of the production. And so, Dean is  
24 more apt to describe the difference between, you  
25 know, quote, unquote "the number of productions" in a

2 particular community and the actual footprint.  
3 Because what we find is in some communities the are  
4 four productions in one month and they have very  
5 little impact. And then in other communities it may  
6 be a large feature film with several trucks, and the  
7 impact is greater. So understanding how best we  
8 regulate that--

9 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: [interposing] I  
10 think that's a fair question because I think those  
11 are exactly the issues that the legislation is trying  
12 to get at. How do you understand, and how do you  
13 communicate with a community about how many parking  
14 spaces are being-- So, I mean I agree with you that  
15 it's a combination of for each shoot how much?  
16 What's the local impact? How many parking spaces are  
17 taken? How many blocks are taken up? How long does  
18 it go? But then there is like when is the next one  
19 coming and now nearby is it? I mean our parking the  
20 zones in which you've got to find a parking space?  
21 So where can we get that information if-- You know,  
22 if you tell-- It sounds like you're looking at it,  
23 but we don't have the ability to see it.

24

25



2 COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: [off mic] Uh-huh.

3 Do you want to address this. In terms of quality of  
4 life issues and how the--

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MCCANN: I'm-- Yes, I  
6 mean it's coming up-- I mean I'm listening to your  
7 comments, and it reminds me of exactly verbatim what  
8 Gale Brewer was saying ten years ago about her  
9 district in Manhattan. Why can't you bring these  
10 jobs to Fort Greene, Brooklyn and have beautiful  
11 tree-lined cobblestone, you know, brownstone streets?

12 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: [interposing] Oh,  
13 so Gale was very effective at getting you to send  
14 them all to our district, but um--

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MCCANN: Brooklyn  
16 Heights, Cobble Hill, there's difference between 76th  
17 Street and between Central Park West and Columbus and  
18 a block in Cobble Hill. So why is it that her  
19 district in Manhattan is overly burdened with  
20 production activity, which is why in collaboration  
21 with the production community we started to highlight  
22 other communities throughout the City of New York.  
23 The same way the Commissioner was referring to  
24 expanding everyone sight line to Bronx and Staten  
25 Island, and getting some of this production out of

2 the normal usual suspects. The challenge is that  
3 there's been a proliferation fortunately thank God of  
4 stages. And those stages predominantly are based in  
5 Brooklyn. And when you're based in a stage in  
6 Brooklyn and you're in your stage for the morning  
7 doing half a day's worth of work, and then you need  
8 the company to move and pop out to shoot the  
9 exterior/interior cafe, you don't have the luxury of  
10 going all the way to Manhattan or to another borough.  
11 You need to efficiently pop out of your stage, grab  
12 that cafe or grab the bodega or grab the exterior  
13 walk and talk somewhere within striking distance of  
14 your stage. And that's really what is at the core of  
15 this problem that you're talking about.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: [interposing] So  
17 I hear that, but I'm telling you that within striking  
18 distance of Steiner, of the, you know, our much  
19 broader set of neighborhoods than just the ones in  
20 Steve's and my districts that are getting the lion  
21 share of it right now. And we need some way to  
22 improve that. I mean I think that if you look at the  
23 Queens and Brooklyn border and the broad side of  
24 communities we can spread this out in ways that I  
25 think would actually be beneficial to a wider set of

2 neighbors. We were excited when we got the first  
3 couple a decade ago. They bring some vitality and  
4 economic energy to a community, and I think we want  
5 it. A lot of people in our districts actually are  
6 working the industry and are freelancers. So I do  
7 think we feel on both sides of it. We have to find  
8 some way to improve it. This I think is a thoughtful  
9 way to improve it. If you have better ones-- I mean  
10 it's Steve's--it's Council Member Levin's bill, but I  
11 think we need a conversation about to do to lessen  
12 the quality of life burdens which are currently  
13 concentrated in our neighborhoods. If you have some  
14 other ways of doing it in addition to or an amendment  
15 to this bill, I'm guessing Council Member Levin will  
16 be open. I know we have a lot of constituents who  
17 are here. You hear the urgency that we feel about  
18 it. And my last point is on the employment because I  
19 do think that's important as well. I hear you that,  
20 you know, you don't necessarily think it's helpful to  
21 force the industry to be providing a lot of  
22 demographic information on its employees. At the  
23 same time I guess I would have thought in the de  
24 Blasio Administration with such a focus on equity,  
25 that we would do a little more to push. The Made in

2 New York program is wonderful, you know, but I think  
3 there are some ways that we could provide an even  
4 stronger push to the industry to be hiring New  
5 Yorkers to be hiring through Made in New York to  
6 expand that program. I do want there to be a  
7 difference. And I mean I know you've got the Made in  
8 New York brand, but I think we could push the  
9 envelope a little bit harder. So that those  
10 employers who hire our people who are more inclusive,  
11 who are attentive to issues of equity are the ones  
12 that we're embracing in New York. And those that  
13 resist that, let them go to Toronto. If they're not  
14 going to hire our people and be part of our  
15 opportunity, or inclusive opportunity agenda, you  
16 know those folks I don't want here. I care less  
17 about giving the tax breaks away. So if you don't  
18 want to do that through reporting similarly let us  
19 know what things you're doing to make sure the  
20 industry is continuing to move in a more inclusive  
21 direction.

22 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Okay. Thank you,  
23 Councilman. I do want to say what's coming across  
24 here today and that is we have a piece of  
25 legislation. We're having a hearing as required.

2 This legislation deals with transparency. However,  
3 you are the new Commissioner, and I'm sure you're  
4 going to do a great job. My interactions with you  
5 have all been positive since you've been appointed.  
6 Much of this is what you do internally. Much of this  
7 is process. Much of this is administrative. We in  
8 the Council cannot and should not micro manage any  
9 agency. But we look to you to look at the issues  
10 that have been raised today. So while we may have a  
11 legislative role and an oversight role, we know that  
12 on a day-to-day basis we expect your agency to take  
13 to heart what we're saying, and to see where you can  
14 act upon the issues raised. So we look forward to  
15 working with you in that regard. But so much of the  
16 onus will not fall on your agency as to whether or  
17 not there is a responsiveness to listening and  
18 collaboration.

19 COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: Okay.

20 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Okay. Council Member  
21 Crowley.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Good morning. I  
23 have never used one of these microphones before. But  
24 it's working. Okay, give me a sec. [sic]  
25 Commissioner, it's nice to meet you. Sorry I was

2 late. I had another hearing across the street. I'm  
3 understand what we are hearing about today is really  
4 the bills that Council Member Levin has put forth in  
5 trying to evaluate the quality of life burdens that  
6 are brought on by productions in communities  
7 throughout the city. Now, my community has  
8 productions and we welcome them. I've had some  
9 complaints, of course, because we've seen an  
10 increased number of productions happening. But I  
11 welcome them as community enhancements, and job  
12 creations and it brings a certain sense of excitement  
13 to our area when people see stars. Or, you know,  
14 people who are not traditionally in the community or  
15 shopping at the neighborhood deli. And bringing in  
16 that type of--generating that type of economic  
17 opportunity to the local small businesses.

18 I'm curious to know if your agency, even  
19 though you're new, maybe prior to you being there has  
20 evaluated the economic impact of these types of  
21 productions. Now, I have a community that had a  
22 strong vibrant manufacturing base 25 years ago. And  
23 over the years I've seen more and more stoppage, stop  
24 and storage facilities opening up, which scares me.  
25 And I really value those neighborhoods. And I

2 noticed probably about the same time 25 years ago  
3 communities like Long Island City and Williamsburg  
4 were getting these types of production facilities in  
5 those neighborhoods in these old manufacturing sites.  
6 We just don't have those types of jobs in the city.  
7 And so, I'm glad that we have these types of tax  
8 breaks that welcomes production businesses to come  
9 into the city. But do we ever evaluate that economic  
10 impact of the production industry, and what it's done  
11 to parts of Brooklyn, and what it's done to parts of  
12 Queens in terms of economic opportunity of resurgence  
13 in communities that were once suffering from low  
14 unemployment or under-utilized properties?

15                   COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: We have in the past-  
16 - Our agency has in the past worked with the Boston  
17 Consulting Group on an independent study that looks  
18 at the economic contributions made by the film and  
19 television industry to New York City. We are  
20 currently working with them to engage them in  
21 potentially another study. So it has been done. In  
22 terms of very local specific or district specific  
23 contributions, currently we just have anecdotal  
24 information based on the local businesses that have  
25 communicated with our office. To say, you know,

2 given the productions that you have put in our  
3 community, you know, we see revenue increase at our  
4 small businesses. We do not have something  
5 comprehensive on a local level. But the Boston  
6 Consulting Group will look at New York City as a  
7 whole and see the economic contributions that have  
8 been made by this industry.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Yes, I would be  
10 interested in knowing whether they are helping to  
11 price themselves out of certain neighborhoods as they  
12 grow and are moving into other neighborhoods. And  
13 helping those neighborhoods, and bring up the  
14 property value in those neighborhoods that might be  
15 more affordable. You know, and that type of  
16 question. Like if you look at the property value in  
17 Long Island City today compared to what it was 20  
18 years ago, of course, a lot of our city property  
19 value has gone up significantly. But it has gone up  
20 at such a greater percentage in an area like Long  
21 Island City. That has a few stages, or an area like  
22 Williamsburg. So I'm just curious to know that, and  
23 hopefully you will look into that to see if you could  
24 produce that type of economic indicator that the  
25 production industry does.



2                   DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CASTRO: At the  
3 Commission what we have is anecdotal right now from  
4 that level and certainly trying to get a sense of the  
5 impact across the city as well as in particular  
6 communities is something we're interested in. We'd  
7 have to take a look at what the--what the study is  
8 capable of, or what the consulting group is capable  
9 of taking a look at, but certainly having an  
10 understanding of the impact on communities would be  
11 something we're interested in looking at.

12                   COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: And the last  
13 question is I have Forest Park in my district, which  
14 is in the middle of Queens. And I know there's a lot  
15 of filming that happens there. The Forest Park  
16 Trust, which is a board that runs the park, and makes  
17 enhancements to the park says that there is a certain  
18 percentage that comes into the coffers that is  
19 donated through the filming industry into their  
20 foundation. And I see that, you know, Local--the  
21 Teamsters Local that you work with, or works with the  
22 production industry is giving back. So I'm curious  
23 to know what type of impact that has on communities?  
24 What type of non-profit organizations or philanthropy  
25 work gets done with the production industry.

2                   COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: There are various  
3 examples of how the film and television industry have  
4 donated their services and resources to the local  
5 community. I know that earlier during my testimony I  
6 described a little bit about how one production  
7 agency donated during Hurricane Sandy thousands of  
8 dollars to relief efforts. And in addition, booked  
9 several--hundreds of rooms for crew members that had  
10 been affected by Hurricane Sandy. That's one example  
11 of a community give back. Another example of a  
12 community give back is the partnership that you're  
13 referring to that we've developed with the Teamsters,  
14 Local 817 where they are donating \$160,000 to our  
15 agency through the Mayor's Funds to improve New York  
16 City. And three communities that are impacted by  
17 these productions can apply for these funds to  
18 improve a public school, a public library or a  
19 community-based organization. So we will continue to  
20 look for ways in which, and there are many, many  
21 examples. Those are only two examples that I cite,  
22 but literally there are hundreds of examples of how  
23 this industry has given back to local communities in  
24 times of need.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: I have no  
3 further questions. Mr. Chairman, I just, you know,  
4 for the record support the industry and welcome more  
5 types of production into my district.

6 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Okay, send them  
7 there. [laughter] Council Member Levin has several  
8 questions.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you very  
10 much, Mr. Chairman. A couple of follow-up questions,  
11 Commissioner. In terms of complaint processes, what  
12 is the process for somebody to make a complaint film  
13 crew. Say they have a complaint about, you know  
14 there being excessive parking being taken up or  
15 something like that. What's the--what do they do?

16 COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: [off mic] There are  
17 tow-- [on mic] There are two ways currently. Since  
18 the parking signs have the location manager listed on  
19 that sign they can call that person.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: [interposing]  
21 Right.

22 COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: So that's one way.  
23 The second way is they call our office, and the third  
24 way is 311. And so there--

2 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: [interposing] So  
3 if they call--

4 COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: There are three ways  
5 to approach us.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: If they-- So do we  
7 know how many complaints have come into your office  
8 or 311. So not-- I guess it's hard to track whether  
9 they call the, you know, production manager directly.  
10 But do we keep track of how many complaints have come  
11 in and disaggregated by community board that have  
12 come into your office or 311?

13 COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: In terms of the  
14 tracking of complaints, we do have a Community  
15 Affairs Unit that responds to all complaints. And I  
16 don't have that information accessible, but we do  
17 have that information.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Is it-- Like so  
19 if a member of the public wants to-- they say I want  
20 to know how many complaints have been in Boerum Hill  
21 or Community Board 2, for example? I'll do--like  
22 Community Board 2 how many complaints have come in,  
23 the public can find that information or is that  
24 information made public?

2                   COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: I will refer it to  
3 our deputy Commissioner. I'm not sure the actual  
4 specifics of the complaint system and how they're  
5 logged.

6                   COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Okay, and the  
7 follow-up question on that then is just 311 if  
8 someone calls 311 is that complaint logged with 311.  
9 Because like for other types of issues in the city if  
10 it's potholes or something like that if someone calls  
11 311 about it that's then logged as a 311 complaint  
12 about a pothole.

13                   DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MCCANN: We have our  
14 own internal complaint log that we manage at our  
15 agency also 311 as a reporting mechanism by which  
16 they refer, you know, the calls to us. .

17                   COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Uh-huh.

18                   DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MCCANN: Whether we  
19 could disseminate that information to you, whether  
20 Community Board 3 that had 50 complaint calls versus  
21 Community Board 2 that had 2 complaint calls, it's  
22 not broken down by community board.

23                   COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Okay. That's  
24 something that I think could be--

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MCCANN:

3 [interposing] 311 could probably break it down.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: See that's

5 actually what our understanding right now is that 311

6 does not have that information, and that-- Because

7 when we called 311-- You know, when we asked 311

8 about it, they say well that goes--that goes over to

9 the Mayor's Office of Filming, Theater and

10 Broadcasting so--

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MCCANN: Okay, I

12 guess the way that they log the information is not

13 the way that I thought that they logged it.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Uh-huh.

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MCCANN: Yeah, they

16 refer the calls to us. So then, you know, we log

17 those complaint calls in, and respond immediately.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Okay. Okay, so

19 then in terms of kind of transparency and open, you

20 know, open data that's something that we want to be

21 looking at as well. You know, these are the types of

22 things that I think are helpful for the public to

23 know just in terms of the interest of transparency.

24 Is part of the other part of the bill-- You expressed

25 some reservations. You mentioned that it could have

2 a chilling effect on the industry. I'm wondering  
3 specifically what--what parts of that do you think  
4 would have a chilling effect on the industry? You  
5 know, we don't want-- I'm not looking to chase our  
6 productions, you know, with a pitch fork and like  
7 scare them to go anywhere but here. But I am eager  
8 to know what parts of the bill specifically do you  
9 believe would have a chilling effect on the industry.

10 COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: [off mic] Do you  
11 want to answer.

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CASTRO: I want to  
13 put out that as the Commissioner mentioned in her  
14 testimony one of the issues is information that is  
15 proprietary to the industry that, you know, they  
16 would not feel comfortable with sharing. That's part  
17 of what's in this.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Like what? What  
19 would be proprietary?

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CASTRO: Budgetary  
21 information and things like that.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Secrets. Sorry.  
23 Just to interrupt there. So I'm looking at the--the  
24 tax credit fact sheet here from the Empire State  
25 Development Corporation, and there are-- You know,

2 they have to do there a production budget in order to  
3 apply. In order to get the tax credit they have to  
4 submit an employment report, production budget,  
5 general ledger report, shoot day summary and daily  
6 production report and the casting crew list. In  
7 order to get the tax credit they have to submit to  
8 the SDC. I don't know if that is the FOILABLE. I'll  
9 bet you it's FOILABLE, though.

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MCCANN: No, they can  
11 request it if they want to. [sic]

12 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Oh, really?

13 COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: Yes.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Okay.

15 COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: [off mic] So that is  
16 not an--

17 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: [interposing] All  
18 of that information?

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MCCANN: We'd have to  
20 check with the Governor's Office.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Okay.

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CASTRO: Other --  
23 other information that could--

24 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: [interposing]  
25 Basically, they're proprietary issues. Okay.



2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CASTRO: Other--other  
3 information that could be difficult to get is, um,  
4 just in terms of information on who is employed. The  
5 demographics of folks who are employed. A lot of  
6 that information they put in that report is not--it  
7 was certainly not provided to us during the  
8 permitting process. But that's something that adds  
9 an additional level of red tape.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Okay.

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CASTRO: As you  
12 recall, what we've done here, and the reason we've  
13 had such success in bringing this industry to New  
14 York is to be able to help streamline and reduce some  
15 of the red tape. So what we're talking about is  
16 creating a system were we're adding more red tape to  
17 the process, which will--which will reduce--

18 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: [interposing]  
19 Right, but to be fair, look one reason we've been  
20 able-- I mean the conditions are extraordinarily  
21 welcoming. If I look at it from my perspective, and I  
22 look at the conditions for filming in New York City I  
23 would say that they are-- I don't know if I'd say  
24 we'd bend over backwards for them, but we are very  
25 welcoming. And I think we have a tax credit worth

2 \$420 million annually. We have a permit--a  
3 permitting system were up until 2010 it was free.  
4 Now, it's \$300 a permit for any shoot, right. So  
5 there's a shoot-- Just to be clear, a \$100 million  
6 production that shoots over the course of 100 days in  
7 New York City pays a one-time fee of \$300 bucks,  
8 right. The same as the three guys from NYU making a  
9 student film pay a one-time fee of 300 bucks. So  
10 does transformers or whatever. You know transformers  
11 3 or transformers 4, they want to shoot in New York  
12 City and camp, and, you know, get 100 days of  
13 shooting. Okay, that's correct, right for a one-time  
14 fee of 300 bucks?

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CASTRO: A one-time  
16 application fee.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: A one-time  
18 application fee. So

19 COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: A one-time  
20 application?

21 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Right.

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CASTRO: Right.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: So, and not to  
24 mention the fact that the Controller's report just  
25 this month showed that that's-- that rate is about a

2 million dollars in revenue a year. The cost of the  
3 Mayor's Office of Film, Theater, and Broadcasting  
4 plus the--plus the police non-overtime police costs  
5 for the--for the police unit that oversees movies and  
6 TV is-- You know that's about and it's closer to \$5  
7 million. So, you know, what I would say is that,  
8 look I'm not looking to scare them away either, but  
9 there has-- Right now the commissions are--are very  
10 welcoming, very, very welcoming to the film industry  
11 and what this bill is asking to do is just provide a  
12 basic level of accountability to the neighbors that  
13 host them. I mean here, you know, we--we are giving  
14 up, you know, days and days of parking events. Kind  
15 of there's no-- You know, we don't even know--the  
16 community doesn't even know. They'll go, Oh, I  
17 don't-- You know over the next month they have no  
18 idea. They have no idea whether they're going to be  
19 able to park on their block. And there's-- I think  
20 that what this bill is looking to do is just  
21 establish a basic level of accountability that is  
22 standard across the city, city agencies across our  
23 entire government have reporting that they have to  
24 do. This is--this seems like-- You know, I mean--I  
25 just--I challenge the premise that we're going to--by

2 doing this like this scare them away. I mean they  
3 have a \$420 million tax credit a year. That's what's  
4 keeping them in New York City. It's that it, you  
5 known, it--works here. It works here. Okay.

6 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Okay. Thank you.  
7 Thank you. We're going to move on to our first  
8 panel. We want to thank you Commissioner--

9 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: [interposing]  
10 Thank you, Commissioner.

11 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: And everybody else.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: [interposing] And  
13 thank you Deputy Commissioners.

14 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: It's only been--it's  
15 only been three hours, but it looks like we only met  
16 yesterday. All right, we're going to hear from some  
17 neighborhood residents first. I do want to notice  
18 that I have-- I do want to make notice that I have a  
19 letter from Borough President Eric Adams supporting  
20 this bill. His Deputy Diana Reyna was here but she  
21 had to leave and Caroline Bell. I do want to note  
22 for the record that we have 45 people that want to  
23 speak. So I mean I can take my shoes off and we will  
24 stay. But I only want you to know that I'm limiting  
25 you to two minutes. We get the--we get the thrust of

2 where you want us to go. If someone speaks, and you  
3 think what you want to say could be repetitious you  
4 can yield when your name is called. So we want to  
5 hear from you, and please don't take my comments as  
6 anything but that. But this is a very, very well  
7 attended hearing with so many speakers. So we have  
8 to ask your indulgence. I have to give up the Chair  
9 for a minute. I'm going to ask Councilman Levin to  
10 take over the Chair.

11 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: When you hear your  
12 name speak up.

13 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: And by the way, I did  
14 ask that Commissioner Lopez I did when I spoke to her  
15 I did ask that somebody be left behind from her  
16 agency while the community speaks.

17 [background comments]

18 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Everybody, in the  
19 interest of time I think we're going to keep all  
20 testimony to two minutes. We appreciate your  
21 patience and we appreciate you being here. And  
22 whoever wants to begin can go ahead.

23 BARBARA BLAIR RANDALL: Okay. so--

24 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: I'm sorry. Make  
25 sure the light is on.

2                   BARBARA BLAIR RANDALL: Hello, thank you  
3 for taking the time to hear us. My name is Barbara  
4 Blair Randall. I'm a resident of Park Slope, and  
5 over the last five to ten years Park Slope  
6 particularly Prospect Park West has just been  
7 inundated with filming either for feature films or  
8 for television series. Over the last year in several  
9 instances the completion of one filming segued into  
10 the start of the next. In one instance this fall,  
11 streets approaching PPW were closed for weeks. I used  
12 to be a car owner, and during one of these weeks I  
13 was towed despite my car to make sure that I was not  
14 on a street posted for filming. I carefully planned  
15 for a spot that would be good for a week. Not so.  
16 The street was posted after I parked there and I was  
17 towed. So because I had not checked the block every  
18 single day, I was not aware of the posting. I'm sure  
19 you're aware from popular humor that we in Park Slope  
20 refer to it as Park Nope. I'm aware that the City  
21 derives economic activity from encouraging filming in  
22 New York. I am respectful of this opportunity.  
23 Regardless, I implore you to put a moratorium on  
24 filming in New York City until a system can be

2 devised that apportions filming to like neighborhoods  
3 throughout the five boroughs of New York.

4           If the film company desires a brownstone  
5 neighborhood, those shoots should be apportioned  
6 amongst brownstone neighborhoods throughout the city.  
7 No neighborhood should be required to take more than  
8 two shoots a year within a zip code. There are  
9 brownstone neighborhoods throughout New York City  
10 that in all likelihood have no shoots. This rule  
11 should govern residential districts, which by nature  
12 had different characteristics and needs than business  
13 districts. I also understand that although filming  
14 companies are required to give back locally to non-  
15 profit or community organizations, they generally  
16 don't unless they're asked. And when they do it's a  
17 minimal amount. I'm putting the following  
18 recommendations on the table for the Council to  
19 consider when legislating. The film companies should  
20 be required to contribute at least \$10,000 to a  
21 community organization. [bell] Is that my time.

22           COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: If you can just  
23 wrap it up.

24           BARBARA BLAIR RANDALL: Okay, when a  
25 street or avenue is closed for filming and parking is

2 interrupted or prohibited, alternate side of the  
3 street parking should be suspended within a five-  
4 block radius of the closed street for the duration of  
5 the filming. City Hall should maintain a database  
6 that shows all streets closures for any reason so the  
7 streets and avenues are not closed sequentially so  
8 that there are not multiple street and avenue  
9 closures on the same day. In other words, the  
10 Council should prohibit a filming on Prospect Park  
11 West or anywhere at the same time you're closing a  
12 side street that intersects with the avenue or for  
13 DOT to repave, as occurred this past summer. Or  
14 streets should not be closed for street fairs, block  
15 parties or if there are other streets within the  
16 neighborhood, the zip code that are closed for other  
17 purposes such as filming or repaving. If the city  
18 had a master map last summer, you would have seen  
19 multiple streets and avenues closed throughout the  
20 summer for the above-mentioned activities sometimes  
21 simultaneously and sometimes consecutively. It was  
22 ridiculous if you were a resident of Park Slope. As  
23 stated, neighborhoods should have to tolerate more  
24 than two closures a year for filming. Commercial  
25 activity is the life blood of a vibrant--



2 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: I'm sorry, I have  
3 to ask you to summarize.

4 BARBARA BLAIR RANDALL: Okay. I was just  
5 going to add that commercial activity is the life  
6 blood of the vibrant city. But I would only say that  
7 you can have commercial broken windows in addition to  
8 behavioral broken windows. And when commercial  
9 interests override the interests of the residents and  
10 the residents of the city you have commercial broken  
11 windows.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you very  
13 much.

14 CAROLINE BELL: Hi. My name is Caroline  
15 Bell from Cafe Grumpy. When we opened the doors to  
16 our coffee shop in 2005 in Greenpoint, Brooklyn our  
17 very first customers were from a television series  
18 that was being shot on the Broadway stages across the  
19 street from our cafe. Luckily for us hardworking  
20 cast and crew members drink plenty of coffee and  
21 large orders soon became a regular occurrence. Our  
22 cafe even ended up getting a small cameo in one  
23 episode of that series. Being located in the  
24 industrial business zone of Greenpoint we were  
25 struggling to attract customers. If it were not for

2 the business that we received from the first  
3 television shoot and subsequent others, we would have  
4 not been able to keep our doors open. We were also  
5 lucky enough that our cafe was used occasionally as a  
6 location shoot providing another source of income to  
7 help us through our early years as an independent  
8 business. Like with many other small businesses in  
9 the neighborhood, the cast and production crews  
10 filming in and around Greenpoint had become our  
11 regulars and friends. We see them on their lunch  
12 breaks at local restaurants and support local  
13 businesses. These individuals like the productions  
14 themselves are helping grow the local economy. In  
15 our case, the boost in sales we've received because  
16 of filming in Greenpoint has kept business growing  
17 and has enabled us to hire more staff. We now employ  
18 over 50 on staff. New York is a city in which hard  
19 work and industry are positive for the entire  
20 community and a thriving film industry benefits  
21 everyone. When the no parking film shoot signs go  
22 up, we know that means increased business for dozens  
23 of small businesses in the neighborhood. Thanks.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you very  
25 much.

2                   DAWN SKEETE: Good morning to the  
3 Technology Committee. My name is Dawn Skeete and I'm  
4 a Brooklyn based small business owner that operates a  
5 celebrated restaurant known as Jamaica Grill located  
6 in the heart of the Bedford-Stuyvesant section of  
7 Brooklyn. Not only have I been a part of the  
8 community as a business operator for a number of  
9 years, but I've also dedicated much of my efforts to  
10 providing leadership for our local community  
11 development and to youth empowerment. But even more  
12 specific to the matter at hand I am a living  
13 testimony to the impact of the much needed and highly  
14 desired expansion of filming and production offered  
15 by the City of New York and specifically under-  
16 developing neighborhoods throughout Brooklyn.

17                   To what I'm referring you may ask. For  
18 four months I have faced a daunting utility bill,  
19 which I had no clear solution for paying while my  
20 restaurant stood the test of time and continues to  
21 employ a number of local staff. Like most of the  
22 small businesses in the Brooklyn area we, too, have  
23 been hit hard by the economic downturn of the past  
24 few years. Four months ago, Star Power Production  
25 Company and acclaimed Star series Power approached me

2 to use my restaurant as a key location for filming of  
3 their highly anticipated second season. Without  
4 direct revenue and-- With that direct revenue and  
5 product food sales to the production team my business  
6 would not have been able to pay that utility bill. I  
7 must tell you when I got that check, I went directly  
8 to National Grid and paid that bill. Hence, I'm here  
9 today. Now, my business would not have been able to  
10 pay that bill without that revenue. My doors and my  
11 employees continued to maintain their households and  
12 keep their lights on. Without support of this  
13 filming and production opportunity, my neighborhood  
14 would have taken a major hit.

15 But today, our doors are open. Our  
16 employees have [bell] have an opportunity to earn an  
17 income and our neighborhood is littered with small  
18 struggling business still have a hope for a brighter  
19 future. I know I have to wrap up now, but let me  
20 just say this: The production that is happening in  
21 New York City right now it is needed to keep small  
22 communities alive. When talk about communication,  
23 they do communicate with the residents of those  
24 communities. I think communication is not just  
25 within that area, but it's within all city entities

2 to communicate with the residents. The film  
3 production I think is a group that has been doing  
4 their best to let the residents of each neighborhood  
5 know that they will be in the neighborhood, which  
6 parking spots will be taken, and they do offer work  
7 for the city, for the people within those surrounding  
8 communities. Thank you.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you for your  
10 testimony.

11 JOSEF SZENDE: So, hi. Matthew was  
12 called up. I think Matthew and Charlie are a team so  
13 maybe they can both share the mic.

14 MATTHEW LE SORCIER: Sure.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: They can use both  
16 mics. It's fine. Charlie, you could use--you could  
17 use the mic, too, if you want.

18 MATTHEW LE SORCIER: My name is Matthew  
19 Le Sorcier [sp?]. I own the Wine Shop on Atlantic  
20 Avenue in Brooklyn Heights, and we've been very  
21 adversely affected by all of the filming shoots. The  
22 problem with it is the consecutive number of weeks  
23 that parking spots have been taking up. We are in  
24 Downtown Brooklyn. Brooklyn Downtown is a  
25 neighborhood where people do commute, come to work to

2 the court system. And we do count on who that do  
3 come into our neighborhood that shop in our  
4 neighborhood. So we're a destination store in a way.  
5 As a neighborhood store we're equally affected by the  
6 amount of trucks that line the street. And then  
7 people don't want to walk on the street to shop for  
8 those days. And I equally would like to expand the  
9 conversation to another level. What I see is the  
10 most detrimental thing. I could live with that  
11 because I understand that the city needs to have its  
12 revenue from the film industry. What I would love to  
13 see is as a retailer is that there be a moratorium  
14 during specific times when our retail sales the most  
15 critical. The most critical times obviously  
16 Thanksgiving, Christmas, Passover, you got the idea.  
17 Easter. At those times there should be a moratorium  
18 on commercial streets that count on their own local  
19 residents or outside people that come into shop in  
20 their neighborhood to be able to get to those places  
21 so that people don't change their buying habits.  
22 That's my testimony.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you very  
24 much.

2 CHARLIE SAHADI: I'm Charlie Sahadi from  
3 Sahadi Specialty Foods on Atlantic Avenue. We've  
4 been on Atlantic Avenue since 1948. This is our 67th  
5 year there, and these last few years with these movie  
6 shoots it's been very, very difficult for us.  
7 Parking in Downtown Brooklyn is very, very difficult  
8 at best, and we've even gone to the new system Smart  
9 Park in order to get people to move their cars more  
10 frequently so we can get more customers that could be  
11 able to get spaces so they can shop with us. The  
12 movie shoots are never announced in enough time for  
13 us. We don't have time to warn our customers. This  
14 has caused a major problem in customer service. And  
15 this is part of how you run a business is giving  
16 people as much convenience as possible. Once that  
17 convenience is gone, they find many other areas that  
18 are more convenient that they can go to. We've also  
19 had the problem with the trucks. We are between  
20 Court and Clinton Street, but the trucks go between  
21 Court and Henry Street, which is two very long  
22 blocks. Trucks on both sides of the streets allowing  
23 no parking at all. That makes it very difficult for  
24 salesmen to come in and try to sell us some products.  
25 It makes it difficult for our deliveries, which we

2 get many from local distributors and we have our own  
3 truck which comes from our own warehouse and it comes  
4 every night. And it's been a major hassle where  
5 sometimes we get two, three, four pallets of  
6 merchandise at a time. And it's been very difficult  
7 to get the concession to allow us to pull our truck  
8 close enough to the storefront so that we can unload  
9 on a timely basis. It's just been a difficult time.  
10 Now, after listening to all the wonderful benefits  
11 that the movie industry brings to New York, it's very  
12 difficult to comment against them. But when you  
13 realize your business is suffering, and it's a  
14 business that has a wonderful tradition. We are a  
15 destination-- It's not east side. We're a  
16 destination store where people come from Connecticut.  
17 They come from Philadelphia. They come from  
18 Westchester, and they come from all over the city  
19 both Brooklyn and Manhattan. And it's just [bell]  
20 making it difficult for us to continue doing things  
21 as we've been doing for these years. Thank you.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you very  
23 much. Just one quick comment because I know that  
24 there's a concern that if people can't park, they can  
25 go to some other alternative location. But for both



2 of your stores, there is no other comparable  
3 alternative locations.

4 CHARLIE SAHADI: Thank you, Steve.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: So, I just want to  
6 point that out for the record.

7 JOSEF SZENDE: Hi, my name is Josef  
8 Szende. I'm the Executive Director for the Atlantic  
9 Avenue Business Improvement District. Our district  
10 is on Atlantic Avenue in Brooklyn, Brooklyn Heights,  
11 Boerum Hill, Cobble Hill and it's as we've heard from  
12 our representatives a favorite site for filming. And  
13 we understand that our neighborhoods are beautiful  
14 and attractive and highly sought after. And that is  
15 wonderful. And what--and we're not asking for any  
16 kind of shutdown, or we really don't want to harm the  
17 film industry at all. But we are a place of  
18 business, and we have over 300 businesses located  
19 within our district. They're destinations for  
20 shopping and dining, and many people who are coming  
21 from areas where they don't have an alternative to  
22 driving to come. And so they really rely on street  
23 parking. And just to give you an idea of some of the  
24 number for us that we've been able to calculate.  
25 Between Columbus Day and Christmas there were 73

2 days. And we had some kind of production on 17 of  
3 those days. So that was one in five days had some  
4 kind of production where at least one block of our  
5 district was disrupted. Five of those productions  
6 were between Thanksgiving and Christmas, which as  
7 Matthew said are the most critical days for retail  
8 strips to do business, to employ their employees all  
9 year long. We believe that this legislation is just  
10 going to be able to give us the numbers to form a  
11 basis of trying to see where it makes sense to have  
12 more filming, and where it makes sense to have less  
13 filming in the city. We think this is a modest  
14 proposal. It's a good proposal, and we really hope  
15 that the Council will support it. It's a balanced  
16 approach to film and television production in the  
17 city, and we think it's a great first step. [bell]

18 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you, sir.

19 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you. Our next  
20 panel, and each speaker again is limited to two  
21 minutes. Carlo Scissura, Brooklyn Chamber of  
22 Commerce; John Ford, Local 52; Lori Raphael, Brooklyn  
23 Chamber of Commerce.

24 LORI RAFAEL: [off mic] I'm speaking for  
25 Carlo.

2 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Oh, you are? Okay,  
3 so Carlo is not here. but we have Ms. Rafael speaking  
4 for him. Angela Mealy Motion Picture Association of  
5 America; Neil Dudich, Director of Directors Guild of  
6 America.

7 [background comments]

8 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Would the Brooklyn  
9 Chamber like to go first, please.

10 LORI RAPHAEL: Thank you. Good morning  
11 Chair Vacca, member of the New York City Council  
12 Committee on Technology, and guests. My name is Lori  
13 Raphael, and I serve as the Vice President for  
14 Strategic Partnership for the Brooklyn Chamber of  
15 Commerce and I'm delivering testimony on behalf of  
16 Carlo Scissura, President and CEO of the Brooklyn  
17 Chamber of Commerce. The Brooklyn Chamber is a  
18 membership based business assistance organization,  
19 which represents the interests of over 2,000 member  
20 businesses as well as the business community of  
21 Brooklyn. The Brooklyn Alliance is our not-for-  
22 profit economic development organization, which works  
23 to address the needs of businesses through direct  
24 business assistance programs. We applaud the  
25 Committee on Technology for convening this forum

2 intended to explore ways in which the business  
3 community, film industry, and local neighborhoods can  
4 best work together to share information and  
5 strengthen working relationships. However, we are  
6 not in favor of the bill as it is currently drafted.  
7 It is vital to the continued growth of the  
8 entertainment sector in New York City that we find a  
9 way of communicating effectively without adding  
10 administrative burdens to our productions. The  
11 Brooklyn Chamber believes that New York City and  
12 specifically Brooklyn is the best place in the world  
13 to film. We're proud that major film and TV  
14 productions come to Brooklyn to shoot, and that  
15 Brooklyn is home to many of the people that work at  
16 all levels of the production side of the  
17 entertainment industry. The entertainment industry  
18 employs 130,000 New Yorkers, and contributes more  
19 than \$7 billion to the city's economy annually. Last  
20 year alone the city hosted 242 film productions, and  
21 42 prime time episodic series. The Brooklyn Chamber  
22 fully supports these filming jobs, and any additional  
23 barriers are not consistent with a pro-job growth  
24 message. The economic and social impact of the film  
25 industry in New York City cannot be overstated. Our

2 studios are committed not only to training local  
3 residents, but they provide some of the best jobs  
4 available in the local economy. Film productions  
5 shop locally and support their neighborhood  
6 businesses and they are often a source [bell] of  
7 important information--

8 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: [interposing] Please  
9 conclude. Do you support the bill?

10 LORI RAPHAEL: Not as it is written.

11 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: So what do you  
12 propose?

13 LORI RAPHAEL: We propose the kind of  
14 case-by-case common sense communication and approach  
15 that the agency is currently working under.

16 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Okay. So you don't  
17 see a need for legislation at this time? So you do  
18 not support the bill?

19 LORI RAPHAEL: That is correct.

20 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Okay. That's fine.  
21 Thank you. Next.

22 JOHN FORD: My name is John Ford. I'm  
23 the President and Business Manager of Motion Picture  
24 Studio Mechanics Local 52. On behalf of the 4,000  
25 members of my local union, we express our opposition

2 to the Council's bill. My union represents grips,  
3 electricians, set dressers, set decorators, prop  
4 masters, and the majority of the low line crew. My  
5 opposition to the bill is the--some of the reporting  
6 requirements with regards to wages and residency  
7 requirements. Only because I think that there are so  
8 many different contracts and budgets. Some guy could  
9 make 20 bucks an hour doing one job. Another guy  
10 could get \$30 or \$40 an hour. I don't know how that  
11 data would be collected or used, or what its purpose  
12 would be. I'm just going to run through this quickly  
13 because most of it has been said already.

14 I also would express a little bit of  
15 concern about anything, legislation require data  
16 collection with regards to the Sony incidents with  
17 Cyber attacks. A lot of my members were affected by  
18 that. Working with Sony years ago their information  
19 was comprised. But I also--just a couple of brief  
20 comments with regards to the burdens that the Mayor's  
21 Office already has. That is correct. There are  
22 problems with the scripts. Scripts aren't written  
23 for tomorrow, so they don't have any idea where  
24 they're going right now. So it's very difficult for  
25 them to provide those. If it's going to snow

2 tonight, half the shows in the city they'll want to  
3 move inside. Those permits they don't need. The  
4 other half are going to move outside for free special  
5 effects. So it's very difficult to get the  
6 information, and even when you have it, I don't  
7 really know how accurate it's going to be. But I'm  
8 happy to answer any questions, and I'm certainly  
9 happy to work with the Mayor's Office and the City  
10 Council to address any issues with motion picture and  
11 television production. But also quickly, it is a  
12 very tenuous position. We have a generous tax  
13 credit, but Georgia's is better, [bell] and  
14 Louisiana's is better, and they'll go there in a  
15 heart beat if they have to. Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: You know, sometimes  
17 bills are introduced to be passed, and I think that--  
18 I'm hoping that we can get to a point where we can  
19 review the legislation and see what's the best way to  
20 go because I do think there's a problem. But also, I  
21 think legislation promotes a discussion and changes  
22 in policy. So I think that we're looking at both at  
23 this point. So I appreciate both of you saying that  
24 you're not for the legislation. You've raised some  
25 pungent points, and something that we're going to

2 consider going forth. But I did--I did get the  
3 feeling from the Commissioner being here today that  
4 she was made aware of the extent of the problem, and  
5 that hopefully she can administratively do some  
6 things to work with local neighborhoods a little  
7 better than has happened in the past, or  
8 significantly better I should say. Okay. Yes, would  
9 you introduce yourself, please?

10 ANGELA MEALY: Is this on?

11 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Yes.

12 ANGELA MEALY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

13 I'm Angela Mealy with the Motion Picture Association  
14 of America. We are producing and distributing these  
15 motion picture features, television series that are  
16 filming throughout the city. I appreciate the  
17 opportunity to be here today to testify in opposition  
18 to Intro 84. I'm going to skip a lot of my testimony  
19 just because we only have two minutes. But I  
20 understand the acceleration of motion picture and  
21 television production in this city. And some  
22 neighborhoods has sparked increased questions  
23 regarding transparency in connection with the  
24 program. We don't believe the answer to that concern  
25 is to impose complex reporting requirements as



2 drafted in Intro 84. I think the Commissioner had  
3 expressed some of the concerns, But it's true that  
4 some of the provisions with respect to the  
5 disaggregated information by job titles,  
6 compensation, employment or demographic information  
7 would be very difficult. And it would really come  
8 from our member companies and other production  
9 companies as opposed to- Or, it would have to come  
10 from the State who has some of that information on  
11 the application, if even that minutia. So, we want  
12 to make sure that any information that is required is  
13 information that is already readily available or  
14 could be gleaned from different databases that are  
15 already available for the city. And, we understand  
16 obviously it's the State's competitive tax program  
17 that's driving all this location production in the  
18 city. And it is a very mobile industry given the  
19 fact that 38 other states have film production tax  
20 incentives. So, we respectfully request that the  
21 legislation requiring all these complex data points  
22 be rejected by the committee and we look forward to  
23 working with you. We pledge to work with you to come  
24 up with the situation--some reporting requirements  
25 that would be--satisfy your transparency, as well as

2 not putting an onus on the industry or the Mayor's  
3 Office who has done a herculean job to this point  
4 addressing with the community boards and the boroughs  
5 to this point. [bell]

6 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you. Boy you  
7 timed that really well. You did a good job. That's  
8 why you're in pictures. [laughter] I thank you.  
9 You've been very constructive in your meetings with  
10 me, and I thank you for being part of the process.  
11 So thank you for coming today, of course. Yes, sir.

12 NEIL DUDICH: My name is Neil Dudich, and  
13 I'm the Eastern Associate Executive Director for the  
14 Directors Guild of America. It's a national labor  
15 union that represents feature film and television  
16 directors, assistant directors, production and  
17 location managers. 1,844 of our members are  
18 residents of the City of New York. As we all know,  
19 this city has become a powerhouse for film and  
20 television production and maintaining those jobs here  
21 at home is of the utmost importance to our members.  
22 Before the incentive and the Mayor's Office work with  
23 the industry here, there were only five scripted TV  
24 shows in New York in 2004. New York City based DJ  
25 members earned less than \$15 million that year on

2 projects shot here. Shows that wanted the New York  
3 look whether it be Times Square or Central Park as  
4 you mentioned here, shot exteriors here, and the rest  
5 of the production elsewhere. Even a movie about 9/11  
6 was shot in Canada.

7           The picture today is very different. In  
8 2013, 59 scripted TV--television series were shot in  
9 the city. Between 2005 and 2013, the number of shows  
10 has increased by 30% a year. The earnings of our New  
11 York members followed suit rising 120% in the last  
12 eight years, and topping \$32 million in 2013. That  
13 is an annual compounded growth rate of nearly 8%, and  
14 covers a period when the city went through a very  
15 difficult economic recession. I want to be clear  
16 that the data I've just offered reflects New York  
17 City residents who worked on New York City projects.  
18 These are good jobs with strong pension and health  
19 benefits, jobs that build the middle-class and the  
20 kind that we should want to create.

21           The Mayor's Office has done a great job  
22 of balancing the competing interests of residents who  
23 benefit from production, and those who may not. Make  
24 no mistake about it, our location and production  
25 managers are plenty upset with the Mayor's Office

2 places a neighborhood on the hot list or denies  
3 access to a location for a crucial scene. Or gives  
4 the production less access to a particular location  
5 when they want it. But we understand the need for be  
6 reasonable and create a proper balance [bell] that  
7 ensures productions not only are vibrant but  
8 sustainable. Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you. I think  
10 that we can have an accommodation. I mean I'm having  
11 this hearing because Councilman Levin prevailed upon  
12 me. Really. I'm telling you the truth. If you look  
13 in his district, you should know. He was persistent.  
14 I'm not saying he was a pain, but he was persistent.  
15 But that's his job to represent his district, and I  
16 was a former district manager to a community board  
17 before I came here. So, I can very much associate  
18 with some of the issues people are raising, but is  
19 there an overriding citywide need for the motion  
20 picture industry? The answer is yes. And we don't  
21 want to do anything to impede that. So we have to  
22 find a way for some type of notification,  
23 transparency, administrative improvements while not  
24 stifling that. So all the points you raised were  
25 very good. I appreciate it. And jobs are the most

2 important, of course. Okay, our next panel. Okay, I  
3 just complimented you. You want to talk again now?

4 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Mr. Chairman, I  
5 just wanted to add that when I was speaking to the  
6 Commissioner earlier about why I believe the film  
7 industry is here in New York. I want to add to that  
8 as one of the main reasons that we do have here in  
9 New York City a number of studios and stages like  
10 Kaufman, like Silvercup, Steiner Studios, Broadway  
11 stages, Steiner and Broadway stages are in my  
12 district. And they have invested in infrastructure  
13 to keep the industry here. So I want to make sure  
14 that that is on the record that, you know, one of the  
15 main reasons why the industry I believe is going to  
16 continue to stay here is because the infrastructure  
17 is--has been established here in larger part due to  
18 the efforts of those organizations. So I just want  
19 to make sure that is there on the record.

20 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Yes. Okay. Our next  
21 panel. Terry Casaletta, Teamsters 817; Josef Szenda,  
22 Atlantic Avenue-- Oh, he already testified here this  
23 morning. Dana. Some of you guys' handwriting is  
24 terrible. [background comments] Don't blame my  
25 pronunciation. Dana Constaltekoff. [background

2 comment] Okay, close? Okay. Ms. Jay Simmons. Jen  
3 Hensley. Jen Hensley and Howard Collins.

4 [background comments]

5 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Would the first young  
6 lady like to introduce herself and start off? Okay.

7 TERRY CASALETTA: Thank you, Chairman  
8 Vacca and members of the committee for this  
9 opportunity to speak with you today. I'm Terry  
10 Casaletta. I'm a representative of Teamsters Local  
11 817, and I'm here to share our opposition to the  
12 Council Intro 84 in its current form. We represent  
13 the drivers, casting directors, casting associates,  
14 commercial location manager, commercial location  
15 scouts. We provide services for movies, television  
16 commercials, theaters, the entire entertainment  
17 industry. I'm going to cut through a lot of this.  
18 In 2008, Local 817 drivers. The number of drivers  
19 employed in this business were 935. 2008, 935.  
20 Their wages and benefit for that period totaled close  
21 to \$84 million, just drivers. And in nine months of  
22 last year from January to September, 1,367 drivers  
23 were employed, and projected wages and benefits for  
24 the entire year at close to \$175 million. We live  
25 here. We work here. We want to stay here. We

2 understand a lot of the community issues. You know  
3 from 817 we donate. We participate in not just  
4 blocking your streets, but also providing public  
5 service donations or whatever. So we would hope to  
6 work with you to address some of these issues. And I  
7 would also encourage the council members to come with  
8 us to a location set. See what it's like.  
9 Experience what you really see. It's not easy. It's  
10 very, very complicated, but if we can give you some  
11 insight into that, I think it would be helpful.  
12 Thank you.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: What-- Sorry.  
14 Just what specifically in the bill does--?

15 TERRY CASALETТА: A lot of the--a lot of  
16 the proprietary information--

17 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: [interposing]  
18 Okay.

19 TERRY CASALETТА: --or information of who  
20 you are, where you live, where you work, what you  
21 earn it's complicated and, you know, people that  
22 it's--

23 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: [interposing] I  
24 don't think we're asking for people to give addresses  
25 and names.

2           TERRY CASALETТА: Well, kind of where you  
3 are with that kind of stuff, that kind of sends a  
4 message that there's more to this than just working  
5 with your community, and trying to figure out the  
6 parking and making certain areas accessible. Plus I  
7 think that some of the reporting process is just kind  
8 of complicated, in an already complicated and over  
9 bureaucratized situation. So if there is information  
10 that you feel you need to help your constituents with  
11 the issue they deal with, with parking, closing your  
12 businesses and whatever, I think we can talk about it  
13 and see how to get that information to you in an easy  
14 way. But the way it's written right now causes us  
15 great concern.

16           COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you.

17           TERRY CASALETТА: Thank you.

18           DANA KUZNETZKOFF: Thank you, Mr. Chair,  
19 Committee. My name is Dana Kuznetzkoff and I'm a  
20 longstanding member of the New York Production  
21 Committee as well as a member of the Directors Guild  
22 of America and the Producers Guild of America.  
23 Since 2004, when New York began offering tax credits,  
24 the film industry has experienced record growth. We  
25 all know that. What began as a jobs creation program



2 has soared to heights that we couldn't know was  
3 possible. Yes, the film community has seen  
4 unprecedented growth, and with growth come growing  
5 pains. Displacement, disruption, noise, common  
6 complaints from all New Yorkers whether the industry  
7 is construction, street fairs, deliveries, or film  
8 shoots. However, the film industry is often target  
9 above any other industry because the perception of  
10 entitlement and excess. Although it is because of  
11 rapid growth of the industry that the production  
12 community has adjusted and rallied and share  
13 information and resources, and has taken active steps  
14 to manage disruption. Managing disruption and the  
15 benefits of film production is something the public  
16 never hears about. You will hear about the loss of  
17 parking, the noisy trucks, maybe a rude production  
18 assistant. But you should also hear about the rise  
19 in income for local residents and businesses or the  
20 training programs that open up the mysteries of  
21 production. But what is rarely discussed is that  
22 almost every production shooting in New York makes it  
23 a point to give back to the communities in which they  
24 film. Either a donation to a block association,  
25 repairs to the local park, or the schools, or a

2 significant purchase to local organizations that they  
3 would never have been able to afford on their own.

4           While based in Brooklyn, the NBC series  
5 Smash, of which I was the co-producer often gave back  
6 to the community by assisting local organizations  
7 with monetary and material donations and set visits  
8 for local charities and local leaders. In Season 2  
9 in over six months, the show made over \$3,700 worth  
10 of monetary donations. And an uncalculated amount of  
11 materials for community outreach. In the wake of  
12 Hurricane Sandy, in addition to putting up our crew  
13 that was displaced in hotels, Smash dispatched eight  
14 fully loaded 53-foot trucks with supplies like  
15 diapers, clothing and construction materials that  
16 were sent to the hardest hit areas. That was a  
17 communitywide effort with the entire film production  
18 community including Local 817. [sneezes] I snuck it  
19 in there. Local 817 and the Mayor's Film Office. It  
20 was an entire community effort, and these are the  
21 stories from the film production that do not make the  
22 news. Whether on the Upper West Side or Park Slope  
23 for every resident or business that decries the film  
24 industry and condemns the intrusion in the  
25 neighborhood there are many more standing in line to

2 welcome productions, which will surely mean an  
3 increase in coffee sales, dry cleaning, a donation to  
4 a block association. Or a residential building that  
5 could certainly use the influx of cash that a  
6 location fee will bring. Measuring the impact of  
7 filmmaking as this amendment calls for cannot only be  
8 the detrimental. Measuring the impact of film  
9 production has to include the benefits and the  
10 positive impact as well. Thank you.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Just one thing.  
12 You know, when we drafted the bill over a year ago,  
13 you know, the second part of the bill, that was the  
14 intention. It was to highlight where--who the  
15 industry is hiring, and what the industry is-- So  
16 it's--I find it a little interesting that industry  
17 has raised issues with the second part of the bill  
18 over the reporting for employment and things like  
19 that. We wanted to--we put that in as an opportunity  
20 to highlight what--what the benefits, economic  
21 benefits were of the industry. So I just wanted to  
22 just be clear on that.

23 DANA KUZNETZKOFF: There are some  
24 benefits that are just not recorded. Yeah, as in the  
25 donations and the community give back that we do, and

2 part of that is business. You can't always tell your  
3 corporate parent that you're going to write a big fat  
4 check to the community service because that's what  
5 the corporation does.

6 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Yes, Miss.

7 J.J. SIMMONS: Yes, hi, Chairman Vacca  
8 and members of the committee. My name is J. J.  
9 Simmons and I'm the New York Executive Director of  
10 Screen Actors Guild and AFTRA as well as the Co-  
11 Chairman of the New York Production Alliance, also  
12 known as NYPA. Many of my colleagues are here in the  
13 room, and have already testified, and some will be  
14 testifying shortly. As Co-Chairman of NYPA, I  
15 appreciate the opportunity to express our opposition  
16 to the Council Bill Intro 84 as it is currently  
17 written. The New York Production Alliance has 64  
18 member companies with a total member base of 200,000,  
19 many of which live in New York City and all the  
20 boroughs including Brooklyn, including the Bronx,  
21 Manhattan all of the major areas here in New York  
22 City. And there is a total membership base of about  
23 200,000. That represents a broad spectrum of  
24 interests in the motion picture, television,  
25 commercial industry here in New York. As an

2 organization, we have witnessed the industry grow and  
3 thrive over a period of the past ten years. I mean  
4 extraordinary growth, and it has created jobs and  
5 business opportunities, as you heard, for our members  
6 and for tens and thousands of our residents. Every  
7 economic impact report on this industry reveals what  
8 a tremendous boon it has been to the New York  
9 community and economy from the jobs and production  
10 span to business expansions, and millions of dollars  
11 in capital improvement, which, of course, stays  
12 beyond the production time. This program has helped  
13 reverse the downward trend in motion picture,  
14 television, commercial production employment when  
15 other industries investment in job creation are not  
16 nearly as robust as I believe my colleague Neil  
17 Dudich from DG has already mentioned. Production  
18 companies in these tough economic times will make a  
19 cost determining factor, and if more obstacles like  
20 tedious reporting requirements are imposed directly  
21 on production companies causing added obstacles or  
22 added reporting requirements, this may give them a  
23 little bit of pause. And may have them reconsider  
24 actually filming here, and we know this. Let me just  
25 add a little anecdotal. When I first came on board

2 17 years ago at SAG, I would hear from my colleagues  
3 and hear from industry on the west coast that New  
4 York is too tough. There are too many complications.  
5 [bell] And we don't want that. We don't have that  
6 any longer, and we want to support the current robust  
7 production that we see here, and the welcoming  
8 attitude and the welcoming climate that we've created  
9 here. Thank you.

10           HOWARD KOLINS: Hi, I'm Howard Kolins,  
11 President of the Boerum Hill Association, and  
12 ironically also I am a DGA member and an Actors  
13 Equity for that member for that matter, and I work in  
14 live events. I'm usually in a studio. I think this  
15 is a very important business. I don't think the--I  
16 think the legislation--my organization supports the  
17 legislation, but I think hearing some of the comments  
18 today there are some legitimate concerns from the  
19 industry. Having said that, I'm going to urge the  
20 Mayor's Office to be more robust with asking people  
21 to communicate with the local communities earlier and  
22 more often. So I'm going to applaud NBC and  
23 Universal's The Slap for having posted on the 14th of  
24 this month all the streets they will be visiting on  
25 the 23rd.

2           That's long in advance of the notice,  
3 which I'm not sure I've actually received yet. I'm  
4 getting the direct feed from Steve Levin's office.  
5 Thank you, Steve. So I'm tracking on my own the two  
6 to three days notice we get. I am actually loathe to  
7 call the production manager who is doing a multi-  
8 block shoot and say, by the way, could you tone down  
9 the generator noise? Could you watch the trees? I'm  
10 looking at the local things that my community  
11 organization has worked on that we want the film  
12 production to be cognizant of. So I applaud The  
13 Slap. They've done that many times.

14           We have a very good email conversation  
15 going. They Americans the same thing. The  
16 production manager actually took someone around  
17 because they towed a car, and nobody knew where it  
18 was. Above and beyond the go-around. So my thing  
19 really is-- A lot of people have said things.  
20 Everybody hates moving. Parking is always-- I'm  
21 tired of hearing about parking, quite frankly. RPP,  
22 if everybody in the room knows what that is. RPP an  
23 old topic, but better communication. The bigger the  
24 production, you should get out sooner. You should  
25 post something to the community. You should reach

2 out to the neighborhood association. I'm willing to  
3 send out to my constituents specific information. I  
4 will even send out hey they've released half a block  
5 for parking. Get there now. Some people are smart  
6 [bell] in leveraging this. Please do that. Thank  
7 you.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: About parking I  
9 just want to ask a quick question. Instead of having  
10 the chain as it is now where it comes to my office, I  
11 send it to you, you send to the Boerum Hills  
12 membership, would it be more helpful to have that  
13 information just publicly available and skip three  
14 steps?

15 HOWARD KOLINS: Well, of course, it would  
16 be. I'm not sure given what I heard Dean say and  
17 I've actually gone to the office to get permits. It's  
18 not always possible to get what you want on the day  
19 you want it. And the poor Americans angered my  
20 community. They got rained on three times in an  
21 overnight shoot. So we kept sending notes to the  
22 community like cut them a little break, and I kept  
23 talking to them. So whenever someone can say  
24 something to me like, yeah, you know, what they can  
25 talk there later than we posted, park there. Put the



2 cone on top of the car. We won't tow you. Get out  
3 by 6:00. Anything I can tell people is helpful. It  
4 is a very fluid business. I know that, but having  
5 said that, but having said that, the people who do  
6 the business, the people who are really, really  
7 smart, these are people I work with. I love them.  
8 They can be smarter and the office can be smarter.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you.

10 HOWARD KOLINS: Thanks.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: The next panel  
12 Judy Stanton, Brooklyn Heights Association, Bridgett  
13 Pinnell, Montague Street BID; Richard Mazur, North  
14 Brooklyn Development Corporation; Damon Gordon and  
15 Joshua Astrachan.

16 [pause, background comments]

17 JUDY STANTON: Who is first? Do I go  
18 first, Steve?

19 STEVE: Yeah, you can go first.

20 JUDY STANTON: My name is Judy Stanton.  
21 I'm the Executive Director of Brooklyn Heights  
22 Association. I'm going to read written testimony,  
23 and then speak off the cuff. The Brooklyn Heights  
24 Association wholeheartedly endorses Intro 84 and the  
25 filming activity reporting requirements it would

2 establish. Monthly reports of all film and TV  
3 production permits, as well as magazine and catalog  
4 film shoots approved by the Mayor's Film Office. As  
5 outlined in this bill will at a minimum enable my  
6 organization to have an effective response to the  
7 complaints that we receive from our members.

8           Understand the relative impact of filming  
9 on the different neighborhoods around the city  
10 especially Brooklyn eights community is the first  
11 step toward ensuring a balanced sustainable level of  
12 activity for our residents and others--of other  
13 neighborhoods where filming is a common occurrence.  
14 Brooklyn Heights sees filming every--almost every day  
15 of the year, and certainly there's concentrations of  
16 it at different times of the year. And I want to be  
17 able to track it more easily. We also endorse the  
18 provision that would require a reporting of the  
19 direct and indirect costs and benefits of the film  
20 and television industries in New York.

21           Though not covered in this legislation,  
22 we hope to see improvements in the quality of advance  
23 notice for neighborhood associations like ours, and  
24 to the community boards. Because Brooklyn Heights is  
25 such a popular film spot, we think it's only

2 reasonable to request better notice in order to pass  
3 on the information to effective residents. And to  
4 ensure that planned production footprints are not  
5 necessarily intrusive. We know film is worth the  
6 loss of revenue to our local small businesses, and we  
7 urge the Council to adopt this legislation. And if  
8 Steve were to ask me the same question he asked  
9 Howard Kolins: Would this help us to track the  
10 filming? It certainly would, and we would get the  
11 word out to our members more quickly. Thanks.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: And it would be  
13 helpful to BHA to get the information or to have your  
14 members get the information directly.

15 JUDY STANTON: Yeah, if they can go to a  
16 website then it saves your staff the trouble of  
17 emailing to me, or maybe it's automatic. But it also  
18 saves me the trouble of then figuring out to whom I  
19 should be forwarding those event notices that I  
20 already get. It needs to be on a website where  
21 everybody can see it. And even if it's after, at the  
22 end of the month, if the film office is unwilling to  
23 provide it in advance of the filming, it's still  
24 helpful to everybody rather than relying on actives  
25 to have a compilation of the impact of the industry

2 on a particular block, and a particular month, and a  
3 particular area.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you very  
5 much.

6 BRIDGETT PINNELL: Thank you all for the  
7 opportunity today to testify in support of this  
8 legislation. My name is Bridgett Pinnell. I'm of  
9 the Montague Street Business Improvement District. I  
10 represent over 100 businesses, the majority of which  
11 are business-own business--minority business owners.  
12 I have heard for years complaints from stakeholder in  
13 the community, business owners, property owners and  
14 residents that there was a rampant filming along  
15 Montague Street. The proliferation of film trucks,  
16 sidewalk crowding of crews has resulted in the loss  
17 of critical delivery parking, and sidewalk  
18 congestion. This has hurt business in our district,  
19 and created an often uninviting and unappealing place  
20 to live and shop.

21 The argument that our district in  
22 Brooklyn Heights was getting a disproportionately  
23 large share of filming cannot be confirmed or refuted  
24 because the Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment  
25 does not track where the filming takes place

2 throughout the city, and they don't report on the  
3 economic impacts. The Mayor's Office of Media and  
4 Entertainment has provided general comparisons and  
5 assurances that our district is not an area with a  
6 disproportionate share. But how can those claims be  
7 substantiated without data to back it up? The  
8 business owners and residents affected by filming  
9 have a right to know how much filming really is  
10 occurring. This is basic information, and not  
11 complicated to track. It is unreasonable to argue  
12 that sending out film notices is sufficient.

13           It does not allow us to compare to other  
14 areas in the city. And by the way, the idea that I'm  
15 supposed to walk along my district and count them up,  
16 isn't possible for me because I'm the only staff  
17 member. And I work part time. When I requested to  
18 get the notices, I was told that I wasn't--it wasn't  
19 possible to do so even though it does go to our  
20 community board and to our City Council  
21 representatives. So it's difficult for me to track,  
22 but I definitely am not able to compare the data to  
23 other areas in the city. The responsibility to track  
24 and report this information should fall to those who  
25 approve the film permits. We ask that this

2 requirement to be approved so that the real economic  
3 impact on our community can be measured and  
4 evaluated. [bell]

5           The film industry is well known to be an  
6 important revenue generator for the city. But, it  
7 should be determined through tracking and reporting  
8 whether or not the negative impact of filming has  
9 grown in a few areas, or is more accurately shared  
10 citywide. We believe our district is overburdened,  
11 and given that our attempts to work with the Mayor's  
12 Office of Media and Entertainment have not been  
13 fruitful, we feel that legislative action is the only  
14 way to get this information. I also want to state  
15 that in my eight years running a Business Improvement  
16 District in New York City I have been contacted by a  
17 film representative exactly one time. I can't say  
18 that my business owners haven't been approached by  
19 them, but I have never-- I have only heard  
20 complaints from business owners. We have never in my  
21 eight years received a community give back. So I  
22 kind of refute some of those statements. What we  
23 have seen so far is that it affects Brooklyn Heights.  
24 Thank you.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you very  
3 much, Ms. Pinnell.

4 RICHARD MAZUR: Good afternoon. My name  
5 is Richard Mazur. I'm the Executive Director of the  
6 North Brooklyn Development Corporation, which is a  
7 local not-for-profit neighborhood preservation  
8 program in Greenpoint. And I am also a lifelong  
9 resident of Greenpoint. And I'm here not so much to  
10 be against the bill even though I signed up as being  
11 against as for the best really partner that I've ever  
12 had in my history of doing community work in  
13 Greenpoint. I've lived in Greenpoint since 1950, and  
14 Councilwoman Crowley said, there are some areas of  
15 her community that are industrial wastelands. It  
16 kind of looks like Gotham City, and that's what the  
17 East Side of Greenpoint looked like. When Broadway  
18 stages moved in, all of a sudden places that you  
19 couldn't walk because there was crushed glass, broken  
20 windows and dark and dingy came alive. All of a  
21 sudden they were bright lighted, lit buildings and  
22 flowerbeds. And that goes from McGuinness Boulevard  
23 all the way to the Greenpoint Avenue Bridge. And  
24 every place I've lived they've improved. One of the  
25 earlier places that I lived was actually taken over

2 by an industrial expansion, and Broadway Stages  
3 bought the factory, and turned it into a safer place  
4 to exist. What we do is--our mission is to improve  
5 the quality of life of the residents and people that  
6 work in Greenpoint. So we do everything from senior  
7 programs, after school programs. We fight for  
8 affordable housing. We do tenant advocacy, and we  
9 are environmental ombudsmen. Broadway Stages not  
10 only-- You know, I'm an unabashed mercenary for the  
11 community. I go to Steve Levin for money, and for  
12 programs, I go to Broadway Stages for money for  
13 programs. Broadway Stages is one of the few people  
14 that come to me and say, Rich, what can we do to help  
15 you do what you do for the community? So, you know,  
16 again other issues. The industry will tell you why  
17 they're against it. I always feel it's money  
18 probably. But I hear there are some privatization  
19 issues or whatever, and I'm not sure the-- All  
20 politics is local, and locally for me the industry  
21 has literally dramatically improved the quality of  
22 life in my community. Thank you.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you, Mr.  
24 Mazur, and I just want to speak to that for a second  
25 and concur. As a resident of Greenpoint myself I



2 lived on one side of Greenpoint before, and now I  
3 live on the other side of Greenpoint. Broadway  
4 Stages as a company has done extraordinary things in  
5 terms of improvements to the neighborhood. And are  
6 an extraordinary company in terms of their local  
7 generosity and their working together with other  
8 community organizations and the local community in  
9 general. So I want to make sure that that's on the  
10 record. Very specifically Broadway Stages has done,  
11 as you said, true benefits and made true benefits to  
12 the community that I think are long-lasting. And I  
13 want to make sure that that's on the record as well.  
14 Thank you.

15 RICHARD MAZUR: And I did get Brooke  
16 Shields to donate money to the local public school  
17 once so-- You know, you have to ask for the money.  
18 They don't give it to you-- You know, as you said,  
19 they don't communicate with you. You track them  
20 down. You know, you make them give you something.

21 RICHARD MAZUR: Only you could do that.  
22 [laughter]

23 JOSHUA ASTRACHAN: Hi, my name is Joshua  
24 Astrachan. I'm an independent film producer. I live  
25 in Brooklyn. I live in Prospect Heights. I've been

2 there for 15 years. I used to live in Carol Gardens  
3 and Park Slope before that, and I'm here to testify  
4 against the proposed change to the-- Is it a bill or  
5 is a change to the City Code? I'm not sure.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: It's an  
7 introduction.

8 JOSHUA ASTRACHAN: Okay, I'm here to I  
9 guess testify against the introduction in its current  
10 form. My concerns I'm what the industry calls a  
11 creative producer, which kind of could be I'm the  
12 schmuck who falls in love with a piece of material,  
13 tries to talk people with money into putting that  
14 money up to make that piece of material. Tries to  
15 talk all the people whose union representatives have  
16 been here to come to work so that I can afford to pay  
17 them with that money that somebody put up for that  
18 piece of material. So nobody likes me by the end of  
19 the day except sometimes you make a beautiful movie,  
20 and that's a wonderful thing. And then everybody is  
21 proud to be a part of it. And I guess just to  
22 support some of what's been said here earlier, the  
23 people that make the decisions about where you're  
24 going to film yeah sometimes it is-- There's Central  
25 Park. There's this beautiful-- We've got to get

2 Washington Square. Oh, there's Fifth Avenue.  
3 There's nothing like it, but often it's very bottom  
4 line driven, and it really is what's the red tape.  
5 So just to endorse what I think has been said here  
6 eloquently before me. It feels to me like the real  
7 issue is I hear people with very legitimate  
8 grievances about like we just can't have another  
9 shoot on this block please. Is that there is a human  
10 way to improve that communication, that planning,  
11 that transmission of information without adding  
12 significant amounts of red tape to the process. We  
13 rely on the Mayor's Office to do a brilliant, we in  
14 the film community and we are grateful for that. And  
15 I guess I don't want to tie their hands. At the same  
16 time, we need to be responsive to the community we  
17 work in.

18                   One last note. I was a very lucky guy.  
19 I was a producer for Robert Altman, who kept his  
20 office here in New York, a great American film  
21 director even though [bell] many see him as L.A., and  
22 I got to go to the Oscars with Bob for Gosford Park.  
23 We got seven Oscar nominations, and that was the  
24 Oscars after 9/11, and Woody Allen came out and  
25 introduced a montage of film shot in New York. And

2 it's so heartbreakingly beautiful let's not fuck it  
3 up.

4 MALE SPEAKER: [off mic] Amen.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Okay. Well, thank  
6 you very much to this panel for your testimony. And,  
7 you know for your--

8 DANNY GORDON: [off mic] I want to  
9 speak, too. [sic]

10 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Well, I'm sorry.  
11 One more.

12 DANNY GORDON: Yeah.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: I got thrown off  
14 by that. Okay. Go ahead.

15 DANNY GORDON: Hi, my name is Danny  
16 Gordon. I'm sorry. Can I sit here? Thank you.  
17 I'll try to be brief. My name is Danny Gordon. I  
18 came here today to speak about the proliferation of  
19 filming in my neighborhood and in my city. I'm a  
20 lifelong resident of Downtown Brooklyn and Brooklyn  
21 Heights. I was born and raised there. I attended  
22 school there, Packard Collegiate Institute and P.S. 8  
23 where my son currently goes, and I'm also a graduate  
24 of NYU. I've witnessed the rebirth of the city and  
25 the rebuilding of the city and in general I've

2 noticed that as the economic climate has increased so  
3 has film production. And I feel that these things go  
4 hand-in-hand. When I see a film shoot, I see-- It  
5 feels me with good feelings, and I know that the city  
6 is on a good economic future path.

7           And I know that the images that we're  
8 sporting to the world help to keep this cycle of  
9 growth and prosperity moving forward in quantifiable  
10 ways. I know this because I work actually in the  
11 film business as a location manager, which is some of  
12 the people who are being sort of lambasted here. I  
13 can say that personally without giving away any  
14 industry secrets that on average I spend at least  
15 \$200,000 for a ten-day episode on episodic television  
16 that goes directly into the community. That is not  
17 including the labor that we pay. That is just into  
18 locations. So, in addition to the locations that we  
19 pay for to film that, we rent support spaces and  
20 catering areas to feed the cast and crew.

21           These are usually from community  
22 organizations like churches and schools, and tenants  
23 associations. We donate to block associations like  
24 the Brooklyn Heights Association. We give to  
25 community groups, and parks in addition to where fees

2 are applicable. I can personally attest to the  
3 hundreds and hundreds of thousands of dollars that  
4 I've put into the communities in which we've filmed.  
5 And that's just the primary feature of--the primary  
6 funds that go out. In addition, we have secondary  
7 and ancillary businesses that are supported. We hire  
8 engineers and absorb overtime and other labor costs.  
9 We rent lifts and vehicles, and hotel rooms and  
10 apartments and utilize stage space and rent storage  
11 area.

12 We buy lumber and metal and build enter  
13 cities on our sound stage. So in addition to that  
14 our production offices just buy lunch from our local  
15 restaurants, which I heard somebody testify to.  
16 [bell] So also I just want to say as a New Yorker  
17 it's not that we are somehow immune to the realities  
18 and inconveniences of filming. I live in Brooklyn  
19 Heights like I mentioned and they shoot at the  
20 Brooklyn Bridge, that iconic structure almost every  
21 weekend. So I deal with it, too, and I think that we  
22 are more concerned and more aware of the  
23 inconvenience and we try to mitigate it often. And I  
24 mean these countless productions have stopped because  
25 of the construction on the Brooklyn Bridge.

2           So, when you go from filming to  
3 construction I think that these are just some of the  
4 realities of living in New York. It's part of the  
5 organic realities. And I'll you this that with the  
6 film production, you have a personalized valet. You  
7 can call me up, and I'm going to help you. Try  
8 getting help from a construction site? Try asking  
9 the street activity permit or the parade to help get  
10 your diabetic cat to the vet on time, and you  
11 probably won't have any help. But for the film  
12 industry, we go out of our way and do bend backwards  
13 to help people. So I would just say that if we can  
14 look beyond some of the minor inconveniences, and see  
15 the bigger picture that it employs people such as  
16 myself and all of the others that certainly see the  
17 benefits of this industry. Thank you.

18           COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you.

19 [applause] The next panel Rolf Carl, Steven Shore,  
20 Prudence Katze. Is it Matthew from James Restaurant?  
21 I can't read your last name, and Bruce Silverglade  
22 from Gleason's Gym.

23           [pause, background comments]

24           ROLF CARL: Hello. My name is Rolf Carl  
25 from Greenpoint. I'll cut to the chase with my

2 testimony. I'll leave out all the great things that  
3 I have to say about my Councilman Steven Levin. And  
4 go right to an experience that I had regarding a film  
5 complaint. And I'm going to briefly outline the  
6 complaint, but overall message to this committee is  
7 that the legislation proposed by Councilman Levin is  
8 good legislation. But I think it needs a little  
9 extra work as far as wording that includes the  
10 complaints made in neighborhoods. [clears throat]  
11 That we document the complaints made, which I think  
12 there's a shortcoming presently with the complaint  
13 process, and with the Mayor's Office of Media and  
14 Entertainment. So I'm going to quickly read the  
15 complaint that I had, how I presented it, and the  
16 Excel spreadsheet I got back from the city. Which is  
17 documentation of that complaint or barely  
18 documentation of my complaint. So the following is a  
19 description.

20           On November 13, 2014, at 7:00 a.m. I  
21 witnessed a film shoot. There were no permits  
22 displayed. The permit on the generator truck's  
23 dashboard was for another borough. The lighting  
24 equipment was positioned in an MTA bus stop, and  
25 last, the production was filming in a designated no



2 shoot zone, a red zone. I took the following action.  
3 I called my precinct. They told me to call NYPD  
4 Movie Unit. I called the NYPD Movie Unit. They did  
5 not answer the phone. I called the Mayor's Office.  
6 A recording told me to call during business hours. I  
7 then photographed the shoot, and emailed MOME  
8 Production Director Dean McCann with a description of  
9 what I believed to be an illegal film shoot. At 9:00  
10 a.m. I again called MOME, and explained the  
11 situation, and asked for a complaint number.

12 Incidentally, unlike 311, MOME does not automatically  
13 callers a tracking number unless they ask. MOME--

14 Excuse me. [bell] Oh, really. The bottom line is--

15 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: [interposing] You  
16 can keep going.

17 ROLF CARL: Okay, okay.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: There's a lot of  
19 noise out there.

20 ROLF CARL: All right. The bottom line  
21 before you, you have Excel spreadsheet, which is  
22 Complaint Number B144, which the description of my  
23 complaint was related to an operator at the Mayor's  
24 Office. Yet, the description that has been  
25 documented by the Mayor's Office is very vague. It

2 doesn't go into any detail, and again I'll say the  
3 legislation should have some language in it that  
4 requires the complaint made by the public to be  
5 included in the monthly reports. Thank you.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you, and we  
7 had asked a little bit about that, but we should  
8 follow up if you wouldn't mind after the hearing.

9 ROLF CARL: Absolutely. Thank you.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: We could have some  
11 specific language suggestions there. Thank you.

12 STEVEN SHORE: My name is Steven Shore,  
13 and I represent the Association of Independent  
14 Commercial Producers, the AICP. I sit on the East  
15 Coast Board of Directors of the AICP and I also  
16 represent the AICP on the Board of the New York  
17 Production Alliance, NYPA, some of whose members have  
18 spoken already today. I've been working with the  
19 Mayor's Office my entire career, and I think they  
20 have always been great. And they only seem to get  
21 better and more thorough at what they do. We're  
22 concerned about the legislation in its current form.  
23 We're small companies in the AICP, and unlike TV show  
24 or movies, most of our productions are one-day  
25 shoots. They may be big, but they only last a day,

2 each shoot is different, and most times we employ  
3 completely different crews. So the reporting  
4 requirements of the proposed legislation would just  
5 simply put an administrative burden on our small  
6 businesses. Unlike TV and movie production where the  
7 trend lines have production increasing in New York,  
8 as they decline in Los Angeles, TV commercials  
9 continue to buck this trend preferring to remain in  
10 L.A. So we're always obviously interested in moving  
11 as much commercial production back to New York as we  
12 can. We think it would be interesting to aggregate  
13 location shoot data, maybe producing some sort of  
14 visual data that identifies shoots by frequency per  
15 neighborhoods. But as drafted, the legislation, you  
16 know, the legislation with it's potentially onerous  
17 reporting requirements. And also, just the  
18 perception of more red tape, which really was the  
19 negative perception of working in New York back in  
20 the '90s. It would just simply represent one more  
21 potential impediment to returning commercial  
22 production to New York.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you.

24 BRUCE SILVERGLADE: Hi, I'm Bruce  
25 Silverglade. I'm the owner of Gleason's Gym, which

2 is located in Dumbo Brooklyn. I'm here to say that I  
3 support the industry. There are probably two to  
4 three shoots a week every week of the year at  
5 Gleason's Gym. They're very cooperative. They help  
6 pay my rent, which I wouldn't be able to afford in  
7 Dumbo if it wasn't for the shoots. And the problem  
8 with parking is minimal. However, it can be  
9 addressed. I think that the people when there's a  
10 shoot coming up, and they will notate when the shoot  
11 is going to be, the put the ones out 24 hours ahead  
12 of time. So they really cut off parking when it's  
13 not necessary. So we can certainly address that  
14 issue. I think as far as being accountable for the  
15 industry, everybody on both sides of the issue is for  
16 the industry, doesn't want it to go away. So the two  
17 sides should get together, and compromise the  
18 questions, and let's keep going. Thank you.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you, Bruce.

20 PRUDENCE KATZE: Okay. Hi everybody.  
21 Good morning, Chair Vacca and Council Member Levin.  
22 My name is Prudence Katze. I'm the Project  
23 Coordinator for Reinvent Albany, a non-profit group  
24 which advocates for open and efficient New York  
25 government. Reinvent Albany supports the intent of

2 Intro 84, and we would strongly urge that he bill  
3 requires agencies to put the mandated reports about  
4 film shoots in machine readable format on the New  
5 York City Open Data Portal. With the Advent of the  
6 Open Data Portal, sharing this information is simple  
7 and straightforward. Rather than locking this  
8 information away in a report published as a PDF, we  
9 would urge the Office of Film and Television to also  
10 share the reports about film permits in machine  
11 readable format such as CSV, XML or other Excel  
12 compatible file formats. If this is codified in  
13 Intro 84, it would be a citywide best practice for  
14 all public reports. At the moment there is a New  
15 York City permitted event information dataset on the  
16 portal. I took a look at that this morning, but I was  
17 only able to see two film shoots. and it seems to  
18 only represent 2014 and up until in 2015. So it  
19 doesn't seem like it's clear that all shoots are  
20 represented since they probably list more than two.  
21 But I do want to say that there is a dataset for New  
22 York City Permitted Event Information that is  
23 viewable on the New York City Open Data Portal, and  
24 it can be sorted by a block event, a street fair, and  
25 film shoot. So that is also an opportunity to

2 perhaps make this data set more robust. Thank you  
3 for inviting Reinvent Albany to testify today, and  
4 I'm happy to answer any questions.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you very  
6 much for testifying. That's very helpful and we'll  
7 be using that going forward for the film discussions  
8 with the Mayor's Office. And I thank you very much  
9 to this panel. We really appreciate all of your  
10 suggestions, and look forward to working with you  
11 guys as this bill moves forward. Thank you.  
12 Unfortunately, folks, I have to run and Chair my own  
13 hearing. So I'm going to turn it back over to our  
14 Chairman who--

15 STEVE SANDS: [off mic]

16 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Oh, I'm sorry,  
17 there is one other member of the panel. Excuse me.

18 STEVE SANDS: [off mic] Hi there. I came  
19 late and I do not have a necessary set of prepared  
20 notes, but I just want to make a couple of comments.

21 [background comments]

22 STEVE SANDS: Hi there. My name is Steve  
23 Sands. I'm with New York Newswire. I'm a member of  
24 the press. I'm a person that has been covering movie  
25 sets in New York City for about 35 years. I know all

2 the crews, most of the people here, and I will say a  
3 lot of them are very good hearted and they mean well.  
4 And as far as disclosure to the Mayor's Office I'll  
5 just say a couple of things. I just scribbled down  
6 some notes here. The first thing is that the Mayor's  
7 Office of Motion Pictures when--basically keep  
8 information private to members of the press or people  
9 of the community who want to gather information.  
10 They won't let you see the permits. They used to let  
11 you see the permits, but that was stopped about eight  
12 years ago. Secondly, local businesses are affected  
13 because when one of the members of the panel came and  
14 spoke, he basically said that they go to restaurants.

15           Many times that is not true. They bring  
16 their own catering trucks, and they cater the crew  
17 people. Very seldom do the crews go to restaurant in  
18 the local neighborhood. Secondly, the parking issues  
19 they take much more space than they need. Many times  
20 I've seen them taking spaces that aren't even  
21 permitted to allow spaces to be taken. So it  
22 basically affects the community. And my own personal  
23 issue as a member of the press, many times I come  
24 there to take photographs, and they tell you not to  
25 take photographs. And I even have on their own call

2 sheet even though it's not on the permit where they  
3 have a noting on the call--a notation on the call  
4 sheets that it's a closed set and that there is no  
5 photography allowed. So these--and I personally, and  
6 I just want to say this, have been arrested taking  
7 photos on a movie set because they didn't--

8 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: [interposing] Well,  
9 let me ask you. Excuse me.

10 STEVE SANDS. Yes, sir.

11 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: I need to know where  
12 you stand on the legislation. That is the issue at  
13 hand.

14 STEVE SANDS: Right. Okay, that's what I  
15 thought was [bell] going to be. So I just wanted to  
16 make that kind of notation.

17 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Okay.

18 STEVE SANDS: I certainly don't mind  
19 government and a full disclosure on everything that  
20 goes on in the city, and if it takes a little more  
21 time the public has a right to know.

22 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Okay. Thank you.

23 STEVE SANDS: Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Our next panel. Eva  
25 Radke, Film Industry. Andrew Saxy [sp?]. He's with



2 Tulip in Morristown Film Industry. All these people  
3 are in the film industry. How do I get to audition?  
4 I don't know. [laughter]

5 EVA RADKE: A SAG Award.

6 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: You want a roll? I  
7 think I'm on a roll here. Josh Cohen. Are you here?  
8 He says he's representing himself. That's a good job  
9 to get. Abby Castle, Rock and Wrap It Up. Is she  
10 still here? Rock and Wrap It Up? Not here. She  
11 must have wrapped it up and left.

12 EVA RADKE: No, he's here.

13 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Oh, you're here.  
14 Okay. All right, don't wrap--we're not wrapping up  
15 yet then. Patricia Webber-Jones.

16 ABBY KASH: [off mic] No, she's not here.  
17 She's actually on the street. She's solving problems  
18 with local businesses.

19 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Good for her. That's  
20 what we need.

21 ABBY KASH: [off mic] She's a location  
22 manager. I know that.

23 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Oh, tell her we  
24 missed her.

2 ABBY KASH: [off mic] I don't have to do  
3 that.

4 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: You don't have to,  
5 but you want to I know. Okay. All right so we only  
6 have two people. I'll take the next panel.

7 EVA RADKE: All rightee.

8 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: No, Jen Henley--

9 JEN HENLEY: Right.

10 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: --Abney [sp?].

11 Stewart Suna, Silvercup Studio.

12 MR. SUNA: [off mic] Silvercup is not  
13 here, but can I go instead?

14 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: What's your last  
15 name?

16 MR. SUNA: Suna.

17 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Oh, Suna. Yes, I'll  
18 put you on. We've got to get bigger tables next  
19 time. Lou. Okay.

20 [background comments]

21 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Why don't we have the  
22 young lady go first because-- Well, we have two  
23 young ladies. This young lady in front of me will go  
24 first because you've been patient.

2           EVA RADKE: Definitely. Hi, everybody  
3 and thank you for the privilege to speak to you  
4 today. My name is Eva Radke and I'm the founder and  
5 president of Film Biz Recycling. Film Biz is an EPA  
6 recognized non-profit 501(c)(3) organization that was  
7 born from the New York film, television and new media  
8 community. Productions that shoot in New York donate  
9 leftover furniture, wardrobe, home goods, raw  
10 materials, and everything in between to Film Biz  
11 where we find the best homes for these items  
12 throughout the city in all five boroughs. We also  
13 have a resale shop and that employs eight people. In  
14 addition to being open to the public and the trade,  
15 we regularly donate to local arts groups, city  
16 agencies, shelters for men, women, children an  
17 animals. Since 2008, over 550 tons have crossed our  
18 threshold, and not only stayed out of a landfill but  
19 improved the lives of communities in all five  
20 boroughs. For instance, when America's Next Top  
21 Model completed filming, they donated nine pre-  
22 assembled bunk beds to us. They were immediately  
23 sent to a women's shelter in Park Slope. I followed  
24 up with the director asking if the beds were okay,  
25 and she paused and said, Eva, not only were they

1 okay, 18 more kids can sleep here tonight. Under the  
2 radar, not seeking glory or praise, these efforts  
3 come from inside the film industry, not from outside  
4 regulation. The production community in New York is  
5 comprised of local citizens, a unique family that  
6 rises to any call or challenge to help the  
7 communities in which we earn our livelihood and where  
8 we live. Along with hundreds of volunteer film  
9 professionals, FBR were first responders with Super  
10 Storm Sandy hit NYC. The next day we were  
11 immediately donating staples such as matches, sox,  
12 candles, bottled water, et cetera, to the Rockaways,  
13 Red Hook, and Coney Island. Once FEMA made it to  
14 these locations the intensity of their work was eased  
15 by the fact that founders like me and the community  
16 provided the basics of the basic needs for survival.  
17 This industry is magical. It is a huge benefit to  
18 New York City not only the revenue, the good paying  
19 jobs, but being the most beautiful backdrop for a  
20 film. And what no one sees or no one knows is the  
21 generosity behind the scenes. Sure the culture-  
22 [bell] Oh, rats. You know, the-- I'll just wrap it  
23 up really quick. The magic of this industry should  
24 not be ended but continue on its natural path, and  
25

2 the potential that production has to improve our  
3 communities should not do anything but flourish.  
4 Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: So let me clarify.  
6 You are against the legislation?

7 EVA RADKE: I am against the legislation.

8 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Okay. Sir, would you  
9 go next. Introduce yourself, please.

10 ABBY KASH: My name is Abby Kash. I'm  
11 with an organization called Rock and Wrap it Up.  
12 Rock and Wrap it Up is an independent anti-poverty  
13 think tank based in New York. It is non-profit and  
14 non-partisan and an organization devoted to  
15 developing innovative greening solutions in the  
16 pressing issues of hunger and poverty in America.  
17 The organization works by increasing financial assets  
18 available to fight poverty by identifying new  
19 revenues through food and other basic assets of  
20 paying without cost. Rock and Wrap it Up's 25 years  
21 of existence has helped to be a dependable source of  
22 sound thinking concerning key poverty issues  
23 nationally. One of our main sources of food recovery  
24 is from television and film productions in New York  
25 City. Through the cooperation of independent

2 producers as well as from major studios such as NBC,  
3 Universal, Warner Brothers, CBS, Sony, Disney, Fox  
4 and Paramount we are able to provide fresh food from  
5 leftovers after a production finishes their lunch.  
6 Last year Rock and Wrap it Up recovered food from 61  
7 productions. [coughs] With the cooperation from New  
8 York City studios such as Steiner, Broadway Stages,  
9 Silvercup, Kaufman, York and Silver Screen at Chelsea  
10 Piers we have placed freezers in order to collect  
11 food even when we're not there when lunch ends.

12                   An example of the amount of food  
13 collected last year was Boardwalk Empire donated  
14 3,980 pounds of food, which equals 3,061 meals and  
15 prevents over 3,000 pounds of CO2 from entering the  
16 atmosphere because the food didn't hit the landfill.  
17 The Nest donated 2,170. The Amazing Spider Man,  
18 7,620; and End East [sic] 7,285; and Royal Pains,  
19 2,960. We know this because we keep track of all of  
20 our pickups including where the food is picked up  
21 from, and where it went to. Most of the food stays  
22 where it was recovered from. Food from Steiner and  
23 Broadway Stages mostly stay in Brooklyn. Silvercup  
24 and Kaufman mostly in Queens, and Chelsea Piers in  
25 Manhattan. When on location and they are eating in a

2 church or community center, we ask the church or  
3 community center to keep the leftovers, and let them  
4 know that it's available to them. Many have soup  
5 kitchens and shelters that can use it. Film and  
6 television production New York City has been a  
7 tremendous asset for feeding the needy in New York  
8 City.

9 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: I appreciate everyone  
10 bringing up the positive things that the film  
11 industry does. I don't hear people saying about the  
12 negative things the film industry does. I do hear  
13 that there are some negative impacts on local  
14 neighborhoods when the filming takes place. So can  
15 we understand that we have both of those things in  
16 place, and I certainly do. But I do appreciate the  
17 positive things I'm hearing about the film industry  
18 because really for someone from the Bronx, it's not  
19 something that I really knew. So I appreciate that  
20 and the jobs, the commitment to non-profits is all  
21 very good to hear. Ms. Henley, do you want to go  
22 next, please.

23 JEN HENSLEY: Sure thing. I'm Jen  
24 Hensley, the Executive Director of the Association  
25 for a Better New York. And in the interest of time

2 you have my prepared testimony, and have in there  
3 many positive things to say about the film and  
4 television industry. I want to note to add to your  
5 point, Chairman, that many-- As you said, many of  
6 the challenges about film shoots happen locally.

7 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Yes.

8 JEN HENSLEY: But many of the benefits to  
9 the city--accrue to the city as a whole including to  
10 the neighborhoods where the filming takes place. So  
11 it's definitely a complicated issue, and our concern  
12 is that in the current form the legislation basically  
13 allows for communities. Or, may result in  
14 communities being able to pick and choose what shoots  
15 happen in their neighborhood. And we think that  
16 really there's a marketing opportunity for the city  
17 as a whole, and it's tremendously important to  
18 showcase all of the elements of the city to the world  
19 through these different media. I also wanted to note  
20 I'm an Astoria resident personally. We have many,  
21 many, many shots on my block, in my building, in  
22 fact. And, you know, while there may be some minor  
23 inconveniences at the time of the shoot, when my kids  
24 see our lobby on a television show or our street in a  
25 movie, it's a really thrilling part of their life.



2 And it's an important part of the fabric of New York,  
3 and I think it's important to recognize that a little  
4 bit of sacrifice or a little bit of inconvenience  
5 while we should all work to minimize that, there are  
6 these benefits that accrue to the city as a whole.  
7 And to the industry as well. So thank you for the  
8 opportunity again, and you have my full testimony  
9 there.

10 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: I do. Thank you so  
11 much. Yes. The gentleman the end. I'm sorry. Would  
12 you state who you are?

13 STUART SUNA: I'm Stuart Suna. I'm with  
14 Silvercup Studios in Long Island City. I was a  
15 little offended earlier by someone who said that most  
16 of the studios were in Brooklyn, [laughter] but  
17 certainly with Silvercup and Kaufman in Astoria and  
18 many others. There are a lot of great studios in  
19 Long Island City and Queens. Queens is used a lot  
20 whether it be Sex and the City, Sopranos, Gossip  
21 Girl, Person of Interest. The list goes on and on  
22 and they use this. I think that I'm against this  
23 bill mainly because it's very small minded. No  
24 offense, but it's really about local people's parking  
25 concerns. And having lived in Long Island City for

2 ten years, I actually now live in one of the hottest  
3 districts, which doesn't have-- It doesn't have the  
4 complaints, with is 84th Street and Fifth Avenue  
5 where they shoot almost everyday, every week of the  
6 year all year round because it's just such a  
7 beautiful part of New York City. I think with this  
8 industry you have to be very careful. It's very  
9 fickle. I'm a small business. You might think of  
10 Silvercup, but we took a bankrupt bakery in Long  
11 Island City 30 years ago and we employ local people.  
12 We buy from the local community. The lumber, the  
13 paint is all local businesses. And every time  
14 there's a question about this industry changing or  
15 being more regulated or film tax credits with New  
16 York State program, this industry very quickly rolls  
17 out to different states. They're very fickle,  
18 they're very mobile. So we have to be very sensitive  
19 to that.

20                   This New York State tax credits, not a  
21 New York City Tax Credit let's not forget, going to  
22 Controller Denopali from New York State generates \$2  
23 of revenue today for the promise of paying back a tax  
24 credit three years later. You could finance on Wall  
25 Street and do a lot of good things for New York. So

2 I think we need to be very careful. It grows a  
3 tremendous amount of new jobs locally. It is-- Yes,  
4 there is some parking issue. That is the biggest  
5 complaint, and I think that needs to be regulated. A  
6 good suggestion might be what the Mayor's Office has  
7 been working on. Is when you have a new TV show and  
8 a new pilot, they use maybe your house, and say,  
9 okay, this is going to be the house for-- You know,  
10 some new person is going to live there. And if the  
11 pilot gets picked up, they need to go back there  
12 every month. So they should try and move things  
13 around a little bit as a puzzle. [bell] I also the  
14 good news for you is that we're actually looking at  
15 buying a piece of property in the Bronx to build some  
16 new studios. And hopefully this all comes, and we'll  
17 be able to talk to you about it real soon. But the  
18 Bronx is a great place to work, and we really want to  
19 bring more jobs to the Bronx.

20 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: [off mic] You made  
21 my day. [on mic] You made my day. Now there is a  
22 purpose for my existence. [laughter] That is very  
23 good news, and I'd like to help you in any way  
24 because I do believe that the film industry is a good  
25 industry. I do believe it brings jobs, and I do

2 believe by virtue of you being in the community you  
3 support local merchants. You eat there, you shop  
4 there, you-- You know, you use local stores. So  
5 there's a whole positive nature to your industry, and  
6 I think most of it is positive. And I think we have  
7 to, though, look at local neighborhoods. How do we  
8 make communication better? How do we work with local  
9 communities, and a little work on this bill. But we  
10 don't want it to be offensive to the industry in any  
11 way. I don't think anyone here is offended by the  
12 agency--by your industry. I just think that there  
13 are some local concerns that we would like to try to  
14 address.

15                   STUART SUNA: I don't know if you're  
16 aware, but a lot of production use the Bronx to shoot  
17 because it's much easier to work in, and much more  
18 friendly. So you're getting more opportunity, and we  
19 did see--

20                   CHAIRPERSON VACCA: [off mic] And then  
21 you'll have the complaints. [laughs] But I always  
22 said we have friendly people.

23                   STUART SUNA: We also have the jobs,  
24 which is a really good thing.

2 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: And he jobs we could  
3 use.

4 STUART SUNA: Yes.

5 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: And the communities  
6 will work with. I represent a community in the  
7 Bronx, City Island, and we also have film shoots on  
8 City Island. And the reports I get is that the  
9 people filming always go into local restaurants.  
10 Always shop in local delis and stuff like that. And  
11 we do notify residents when there's parking  
12 omissions, when there's traffic issues. We notify  
13 residents, and people are able to work around it.  
14 But is there a need for better communication?  
15 Perhaps in the day of social media and all, we can do  
16 a better job. And I think the city has to  
17 administratively look at that, and I think the  
18 Commissioner was open to that today, too. Now, you  
19 didn't speak?

20 LOUIS OWENS: Yes. My name is Louis  
21 Owens and I'm the Managing Partner of the Brazen Head  
22 Bar at 228 Atlantic Avenue. I am also an actor, and  
23 my wife is a location manager for film and  
24 television. So I clearly have a dog or two in this  
25 fight. I'm going to jump around a little bit because

2 I cut out a lot of my testimony so not to repeat what  
3 already has been said. So I want to talk first about  
4 the work program that the film industry does, and how  
5 it targets young people from minority and low-income  
6 families. As a community activist in Red Hook for 17  
7 years and a past member of Community Board 6 serving  
8 with Brad Lander, I have heard politicians talk over  
9 and over again about jobs being their number one  
10 priority. I have seen land use policy instituted to  
11 create them, often to no avail, and even noxious use  
12 businesses defended in the name of jobs.

13 Most of the proposals I've heard offer  
14 very few jobs and most of them very low pay. This is  
15 not true of the movie industry, which already exists  
16 and should be expanded and not curtailed. The  
17 cityscape of New York is one of the biggest assets  
18 and New York industry--and no other industry turns it  
19 into an economic engine like the film business.  
20 Brooklyn is the hottest little city in the USA, and  
21 may artists, actors, directors, producers, and movie  
22 related trades people are choosing to live, shop, or  
23 eat and drink here. Often they experience our  
24 neighborhood for the very first time while working on  
25 a movie or TV show. They spend a lot of money in our

2 shops, restaurants and bars, and I know this from  
3 first hand. This is where I have to differ from my  
4 friends and neighbors, Matt who owns the wine store  
5 and Charlie who is a good friend of mine who own  
6 Sahadis because my experience has been totally  
7 different from theirs. I have especially-- I want  
8 to talk about parking. All of these businesses on  
9 Atlantic Avenue, which I'm part of it and part of the  
10 BID [bell] always talk about how parking is a problem  
11 as if parking actually exists. It doesn't. It's a  
12 myth. It's a fantasy. It's a figment of our  
13 imagination where we are. So I don't see how the  
14 loss of parking can affect business since there  
15 already is no parking.

16           Finally, I know from observing what my  
17 wife does everyday, the film community works very  
18 hard to be a good neighbor and to minimize any  
19 negative impacts on the neighborhood. The film  
20 industry wants to enhance its process with more  
21 dialogue between them and the communities they work  
22 with, and not by putting numbers on a spreadsheet. I  
23 have one more sentence, and it will be over. Numbers  
24 don't always give the whole picture, and numbers can  
25 lead to close, which will put caps on certain

2 geographical areas and neighborhood. These locations  
3 are often necessary to fulfill the visions and  
4 dictates of a script. And if these locations are off  
5 limits, the producers will not come here. Thank you  
6 all.

7 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Okay. Now, our next  
8 panel. Who's the next panel? Oh, here they are.  
9 All right. Neal Low, Ph.D. Production Companies,  
10 Brooklyn. I don't know. Jessica Walker, Partnership  
11 in New York City. John Salmon-- Joe Hill--Joe Hill  
12 I think Joe Hill, Salmon Solar Energy Systems.  
13 Margaret Kostecki, Dupont Senior Housing. And Father  
14 John Ascension Reform Church.

15 [pause, background comments]

16 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Oh, Jessica left.

17 [background comments]

18 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Oh, two more can go.  
19 Theodore Davis and Brian Papatrol--Paparol. [sp?]

20 MALE SPEAKER: [off mic] And Margaret  
21 Kostecki who is my Deputy Director, and I want to  
22 speak on her behalf. [sic]

23 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: You want to speak on  
24 her behalf? Okay. All right, you can come.

25 MALE SPEAKER: [off mic] I do.



2 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Okay. All right, you  
3 can come. Go there

4 [pause, background comments]

5 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: All right, I'm going  
6 to eat a little bit while I listen to everybody  
7 because I'm very hungry. My stomach is growling.  
8 Okay. Now, who would like to go first? Wasn't there  
9 a young lady I called?

10 [background comment]

11 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: So I called-- No one  
12 I called-- everyone I called is up there, right? So  
13 I only called two more people. That's it. That's  
14 it. Oh, boy. All right, let's start in the  
15 beginning, sir. Introduce yourself.

16 JOHN SALMON: Hi, my name is John Salmon.  
17 My name is John Salmon. Is that good? You can hear  
18 me okay? From Solar Energy Systems. We are a solar  
19 energy contractor based in Greenpoint, Brooklyn. I'm  
20 here to speak on behalf of the film industry. We are  
21 a 15-person company that designs, builds and  
22 maintains solar electric facilities throughout New  
23 York and New Jersey primarily in New York City. We  
24 are a direct beneficiary of the film industry through  
25 our work for Broadway Stages. Broadway Stages is

1 COMMITTEE ON TECHNOLOGY 170

2 home to the Good Wife, Blue Bloods, Royal Pains. It  
3 was an early adopter of commercial solar power,  
4 commercial scale solar power having installed their  
5 first project in 2010. We just commissioned their  
6 most recent project three weeks ago. To date,  
7 Broadway Stages has installed over 950 kilowatts,  
8 just under a megawatt of solar power covering 14  
9 films, stages and generating over 1.3 million  
10 kilowatt hours of clean electricity for our city. As  
11 a result of their early commitment and our hard work  
12 as well, we've installed over 7 megawatts of solar  
13 power here in New York City. So it's a energy  
14 infrastructure project with a long-term benefit. So  
15 I'm here to speak on behalf of our involvement in  
16 Greenpoint as well as with the Broadway Stages.  
17 Thank you very much.

18 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Where do you stand on  
19 the legislation?

20 JOHN SALMON: I'm opposed to the  
21 legislation.

22 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Okay. Sure. Next.

23 BRIAN PAPWORTH: Hi, my name is Brian  
24 Papworth. I'm an assistant director and an  
25 independent producer on feature films and television.

2 I've worked on everything from Law and Order to Sex  
3 and the City, Woody Allen movies to the New York City  
4 Marathon. I'm a native of New York, and a product of  
5 Brooklyn College's Film School. So, I'm against the  
6 proposed legislation for a couple of reasons the way  
7 it's written. Not so much in permitting as the  
8 tracking of the money. There's nothing greater or  
9 very-- There's nothing greater than when I'm working  
10 on a film set, and someone off the street comes and  
11 asks me for a job. Wondering how do you break into  
12 the industry and how do you become an extra.

13           And to be able to have the opportunity to  
14 get this one person, this one chance to all of a  
15 sudden work for that day, the next day, the following  
16 week or express to them where they should go and  
17 where they should call. And then, a year or so later  
18 find them on another set, and they have a career.  
19 Every film set on the streets of New York is a  
20 traveling caravan of opportunity, and the growth that  
21 we've had has led to an incredible amount of good  
22 paying union jobs. To do anything that would risk  
23 that is troublesome. And we are in competition with  
24 varied film commissions around the country,  
25 specifically Los Angeles, Georgia, New Orleans. And

2 these people would like nothing more than to take our  
3 work away.

4           This legislation puts a further burden on  
5 the Mayor's Office for Media and Entertainment. And  
6 a lot of this there are solutions there that my  
7 fellow colleagues in the Directors Guild of America  
8 know how we could decrease our footprint. And we  
9 know what we could sort of do here, and sort of do  
10 there on a case-by-case basis. The problem is that  
11 we've grown so much, but the Mayor's Office of Media  
12 and Entertainment hasn't in terms of its budget. In  
13 terms of its resources. [bell] It has pretty much  
14 stayed the same as when it had 15 shows, 20 shows.  
15 Currently, right now in the City of New York I think  
16 we have 40 shows out on the ground going. And in  
17 order to supervise these shows and to detail the  
18 parking and look at the scripts and do all of the  
19 great ideas that that--we would need, these guys need  
20 a lot of help. And I would strong encourage an  
21 increase in their funding.

22           CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Excuse me. I know I  
23 was not here for everyone's testimony. I had to step  
24 out, but you raise a very interesting point and that

2 is how many people are working for the city agency in  
3 light of the increase in film production?

4 BRIAN PAPWORTH: Yeah, my understanding  
5 is that it hasn't grown at all, and yet they have so  
6 much more permitting to do. And so much more that  
7 needs to go on, and so much more oversight that needs  
8 to occur. I mean I fear for the safety of our  
9 streets with the stunts that we do, and the lockups  
10 that we do and the things that happen because of this  
11 directly. They don't really--they haven't grown with  
12 us. They don't have sort of film and TV people  
13 inside who can say well this stunt needs to happen,  
14 and that way and not this way. If you lock this up,  
15 or close off these streets there's an effect halfway  
16 across the neighborhood. They really haven't been  
17 able to grow with us, and as such any further burden  
18 with this legislation, or with anything just dilutes  
19 the entire department.

20 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Do you feel that  
21 someone from this agency should be on site when you  
22 do filming?

23 BRIAN PAPWORTH: Well, I think that it  
24 would help both the industry as well as the citizens  
25 of New York that if there was more one-on-one

2 interaction. Every single show of these 40 shows has  
3 what's called the techs gap. Whereas, a lot of the  
4 key department heads go out and they look at a  
5 location. They look at the problems, and what the  
6 scenarios are. They go through the possible stunts  
7 that they say what's going to be parked here. What's  
8 going to be parked there. I think that the industry  
9 would welcome participation from the Mayor's Office.  
10 But think about the amount of work that's involved in  
11 that. You know that's an entire day on a movie that  
12 can be two or even three days just to do that. And  
13 it requires a level of experience for the person  
14 that's doing it. But I do think that that would  
15 severely decrease the problems that we have, and I  
16 think that it would help the industry, and I think  
17 that it would help the residents of the city.

18 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Is there a police  
19 officer always on site when you film?

20 BRIAN PAPWORTH: Negative. As a matter  
21 of fact, this is another problem that we're  
22 encountering right now. The TCD officers who were  
23 assigned. There's 13 TCD officers in the City of New  
24 York. These are the officers that are assigned, and  
25 they are the only ones that are allowed to block off

2 the street. We can't say we're going to do this or  
3 that.

4 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Just tell us what the  
5 TCD is for the record?

6 BRIAN PAPWORTH: What is that?

7 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: What are TCDs for the  
8 record?

9 BRIAN PAPWORTH: Traffic Control Division  
10 I think is--is what the are called.

11 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: And there are 13  
12 people in the whole city that are--

13 BRIAN PAPWORTH: [interposing] There's  
14 13--13 officers. Yes.

15 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Doing oversight?

16 BRIAN PAPWORTH: Exactly.

17 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Okay.

18 BRIAN PAPWORTH: And now because of the  
19 latest tragedies they're pairing up. So that means  
20 that there's only six that can ever be out there. So  
21 again, we're dealing with a dilution of the talent  
22 pool that is sort of required to do this work. And  
23 we could use government support in this.

24 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Very interesting. I  
25 thank you for that because in the Council are

2 approaching budget time when we do budget preparation  
3 oversight, and it's very good timing. And this  
4 agency comes under my jurisdiction. So I'm going to  
5 take very seriously your

6 BRIAN PAPWORTH: [interposing] Well,  
7 it's already--

8 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: --projections.

9 BRIAN PAPWORTH: --been said that we have  
10 over 100,000, 130,000 employees of the entertainment  
11 industry in New York. That's more than the Fire  
12 Department and the Police Department combined. It's  
13 a tremendous, tremendous industry, and it's growing.  
14 And hopefully it grows even more because I can't give  
15 that opportunity to that person on the street if we  
16 don't grow.

17 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Right.

18 BRIAN PAPWORTH: And, yet the  
19 administration of it is funded by I believe it's 70  
20 people in that office. And I think it's--I don't  
21 know what the budget is.

22 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: I don't think it's  
23 70.

24 MALE SPEAKER: [off mic] About 20 people  
25 or 25 people are employed and --



2 BRIAN PAPWORTH: Right, but in all the  
3 Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment.

4 MALE SPEAKER: [off mic] Yeah, who can  
5 oversee us.

6 BRIAN PAPWORTH: Right. So there is only  
7 20 who supervise the jobs of 130,000 and \$7 billion  
8 in the City of New York. And this is one of the  
9 reasons why I'm against this bill. I mean now you're  
10 asking me to further burden them without any  
11 resources to be able to provide for that.

12 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: I thank you very  
13 much. Very interesting. Thank you. Yes, sir.

14 RICHARD MAZUR: All right, I'll be brief.  
15 Richard Mazur on behalf of Margaret Kostecki, who is  
16 the Deputy Director for Senior Programming and  
17 Property Management at North Brooklyn Development  
18 Corporation. The seniors kind of love the film  
19 industry because we rent the space in our Community  
20 Room for them, you know, for movie shoots. And for  
21 them it's kind of an exciting day when they see even  
22 wardrobe people moving in and out. They feel like  
23 they're part of the shoot. And frankly, we even take  
24 the cars out of our parking lot, which are 30 spaces,  
25 and have not had complaints. Because let's say we're

2 doing a movie shoot. You can't park your car there  
3 for two days or three days, and the money goes back  
4 into the senior programming where thanks to one or  
5 two movie shoots a year, we throw holiday parties,  
6 Valentine parties, Harvest parties. I wind up having  
7 to dance with at least 25 or 30 85-year-old ladies  
8 and their partner. And for them it's kind of an  
9 event, and they get to enjoy theater almost. They  
10 say, wow, movie stars are coming. Everything is  
11 happening, and, you know, the lives of the elderly  
12 can be boring sometimes. And we add to that  
13 excitement. And I think the City should add a sort  
14 of film Community Liaison Department to deal with  
15 issues on the spot as the prior testimony states.  
16 Because a lot of things can be resolved immediately.  
17 I know we get things solved very quickly in my  
18 neighborhood because we followed through. But that  
19 requires a community ombudsman. So I think if there  
20 was the equivalent on the city side. We're obviously  
21 short staffed with the volume of filming that goes.  
22 We all get excited about it. I'm with the old ladies  
23 when I see them myself. Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you. Well, I  
25 know that the agency is not the stand now, but is

2 there a Director of Government Affairs? Can you  
3 answer that? Are you the Director?

4 BRIAN PAPWORTH: [off mic] First Deputy.

5 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: No, no, I mean the  
6 agency. You're not on the witness stand. Let me ask  
7 you something is there a Director of Government  
8 Affairs?

9 BRIAN PAPWORTH: [off mic] We do have  
10 someone who works in Government Affairs. We also  
11 have our staff, which serves as a liaison--someone  
12 that--anyone who is in our office, and we would try  
13 to connect the members of our staff with them to try  
14 to address these kind of issues. [sic] But we do have  
15 that. Yes.

16 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Okay. Well, we may  
17 have to get the word out a little more. And we will--  
18 -I want--I will be talking to the Commissioner about,  
19 you know, levels of staff and support. Okay. There  
20 are no further speakers believe it or not. It was a  
21 great day. 1:30. I want to thank everyone. I want  
22 to thank the Commissioner for coming, and I want to  
23 especially thank her for leaving her staff behind,  
24 which many people don't do, but she did. So I thank  
25 her. I thank all of you and my colleagues. It is

2 now 1:30. This hearing of the Technology Committee

3 is hereby adjourned. [gavel]

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date January 25, 2015