

COMMITTEE ON CULTURAL AFFAIRS, LIBRARIES AND
INTERNATIONAL INTERGROUP RELATIONS JOINTLY
WITH THE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
AND THE COMMITTEE ON TECHNOLOGY

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CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON CULTURAL AFFAIRS,
LIBRARIES AND INTERNATIONAL
INTERGROUP RELATIONS JOINTLY WITH
THE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT AND THE COMMITTEE ON
TECHNOLOGY

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February 28, 2023
Start: 1:17 P.M.
Recess: 4:27 P.M.

HELD AT: Council Chambers - City Hall

B E F O R E: Chi A. Ossé,
Chairperson for Committee on
Cultural Affairs, Libraries and
International Intergroup Relations

Amanda Farias,
Chairperson for the Committee on
Economic Development

Jennifer Gutiérrez,
Chairperson for the Committee on
Technology

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Eric Dinowitz
Amanda Fariás
Shahana K. Hanif
Crystal Hudson

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COUNCIL MEMBERS: (CONTINUED)

Rita C. Joseph
Farah N. Louis
Francisco P. Moya
Sandra Ung
Robert Holden
Shaun Abreu
Julie Won
Sandra Ung
Rita Joseph
Nantasha Williams
Ari Kagan
Kevin C. Riley
Erik Bottcher
Lincoln Restler
Keith Powers
Alexa Avilés

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A P P E A R A N C E S

Anne Del Castillo
Commissioner of the Mayor's Office of Media and
Entertainment

Kwame Amoaku
MOME's Deputy Commissioner for the Film Office

Lori Barrett-Peterson
MOME's General Counsel

Arlen Valdivia
Senior Director for the Motion Picture
Association

Charles Taylor
Theatrical Teamster Local 817 union member

John Williams
Cofounder and CEO of Reel Works

Charles Reynoso
Director of Education at Reel Works

Doug Steiner

Lorcan Otway
Theatre owner in New York who is commonly called
Gypsy

Tyrel Hunt
Director of Marketing at Jamaica Center for Arts
and Learning

Houda Lazrak
International Studio & Curatorial Program, ISCP

Donald P. Cato
Co-Founder of the Queens World Film Festival

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

Ryan Ferguson
Location Manager in New York

Peter Kapsalis
Attended Edward R. Murrow High School

Abdula Allen
Theatrical Truck Driver

Austin Smith
Moving Image in Astoria

David Grindle
Executive Director of the Society of Motion
Picture and Television Engineers

Tom Harris
President of the Time Square Alliance

Carolyn Gersheson
Local 52 Medical Division

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SERGEANT AT ARMS: This is a microphone test for the Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International Intergroup Relations jointly with the Technology and Economic Development. Today's date is February 28, 2023, recorded by Gonzales Rodriguez location in the Chambers.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Written testimony can be emailed to testimony@council.nyc.gov. Again, that is testimony@council.nyc.gov. Thank you for your cooperation. Chairs, we are ready to begin.

CHAIRPERSON OSSE: Good afternoon. I am New York City Council Member Chi Ossé, Chair of the Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International Intergroup Relations. I know it's a mouthful, I do it every single time but still getting used to it. My pronouns are he, him, his. Welcome to our joint Committee hearing with the Committee on Economic Development, Chaired by Council Member Amanda Farias and the Committee on Technology, Chaired by Council Member Jennifer Gutiérrez.

Today's Oversight Hearing is on Film Industry Expansion here in New York City. At this hearing, the Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International Intergroup Relations will also be

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1 hearing one piece of legislation which is unrelated
2 to this oversight topic but it's very important.

3
4 A Preconsidered Resolution cosponsored by Council
5 Members Nantasha Williams, Amanda Farias, Shekar
6 Krishnan and Shahana Hanif recognizing the month of
7 Ramadan annually in the City of New York and
8 celebrating the significant role of Muslims in the
9 multicultural fabric of New York City communities.

10 I welcome my colleague Council Member Williams
11 who has joined us today to provide brief remarks on
12 this legislation. Council Member Williams.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Thank you Chair. This
14 will be very brief. I am just really excited to
15 introduce this Resolution, recognizing the month of
16 Ramadan. I have many Muslims that live within my
17 Council District and I know the city as a whole is
18 full of the vitality of the Muslim community and also
19 as the daughter of a Muslim. I am excited to
20 introduce this and I'm sure that maybe Council Member
21 Hanif or Farias who are my awesome co-sponsors here
22 might also want to share some words and it was
23 written with such excellence and want to thank the
24 writer of the bill Regina.

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CHAIRPERSON OSSÈ: Thank you Council Member Williams. Now, let's start our Oversight Hearing on Film Industry Expansion in New York City by providing a little background. It is noteworthy that three committees have come together for this hearing and that each committee has its own perspective on our multifaceted hearing topic.

In a moment, I will turn the microphone over to Chair Farias to speak from the Economic Development perspective and the financial impact of the growing film industry on our New York City economy.

I will then ask Chair Gutiérrez to introduce the Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment or MOME and to speak about the impact of a film industry on New York City's small businesses and local communities. My Committee has a somewhat different perspective from theirs, that we are of course keenly interested in the economic impact of an expanding multimillion dollar film in television industry and how that industry contributes to the cultural landscape of our city. But let me provide a little background on my Committee's unique perspective.

The Department of Cultural Affairs or DCLA is both the country's largest municipal funder of art

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2 and culture in the city agency responsible for
3 supporting arts and cultural organizations in our
4 five boroughs.

5 At least since the development of DCLA's Create
6 NYC, the ten-year comprehensive cultural plan for New
7 York City, which is published in 2017, the importance
8 of expanding and supporting diversity in the art and
9 cultural sector, has been officially recognized in
10 our city and specifically the DCLA.

11 One of the original strategies of Create NYC was
12 to begin new efforts to support the professional
13 development and career advancement of cultural
14 workers from underrepresented groups. When
15 translated into DCLA's action plan in 2019, that
16 strategy became two key strategies. To increase
17 funding for individual artists, especially those from
18 underrepresented communities and to improve cultural
19 access for historically marginalized groups of
20 artists, audience and cultural workers.

21 Those underrepresented and historically
22 marginalized groups of artists to which DCLA's action
23 plan was referring, include people of color, LGBTQIA+
24 individuals, people with disabilities and women. For
25 example, one specific action in DCLA's action plan

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2 for fiscal years 2018-2020, was launching and paying
3 out the majority of MOME's \$5 million women's film TV
4 and theater fund to support film and theater projects
5 led by artists identifying as women or coming from a
6 female perspective.

7 We know that film making in the film industry as
8 a whole is governed by MOME but DCLA has a unique
9 position in this work. DCLA has a commitment through
10 Create NYC and through the leadership of Commissioner
11 Laurie Cumbo to bring more diversity to the arts and
12 cultural world and the city.

13 And the agency has been committed to supporting
14 artists and organizations by providing guidance and
15 adamant support, creating funding streams such as the
16 Cultural Development Fund, otherwise known as CDF and
17 capital dollars for physical spaces and being vocal
18 champions and advocates for our cultural community.

19 With a butting and growing film industry in our
20 city, DCLA has a powerful role to play increasing
21 representation in film. And in this hearing, I hope
22 to understand the ways this agency can foster film
23 makers and film organizations.

24 My Committee specifically wants to understand how
25 DCLA is encouraging and supporting artists from under

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1 represented groups who work in the film and
2 television industry in our city. Artists like Black
3 film makers who create and produce small independent
4 films that speak to their own histories from their
5 unique perspectives. We are also interested in
6 understanding how DCLA works to support and foster
7 film and television careers for our youth. Whether
8 that is through initiatives or supporting after
9 school activities and CUNY film programs.
10

11 My colleagues in the Economic Development and
12 Technology Committees will emphasize the need to
13 center local workers and businesses. If we want to
14 center the local workforce in this industry, we also
15 need to cultivate and foster a local workforce, that
16 means investing in our youth. We're not interested
17 solely in large film studios with new and expanding
18 facilities, though we recognize what they contribute
19 to our city too. We want to explore how DCLA can
20 support small, grassroots film organizations and
21 BIPOC organizations as the film industry expands in
22 New York including capital funding for studio space.
23 We want to understand how the City Council can best
24 support the efforts that are spotlighted in DCLA's
25 Create NYC and subsequent action plan. Efforts that

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2 increase funding for individual artists, especially
3 those from underrepresented communities.

4 Before I move on to Chair Farias for her opening
5 statement, I want to acknowledge my colleagues on the
6 Committee who are present, Council Members Ung,
7 Joseph, Williams, Louis, Hanif, Dinowitz, Moya, Won,
8 Kagan, and Bottcher.

9 I would also like to thank my staff and the
10 Committee staff for their work in preparing today's
11 hearing. My Chief of Staff Naomi Hopkins, my Policy
12 and Budget Director May Vutrapongvatana. The
13 Committee Senior Legislative Counsel Brenda McKinney,
14 the Committees Legislative Policy Analyst Regina
15 Paul, who also wrote the Resolution we are hearing
16 and Sandra Gray, the Committees Financial Analyst.
17 Now, I would like to invite Chair Farias to give her
18 opening statement. Chair.

19 CHAIRPERSON FARIAS: Thank you so much Chair Ossé
20 and thank you to Chair Gutiérrez and the members of
21 three Committees for coming together for today's
22 joint hearing. My name is Amanda Farias and I have
23 the privilege of Chairing the Council's Committee on
24 Economic Development.

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2 This Committee primarily oversees the city's
3 economic development corporation who along with the
4 Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment work to
5 ensure that city, state and federal incentives are
6 made available to the many film and production teams
7 that either operate out of New York or use the city
8 as a setting for various film media.

9 Since the early 2000's, there has been a push to
10 build infrastructure to attract film and media to New
11 York. The states film production tax credit offers a
12 25 percent tax credit on qualified costs incurred in
13 New York State for eligible productions, including
14 crafts and technical services, crew production,
15 expenses for facilities, props, makeup and wardrobe,
16 cost of set construction and pay for background
17 talent.

18 In 2010, the state also introduced a post-
19 production tax credit, which offers an additional 25
20 percent tax credit for qualified post production
21 costs in New York, including picture, sound and music
22 editing, rerecording and mixing, visual effects,
23 graphic design, original scoring animation and music
24 composition.

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2 These incentives had led to a boom in the
3 development or renovation of film studios in New
4 York. In 2016, the construction of Silver Cup
5 Studios Port Morris Campus resulted in the creation
6 of a 115,000 square foot of studio space and 500 jobs
7 across the construction and film production
8 industries. In 2020, York Studios, Michael Angelo
9 Campus was completed just outside of my district and
10 I'll be getting it a redistricting and features
11 350,000 square feet of studio space and also resulted
12 in the creation of around 500 jobs. And there are
13 several more large studios currently under
14 construction, including Netflix's new Brooklyn
15 facility as well as expansions to existing facilities
16 owned by Singer Studios, Kaufman Astoria Studios and
17 Broadways Stages.

18 Apple to has been leasing additional production
19 space for its programming. Last year alone, there
20 was nearly one million square feet of new or
21 renovated media space in the city. While I applaud
22 our partners at EDC, MOME and the Media and
23 Entertainment Sector in driving more production here,
24 I have to ask the question, what is the local
25 benefit? Part of this Committees role is to evaluate

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1 the workforce development and small business
2 engagement strategies of city agency incentive
3 programs.
4

5 To that end, I would like to focus today on how
6 the film and entertainment sector is working to
7 ensure that New Yorkers are being hired at these
8 facilities. That local businesses are being
9 supported by film and media crews and that film crews
10 undertake best efforts to minimize disruptions to the
11 lives of every day New Yorkers who live and work in
12 film areas.

13 City residents and small businesses are regularly
14 asked to deal with the unpleasant reality of living
15 and working on active film sets. From film trailers
16 blocking busy streets to loud generators running
17 right outside of peoples homes and glaring flood
18 lights during the nighttime hours, there's often
19 little relief for New Yorkers who live and work in
20 areas where filming occurs regularly.

21 Many city businesses lament that they lose
22 considerable revenue whenever film crews operate on
23 their streets, since roads are usually closed and
24 foot traffic plummets. Many small businesses complain
25 that they are not given proper notice ahead of film

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1 street closures and therefore cannot make appropriate
2 arrangements to reduce staff on those days.

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4 Similarly, film crews often bring their own
5 catered food and make arrangements for other
6 services, which means less opportunities to do
7 business at local restaurants, clothing shops or hair
8 and nail salons. To be clear, this hearing is not a
9 criticism of the fine work being done by the many
10 film crews who continue to showcase New York City in
11 all its glory in their productions. Rather, this is
12 an opportunity to voice concerns regarding how the
13 states tax incentive programs have achieved their
14 goal of driving more film and production work to the
15 city but without a firm understanding of the local
16 impact.

17 Today, we look forward to hearing from MOME
18 regarding what is being done to expand local hires in
19 the film and entertainment sector, how the industry
20 is working to minimize disruption to the lives of
21 every day New Yorkers and what, if anything is being
22 done to incentivize film crews to patronize local
23 city businesses.

24 Before I turn it over to my Co-Chair, I would
25 like to just take a moment to thank the staff of the

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2 Economic Development Committee Senior Counsel Alex
3 Paulenoff, Senior Policy Analyst William Hongach and
4 Financial Analyst Glenn Martelloni for all their hard
5 work in putting this hearing together.

6 With that said, I will now turn it back over to
7 my Co-Chair Council Member Jenn Gutiérrez for her
8 opening remarks and I'd like to announce that we've
9 been joined by Council Members Holden and Abreu for
10 this hearing today. Thank you.

11 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you Chair. Good
12 afternoon. I'm Council Member Jennifer Gutiérrez and
13 I am the Chair of the Committee on Technology. I'm
14 happy to join my colleague Chair Ossè and Chair
15 Farias in holding this joint hearing on film industry
16 expansion in New York City.

17 The film industry is an inextricable part of New
18 York's cultural and economic fabric and presents a
19 tremendous opportunity for growth that can benefit
20 all New Yorkers. But like all other issues we
21 discussed in the Tech Committee, we need to make sure
22 we are approaching this from an equity angle. Tens
23 of millions of people visit New York City each year
24 and this held true even during the pandemic, when the
25 city saw around 22 million visitors in 2020. This is

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2 in no small part due to New York City's significant
3 presence in TV shows and movies but the film industry
4 does more than just boost our city's tourism profile.

5 As mentioned by my colleagues, the film industry
6 in New York City employs thousands of New Yorkers and
7 brings in billions of dollars of tax revenue and
8 economic impact to the city. As such, expanding the
9 film industry here presents a tremendous opportunity
10 for growth. New York City already has a number of
11 great programs in place to encourage a local and
12 diverse workforce for the film industry. The Made in
13 NY series of programs includes education that enables
14 New Yorkers to start careers in the film industry
15 like the post production training, production
16 assistant training and writers room program. MOME,
17 the Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment also
18 runs the New York City Women's Fund for Media, Music
19 and Theater, and the Women's Screen writing contest,
20 along with a number of other programs that foster
21 local talent. But we can always do more and we
22 should strive to do more especially as the film
23 industry expands in New York City.

24 Beyond focusing on hiring locally and
25 facilitating a diverse workforce, supporting union

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1 labor and ensuring a living wage with benefits, we
2 should also look to involve more of our small
3 businesses and taking part in and thereby benefiting
4 from the film industries expansion.
5

6 This applies not just to small businesses that
7 directly work in the industry such as production
8 studios, costume and prop manufacturers and more, but
9 also our restaurants. Equipment rental businesses,
10 cafes, laundromats and other businesses. In
11 particular, we must engage our MWBE's as we look to
12 expand our film industry and ensure that we empower
13 all New Yorkers so that these efforts do not leave
14 anyone behind.

15 Further, we must take into consideration the
16 impacts that the film industries expansion can have
17 on our residents and make the effort to both minimize
18 adverse effects on quality of life and allow for
19 reliable communication through avenues like NYC's
20 311, so that all New Yorkers are willing to support
21 the expansion of the film industry.

22 I look forward to discussing how the city plans
23 to manage expansion specifically thinking critically
24 about where larger film operations are housed. As a
25 member with a large industrial business zone in my

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2 district, I need to ensure we are protecting the core
3 manufacturing businesses, which are vital to the
4 supply chain of the city.

5 Today, we hope to learn more about what's in
6 store for New Yorkers and what we can all expect to
7 see as the film industry continues to grow. I'm
8 looking forward to hearing testimony from the
9 Administration and members of the public that are
10 here today. I would also like to acknowledge Council
11 Members Kevin Riley, Council Member Restler, Council
12 Member Crystal Hudson. Is that everyone? Thank you.
13 Great, who have joined us and now, I want to turn it
14 back to the Committee Counsel for Administrative
15 proceedings.

16 CHAIRPERSON OSSE: Thank you Chair Gutiérrez.
17 Now, I would like to address some housekeeping items
18 before we begin with the Administrations testimony.
19 First, as a reminder, today is an in-person hearing
20 with the option of virtual testimony for the public.
21 The Committee's will be accepting registrations for
22 testimony throughout the hearing. Anyone who is
23 attending in person and who wishes to testify in
24 person should see the Sergeant at Arms to fill out a
25 witness slip, even if you registered in advance

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online. As usual, we will begin today's hearing with testimony from the Administration followed by Council Member questions and answers and then move to public testimony. We will limit Council Member Q&A including comments to five minutes. During the public testimony portion of the hearing, witnesses from the public will be limited to two minutes. As a reminder to all of our witnesses, please state your name prior to your testimony for the record. The Committees will also be accepting written testimony for up to 72 hours after the hearing.

Now, I will turn to our Senior Committee Counsel who will administer the affirmation to the witnesses from the Administration who may then begin their testimony. Brenda.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: And also recognizing that Council Member Restler is here. If you can please raise your right hand. Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth before these committees today and to answer Council Member questions honestly? Thank you. And with that, we may begin with Administration testimony.

ANNE DEL CASTILLO: Good afternoon Chairs Ossé, Farias and Gutiérrez and members of the City Council

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2 Committees on Cultural Affairs, Economic Development,
3 and Technology. I'm Anne del Castillo, Commissioner
4 of the Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment and
5 I am joined by Kwame Amoaku, MOME's Deputy
6 Commissioner for the Film Office, Lori Barrett-
7 Peterson, MOME's General Counsel, and members of my
8 senior leadership team. I want to thank you all for
9 the opportunity to discuss the state of film and
10 television production in New York City.

11 Since 1947, the beginning of the TV era, the
12 City's Film Office has been charged with permitting
13 production throughout New York City and supporting
14 the economic growth of film and television in New
15 York City. In 2010, our film office operations were
16 merged with NYC Media, the city's production group
17 and television and radio network, and our agency
18 became known as the Mayor's Office of Media and
19 Entertainment, otherwise known as MOME.

20 In the last six years, MOME's portfolio has been
21 expanded from two divisions to five. In addition to
22 the Film Office and NYC Media, MOME now oversees the
23 Office of Nightlife, the Press Credentials Office,
24 and the Creative Sector Programs Office, which
25 focuses on economic and workforce development in

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1 theatre, music, live performance, advertising,
2 publishing, digital media and video games. Prior to
3 the pandemic, these sectors accounted for nearly a
4 half a million jobs and \$150 billion in economic
5 activity. But more than that, I think we'd all
6 agree, New York City's creative sectors are at the
7 heart of our identity as a world-class center for
8 creativity and culture.
9

10 The film and television industry is the largest
11 economic driver of all of New York City's creative
12 sectors, the result of over 80 years of strategic
13 thinking, collaboration and engagement among
14 government, industry and other stakeholders. The
15 global film and television industry actually began in
16 New York City, when Broadway actors were drawn to the
17 celluloid spotlight of motion picture making. But
18 better weather and more open space eventually drew
19 much of the industry to Los Angeles until New York
20 City government began an aggressive campaign to lure
21 the motion picture industry back to New York.

22 New York City was the first municipality in the
23 country to establish a film commission and a cultural
24 affairs commission. The film office was created to
25 support the film and nascent television industry and

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2 simplify the process of filming in New York City. In
3 1962, the City Council passed a local law to
4 establish a filming permit, and in 1966, Mayor
5 Lindsay created the NYPD Movie and TV Unit.

6 Today, the Film Office and the NYPD Movie and TV
7 Unit continue to help film and television creators
8 from all over the world land their productions in New
9 York City. When governments from other
10 municipalities, states and countries want to see how
11 this is done, they look to us here in New York City.
12 New York City has been depicted on-screen as a place
13 of wonder and vitality, helping to reinforce the
14 city's culture and positioning on the global stage.
15 The city's iconic urban landscape has been featured
16 in countless productions, making its skyline,
17 streets, and buildings cultural touchstones for
18 people the world over, inspiring millions to visit,
19 live and do business here.

20 In 2019, the film and television industry
21 supported over 185,000 total jobs in the New York
22 City, accounting for over \$18 billion in total wages
23 and nearly \$82 billion in total economic output. To
24 put it in context, the film and television industry
25 represents 6.5 percent of the New York City economy,

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based on its share of the city's gross domestic product. While the COVID-19 pandemic initially forced the industry to a standstill, film and television production was one of the first industries back to in-person work. The triumphant return of the industry is a recovery success story and is a testament to the industry's resiliency and continuous innovation in the face of adversity. At the end of last year, television production had returned to nearly pre-pandemic levels with nearly 80 shows filming in New York City.

When we talk about the film and television industry, often the first thought that comes to mind is the big Hollywood studios. But the industry actually consists of an expansive range of players, from multinational corporations and world-renowned production studios to independent filmmakers and sole proprietor businesses that support the industry. Large and small, these entities support the livelihoods of hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers. They are our family, our neighbors, our friends, and they are all New Yorkers, who are earning a living in their city. Film and television production creates jobs and opportunities for New Yorkers who have never

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1
2 even set foot on a set, dry cleaners like Kingbridge
3 Tailor and Cleaners in Brooklyn, lumber providers
4 like LeNoble Lumber in Queens, florists like Jamali
5 Garden in Midtown and legal and financial firms
6 throughout the city that represent clients in the
7 industry. We hear many stories from local business
8 owners who tell us how business generated by
9 productions has helped them grow and survive through
10 COVID.

11 For example, when In the Heights filmed in Upper
12 Manhattan in Summer 2019, they spent \$640,000 on
13 lodging, \$673,000 on catering and other food items,
14 and \$537,000 on hardware and lumber supplies. There
15 are also countless churches, schools, parks, catering
16 halls, and nonprofit organizations throughout the
17 city that have hosted productions and benefitted from
18 locations fees and community givebacks. The Parks
19 Department reported that it received more than
20 \$570,000 in donations from productions last year.

21 Productions participating in the "Made in New
22 York" Marketing Credit program, which only captures a
23 fraction of the projects made in New York, has
24 generated over half a million dollars in donations to
25 51 cultural institutions and community organizations

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1
2 in New York City over the last five years. The
3 program, which is designed to promote "Made in New
4 York" productions, provides qualified film and
5 television productions with advertising on buses and
6 subways and other city-owned assets. Participants in
7 this program are required to contribute a portion of
8 their budget, up to \$10,000, to a community or a
9 cultural institution.

10 The volume of film and television production has
11 grown exponentially in recent years, largely due to
12 the demand for streaming content. When I first
13 joined the agency as general counsel in 2014, we had
14 just under 30 episodic television series filming in
15 New York City. We now have close to 80 but
16 increasing competition from other jurisdictions with
17 generous incentives is threatening to undercut the
18 tremendous progress we've made in building a thriving
19 industry. In addition to supporting the Governor's
20 proposed enhancements to the State Film Tax Credit,
21 this Administration has recommitted to the industry
22 to ensure that this great New York success story
23 continues.

24 Last year, Mayor Adams issued Executive Order 21,
25 requiring each city agency to designate at least one

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2 staff liaison and an alternate with the authority to
3 expedite and coordinate arrangements with the Film
4 Office to facilitate on-location production
5 throughout the five boroughs. In addition, we
6 convened the first-ever Film and Television
7 Production Industry Council, comprised of a diverse
8 group of stakeholders from film studios, soundstages,
9 unions, trade associations, and workforce training
10 partners to advise the city's production policies and
11 programs.

12 And finally, we appointed Kwame Amoaku as Deputy
13 Commissioner for the Film Office to promote New York
14 City as a premiere location for production, support
15 the development of infrastructure for production and
16 post-production, and expand our workforce development
17 efforts. Two weeks ago, we joined Mayor Adams and
18 Queens Borough President Richards at a topping out
19 ceremony for Wildflower Studios, a new soundstage
20 being developed in Astoria that will be the first-
21 ever vertical soundstage with 11 stages that will
22 house 1,000 jobs.

23 Currently, nearly one million square feet of
24 production and other related space is being newly
25 built or renovated throughout the five boroughs.

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2 Other projects include the "Made In New York" Campus
3 at Bush Terminal in Brooklyn, Pier 94 at Hudson River
4 Park, York Studios in Soundview, and Broadway Stages
5 in Staten Island.

6 In addition to expanding infrastructure, we
7 continue to work with industry partners to build a
8 strong local talent pipeline for jobs in the
9 industry. The "Made in New York" Production
10 Assistant Training Program provides free training for
11 underemployed and unemployed New Yorkers seeking work
12 in production. Over the last 15-plus years, more
13 than 1,000 people have graduated from the program and
14 secured jobs in the industry. The PA program has
15 served as a model for the "Made in New York" Post-
16 Production Training Program, which has trained nearly
17 200 New Yorkers in the fields of editing, animation,
18 motion graphics, and visual effects.

19 We've also expanded our programs to include early
20 career exposure, with opportunities for deeper
21 engagement for those who want to pursue careers in
22 the industry. The "Made in New York" Animation
23 Project is a partnership with the Department of
24 Probation NEON Centers and The Animation Project,
25 which offers participants the opportunity to engage

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1
2 in storytelling, gain technical skills in 3D computer
3 animation, and qualify for paid internships in this
4 burgeoning field.

5 Media Makers is a partnership with Reel Works,
6 the City University of New York, media companies and
7 The International Alliance of Theatrical Stage
8 Employees to train, credential and prepare emerging
9 talent for careers in media and entertainment. These
10 programs were developed in consultation with
11 employers to ensure that participants gain relevant
12 skills so that we can build a strong pipeline of New
13 York City talent to continue to build our local
14 industry. We also provide educational opportunities
15 through programs such as the Made in New York Talks
16 Series and the Public School Film Festival.

17 Presented in partnership with the Center for
18 Communications, the Made in New York Talks Series
19 presents a variety of free programs exploring
20 multiple topics within the media and entertainment
21 industry, where students can learn from and network
22 with industry professionals.

23 The Public School Film Festival presented in
24 partnership with the Department of Education
25 celebrates the talent and diversity of student voices

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1
2 and provides opportunities for middle and high school
3 students to have their work recognized by industry
4 leaders and explore careers in filmmaking. Overall,
5 MOME has created educational and training programs
6 that reach 6,000 New Yorkers a year.

7 The success of New York City's film industry is
8 possible because of the drive, talent and hard work
9 of our local production and small business community,
10 and the collaborative, responsive and flexible
11 approach that city government has taken with respect
12 to production. We should all be proud of what we
13 have achieved together. Decades ago, we were the
14 first city in the nation to set up a government
15 entity to make film and television production work
16 for everyone. And look where we are now. We have
17 185,000 jobs generated from the film and television
18 industry, nearly \$82 billion in economic output,
19 which represents 6.5 percent of New York City's
20 economy.

21 The artists who work in film and television
22 production create images of our city that are
23 unforgettable. Each time someone somewhere sees an
24 image of New York City on a television, at a movie
25 theater, or on their streaming device, our position

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as a world capital grows. As we build a future for this industry, we look forward to working with the city agencies, industry stakeholders, local communities, and of course, you the City Council to ensure continued, sustainable economic growth and job opportunities for all New Yorkers. Thank you again for the opportunity to discuss this important economic and creative engine. I'm happy to answer your questions.

CHAIRPERSON OSSÈ: Thank you so much for your testimony Commissioner. I would like to start today with a few questions related to cultural affairs. My staff was informed that because DCLA is not available to testify today, that MOME is prepared to answer questions on DCLA's staff.

So, the first question I wanted to ask about is you know DCLA is required through Create NYC, the city's comprehensive ten-year cultural plan for the city's art and cultural sector launched in 2017 to "begin new efforts to support the professional development and career advancement of cultural workers from underrepresented groups."

How does DCLA through the perspective of MOME, engage with the film making and film production

1 industry to support workers from underrepresented
2 groups?
3

4 ANNE DEL CASTILLO: Uhm, so as part of the Create
5 NYC plan, there were a couple of pieces that we have
6 been working on with DCLA. So, one of the - I know
7 that one of objectives was to increase funding and
8 support for underserved communities. And that was
9 part of the impetus behind our New York City Women's
10 Fund for Media, Music and Theatre. To date we have
11 awarded \$5.5 million in grants to 246 New York based
12 artists and we're about to announce the fourth cycle
13 of grants in the coming month. Where we'll be
14 granting another \$2 million and those are really
15 important projects because the idea is to support
16 these creators who are just at the precipice of
17 getting to their next stage, you know they're a
18 little bit above emerging and so, these projects are
19 ones that can take them to really like the next level
20 of their professional development and we've seen
21 great success with some of the programs.

22 One of the very first grantees was a transgender
23 woman by the name of Isabelle Sandoval who was able
24 to finish because of our grant, was able to finish
25 her film, get it into the [INAUDIBLE 31:16] and has

1
2 gone on to win countless awards with that film and is
3 now working on other film projects and just recently,
4 one of our projects was nominated for a grammy award.
5 It was a woman who was nominated in the oh, it's a -
6 it's kind of a unique category. I forget what the
7 name of it is but so, we are seeing opportunities for
8 our grantees to move to the next level of their
9 careers.

10 CHAIRPERSON OSSE: And I also want to note from
11 your perspective in relation to working closely with
12 DCLA. Does DCLA believe that BIPOC people with
13 disabilities, women and members of the LGBTQIA+
14 community are underrepresented in the film and TV
15 industry? And if so, what can DCLA do to help
16 increase representation?

17 ANNE DEL CASTILLO: I have to say the work that
18 we've done with DCLA was really solidified,
19 particularly during the pandemic. You know, DCLA is
20 primarily a grant making institution for nonprofit
21 organizations. And we at MOME are really focused on
22 sort of the industry development side but through the
23 pandemic, we really saw that the line between those
24 worlds is pretty small. The creative community
25 across the sectors was really adversely affected and

1 so, we worked very closely with DCLA to connect them
2 to resource – to connect our constituents, artists,
3 from across the spectrum to resources in government,
4 connect them to small – we advocated to get them
5 small business grants. Some of the nonprofit arts
6 organizations weren't previously eligible for that.
7 We wanted to make sure that our constituents in those
8 spaces knew that they had access to some of the HRA
9 resources, unemployment benefits, and so, I think we
10 share a very common goal of uplifting the tremendous
11 diversity across New York City. That is truly the
12 draw of New York is the vast diversity you know is
13 from small community theater in Queens to Broadway.
14 It's small needy arts groups making productions to
15 the big uhm, productions that are filming on sound
16 stages.

17
18 We share a commitment to advancing these sectors
19 but making sure that New Yorkers have opportunities
20 at every level and in every space within those
21 sectors.

22 CHAIRPERSON OSSÈ: Thank you for that response
23 and with regard to connecting folks and people within
24 this community to government and trying to diversify
25 them in government. The examples you provided about

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2 supporting women, can you tell me more about the ways
3 in which the city supports LGBTQI+ individuals or has
4 been doing so?

5 ANNE DEL CASTILLO: So, we also in addition to
6 uhm, the Women's Fund, I know that there are a
7 number, there's a number of arts organizations that
8 serve those populations that are funded by DCLA. On
9 our side at MOME, we also provide marketing support
10 to promote and raise the visibility of some of these
11 festivals and organizations. Pardon me, while I
12 refer to some of my notes if you don't mind.

13 CHAIRPERSON OSSÈ: No worries.

14 ANNE DEL CASTILLO: Because there's a lot of
15 them.

16 Uhm, okay, so you know some of these
17 organizations whether they're supported from by MOME
18 or DCLA. They include like the African Diaspora Film
19 Festival, the Asian American Film Lab, Firelight
20 Media, Ghetto Film School, Latin American Film
21 Center, Black Public Media. There's a whole host and
22 range of organizations and I think you know it's
23 important that we continue to support these because
24 it is again what makes New York City arts so
25

1
2 innovative, so diverse and really sets a standard for
3 the global stage.

4 CHAIRPERSON OSSÈ: Thank you. From your point of
5 view, does DCLA view the film and television industry
6 as a priority in its work and outreach? Why or why
7 not?

8 ANNE DEL CASTILLO: I mean, film and television
9 sit squarely within MOME's portfolio but there is
10 certainly media arts organizations and film
11 organizations that are supported by DCLA funds for
12 sure. And again, we work very closely, we work with
13 others constituent groups to make sure that they are
14 aware of other funding opportunities or promotional
15 opportunities that we offer. So, it's a pretty fluid
16 dialogue that takes place between the agencies.

17 CHAIRPERSON OSSÈ: And how does DCLA engage with
18 — thank you for that response. How does DCLA engage
19 with major film makers and multimillion dollar firm
20 studios? Do you have any examples?

21 ANNE DEL CASTILLO: Again, DCLA is primarily
22 focused on the nonprofit side of and grant making
23 side. The relationship with industry falls within
24 MOME's per view.

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2 CHAIRPERSON OSSÈ: Hmm, hmm, and I hear you on
3 that response but I'm sure that many of the nonprofit
4 sides that DCLA works with you know represent or
5 engage with small independent film makers. So, I'd
6 love to hear from your perspective how DCLA engages
7 with those small film makers and small film making
8 studio-organizations.

9 ANNE DEL CASTILLO: As a funder of nonprofit
10 organizations, I am not sure to what degree DCLA
11 engages with individual film makers but happy to
12 confer with them and get back to you on that.

13 CHAIRPERSON OSSÈ: Thank you. And I know you
14 touched on this a bit before but New York City is
15 home to a number of film making events. Most notably
16 the Tribeca Film Festival. Film Festivals and other
17 similar events can be critical to gaining exposure
18 for a film maker. In your perspective, from your
19 MOME perspective, how does DCLA provide guidance to
20 film makers who want to enter these large-scale film
21 festivals but do not know where to begin?

22 ANNE DEL CASTILLO: Again, I'm not sure what
23 their engagement is with individual film makers as
24 much as their grant making is focused on
25 institutions, a number of institutions and I'm in

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1 full transparency. I was actually a former grantee
2 at American Documentary. We received DCLA funds and
3 we were very active in guiding our film makers about
4 how to apply a number of these organizations that
5 support independent media artists. That's their sole
6 function is to help guide them to funding. How to
7 apply to festivals, all of that.

9 CHAIRPERSON OSSÈ: And do you know how many
10 cultural development fund or CDF awards were granted
11 by DCLA this past year? Uhm, two small film
12 makers/film making organizations by chance?

13 ANNE DEL CASTILLO: I would actually have to get
14 back to you on that.

15 CHAIRPERSON OSSÈ: Thank you. And also as you
16 know, studio space is vital for film makers and
17 organizations to be able to film, produce, edit, and
18 work on their films and other media projects. DCLA
19 does provide capital dollars to organizations for
20 physical space and no worries if you don't know the
21 response to this question right now but do you know
22 how many film makers/film making organizations
23 received capital funding for studio space and other
24 physical space/technology upgrades for film making?

25

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2 ANNE DEL CASTILLO: We'd have to get back to you
3 on that.

4 CHAIRPERSON OSSÈ: Uh, another question is, what
5 is DCLA's responsibility with regard to supporting
6 workers in the production side of the film industry?
7 And how does DCLA reach out specifically to workers
8 of color in film production?

9 ANNE DEL CASTILLO: Again, I know that DCLA
10 supports a number of organizations that strive for
11 advancement of BIPOC artists in the industry. We
12 work with a number of their grantees actually. Like
13 the Media Makers Program that I mentioned is run by
14 Reel Works, which I believe receive funds from DCLA
15 as well. And there's many, many others and I'd be
16 happy to provide a list.

17 CHAIRPERSON OSSÈ: Reel Works is amazing. As
18 mentioned, one of the Create NYC goals is to "begin
19 new efforts to support the professional development
20 and career advancement of cultural workers from
21 underrepresented groups." As a deadline to check in
22 with Create NYC benchmarks approaches, what does DCLA
23 plan to do in the next few years to support local
24 film makers and small film organizations?

25 ANNE DEL CASTILLO: I'll have to -

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2 CHAIRPERSON OSSÈ: Right. Uhm, if we want the
3 film and TV industry to hire locally, then we need to
4 educate a local workforce, starting with our youth.
5 Do you know how DCLA supports New York City youth who
6 are interested in film and TV careers?

7 ANNE DEL CASTILLO: And I think there's quite a
8 bit of overlap in the work that DCLA and MOME does
9 but we really try, at least on the MOME side, we try
10 to engage DOE students, CUNY students you know
11 through projects like the Public-School Film Festival
12 but again, there's a number of media arts
13 organizations throughout the city that receive funds
14 from DCLA to do work locally as well as across the
15 city.

16 CHAIRPERSON OSSÈ: And as we all know, New York
17 City has schools with very prestigious film programs
18 such as NYU Tisch and those at the new school but we
19 also have a number of amazing CUNY institutions that
20 offer programs in the arts and culture. How is DCLA
21 supporting CUNY in their film programs and supporting
22 college students who are interested in entering this
23 industry?

24 ANNE DEL CASTILLO: So, I can't speak to DCLA but
25 what I can say is on the MOME side, we've worked for

1 example with Lehman College. They produced a series
2 of shorts particularly during the pandemic to
3 document some of the work that was happening in the
4 creative spaces that we were able to air on NYC media
5 and they've continued to document other creative
6 spaces since then and it's created a really wonderful
7 opportunity for the students to get real hands-on
8 experience in training in film production.
9

10 CHAIRPERSON OSSÈ: Thank you.

11 ANNE DEL CASTILLO: Oh, and we also uhm, sorry
12 work with uhm, I would be really remiss if I did not
13 mention that we were a partner with Feirstein
14 Graduate School of Cinema, which is the first CUNY on
15 working production lot over at the Brooklyn Navy
16 Yard. So, we really are committed to advancing
17 opportunities for CUNY students.

18 CHAIRPERSON OSSÈ: And that's through MOME,
19 correct?

20 ANNE DEL CASTILLO: Yes.

21 CHAIRPERSON OSSÈ: Prior to this hearing, our
22 office heard from some of the CIGs or the Cultural
23 Institution Group who expressed interest in expanding
24 opportunities in the film industry to
25 underrepresented artists. How does DCLA plan to

1

2 partner with members of the CIG to bring in more
3 diversity to the film industry?

4

ANNE DEL CASTILLO: We can certainly follow with
5 DCLA but again, these are part of our sort of ongoing
6 conversations with them to engage some of the
7 grantees. You know at the end of the day, it's a
8 pretty, it's not a great designation between
9 nonprofit and industry, like it's a very fluid
10 ecosystem in the film and media arts world. And so,
11 that's partly why we are working so closely together.

12

CHAIRPERSON OSSÈ: And this is the last DCLA
13 question and then it's totally MOME. I appreciate
14 you for answering all of these but as we head into
15 budget negotiations, how much funding will DCLA need
16 to continue, expand or start programming that will
17 help support small film makers and film
18 organizations?

19

ANNE DEL CASTILLO: I will definitely not respond
20 to that. I will get back to my colleagues and will
21 have them get back to you on that.

22

CHAIRPERSON OSSÈ: Right, thank you so much.

23

Well, I hope these will be more engaging because I

24

think they pertain to MOME a lot more than DCLA but

25

DCLA is required through Create NYC to "partner with

1 city agencies" and the cultural sector to better
2 communicate cultural offerings across socioeconomic
3 accessibility and language barriers. MOMÉ is one of
4 the agencies specifically identified. How does DCLA
5 engage with MOMÉ generally?
6

7 ANNE DEL CASTILLO: So, there's one example that
8 I would like to point to that I think was pretty
9 critical especially during the pandemic. When
10 everything was shutdown, DCLA grantees are live
11 performance across the city was not able to access
12 audiences and so, we actually worked with DCLA and
13 NYC & Company to create virtual experiences of our in
14 culture. And the name escapes me so, I'm again, I'm
15 going to refer to my notes, but uhm, and that was a
16 very robust program that was able to keep the arts
17 alive and have our arts organizations stay connected
18 to their audiences. It was called the Virtual NYC
19 Curator Collections and so, we would often work with
20 executive directors at some of the DCLA funded
21 organizations to curate experiences throughout the
22 city. And we promoted those in partnership with
23 DCLA, NYC & Company and MOMÉ.

24 CHAIRPERSON OSSÈ: And DCLA's action plan which
25 grew out of Create NYC, recorded activities in Fiscal

1
2 Year 2018-2020 that included launching and paying out
3 the majority of MOME's \$5 million women's film TV and
4 theatre fund to support film and theatre projects led
5 by artists identifying as women as we brought up
6 before or coming from a female perspective. Would
7 you talk a bit more about this work? Although this
8 is MOME program, would you talk a little bit more
9 about this work?

10 ANNE DEL CASTILLO: Yeah, this is one of the
11 programs that we're particularly proud of. I mean,
12 to be able to provide opportunities for 246 projects
13 by New Yorkers is no small feat. Our partner on that
14 project is the New York Foundation for the Arts.
15 They administer the grant program. They do all of
16 the outreach. Initially the fund was started with
17 just film TV and theatre in mind and then we realized
18 we were missing a pretty significant creative sector
19 and added music to that group and to date, we've
20 actually given out more than \$5 million, it's been
21 \$5.5 million and we have actually committed to
22 future, to another year of funding, so we'll be
23 distributing \$2 million more in grants this year.

24 CHAIRPERSON OSSÈ: Do you know if DCLA does any
25 outreach in regards to that program?

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ANNE DEL CASTILLO: Yes, yes.

3

CHAIRPERSON OSSÈ: Okay. Do you know what kind

4

of outreach?

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ANNE DEL CASTILLO: They help us message out to

6

their constituents to make sure that they are aware

7

of the funding opportunities.

8

CHAIRPERSON OSSÈ: Okay, thank you and other

9

underrepresented communities in the film industry

10

including people of color and members of the LGBTQIA

11

community are not specifically named as recipients of

12

MOME funding or as participants in MOME initiatives,

13

why is that?

14

ANNE DEL CASTILLO: I'm sorry, can you repeat the

15

question?

16

CHAIRPERSON OSSÈ: Sure, so other

17

underrepresented communities in the film industry

18

including people of color and members of the LGBTQIA+

19

community are not specifically named as recipients of

20

MOME funding or as participants in MOME initiatives.

21

Why is that?

22

ANNE DEL CASTILLO: Oh, we can actually provide a

23

breakdown of our grantees. We're happy to do that.

24

You know, equity has been a focus of the agency even

25

prior to my arrival there for sure. It was the basis

1
2 for the founding of the Made in New York PA program,
3 for example.

4 You know, our agency has really made equity a
5 priority in terms of creating opportunities for New
6 Yorkers. Particularly from those communities to
7 participate in the film and television industry.

8 CHAIRPERSON OSSÈ: So, internally, you are
9 collecting that data or at least have the metrics to
10 be able to present that?

11 ANNE DEL CASTILLO: I'm reasonable certain that
12 we do and I have you to follow-up with that.

13 CHAIRPERSON OSSÈ: Thank you. That would be very
14 helpful. How does MOME ensure that major film makers
15 and multimillion dollar film studios are supportive
16 partners for our city and the local artists and film
17 makers who live and work here?

18 ANNE DEL CASTILLO: Uhm, so it's an ongoing
19 dialogue with industry. You know we know that this
20 is what I professionally refer to as a mobile
21 manufacturing operation. You know we're making
22 movies but they're making them not just at one place.
23 They're making them throughout the city. And so,
24 with that kind of engagement, we know that we need to
25

1
2 continually communicate, not just with productions
3 but with the communities in which they are filming.

4 I'd say during the pandemic in particular, as I
5 mentioned film and television production was one of
6 the first creative sector industries to in person
7 work and we knew that we couldn't just have you know,
8 after being in lockdown, we couldn't have 200 people
9 show up on a block all of a sudden. So, we really
10 worked very closely with the state as well as the
11 industry to figure out a way to transition them back
12 and that was a conversation that we had, not just
13 with the film studios but also with sound stages,
14 unions, other stakeholders.

15 And so, that experience is what created the model
16 for this film and television industry council, which
17 I think is going to be really important. It already
18 has been and ensuring that we have the broad
19 perspectives of the industry because it's not a
20 monolith right. Like everyone comes at from a
21 particular, from their particular state but to help
22 us understand what their needs are but also to engage
23 in this ongoing dialogue between government and
24 industry about how to grow this industry in
25 partnership with communities, in partnership frankly

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2 with City Council as well. You know we really do
3 rely on you to help keep us informed about how your
4 communities work, how the districts work. How do we
5 connect these productions to businesses in your
6 community.

7 So, that, I think that's inherent in the work
8 that we're doing.

9 CHAIRPERSON OSSÈ: I'm glad to hear that. That's
10 a conversation in progress and something that is more
11 fluid than you know a concrete system in terms of
12 what is going on but has there been any or have there
13 been any investments from these major film makers and
14 studios back into our local artists and organizations
15 that you know of?

16 ANNE DEL CASTILLO: Beyond the direct spend of
17 the productions, and also through the Made in New
18 York crediting program, you know so one production
19 might invest; I know that there's one production that
20 invests like close to a half a million dollars just
21 by location fees for and when we're talking about
22 location fees, we're talking about churches that
23 they're using for holding, craft services, that kind
24 of thing. And so, uhm, yes, by and large, there is a
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1
2 pretty significant investment by these productions in
3 the communities where they're filming.

4 CHAIRPERSON OSSÈ: Commissioner, thank you so
5 much for answering my questions. Before I pass it
6 onto another one of my colleagues, I do want to
7 acknowledge that Majority Leader Keith Powers is here
8 and I'll turn it over to Chair Amanda Farias. Thank
9 you.

10 CHAIRPERSON FARIAS: Thank you Chair and thank
11 you Commissioner for your public testimony and for
12 being here today. I'll just jump into some of the
13 EDC-ish related questions. So, around the tax
14 incentives themselves, I did want to ask about how
15 you view some of the tax incentives that are already
16 out there and if you can kind of give us from your
17 point of view what do they mean for New York City and
18 what does it mean for either its expansion or what is
19 proposed right now at the state? I know that's not
20 city related perse but it does have a city impact.

21 ANNE DEL CASTILLO: So, the tax incentive has
22 been a critical piece in growing the industry here.
23 You know, when the tax credit was revised a couple of
24 years ago, it went from 30 percent to 25 percent and
25 I think that has contributed to some of the decline

1 that we've seen because as that went down, other
2 jurisdictions went out. Just one example, the Joker
3 filmed, the first Joker filmed here in New York but
4 the second joker is actually now based in New Jersey
5 because New Jersey's offered such a strong
6 competitive tax credit. Another one, the flight
7 attendant had its first season here. California
8 lured that away with their tax credit, so we're
9 facing competition from all over. And it's not just
10 the state, it's also like worldwide. A Quiet Place
11 had filmed the first two installments of that film in
12 New York but they're filming the third one in London.
13 So, it's a very competitive market place right now.
14 And so, we do view the state tax credit enhancements
15 as something that could be really pivotal in drawing
16 some of these projects back to New York.

18 CHAIRPERSON FARIAS: Sure, thank you for that.
19 And have you envisioned or do you now envision some
20 of the work that you're doing in terms of the state
21 regarding the tax incentives or like being introduced
22 this year in the state budget? Do you view yourself
23 as having an active role or on the Mayor's side and
24 the Admin having an active role in ensuring that we
25 see a more competitive credit for New York City?

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2 ANNE DEL CASTILLO: Yes, we are in full support
3 of the enhancements to the tax credit. You know, for
4 our part on the city level, like we know that we need
5 to up our game in terms of – and that's partly why we
6 created the film in television industry council to
7 you know engage partnership from industry to make
8 production work more smoothly in New York. It's why
9 the Mayor issued Executive Order 21, to require all
10 agencies to appoint a liaison that we can work with
11 and get better coordinated about landing productions
12 here. And also frankly, why we recruited Deputy
13 Commissioner Amoaku, who has 30 years of experience
14 in production but also years of experience in
15 government managing production. And so, we feel like
16 with that combination plus the tax credit, like we
17 can really continue to build on the success story of
18 film in New York.

19 CHAIRPERSON FARIAS: Great and are there any
20 other ways that we're working to ensure that New York
21 City remains competitive with the other – you know at
22 least a competitive place for – as a competitive
23 location for film and media companies. At least in
24 direct competition with what you're saying as
25

1 Georgia, California, New Jersey are not offering
2 similar incentives?

3 ANNE DEL CASTILLO: I'm sorry, can you -

4 CHAIRPERSON FARIAS: Is there anything -

5 ANNE DEL CASTILLO: Else that we can be doing?

6 CHAIRPERSON FARIAS: Else that we are doing
7 currently to remain competitive.

8 ANNE DEL CASTILLO: Uhm, you know it's looking at
9 our policies. It's really anticipating some of the
10 changes to the city landscape. You know, talking to
11 production and building, and making sure that we
12 continue to have a competitive workforce, right.
13 Like, that's what's behind uhm, our workforce
14 programs is making sure that we have a strong bank of
15 talent so that when productions come here, they get
16 exactly what they need. You know one of New York's
17 claims to fame with film production in particular is
18 that you can literally do everything you need to for
19 film here in New York. From writing to doing your
20 red carpet premier and we want to continue to keep
21 that allure of the city when people are thinking
22 about where to bring their productions.

23 CHAIRPERSON FARIAS: Yeah, that's great. I mean,
24 all of us want to at least keep as many line as we
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1
2 can and this is one industry that we see, we kind of
3 sort of have that pipeline already in place.

4 So, in terms of like local hire, what is MOME
5 doing, I know you said a little bit earlier that you
6 know we have liaisons for every other agency, so can
7 we talk a little bit about you know what we're doing
8 or at least what MOME is doing in connection with
9 other agencies to increase or ensure film crews or
10 your stages our local hire.

11 ANNE DEL CASTILLO: So, it's kind of a scaffold,
12 like I view it as scaffolding right. We have career
13 exploration in elementary and middle school and then
14 middle and high school we're looking at internships.
15 You know we work with DYCD on the Summer Youth
16 Employment Program. We work with many of our
17 stakeholders to create placements for those interns
18 over the summer for those job placements. We work
19 with CUNY on the Feirstein School and then also,
20 Lehman but really I think and then, we also reach out
21 them to do recruitment for our programs like the
22 production assistant training program, like the post
23 programming. Very proud of the fact that those
24 programs have over 90 percent placement rates, which
25 is not very common.

1
2 And so, we're very committed to continue the
3 talent pipeline. The Film and Television Industry
4 Council is very much a part of that conversation.
5 Workforce is a very clear focus and you know we've
6 found real commitment on the part of industry to work
7 with us to build these talent pipelines and if you
8 want to speak to some of the Kwame that would be
9 great.

10 KWAME AMOAKU: Sure. So, diversity and workforce
11 and making sure that it's local people here is a
12 priority for us. We're working to triangulate
13 between labor, the in-user provider studios and
14 networks in the nonprofit programs that we work with
15 in order to coordinate a workforce pipeline that
16 especially emphasizes diversity right and I like to
17 say that I won't be happy until the crews look like
18 the subway cars here in the City of New York. And I
19 think there's an enormous amount of untapped talent
20 here and I think that everyone is ready to up the
21 ante as far as diversity and inclusion here.

22 CHAIRPERSON FARIAS: Sure, and so, in terms of
23 diversification I mean, yes, 100 percent, that's part
24 of our goal I think as a city. I think that mantra
25 or the thing that you're using to say we want to make

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2 sure our film sets or our productions look like the
3 subway cars are the people that are hired, look like
4 our subway cars but also you know from my lens, I'm
5 always wondering how the city is actually looking at
6 each workforce and all of the titled positions within
7 that workforce right? Like, yes, this is definitely
8 a creative sector and so, our brains always
9 immediately go to uhm, who can be on the production
10 set. Who can be a PA, who can be a gaffer who can be
11 the writer etc., etc., but also we need like direct -
12 like, everyone needs a driver's license right. We
13 need a bunch of folks that can do a Class A
14 commercial driver's license because every film set
15 needs to move a truck.

16 So, for me, I'm wondering if there are
17 discussions within the Admin, with MOME, or within
18 MOME and conversations with other agencies where we
19 are yes, looking at career exploration of fifth grade
20 and then when we get them into a career in technical
21 high school like Alfred E. Smith and they're working
22 on you know trucks or cars or learning how to be the
23 mechanics, how do we direct them into a route where
24 they can get a Class B driver's license and be a

25

1 theatrical teamsters and work on sets in New York
2 City and we keep them here in New York.

3
4 So, are we looking at the sectors in this way and
5 are we finding the gaps and the vacancies and how are
6 we connecting that to job training?

7 ANNE DEL CASTILLO: We are - those conversations
8 are happening and again, happy to get back to you
9 with more specifics on that but those are - it's all,
10 it's all part of the strategy.

11 CHAIRPERSON FARIAS: Great, I'd love to talk more
12 about that offline. What percentage of local hires
13 are union labor? Do we know?

14 ANNE DEL CASTILLO: I don't know, I would have to
15 get back to you on it.

16 CHAIRPERSON FARIAS: Sure, and -

17 ANNE DEL CASTILLO: If I may Chair, one of the
18 things that I would say too is to your point about
19 looking at other skill sets, you know that was kind
20 of how animation came about as well, right? Because
21 we see an opportunity. It's not just in film,
22 there's also this emerging industry here. Industry
23 sector of video games and we see opportunities for
24 students in that space and so, we're constantly
25 looking at different areas where we can expand our

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2 outreach and training and education, so that all of
3 the different types of jobs that could be filled. I
4 mean, I know that there's also demand for financial
5 accountants and so, those are conversations that
6 we're also having right now.

7 CHAIRPERSON FARIAS: Okay, great. Yeah, I feel
8 you know a lot of times we get really stuck in tunnel
9 vision. We know this is a creative sector or we know
10 you know this is carpentry and we're not actually
11 interconnecting how someone can totally do carpentry
12 for five years but then move directly into another
13 title in a completely different sector because that
14 skill set is transferable.

15 ANNE DEL CASTILLO: We actually, sorry, did with
16 Reel Works, there was a training for hair stylists to
17 learn how to do that on set. So, those are, so
18 they're already certified hairstylists and then
19 learning how to transfer those skills to a set. And
20 so, those are other areas that we're also continuing
21 to explore.

22 CHAIRPERSON FARIAS: Great, thank you for that.
23 So, I just wanted to quickly, if we can jump into
24 like scouting and managing some of the sites if
25 possible. So, I know you mentioned some of your role

1
2 in MOME on helping identify sites for filming
3 productions or manage them. And I mentioned in my
4 opening statement, some of the disruptions that
5 happened and so, I'd just like to know if we've
6 looked at ways to minimize some of that disruption in
7 the day to day operations and then on top of that,
8 have some of those ways that we've looked to mediate
9 been more innovative and creative because I do know
10 at least many of us know that sometimes a production
11 shoot has a shorter, way shorter timeframe than the
12 average person like myself would like to know ahead
13 of time when something like that is in community.
14 So, how are we actually getting ahead of some of that
15 or are we now looking at different ways to help with
16 local outreach and mediation in those disruptions?

17 ANNE DEL CASTILLO: I'd like to start by saying,
18 I am the first to admit that the industry grew
19 exponentially and we weren't necessarily able to keep
20 with that growth. And so, we have been playing
21 catchup a bit right. And especially since our agency
22 mandate expanded at exactly the time that streaming
23 was taking off, right? And so, some of the items
24 that, the steps that we announced last year with the
25 Mayor to create this Film Industry Council to bring

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2 on Kwame, to establish the executive order. All of
3 that is with an eye towards improving our
4 communications the way that we're managing
5 production, the way that we're engaging with all of
6 you. I had an opportunity to meet with you and some
7 of your colleagues but I know that we still have yet
8 to - I have yet to make the full rounds because
9 that's a big part of how we're going to be able to
10 manage production well throughout the city is in
11 partnership with you understanding what some of the
12 quirks are for each of the neighborhoods but then
13 also helping you understand like how these
14 productions work.

15 The television series, being a television town is
16 great in the sense that we have year-round
17 production, right? And it's a year-round employer
18 but it also means that there are certain locations
19 that become part of a character in a story that
20 they're going to go to and so, we're very mindful of
21 that. But you know, with all of that, I would love
22 for my colleague Kwame to talk through how we
23 actually permit production throughout the city.

24 KWAME AMOAKU: Thank you Commissioner. So, first
25 of all, I'd just like say New York City is an amazing

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1 city to film in. It's incredibly dynamic. I have
2 from production worked all over the world and I know
3 for a fact that there are locations that have
4 challenges that are difficult to overcome. When you
5 go to New Zealand to shoot Lord of the Rings or you
6 go to a desert or a swamp, New York is like that.
7 It's very unique in that there's really no blanket
8 policy that can cover the entire city because each
9 part of the city is unique. So, every project that
10 comes to us, we approach in preproduction to get an
11 idea of what is the need. Then at that point, they
12 will come to us. We will have a meeting with them.
13 They'll break down their shooting schedule to us and
14 let us know where they're going to be. They'll
15 download all of their information and logistics to
16 us. At that point, it will come into the hands of
17 what's called a coordinator. That coordinator will
18 take a look at their production, find out where they
19 want to land and get all the information from how
20 many trucks they have. What the size of their crew
21 is. What the actual action is and they'll look at
22 each individual location and analyze that location
23 and check it for conflicts. Conflicts with other
24 events. Conflicts with construction with other
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things that might be happening in the area. There's an entire review process that happens before the application is even submitted before the permit is even submitted. It allows us to kind of troubleshoot and get ahead of a lot of those issues that you're talking about ahead of time. It's a very meticulous process. I'm very involved in a hands-on level. I like to go out and scout with the productions ahead of time to take a look at major stunts and major impacts.

So, what we're doing is taking a look at each situation at a case-by-case basis, analyzing it and coming up with the best possible solution for production to interact. Part of the process of production is blast notification. So, when a person enters the information into the application, that information goes directly to the Council Members, to the Assembly Members, to the borough presidents office and to everyone else who needs to know if there's FDNY involved, a pyro stunt and they're involved. We're also coordinating with all the other city agencies that might be involved. So, if you're shooting on public property, you might need DCAS or

1 if we're doing a larger event, you might need to
2 coordinate that with CECM.

3
4 So, there's an entire process that happens before
5 the permit is ever actually put in that is involved
6 with us reviewing the permit and making sure it's the
7 least amount of impact as possible.

8 CHAIRPERSON FARIAS: Sure, I appreciate that
9 answer. So, I'm more — what I will say is right,
10 when my office gets the flash response, I'm grateful
11 to get it and I'm like, oh cool, this is happening in
12 the district.

13 Who in that vicinity do I know that I can help
14 notify to get the word out, right? If it's even
15 needed right? Some stuff like filming walking down
16 the street. Like, I read it to kind of see what it
17 is. I worked previously as a staffer in the Council,
18 we were close to Broadway Stages and we had all sorts
19 of things we had to warn people, like noises. So,
20 I'm always like, let me read this document to make
21 sure if I need to warn anyone, I can give them a
22 warning.

23 But what we seen I think at least through the
24 pandemic, the city has a lot of unique ways that we
25 can notify people. Have we considered using Notify

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2 NYC like down the pipeline of how to do outreach to
3 people within a certain zip code or within a certain
4 neighborhood radius to kind of help the productions
5 and the sets that are going to happen and the
6 locality because realistically, like when we all came
7 into these seats, we weren't given every single
8 registered voter or every single households contact
9 information. So, even coming to me, going to the
10 borough president, I don't want to say it's not
11 meaningful but it's you know one other way that we
12 can help with outreach but realistically, we are not
13 making a large impact in notifying residents. Like,
14 you know, I am a consistent watcher of Law and Order.
15 If I can tell everyone in this room, make sure you
16 watch it. We need to keep it in New York City. But
17 I know that I'm in the Bronx. I'm rarely going to
18 get a law and Law and Order set. I'm rarely going to
19 see a consistent production in my district. So, when
20 we get it, I am excited for it and I want it to
21 continue but I do know that it's hard to navigate the
22 back-and-forth communication with residents because
23 there is no other way unless my team and I took a day
24 or two to door knock that area or to you know to
25 flyer that area to inform people. And then we still

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2 have to like prepare for the phone calls to explain
3 what's going to happen. So, I've been thinking about
4 this in the way of like, how could we use you know
5 the data base of 311 services where we know there are
6 people making complaints? How do we get ahead and
7 inform them? Or we just got super proactive and got
8 Notify NYC you know alerts out there where people can
9 choose to opt out. But we still have a data set of
10 people where we can say hey, if you need more
11 information, here's the contact information or ask
12 your Council Members office or a film set is coming
13 your way. We're excited, we hope you are too kind of
14 thing.

15 ANNE DEL CASTILLO: There's a little bit of a
16 balance in that though right? Because well, some of
17 it has to do with the technology, which I think we'll
18 have to look at. Uhm, uh, but there's also, I think
19 where we want to focus is on making sure that we're
20 doing the work ahead of time to sort of make sure
21 that the production, if they're holding parking. If
22 it's going to take - because this is the other thing,
23 it's like we're only thinking about the things,
24 they're holding parking or doing a stunt. But
25 sometimes the shoots are very small, right and you

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2 wouldn't even know that like if it's one, if there's
3 one vehicle there that requires parking. Like, I
4 don't know that you want to notify the whole
5 neighborhood about that right. So, that's part of it
6 but there's also - uhm, I lost my train of thought.

7 Uhm, one of the things that I committed to when I
8 came into office was recognizing that we needed a
9 more robust intergovernmental and community affairs
10 liaison. And the hope was that we could expand that
11 department so that we could really get ahead when
12 we're meeting with productions, when we're adding
13 preproduction meetings that if they are going to be
14 holding a significant amount of parking, they are
15 supposed to be notifying. Productions are supposed
16 to be notifying the communities, posting letters and
17 posting notices, so that it's in advance, right.

18 It's not a surprise. Like, you'll see signs go up.

19 And then at the same time, our intergov team,
20 we're a team of one at the moment. We were a team of
21 two but it's working, like if we know that there's a
22 particular, like if there's a particular area where
23 we really need to or the shoot is of a scale that
24 we're reaching out to you in advance so that we can
25 notify residents. I know that we've - the way that

1 the system is set up right now, it is to borough
2 presidents, state and local elected officials and
3 community boards. We can look at if there's a way to
4 finesse that more in the system. That's certainly
5 something we can start to explore.

6
7 So, I'm not saying - what I'm saying is, we will
8 look at that and continue to work with your offices
9 to make sure that you're aware of what we're doing.

10 CHAIRPERSON FARIAS: Sure, I appreciate that. I
11 only made that note because again like, we all have a
12 limited capability of outreach and we did a really
13 great job during the pandemic with Notify NYC. Uhm,
14 and people are already signed up to those kind of
15 notices and it's just another way to think of it.

16 I only have a few more questions before I turn it
17 over to my colleague. Uhm, are there programs in
18 place to encourage film and production crews to
19 patronize local businesses while filming on site and
20 nearby? And if not, would MOME be open to developing
21 such a program?

22 ANNE DEL CASTILLO: We've been doing it on the
23 basis of when we know that they're going to go into
24 certain neighborhoods to make sure that they're doing
25 outreach. That way we don't have a formal process

1
2 but it's something that we are continually trying to
3 refine and come up with a better way of connecting
4 production to local businesses.

5 We've actually had a number of conversations with
6 small business services to see if there's a way that
7 we can sort of tap into their database and figure
8 that out. So, it's very much top of mind and part of
9 the discussion in improving the way that we have
10 production in New York.

11 CHAIRPERSON FARIAS: Okay, great, and my last
12 question before I turn it over. Uhm, how are we, if
13 we are at all leveraging the needs of the film
14 industry to help prioritize a local infrastructure.
15 Like, stop signs, road way improvements and more?

16 I ask this question because there's been plenty
17 of examples I think as local Council Members that
18 we've seen where local productions coming in or some
19 sort of location is being set up to have production.
20 And it's recommended by either the production set
21 that's there or the staging location that they need
22 stop sign to help or they need road way improvement
23 and that some how gets more expedited than our
24 request from our office. And so, what brings that
25 top to mind for me is outside of these small

1 instances, is there a way that we can be leveraging
2 local infrastructure priorities while also still
3 being able to support some production that's
4 happening?
5

6 ANNE DEL CASTILLO: I'm not aware and I'm happy
7 to look into it and come back to you. I'm not aware
8 of an on-location production being able to request
9 those changes. I know that in instances where we've
10 had like a new sound stage go up, maybe in that
11 instance, like a stop sign has gone up and that's out
12 of concern of the safety of production vehicles
13 moving in and out. But I'm more than happy to have
14 further conversation to see you know where those
15 instances have happened and if there is a way that we
16 can facilitate that.

17 CHAIRPERSON FARIAS: Sure and I'm sorry, I forgot
18 one other question that I have. Two things. Can you
19 discuss the permit fee structure for productions?

20 ANNE DEL CASTILLO: Yes. So, currently, the
21 permit fee is, it's actually an application fee. And
22 again, this is part of our system that we've
23 inherited and that we are looking at revising. But
24 it's a \$300 application fee regardless of what kind
25 of production you're doing. If you're applying for a

1
2 film permit, it's \$300. And that, do you want to
3 speak the or actually do you want to speak to the
4 structure of the film permit fees? Yeah, yeah,
5 currently.

6 LORI BARRETT-PETERSON: The film permit fee as
7 the Commissioner said is currently \$300 and that's
8 what we call a project application fee. The project
9 application, the project itself may consist of
10 numerous permits. Like, for example, if it was an
11 episodic television show, it would be the permits
12 issued during the entire season or it could be like a
13 short shoot. It could mean just a couple of permits.

14 CHAIRPERSON FARIAS: Okay, so just for
15 clarification, we're positive it - I was under the
16 impression that it could potentially be a \$500 fee.

17 LORI BARRETT-PETERSON: We're looking at revising
18 the structure moving forward.

19 CHAIRPERSON FARIAS: Okay, so it's \$300 right now
20 and we're looking at revising it. And right now, is
21 there a - is it just \$300 for the entire shoot,
22 whether it takes two weeks or six months?

23 LORI BARRETT-PETERSON: Yes.
24
25

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CHAIRPERSON FARIAS: And there isn't a -- are we looking at revisions around that being more fees over a certain amount of time?

ANNE DEL CASTILLO: Yes, we are. It's been published in our regulatory agenda that we're considering introducing a new rule to increase the fee.

LORI BARRETT-PETERSON: And to actually change the structure.

CHAIRPERSON FARIAS: Okay, can we talk about what's proposed right now.

LORI BARRETT-PETERSON: We haven't begun the capital process yet, so it hasn't been published.

CHAIRPERSON FARIAS: Okay, okay great and then in terms of the \$300 permit application fee, what does MOME use it for? How is it being utilized?

ANNE DEL CASTILLO: It goes into the general.

LORI BARRETT-PETERSON: Right, the permit fee goes into the general fund.

CHAIRPERSON FARIAS: The good old general fund.

And do we know if a percentage of that goes to hiring more permit coordinators or anything like that? It just goes into the general fund and we hope it comes back to our industry? Yes, okay. Alright, thank you

1 and at this point, I will stop and turn it over to
2 Council Member Gutiérrez, Chair Gutiérrez.

3
4 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you Chair. Well,
5 thank you all once again for holding it down and for
6 the city agency side and for taking some of these
7 questions. While they might not directly pertain to
8 MOMÉ, we're certainly appreciative that you're here.
9 And so, my role as the Chair for the Tech Committee,
10 is to work with you all specifically with MOMÉ. It's
11 a privilege to be here. I want to start off with a
12 little bit about the roles and what falls under MOMÉ.
13 And Commissioner, I think you did a great job with
14 both Chairs questions on kind of like what you all
15 do, the breath of MOMÉ. My question is specifically
16 related to outreach that MOMÉ does with regard to
17 small film makers, specifically small film makers of
18 color. If you could just state for the record, I
19 know that there's like a personal commitment but what
20 are some of the examples that you can share that MOMÉ
21 as an agency does or examples of outreach to well,
22 and film makers of color?

23 ANNE DEL CASTILLO: So, our outreach is pretty
24 vast in the sense that we work with film festivals,
25 right? That we know are attended by and it's a range

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of film festivals. Some of them are hyper local and then some of them are like Tribeca and the New York Film Festival but the hyper local ones are where we're really, we've actually made a concerted effort to really support them and raise the visibility and when there's opportunities for our office to speak and present and help, we'll attend those and talk to them about the various resources that are available to them at the city.

We also, the New York State Council and the Arts has a media arts group that meets fairly regularly and that is comprised of all of the media arts organizations throughout the state of New York but a large concentration of them are here in the city and we are working with them to become more actively involved in that because we know that they reach a lot of the independent film makers.

For a long time, independent production really is actually the majority of feature film production that prior to the pandemic, it was about 80 percent of feature film production in New York. Some of the changes to the tax credit and then some of the COVID impacts have really sharply reduced the amount of independent production that takes place here and so,

1
2 with Kwame here now and with you know the sort of
3 understanding how these impacts are working, we're
4 really trying to much more outreach to those
5 communities to see how we can bring some of that
6 back.

7 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you and in that
8 same spirit, is there - what is the agencies capacity
9 for language access in these instances where you are
10 doing outreach in some of these smaller festivals.
11 We've got a great film festival in Bushwick every
12 fall. But just curious if you all are out there
13 doing the work, do you encounter you know, issues of
14 having that, have language access available and you
15 all saw for that?

16 ANNE DEL CASTILLO: Do you want to talk about
17 some of our language access work?

18 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: You could tell me now and
19 then we'll work on it.

20 ANNE DEL CASTILLO: I mean we, so what I would
21 say is, I know that we've done work in like we've
22 participated in some of the and I'm vaguely
23 bilingual. So, we've done outreach to some of the
24 festivals, we'll go and we'll participate in some of
25 the Spanish language festivals but we have yet to

1
2 really translate all of our materials for some of
3 these festivals and for some of these organizations.
4 So, that is something that we can work on. It hasn't
5 been - we haven't been, I'll just admit, we haven't
6 really been focused on that but that is certainly
7 something that we can look into moving forward.

8 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Yeah, just as far as
9 outreach and making that connection. I know every
10 year, maybe not during the pandemic but there was an
11 annual Columbian film festival. There was an annual
12 Dominican film festival. So, just thinking about -
13 yeah, just like language access, and I think that in
14 turn also helps just kind of do outreach to those
15 communities about understanding the role that you all
16 have.

17 ANNE DEL CASTILLO: So, that was the work that I
18 was alluding to and I made that ridiculous comment
19 about being bilingual because I remember going to the
20 - we go the Dominican Film Festival for example very
21 often and we do - we try to have a presence at these
22 festivals so that they can put a face to the agency
23 but the other thing that we've been doing with them
24 that I think is actually has been very helpful to
25 these smaller organizations in particular is we do

1
2 community and media advise. Community and ethnic
3 media advise for some of the smaller festivals so
4 that they can reach a larger audience. And reach
5 more constituents and uhm, and therefore make our
6 presence more known as a resource for some of these
7 film makers.

8 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Yeah, absolutely. Thank
9 you. My next question is related to a little bit
10 kind of going off on what my Chairs had also brought
11 up, just communication. So, my questions
12 specifically is about communication between MOME and
13 other agencies, both at the city and state. I had
14 shared with you earlier that especially in my
15 district, we have a ton of you know just development
16 going on constantly but right now we've got this huge
17 Empty A project along the L. I went over there with
18 my staff, there was some MDA issues and that we
19 noticed that there was also orange signs up for
20 filming.

21 And I thought hey, this is a perfect example of
22 where government really does need to talk to one
23 another to better coordinate. So, can you share a
24 little bit with me about what those conversations
25 look like, especially as you are approving some of

1
2 these permits, just so that we have a better sense of
3 how to just in turn give that response to our
4 constituents?

5 ANNE DEL CASTILLO: So, we, our system is tied
6 into a citywide events database and that is largely
7 where we get our information from about other
8 projects that are happening around the city. With
9 the liaisons as well, we're starting to have more
10 direct conversations with them, so that there's an
11 ongoing engagement with other agencies to understand
12 what projects they have coming down the pike. The
13 mayor also just recently announced the appointment of
14 public realms are, which we're very excited about
15 because I think that will also help facilitate some
16 of the conversations and coordination throughout the
17 city.

18 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you Commissioner
19 and does MOME receive any or and share data with any
20 other agencies? Is there any reason that your agency
21 has to share any data with other agencies in this
22 process?

23 ANNE DEL CASTILLO: The information is all in
24 this centralized database system but there is some
25 pieces that we don't have access to. Like, I don't

1 think MTA is part of that because it's state but
2
3 yeah.

4 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: And maybe it might not
5 have to be specific to you know proving uhm, a
6 project application but just another, just any
7 examples of where you all share data with other
8 agencies.

9 KWAME AMOAKU: Well, we're constantly sharing
10 information based on the application process. But
11 also, a lot of what happens some in discovery from
12 production and production is there and they notice a
13 construction sign or they notice some construction
14 equipment or they notice a permit and then we'll
15 coordinate with them to get that information to
16 production as well as to make sure the construction
17 is notified.

18 I know that we are working on better coordination
19 within the system and that is something that OTI and
20 CECM are working together to help to make sure that
21 we are all connected therefore, deconfliction will
22 happen almost instantaneously once we enter
23 information into the system.

24 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you.

25 KWAME AMOAKU: So, it's a work in progress.

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2 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you. I just want
3 to pivot a little bit on the kind of the community
4 communication piece. Just one question. How does
5 MOME communicate with production studios and handle
6 requests for complaints or issues with film and TV
7 production. So, at some point, I'd love to
8 understand uhm, if a 311 complaint is made, how that
9 gets communicated. If it does. I know it's a little
10 less seamless than someone just calling the number
11 that's on the sign right? And so, I'm curious to
12 know kind of where and how that lands but right now,
13 can you just walk us through the process. If there
14 is a complaint called directly to the production
15 assistant I believe on site or whoever's information
16 is on that form, how does that get handled by the
17 company?

18 ANNE DEL CASTILLO: By the company. I mean, I'll
19 let you speak to that. On our end, we do get
20 referrals from 311 and we also get direct calls to
21 our office and sometimes what will happen is they'll
22 call the PA and they'll also call our office and so,
23 we'll outreach to the production right away and see
24 what the issue is and typically we'll resolve it
25 right then and there. But if you want to.

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2 KWAME AMOAKU: So, when these complaints come in,
3 uhm, they're usually filtered through community
4 affairs but infinitely, we notify -

5 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Through PD's community
6 affairs?

7 KWAME AMOAKU: Through our community affairs
8 department.

9 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Oh okay, okay, thank you
10 for clarifying.

11 KWAME AMOAKU: Sorry, through MOME's community
12 affairs.

13 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: My ears went up, okay.

14 KWAME AMOAKU: So, uhm, also what we do is we
15 contact the production and notify them and we
16 interact with them immediately as soon as we get the
17 information and we require that they correct whatever
18 the issue is. We also have field inspectors that go
19 out to all of these locations and they're making sure
20 that they're staying within the footprint of the
21 permit and that they're not violating any other codes
22 of conduct. If they are, then they notify production
23 immediately to correct these instances.

24 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: And can you just repeat
25 the name of the role of field?

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ANNE DEL CASTILLO: Field representatives.

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KWAME AMOAKU: Field representatives.

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ANNE DEL CASTILLO: And they are mandated to

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check out the site every how often?

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KWAME AMOAKU: It varies depending on what the

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action is. It's really to the discretion of MOME to

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see what kind of, if it's two people walking down the

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street having a conversation that's something that we

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might deprioritize over a large stunt or a large

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event that's going on. So, we'll go and make sure

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and other larger footprint productions, we're going

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to go inspect those more frequently than we would

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smaller footprint productions.

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CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: And this person, through

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the code of conduct, are they also assessing anything

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else with relation to how the film is looking in the

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community? How it's impacting community or is it

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just simply to follow the code of like relation to

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their application? Like making sure they're doing

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what the application said versus like how they're

22

interacting with the community?

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KWAME AMOAKU: No, they make sure that they're

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following all the policies that the code of conduct

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is policies that are made to protect the public and

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2 to protect residents. And so, definitely any issues
3 that would result in the conflict with residents or
4 businesses is addressed by the field representative.

5 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Got it and I'd like to
6 just ask a question on behalf of some folks in my
7 community. This would help kind of put this on
8 record for folks. How soon can folks from a
9 production team for example, start telling
10 constituents, hey, you can't park your car here?

11 So, the scenario is, the signs go up maybe two
12 days before, right? Uhm, what I have heard from
13 constituents is that cones will start coming down way
14 before that paper says. And so, I guess my question
15 is like, what is the actual rule there? How early
16 can they do it? How soon before? And again, the
17 parking is a complaint that I hear but I certainly
18 you know, I want to continue just for the production
19 team. So, what is the rule here, so we can have it
20 on record?

21 KWAME AMOAKU: They're not allowed to take the
22 permitted area before their permit starts. So, if
23 there are instances in which they have coned off an
24 area ahead of time or unless we've made a special
25 arrangement with them because of the size of the

1
2 footprint or maybe it's a major stunt and we need to
3 clear it out earlier, but usually its when they
4 arrive for production is when they will start moving
5 cars and towing things. Now, sometimes there's
6 exceptions but residents should feel free to report
7 instances like that to us and then we'll correct
8 that.

9 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Yeah.

10 ANNE DEL CASTILLO: And also, what I will say
11 though and I'll admit like, I think that was a
12 practice that was started partly because we lost our
13 tow unit for a while, right? And so, it was very
14 difficult for productions to land if cars wouldn't
15 move and since we didn't have the tow unit to move
16 the cars that were not supposed to be where they
17 were, there was a practice that was started where
18 people would hold parking. I'm not saying it's
19 right; I'm just explaining the rational behind it and
20 that's in large part why we've been able to advocate
21 successfully to bring back the tow unit and so,
22 between that and you know more informed communication
23 and adherence to the code of contact, we hope to see
24 improvements in that.

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2 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you. And can you
3 also just clarify how – well, what role MOME plays in
4 situations where parking has to be removed but they
5 are loading zones or a business could potentially be
6 impacted. If for some reason it's a business that's
7 open at night and it's a nighttime shoot, can you
8 just explain how that is solved for?

9 KWAME AMOAKU: So, they're not allowed to take
10 just any parking. They have to do it within the
11 bounds of the regs as well as take into account
12 handicap spots, loading zones, driveways. They have
13 to interact with the public and make sure that
14 they're not blocking anything.

15 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: But that onus falls on
16 them, the applicant. It's not a part of the process.
17 The review process for example that MOME, they're
18 looking at okay, they want to be on Wilson Avenue.
19 Let me make sure that –

20 KWAME AMOAKU: Yes, it is. It is a part of –

21 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: It is part of MOME's
22 process okay.

23 KWAME AMOAKU: Checking the regs is a part of the
24 process definitely.

25

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2 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Great, great, great thank
3 you. My next question is related to locations of
4 sound stages, sound studios in the city. District
5 34, we have a very sizable industrial area. We have
6 a number of studios in the district. So, my
7 following questions are just going to be related to
8 kind of to that industry, a big piece of my advocacy
9 along with some of my colleagues is to retain
10 manufacturing jobs.

11 I do love that the studios are in the IVZ's. Can
12 you share a little bit about what the average wage
13 for a motion picture worker or a video production
14 worker is?

15 KWAME AMOAKU: That could vary, I mean one thing
16 about a film crew is that there's such an amazing
17 diversity of roles, right. So, every where from a
18 production assistant who might make \$200 a day in
19 where to a cinema photographer who can make you know
20 \$1,500-\$2,000 a day. It varies based on those
21 positions.

22 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay. Uhm, and how often
23 would you say these workers experience an increase in
24 that variation of wages?

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2 KWAME AMOAKU: That's very dependent on the
3 collective bargaining agreement because most of these
4 are union jobs and so, that's based on the collective
5 bargaining agreement between the labor and the
6 supplier.

7 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay, so the reason I ask
8 these questions is because of how valuable I do think
9 industrial jobs are to the City of New York. The
10 average wage is well over \$85,000. Almost 80 percent
11 of the work force are people of color so, my advocacy
12 is always to say if we are utilizing this
13 manufacturing space for technically nonmanufacturing
14 uses, that these jobs are I think proportionate to
15 the salary that these workers are making. So, that's
16 why I raise that question.

17 In your experience, have you had any issues
18 shooting or working or getting situated in these
19 industrial business areas because of the nature of
20 the manufacturing work? As I understand 22 of the 54
21 sound stages are in IBZ's in the city.

22 ANNE DEL CASTILLO: Yeah, uhm, have we had any
23 issues with them being there?

24 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Have you all or to your
25 knowledge, not in MOME but any of the applicants or

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2 soundstages, like have there been any direct issues
3 correlated with the work that they're trying to do
4 versus the work that some of these manufacturing - I
5 mean, in my district, Netflix is down the block for a
6 cement factory. So, you know, Netflix has more than
7 enough money to soundproof their studio but my
8 question is, do you run into that as you're working
9 with some of these sound stages?

10 ANNE DEL CASTILLO: Not really no.

11 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: It's a happy marriage in
12 the IBZ. Okay, great. Thank you. My next question
13 is a little bit off of what Chair Farias has brought
14 up. Just about notification to neighborhoods and
15 Commissioner, I know you mentioned early that there's
16 been I think a lot of work put in to how you
17 transform communication. So, if you could just one
18 more time or just emphasize how you all think you are
19 now engaging differently with communities, especially
20 coming back from the pandemic. What are some of the
21 things that you're really like proud of that you're
22 doing better now? Because I know that there was a
23 disconnect for a little while.

24 ANNE DEL CASTILLO: Well, so, uhm, now that Kwame
25 has been installed, we've certainly engaged in more

1
2 preproduction meetings with the actual productions to
3 help them understand how they need to engage with
4 communities and I think that is making a significant
5 difference. It's not just Kwame, it is also Josh
6 Levin, our head of Intergov and Community Affairs.
7 But also being proactive about getting to know
8 Council Members and the districts and your
9 priorities. We're a little bit behind because I was
10 not here for the first six months at my tenure. And
11 so, we're catching up a little bit in terms getting
12 to know each of you but uhm, I've already seen some
13 pretty significant changes in the way that we're
14 engaging productions in the community conversations
15 and helping acclimate them and there was a period of
16 time where we weren't really able to do big
17 preproduction meetings and I think that impacted the
18 way that we were able to land productions and we've
19 reinstated that practice and I think that's gone a
20 long way and if you want to anything Kwame.

21 KWAME AMOAKU: No, I think preproduction scouting
22 and interactions with these crews before they even
23 touch down or apply for the permit, I think has been
24 very helpful and helping us to deconflict and get
25 ahead of issues and be proactive. I think just being

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2 proactive and staying in communication with Council,
3 with Borough Presidents and with BIDs is key to
4 making Sure that these productions can land with
5 little impact.

6 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you and have you
7 been able to have those discussions with all 51
8 Council Members or making your way?

9 ANNE DEL CASTILLO: Making our way around.

10 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay, how far along?
11 What's the fraction? Please don't say two.

12 ANNE DEL CASTILLO: No, no, no, it's certainly
13 more than that.

14 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay, yeah, I think there
15 is a lot. Like Chair Farias mentioned, I think
16 there's a lot to gain from like even the way that we
17 as members communicate with our communities and also,
18 we live in our districts, right and so, there's a
19 very unique perspective in that we can offer and how
20 do we engage and do outreach. And I think it's more
21 than just outreach to like inform a community that
22 there is a movie coming. It's also about jobs and
23 it's also about kind of working together to get that
24 message out there that here is very robust industry
25 that thrives on filming right here on your block and

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this is how you can become connected to jobs. Is there a different outreach protocol that MOME utilizes for outreach related to jobs versus filming in the community?

ANNE DEL CASTILLO: I mean, it's all tied in. Like when we're coming to meet with you, it's not just about like what problems are you experiencing in film. It's to really give you a sense of the breath of programs that we're running because we want your constituents to know about them and we want to make sure that you're aware that we have these educational training programs that we're working with these, those variety of festivals or conferences in your neighborhood. That's very much a part of the outreach.

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Yeah, perfect, thank you. I just have a couple more questions and then we'll be done. I had a question regarding the code of conduct and I guess the assessment that are made from the field folks that do this work. Do you have a sense of how many of these permitted productions are in violation of a portion of the code of conduct? Is that something that you all report on or can report on?

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2 KWAME AMOAKU: Uhm, we'd have to look into that
3 to get you exact numbers.

4 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay, but is there a
5 scenario where like a violation is issued or what
6 happens?

7 ANNE DEL CASTILLO: Yes.

8 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay.

9 ANNE DEL CASTILLO: So, our process for the code
10 of conduct is uhm, you know depending on – I mean if
11 they resolve the issue right away then, you know
12 that's corrected but if it's not resolved, and if
13 it's a flagrant infraction of the code of conduct,
14 then they will get a violation notice.

15 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay. Uhm, and then
16 Commissioner, you mentioned earlier that you all have
17 the responsibility of responding to 311 complaints
18 and calls that come in directly to MOME. Do you have
19 a set of what how many 311 complaints you've gotten
20 maybe in the last year?

21 ANNE DEL CASTILLO: We would have to get back to
22 you with that data.

23 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay, I think that would
24 be helpful. I know there's some members –

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2 ANNE DEL CASTILLO: It's less than it was in
3 previous years, which is great.

4 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay, fantastic. Yeah, I
5 know some members might raise those questions. My
6 next question is just related to I think a really hot
7 topic around hot spots. Can you just share what a
8 filming hotspot, the definition of what a filming
9 hotspot is? And how you all designate that area and
10 what happens once a hot spot designation is made?

11 ANNE DEL CASTILLO: Sure, so the hotspot list is
12 really one of the tools that we have to manage
13 production. In the sense that, there maybe an area
14 that has a lot of filming but it could also be
15 because there's a big construction project happening
16 there or there have been a number of other types of
17 events that have happened in the neighborhood. And
18 so, we're looking at that monthly or actually
19 probably even more frequently than that, frankly.
20 And really trying to manage the level of production
21 activity. Obviously around you know, there are
22 certain areas where there's going to be more
23 production activity and so, we really try to keep an
24 eye on that and Kwame, if you want to add to our
25 managing the hotspot.

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2 KWAME AMOAKU: No, we're looking at areas that
3 have been oversaturated and an over abundance of
4 filming and giving those areas a chance to breath and
5 to with the exception of maybe a couple of episodic
6 reoccurring locations. Once the location has been
7 established and episodic, they need to keep that
8 consistent, so also being able to preserve those
9 episodic reoccurring locations requires us sometimes
10 to put areas on the hotspot list. So, we're
11 definitely looking at places that have been
12 oversaturated, that have been over shot basically.

13 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Yeah, and I'm sorry to
14 interrupt you. Is there a number to that or?

15 KWAME AMOAKU: There's no mathematical formula
16 for it at this point.

17 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: It just like, it feels
18 like a lot. Okay. Maybe put a rubric on it. I
19 think it's just helpful.

20 ANNE DEL CASTILLO: Well, because again as Kwame
21 was saying, there's - each neighborhood is somewhat
22 different so, a large concentration in an industrial
23 area where it's not impeding business activity. May
24 not like have the same affect as if you're in a
25 residential area. And so, that's why we don't put

1
2 like a specific number on it. We really do, it's a
3 conversation that we have with the community, with
4 you know production, with just the patterns that
5 we've observed and I think you know there was a
6 period of time when we weren't managing the hotspot
7 list very well and we've been much more actively
8 managing that on a regular basis, and I think it's
9 helped considerably.

10 I just wanted to respond to your question about
11 average pay for production and I should have thought
12 of this because we did a study on this but the
13 average wage is \$121,000.

14 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: That's really good. That
15 feels really good and that's why I think the
16 communication piece on pathways is so important but I
17 think especially for someone that represents such a
18 big piece of the industrial business zone, when
19 there's a non-business use going in, I want to make
20 sure that you know my constituents aren't losing out
21 potentially on a proportion of income. So, that's
22 really good.

23 I just have two more questions. One, is just
24 related to staffing. Can you share currently how
25 many folks you have on staff for the Office of

1
2 Permitting or however you word it, but like how many
3 people do you have on the MOME team that whose like
4 job is to review these applications and do you need
5 more?

6 ANNE DEL CASTILLO: So, uhm, we have actually, I
7 can't keep track of how many permit we have now.

8 KWANE AMOAKU: Seven.

9 ANNE DEL CASTILLO: So, we have seven permit
10 coordinators, five field representatives, one IGA,
11 although hopefully that will change soon. And then
12 support in the sense of like our general counsel open
13 house to review our policies and then Kwame is
14 leading that office. Overall, MOME has just under
15 100 headcount to oversee five divisions.

16 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Wow and do you think the
17 seven people that you have to do processing, does
18 that feel like enough at the rate to support you know
19 the goals that you shared in your testimony?

20 ANNE DEL CASTILLO: We can always use more.

21 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Yeah, you can just tell
22 us. We want to support. You can say we need more.
23 Uhm, and then my last question is just related to
24 processing these project applications. I'm clear on
25 the cost to the applicant, it's around \$300 and

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2 you're kind of reworking that structure but do you
3 have a sense of what it costs you all as MOME to
4 review and process that?

5 ANNE DEL CASTILLO: No actually.

6 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay, uhm, okay that's
7 it. Thank you so much. That's it for me.

8 ANNE DEL CASTILLO: Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON OSSÈ: Thank you Chair Gutiérrez. I
10 do want to recognize more of my colleagues who have
11 joined us during this hearing Council Member Avilés,
12 and I want to pass the questioning off to Council
13 Member Dinowitz.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: Okay. Thank you
15 Chairs, all the Chairs. Good afternoon. Do you have
16 a breakdown of where that you mentioned things like
17 average salary and do you have a breakdown of where
18 the jobs are going by borough and by neighborhood?

19 ANNE DEL CASTILLO: We don't because uhm, the
20 productions are shooting. It's not like when I say
21 it's a year-round job, they're by show and so they
22 might relocate depending on where the shows are. We
23 have a breakdown by – we do have a breakdown. Our
24 2019 study does have a breakdown of I think it has a
25 breakdown of some of the different types of jobs that

1
2 are within production. We're happy to share that
3 with you.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: Okay, yeah, no, I'd
5 love to see that I have a sneaking suspicion that
6 proportionately fewer of the jobs and opportunities
7 are in the Bronx. That's just how this city
8 apparently works. And there's a few things; I do
9 want to echo the concerns that some of my colleagues
10 have said about when a production comes in, how that
11 impact you know things like parking, the quality of
12 life and the local economy and I may have missed this
13 but do you provide any incentives or encourage the
14 production to use local businesses for food and their
15 storefronts and things like that?

16 ANNE DEL CASTILLO: When we meet with
17 productions, we really do try to give them an
18 orientation to the neighborhoods that they'll be
19 filming in. I do want to sort of clarify a little
20 bit though like not every production; we deal with
21 such a huge range of productions. Like some of them
22 might be in a community for a day, whereas others
23 might be there more frequently than that. And so, we
24 really try to calibrate the orientation based on the
25 production and how long they're going to be in a

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1 neighborhood. But yes, we are actively working on
2 trying to build more connections between the
3 productions and local communities.
4

5 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: Yeah, does I think the
6 word rubric was used earlier, it doesn't sound as
7 though there's some sort of rubric. I mean, I just
8 want to share that when productions come in, it feels
9 like there's things taken from the community. You
10 know in my community; department is a big one. We
11 don't have a ton of access to public transit but it
12 doesn't feel as though enough is given back. But
13 there's something even I think more important that's
14 taken. You had a nice quote in your opening
15 testimony Commissioner. So, the artists who work in
16 film and television production create images of our
17 city that are unforgettable. And then you uhm, talk
18 about in a positive light, but then you also mention
19 the movie Joker. I don't know if anyone's familiar
20 with that movie. It's about a murderer and the
21 famous scene is the Bronx steps where he's doing the
22 dancing. And it feels like in film and television,
23 there's a lot of negative stereotypes of the Bronx.
24 You mentioned in your testimony about Brooklyn and
25 Queens drycleaner and florist. We actually have

1
2 drycleaners and florists in the Bronx. We have
3 families, we have workers, we have office buildings
4 and I'm wondering what efforts your office is making
5 to improve the image of the Bronx.

6 If you're working with these production
7 companies, how you're using the power of your office
8 and your influence to steer productions toward some
9 of the positive images and all the wonderful things
10 that Bronx has to offer.

11 ANNE DEL CASTILLO: So, we actually have some new
12 studio projects that have opened in the Bronx and
13 they're actively engaged in working with community to
14 engage them in some of the educational programs and
15 work with some of the local businesses. And so, that
16 is something that we are really committed to is
17 working with these sound stages in particular that we
18 know that are going to be there to make sure that
19 we're helping to facilitate those kinds of
20 connections.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: I'm glad to hear that
22 but specifically, is there any work your office is
23 doing to sort of present a positive image of the
24 Bronx and not the place where crime happens, which is
25 typically what we see in TV and film.

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2 ANNE DEL CASTILLO: What I like to say is,
3 listen, I'm absolutely committed to building more
4 workforce development programs and bringing more of
5 that to the Bronx. I think it's really important. I
6 was on the taskforce for Racial Inclusion and Equity
7 during the pandemic and I know how hard in particular
8 the Bronx was hit and that is a very big priority
9 personally, is to really try to build more equity in
10 that space.

11 As to content, we don't regulate content. That's
12 not our job. Our job is to permit production but
13 what I also want to remind people of, because I get
14 this. It's not just about the Bronx. Like, people
15 get upset when they see that you know, there's a
16 story that shows New York in not such a great light
17 but what I say is for every image of the grid city,
18 there's also shows about the pretty city, right?
19 There's uhm, you know for every crime show there's
20 also like Sex in the City or you know, so people want
21 to come here when they see the shows. So, I often
22 say that people that I meet who are here in New York,
23 their first experience very often is an image on a
24 screen and that's why they want to be here. And so,
25 I understand the concerns but I also you know, we

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2 can't be in the business of regulating content. We
3 can just facilitate and make sure that their
4 productions are doing well by the communities that
5 they're filming in.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: Well, I appreciate your
7 commitment to workforce development but I would say
8 if production is not happening in the Bronx and very
9 pleased to hear about the studios but there's other
10 types of film that happens outside the studios. Then
11 the workforce development is most likely to happen
12 from the Bronx and it did sound in your testimony
13 like there is work you do with the productions
14 ensuring that they have what they need and they tell
15 you the scenes they need and it sounded like it came
16 from Kwame, that some of the work that you do. And I
17 am simply saying that if that if that there are
18 positive images that you can help the Bronx. You can
19 help the images and the negative stereotypes that are
20 plaguing in the Bronx by directing some of the
21 productions of positive film towards the Bronx and
22 recognizing it as the beautiful place it is that has
23 all the wonderful things that we have all throughout
24 the city but is somehow still trapped in this

25

1
2 negative stereotype. I think perpetuated by what we
3 see on screen.

4 ANNE DEL CASTILLO: I would love to follow up
5 with your office too to understand, like get a better
6 sense of some of the neighborhoods and locations
7 where we could be recommending. I mean, we know that
8 we need to do a better job of helping production
9 identify new locations for some of the shows that
10 they're doing. And so, I think it would be great to
11 meet with you and to follow up and see how we can
12 support that.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: Great, thank you.
14 Thank you Chairs.

15 CHAIRPERSON OSSÈ: Thank you Council Member
16 Dinowitz. Also, just to add, if you want to tell the
17 producers of the Joker that they can come to Bed-Stuy
18 or Crown Heights, and Lady Gaga that she can come,
19 that would be great to.

20 Also, I remember when they did shoot in the
21 Bronx, it brought a lot of tourists to you know that
22 location and I definitely hear your point but I'm
23 sure the small businesses are really happy about a
24 lot of the attention that is coming over there too.
25 Council Member Restler.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Thank you so much to all
3 three of our Chairs. Gutiérrez and Ossè and Farias.
4 I really appreciate your leadership on this issue and
5 across the board. Oh, sorry, that's never something
6 that is a problem for me. And thank you to the
7 Commissioner and the team, appreciate you all being
8 here today.

9 I'll just start by saying, the film and
10 television industry is a great asset for New York
11 City and we're fortunate to have a thriving film and
12 television industry here that promotes our city,
13 provides good jobs, and I really appreciate all that
14 it does to contribute to promoting New York. My
15 concerns have been around the regulatory framework
16 that we have in place to manage the frequency of film
17 and television shoots on the same block. For
18 example, there are census tracts in my district that
19 have had I don't know 300 film and television shoots
20 permitted in a given month. That is an enormous
21 amount of film and television activity in one census
22 tract in one month. And the impact of many large
23 trucks of generators starting at six or seven in the
24 morning, is a real impact on a neighborhood. And
25 it's one thing if it's happening a few times a week,

1 a few times a month. It's another thing when it's
2 happening hundreds of times in a month.

3
4 And so, the first question I just want to ask
5 Commissioner is, is there cap that the Mayor's Office
6 of Media and Entertainment puts in place or considers
7 for the number of film and television permits that it
8 will issue at a given location, a given block, a
9 given census track to give a neighborhood in a month?

10 ANNE DEL CASTILLO: No.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: No.

12 ANNE DEL CASTILLO: There is no cap but I do want
13 to point out however, that in the census track that
14 you're referring to, you have a number of sound
15 stages there, which would account for the increased
16 amount of activity that you have in those particular
17 areas.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Absolutely and we're
19 fortunate to have Steiner Studios and Broadway Stages
20 in our district to do a lot of good. But what
21 happens is, shoots from those studios, especially
22 from Broadway stage, you know from different stages,
23 will go out to the same locations again and again and
24 again and again and they're lots of parts of New York
25 City that would really benefit from spreading the

1
2 wealth around and having film and television shoots
3 in their neighborhoods as well.

4 So, there's no cap on the number of shoots in a
5 given location. My understanding of the city's
6 policy in perpetuity, you know for many years now,
7 has been, there's no cap. If people complain enough
8 a moratorium is imposed and then we start all over
9 again with complaints and complaints and complaints
10 until another moratorium is imposed. Is that a fair;
11 is that an accurate description of the city's policy?

12 ANNE DEL CASTILLO: Not entirely.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Okay.

14 ANNE DEL CASTILLO: You know again, in the areas
15 that you're describing there are pretty significant
16 sound stages there and so, there will be and I
17 mentioned that earlier, there will be a significant
18 amount more of activity in those areas. It also,
19 around the sound stages but also in the neighborhoods
20 around the sound stages because you know company
21 moves are pretty significant and so, they will tend
22 to film in the areas right around the sound stages.

23 What I have also said is we really want to work
24 on identifying other locations. We have been playing
25 catchup since the industry activity has increased

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1 exponentially. You know we went from 30 shows to 80
2 in like five years and so, our office infrastructure
3 had not kept up with that. So, we fully acknowledge
4 that we need to be better about working with
5 productions to help them identify other areas. So, I
6 think that's part of it.
7

8 The hotspot list is just one tool in our arsenal
9 of tools that we use to manage production. Where it
10 could be because of shoots. It could also be because
11 of public works projects, because of development in
12 the area.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: I just want to; I only
14 have a minute left, so is there anything; I don't
15 mean to cut you off but is there anything more? You
16 want to finish that thought?

17 ANNE DEL CASTILLO: I lost my train of thought.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: I hear you on public
19 works projects and other things and for example your
20 team has worked really well with us in Dumbo where
21 we've had major neighborhood-wide infrastructure
22 project to have a blackout period there, which we
23 appreciate.

24 I do want to recognize Local 817 and the
25 Teamsters that have offered some really good

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1 suggestions to our office and I think to your office
2 as well on how we can streamline operations more
3 effectively, deploy smaller vehicles, take up less
4 space, have less vehicles per department from a shoot
5 that go out.
6

7 ANNE DEL CASTILLO: That's where I was going.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Good. I'm glad I beat
9 you to the punch. But I really just want to, I know
10 we talked a little bit about this. I know it's
11 something you all are looking at and appreciate the
12 conversation with you and Kwame. I just want to
13 strongly encourage you to expedite that as quickly as
14 possible because we believe that smaller vehicles,
15 that have less of a footprint in our neighborhoods
16 that are making less noise would make a big
17 difference. The other big things that I just want to
18 highlight as time expires are generators. The noise
19 and the environmental harm that they cause are
20 significant and we need to quickly identify renewable
21 solutions that can be deployed at scale because I
22 think it would have tremendously less impact on
23 neighborhoods if we didn't have these big generators
24 powering all of these vehicles and trailers and
25 shoots.

1
2 So, we're certainly looking at legislative
3 solutions. We know that there's some research being
4 done on powered generators. We are very intrigued by
5 this. We hope that that will be a major priority of
6 your office.

7 ANNE DEL CASTILLO: It is.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: The other, the last
9 thing and then I promise to shut up to the Chairs, is
10 two final quick comments. We'd like to see more
11 prioritization of local restaurants. We think
12 there's too much catering that goes on and not enough
13 engagement with the local restaurants in our
14 community. We think MOME should be requiring and
15 imposing that much more aggressively than currently
16 happens. It would be helpful to support our local
17 economy, our neighborhood economy, if there were
18 deeper partnerships there.

19 And then lastly, I just want to make a comment to
20 the kind of industry advocates who have been engaging
21 around the legislation we've introduced. No one has
22 reached out to our office from any, on behalf of any
23 industry and you've mentioned to my colleagues that
24 you've been trying to get my attention and that I
25 haven't responded. We've received no emails, no

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2 phone calls, and I don't appreciate being lied about.
3 And so, I just want to say very plainly to the
4 representatives of the industry advocates and to the
5 industry advocates, if you'd like to talk to us, let
6 us know. We've met with folks from the film studios
7 in our district. We met with labor unions. We're
8 happy to talk to anybody but please, do not
9 misrepresent communication with my office moving
10 forward. Thank you very much.

11 CHAIRPERSON OSSÈ: Thank you Council Member
12 Restler. Council Member Powers.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: Thank you. Nice to see
14 you. Thanks for testifying. I know it's a long day,
15 so I'll try to be brief. I think that the concerns
16 around as Council Member Restler pointed out about
17 issues within the districts and where you shoot and
18 how the industry works are pretty well documented and
19 obviously you hear those from us all the time. So,
20 not going to bore anybody with that although you
21 know, I've always appreciated the relationship we've
22 had with the agency and your ability to you know work
23 with us.

24 I'm going to go a totally different direction.
25 Like, I read your testimony and I see an industry

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2 that is just quintessential to New York City right
3 now. It's the image in New York City, whether you
4 like the Joker or you don't like the Joker. It is
5 still, it's a tourism, local tourism for them.
6 People come to New York; I see Council Member
7 Dinowitz in the back. Whether you are a Law and
8 Orders of the world and so forth but more importantly
9 it's not just what you see on the screen, it's the
10 jobs this industry delivers. It is the local economy
11 that gets supported by it. And yes, there are local
12 disruptions but there also is a tremendous economic
13 impact of businesses. And I say that because my
14 father once owned a restaurant and Law and Order
15 showed up, and they filmed in it and it was an
16 economic impact for my dad's business. We'll invite
17 you to the next one.

18 So, I've seen it and I've appreciated it. So, I
19 know there's conversations in the state right now
20 about incentives. What I'm actually more interested
21 in is keeping that industry in the city. I know we
22 have competition right over the divide across the
23 river. I know we have competition outside the city
24 and we have competition all over the world and while
25 they can try to fake it's New York City and they do a

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2 good job on the sets, it ain't New York City and it
3 ain't New Yorkers working on those, so I want this
4 industry to shoot to the moon. I want to see this
5 industry and we have to attend to local issues but I
6 can tell you I represent midtown. You can shoot in
7 my district if you want to shoot in my district. I
8 want this industry to exceedingly well because I
9 think it is a foothold in middle class for a lot of
10 New Yorkers. I've seen it. I know people who work
11 on those sets and it is their path to middle class
12 and beyond.

13 So, I want know; just a different question is, we
14 need to do all this stuff to help address local
15 issues. I want to know how in the city and I
16 appreciate the Mayor's viewpoint on this to, how we
17 get this industry to continue expand and grow and how
18 we make sure that those jobs stay here and we are
19 competitive against anyone. I don't want Jersey
20 taking any jobs. I mean if they are, they got to
21 take New Yorkers are go work on them too but I want
22 them in New York City, so how do we do that,
23 recognizing there are the only issues we have to
24 attend to. I'm not ignoring those but I want to know
25 how we in the city can be good stewards for a very

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2 important industry which you guys say is about six
3 percent I think of our economy and economic
4 development.

5 ANNE DEL CASTILLO: Thank you very much and you
6 know I think what we do is, so part of it is the tax
7 credit. I can't be more plain about that. That will
8 certainly make us more competitive globally. But
9 locally, I think it's really helping, it's helping
10 each other land production. I hear the concerns and
11 we take them very seriously and we are working on
12 solutions for those. But just to make sure that the
13 city is educated about how production works, what it
14 brings to the city. Again, the Mayor put forward
15 Executive Order 21, so that we can work on a more
16 coordinated basis with our city agency colleagues.
17 The Film and Television Industry Council, I think
18 would, what I also envision that being is an
19 opportunity for some of you to come and meet with
20 them when we have our meetings with them so that you
21 can learn about what they're thinking. What they
22 want to bring here. But just continuing to make sure
23 that yes, we know that it's challenging but not
24 having that volume of those complaints scare away
25 production. That is a bit of a concern of mine that

1
2 we're able to have sort of more inside conversations
3 among ourselves about how we're going to troubleshoot
4 and solve some of the challenges that production is
5 creating for the city.

6 I think if we can do that offline, not in the
7 public space so that people really feel like New York
8 does want production to come here, that would help
9 tremendously.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: And just one last
11 question and I'll hand it back. I noted a little bit
12 about where your 2019 stats in terms of job
13 production and your testimony but I'm curious just to
14 know where we are right now relative to prepandemic.
15 It feels like this industry did a pretty good job of
16 getting back on its feet using testing and using
17 other ways to make sure people are safe but where do
18 we think we are now when it comes to prepandemic
19 versus postpandemic or in midpandemic.

20 ANNE DEL CASTILLO: So, we were approaching
21 prepandemic levels with television. Film has not
22 come back and I think some of that has to do with the
23 incentive. There's also a bit of a market correction
24 right now in streaming, so we're seeing fewer
25

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1 projects being greenlit and coming here and so, those
2 are all challenges that we need to overcome.
3

4 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: Alright, my real last
5 question. What's the most exciting production
6 happening in New York City right now?

7 ANNE DEL CASTILLO: Oh, that would be you.

8 KWAME AMOAKU: The Joker.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: Thanks, I'll hand it back
10 to the Chairs.

11 CHAIRPERSON OSSÈ: Great, now that there are no
12 more questions from our colleagues, I'll pass it on
13 to Committee Counsel for public testimony.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you so much. This
15 concludes the Administration portion of this hearing.
16 Thank you.

17 ANNE DEL CASTILLO: Thank you.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Alright, so next we will be
19 moving to public testimony. We will start with three
20 in person panels. I'm going to read the names of
21 everyone on those panels. If you are here to testify
22 and have not submitted a witness slip, please do so
23 to the Sergeant at Arms who can be found at the front
24 of the room. Again, as the Chair mentioned, we will
25 be using a two-minute clock for testimony today.

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2 The first panel, again, I'll read all three. The
3 first panel will be Arlen Valdivia and apologies in
4 advance for any mispronunciations, Charles Taylor,
5 John Williams and Charles Reynoso. If those
6 individuals want to come to the table, we'll be
7 moving to you next. Again, it's Arlen Valdivia,
8 Charles Taylor, John Williams and Charles Reynoso.

9 The next panel will be Doug Steiner, Lorcan
10 Otway, Tyrel Hunt and Houda Lazrak. And then the
11 panel after that will be Donald P. Cato, Ryan
12 Ferguson and Peter Kapsalis. If you did not hear
13 your name and are here to testify, again, please
14 submit a witness slip at the front with the Sergeant.

15 We'll let people move to the table. We're just
16 transitioning now and then we will begin with public
17 testimony in one moment. Okay, and we'll just follow
18 the same order on the list. So, Arlen Valdivia,
19 excuse me, thank you Valdivia, Charles Taylor, John
20 Williams and Charles Reynoso. So, the clock is on
21 the wall and just make sure that the red light is
22 showing on the microphone when you're ready.

23 So, we'll start with Ms. Valdivia and you may
24 begin your testimony when ready.

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2 ARLEN VALDIVIA: Chairpersons Farias, Ossè and
3 Gutiérrez, and all Committee Members, my name is
4 Arlen Valdivia and I'm the Senior Director for the
5 Motion Picture Association. The MPA is a trade
6 association for the leading producers, distributors
7 of movies, television and streaming series. MPA
8 member companies are Walt Disney Studios, Netflix,
9 Paramount Pictures Corporation, Sony Pictures
10 Entertainment, NBC Universal and Warner Brothers
11 Entertainment. New York City is one of the
12 epicenters of film, television and streaming. The
13 film and television industry has and continues to
14 play a vital role in the city's development both
15 culturally and economically. According to a 2021
16 economic report commissioned by MOME, between 2001
17 and 2019, employment in the motion picture and video
18 production sector grew at an annual rate of three
19 percent. Outpacing the city average growth rate at
20 two percent over the same period.

21 This growth is attributable to factors such as
22 the New York City skilled production workforce and
23 the New York State Film Production Tax Credit. In
24 2021, the industry supported more than 100,000 jobs
25 across New York State and over 85,000 jobs in all

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2 five boroughs of New York City. By and large, these
3 are good paying union jobs. Our member companies
4 support New York with organizations such as Reel
5 Works, Ghetto Film School, who train and mentor young
6 adults and equip them with the tools and skills
7 necessary to start career in the creative industry.
8 MPA and its member companies support programs like
9 these to ensure that there is a pathway for New
10 York's diverse youth to enter the film industry. The
11 industry also creates \$8.2 billion in economic output
12 in transactions with suppliers and vendors.

13 For example, in Council Member Restler's
14 district, more than 2,000 local vendors are supported
15 with production spending over \$172 million. When
16 filming on location, productions are resourceful and
17 look to utilize community organizations and places of
18 worship for catering and base camps. Thus far, the
19 ongoing filming of Season 3 of the Equalizer has
20 contributed over half a million dollars to New York
21 City's institutions, including more than \$200,000 in
22 churches throughout the five boroughs and nearly
23 \$50,000 to community organizations and neighborhood
24 associations.

25

1
2 At any given time, oh, I will just continue, I'm
3 almost done. There are more than 80 productions
4 actively filming and understand the frustration that
5 this may cause especially in highly film locations
6 and we look forward to working with MOME to find a
7 creative solution for these.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony
9 and just a reminder that all written testimony is
10 meticulously reviewed. You can submit or amend your
11 testimony up to 72 hours after the hearing. Please
12 submit it to testimony@council.nyc.gov.

13 The next witness will be Charles Taylor, you may
14 begin when ready.

15 CHARLES TAYLOR: Thank you. Good afternoon
16 everyone and thank you for coming out and allowing
17 the space for me to speak. My name is Charles
18 Taylor. I am a Theatrical Teamster Local 817 union
19 member.

20 I am father of two and a New York City resident.
21 I am motivated to testify today and speak briefly
22 about the exodus of productions and the increasing
23 difficulty of shooting on location in New York City.
24 Productions leaving means a crucial hit for many
25 local businesses that they film in. Thousands of

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1 families and communities are being left without a
2 magic that now, to this day, even me as an adult,
3 still enjoy the movie magic. I was born and raised
4 in Crown Heights, Brooklyn for my whole life, except
5 for the two years I moved to Bed Stuy.
6

7 Currently, I reside back in Crown Heights. Park
8 Place and Nostrand to be exact. I attended PS 138
9 middle school which now share its halls with Prospect
10 Heights Success Academy where my son is currently
11 enrolled in second grade. And I want to give much
12 respect to Chi Ossé, the Council Member for the New
13 York City's 36th District, representing Bedford-
14 Stuyvesant and North Crown Heights who has assisted
15 in promoting local economic development and
16 strengthening our schools.

17 He has also improved neighborhood sanitation and
18 is reimaging public safety which makes filming on
19 location and stages in New York City a lot better.
20 Who would have guessed it? A program from the
21 Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment called Made
22 in New York would change my life forever for the
23 better. This program which trains New Yorkers how to
24 become production assistants, highlights the verbiage
25 or lingo as we say, as well as the duties and

1
2 different departments that makes up film production.
3 From pre-pro to post-production. Please check it out
4 and support if you can.

5 It has been the pivot in which my life was turned
6 around on. Bridging the gap of Made on New York and
7 becoming a part of the film industry in New York City
8 has altered my way of life. The way I live, think,
9 and the way I see the world as well as raise my
10 family. It has given me a great discipline and we
11 know discipline equals freedom. Just to let you
12 know, I felt it urgent to come and testify and by
13 creating more interactive film and entertainment
14 programs, that the community has partaken, so they
15 can see and understand what happens to production.
16 There's nothing better than being able to experience
17 and relate to somethings that's embedded in
18 everyone's life. Let's encourage more film festivals
19 and partner with local high schools, colleges and
20 universities to develop film related curriculum.
21 Expanding the film industry and New York City
22 requires an approach that involves government
23 incentives. Industry partnerships and community
24 involvement.

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2 And lastly, I just want to thank the Chairs of
3 the Committee, all of the Council Members, the
4 Mayor's Office, Made in New York, the program which I
5 graduated from, the Local 817 Teamsters Executive
6 Board and all of you who showed up here today. Thank
7 you for hearing my testimony.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you so much. The next
9 witness will be John Williams. You may begin your
10 testimony when ready.

11 JOHN WILLIAMS: And to save time, Mr. Reynoso and
12 I will do our testimony together. Thank you Chairs
13 Ossè, Farias, and Gutiérrez for the opportunity to
14 testify about how Reel Works is partnering with
15 industry to train New Yorkers from all communities in
16 careers and film and television. My name is John
17 Williams, I am the Cofounder and CEO of Reel Works, a
18 Brooklyn based nonprofit that has mentored and
19 trained thousands of New Yorkers through free film
20 making and workforce development programs for over 20
21 years.

22 CHARLES REYNOSO: Hello, I'm Charles Reynoso. I
23 am the Director of Education at Reel Works. I want
24 to thank you all for the opportunity and I want to
25 thank Chair Farias and Ossè for wording Reel Works

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1 Casa Grants this year, so that we can bring our
2 award-winning film making programs to your districts,
3 one of which is in the Bronx, boogie down.
4

5 Through these programs, Reel Works teaches young
6 New Yorkers to tell their stories through film making
7 and for some, it sparks the passion and leads to
8 careers in film and television.

9 In 2019, Reel Works partnered with the Mayor's
10 Office of Media and Entertainment, CUNY and leading
11 media companies to launch Media Makers. A career
12 development program that has engaged, trained and
13 mentored nearly 500 New Yorkers for careers and film
14 and television. Nearly 400 high school and CUNY
15 students have received multiple paid media
16 internships of companies such as NBC Universal,
17 Warner Brothers Discovery and Paramount. 87 percent
18 of our alumni have found full time jobs in media
19 companies.

20 JOHN WILLIAMS: Also, in 2019, Reel Works
21 partnered with Netflix and IOTZY local 52 to create
22 the studio mechanics boot camp and 80-hour hands on
23 union led training designed to prepare trainees to
24 work on lighting crews. Eight young men and women
25 graduated from that first training, permitted work on

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1 sets like the Golden Age and Law and Order SVU.

2 Since then, we have trained over 60 New Yorkers for
3 union careers. Remarkably 97 percent of our trainees
4 have found steady work in their crafts earning union
5 wages and benefits.
6

7 Over the next two years, Reel Works will partner
8 with seven union locals to train nearly 200 New
9 Yorkers in 14 crafts, including grip, electric, set
10 dressing, hair, makeup, scenic, camera, casting and
11 accounting. Expansion of the New York's film
12 industry requires a trained workforce. Reel Works is
13 building a bridge between New York communities, all
14 communities in the film industry that could help
15 diversify and strengthen that workforce.

16 CHARLES REYNOSO: So, the city can support the
17 expansion of the film industry in several ways.
18 Including funding programs like media makers to
19 extend career exploration and career training
20 opportunities for all communities. Designating film
21 as a priority industry in the city's workforce
22 development programs including Summer Youth
23 Employment and Work, Learn and Grow, and supporting
24 Reel Works education and job training programs with
25 initiative funding to cover intern wages and support

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1 services. We'd like to thank you all for the
2 opportunity to testify.

3
4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you so much. That
5 concludes this panel and we'll now move to the next
6 panel. As a reminder, we also have written
7 testimony. I'm so sorry, One moment, we do have one
8 question.

9 CHAIRPERSON FARIAS: I'm sorry. Physc, sit back
10 down. Uhm, so I'll work my way backwards. Love Reel
11 Works, thank you for that. Shout out. I really
12 appreciate that work that you're doing in my
13 district. For you two folks, how have you seen the
14 workforce connections happening by the city and maybe
15 local productions to the students that you are
16 working with in schools?

17 CHARLES REYNOSO: Well, Reel Works has uh, we
18 train middle schoolers, elementary schoolers, high
19 schoolers through free app school film making
20 programs. That's what we've been doing for 20 years.
21 We began to support workforce programs that we saw
22 our young people grow up and need access to the
23 industry. We saw very talented young people; very
24 inspired young people lose their way after high
25 school. So, about ten years ago, we really began to

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build and scaffold workforce programs. First, we did internships, partnering with our foundation partners and industry partners to create paid internships. The Mayor's Office came through to create media makers, connecting us to CUNY, which means 200 New Yorkers, high schoolers and college students getting their first jobs and multiple jobs over time. That's why that program is so successful in graduating people to the industry.

The second group is the work we've done with the unions and with the employers develop sort of these programs to train New Yorkers and these are mostly older people, young adults or older adults like a salon worker who never worked in the TV industry, trained by Local 798 becoming, going on Broadway to swing and start learning hairstyling who is now in the film union. So, there's more than one pathway into this industry. People always talk about interns and production assistance. The truth is that with partnership with the unions who are coming forward as truly enthusiastic, inspiring partners. We can upscale New Yorkers with skills like carpentry, like hair, like makeup, like accounting into this industry that many of them never imagine working in but have

1 the skills to participate in and earn these high
2 wages.
3

4 CHAIRPERSON FARIAS: Great, thank you and just, I
5 just have a question for each of our panelists,
6 sorry. Charles, I'm really excited to see you here.
7 I appreciate that you went through an apprenticeship.
8 That's your apprenticeship model. Do you think the
9 expansion of these models in our city is critical to
10 making sure that we have the workforce and the
11 pipeline needed?

12 CHARLES TAYLOR: Yes, I do. I think it's very
13 critical being a representative from the media
14 program, which also has a post-production program.
15 Uhm, I think more funding allows for you know, people
16 like myself who never thought about entering in the
17 industry, never knew what it was. They give me a
18 full background on set etiquette, theory of it, what
19 it takes to make it, and actually internship before
20 you graduate. They take you to local prop houses.
21 They take you to rental houses. You actually get to
22 work before you graduate. That's one of the
23 requirements. And just making you feel confident in
24 jumping into a new industry and it actually being
25 able to change your life and give you more than just

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1 the financial discipline, just a family, one that you
2 never knew in. It really pushes you forward and my
3 friends from my neighborhood see. I even helped a
4 couple get into the program and it changed the lives
5 of a lot of people.
6

7 CHAIRPERSON FARIAS: That's great and I'll
8 forgive you for only complicating Council Member Ossè
9 earlier.

10 CHARLES TAYLOR: I apologize. I appreciate all
11 of you Brooklynites, Crown Heights. I definitely
12 will.

13 CHAIRPERSON FARIAS: And just my last question
14 for MPA, I just want to touch base on what you think
15 the Council could do to advocate for the continuation
16 and the enhancement of the state tax credit programs.

17 ARLEN VALDIVIA: Yeah, I mean I think they
18 continue to be supportive and be helpful and I think
19 honestly working with MOME to make sure they have the
20 resources they need, whether it's staffing or
21 technology to ensure that we can correct some of
22 these you know frustrations that the industry has
23 with different neighborhoods. So, I do think
24 providing them with resources is a way to help them
25

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1
2 acclimate to the growing, hopefully growing industry
3 here.

4 CHAIRPERSON FARIAS: Great and then just two last
5 things. Can you touch on how many jobs the industry
6 contributed to New York City pre-COVID and then
7 potentially during COVID and do you happen to have a
8 breakdown of jobs, of those jobs in 2021 per borough?

9 ARLEN VALIVIA: Pre-COVID, our numbers were
10 185,000 jobs. Post-Covid it's 108. As Commissioner
11 Del Castillo said, you know there's been a little bit
12 of a dip. By boroughs, I do have that information.
13 It's 5,944 jobs in the Bronx, 30,143 jobs in
14 Brooklyn, 32,138 jobs in Manhattan, 15,759 jobs in
15 Queens and 1802 jobs in Staten Island.

16 CHAIRPERSON FARIAS: Great and I might steal you
17 on the side to look through those again.

18 ARLEN VALIVIA: Yes.

19 CHAIRPERSON FARIAS: Okay, great thank you.
20 Thank you for entertaining my questions folks.

21 PANEL: Thank you.

22 COMMITTEE COUSEL: Okay and that concludes this
23 panel. Thank you very much. Apologies again. The
24 next panel will be Doug Steiner, Lorcan Otway, Tyrel
25 Hunt, and Houda Lazrak. Okay, one moment. Okay and

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1 we'll now begin with Mr. Doug Steiner. You may begin
2 your testimony when ready. As a reminder, there is a
3 two minute clock but the Committees will review
4 written testimony, so whatever you don't include
5 today is also included in the record as testimony.
6 Thank you very much and you may begin when ready.
7 Just make sure you see the red light. Just push the
8 button.
9

10 DOUG STEINER: Okay, how's that? I just want to
11 say a few things about the industry that I think will
12 clear up some misconceptions. This is manufacturing.
13 This is a manufacturing industry. It makes a product
14 and it is manufacturing as the business that wants to
15 be in New York and that can thrive in New York,
16 unlike most manufacturing where New York cannot be
17 competitive. There are three throttles of business
18 here. It is driven by the tax credit at the state
19 level, so our local representatives at the city level
20 have to really be fully in support of the credit
21 renewal proposed by the governor.

22 The workforce when the business was running at
23 full tilt about two years ago, three years ago, the
24 unions were at full employment. So, workforce
25 availability, crew availability is critical and

1 having the business here is driving up employment
2 opportunities for everyone.

3
4 Third is making the business easy to work in New
5 York location shooting permits and the like. Keep in
6 mind on the location shooting permit, if a character
7 lives at a certain house on a certain block, and
8 that's a 12 episode series, there are going to be a
9 days shooting on that block for that house. And also
10 keep in mind that series are written as they go.
11 They're not written in advance and then they know
12 what they're going to do for the next six months or
13 nine months. Their writing episode, eight while
14 they're shooting episode three.

15 So, the predictability of normal industries
16 doesn't apply here. And even shooting schedules are
17 determined the night before or two nights before and
18 not much before that and are also weather dependent
19 and depend on a whole host of variables.

20 The sound stages that you talk about, we don't
21 create any content here. Kaufman doesn't create
22 content, Steiner Studios doesn't create content,
23 Silver Cup doesn't create content. You know either
24 studio executives, they budget three cities in the
25 world. They decide where it's going to go and

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1 they're going to go where it's cheapest. It's show
2 business, it's not show art. New York has to be
3 competitive to compete. Alright, I have a lot more I
4 could say but thank you. Just don't take the
5 industry for granted because it is nomadic and it
6 will move wherever it is cheapest and we are down
7 from 85 series to 25 series because of the
8 uncertainty with the credit. So, jobs, jobs, jobs.

9
10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: And please also submit
11 written testimony, which will supplement the oral
12 testimony as well.

13 DOUG STEINER: Will do, thank you.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you so much. The next
15 witness will be Lorcan Otway and you may begin when
16 ready.

17 LORCAN OTWAY: Thank you. As to diversity, I
18 would like to start by saying [INAUDIBLE 2:25:44-
19 2:25:48]. I'm the as far as I know, only theatre
20 owner in New York who is commonly called Gypsy and
21 come this April, there will none of us. I built
22 Theater 80 with my father in 1964. You're a Good Man
23 Charlie Brown through our present role as the home of
24 the negro ensemble company, we've maintained a place
25 in New York's theatre history. We've launched the

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1 careers of actors such as Bob Balaban, Gary Burghoff
2 and one of our ushers Billy Crystal. Feature films
3 such as last night with Late Night with Emma Thompson
4 and the TV mini series such as Seduce and numerous
5 other TV shows such as the travel channel and history
6 channel shows have been filmed in our venue.
7

8 Every year we've provided employment for actors,
9 technicians and other theatre professionals as well
10 as contributed to the support of restaurants, hotels,
11 hardware stores and all the businesses that rely on
12 tourism and the theatres place in that industry.

13 New York State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli's
14 report this year describes a total loss of 55 percent
15 of the employment in theatre in New York in the last
16 year. The loss of every theatre causes losses of
17 city and state, countless economic opportunities are
18 lost. Early in 2019, the deaths of two family
19 members of this family business necessitated
20 mortgage. Three months later, state action shut down
21 our theatre, our historic tavern and our world-famous
22 museum. The state provided us no protections from
23 the effective of that shutdown and no protection
24 against the predator company purchasing our debt and
25 causing the debt to double to over \$13 million from a

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2 \$6 million loan. The bankruptcy court has refused to
3 consider the role of state action and the impending
4 loss of our theatre. The jobs well, long story
5 short, we are starting a non for profit and without
6 aggressive help from the city, who did not suspend
7 property taxes. So, every time we got from the
8 federal government during the shutdown went to
9 property taxes.

10 And the loss of every theatre is a loss in the
11 entire city. Thank you.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.
13 The next witness will be Tyrel Hunt.

14 TYREL HUNT: First, I'd like to thank Chair Ossè,
15 Chair Farias, and Chair Gutiérrez and members of the
16 City Council for the opportunity to testify. My name
17 is Tyrel Hunt. I work as the Director of Marketing
18 at Jamaica Center for Arts and Learning, also known
19 as JCAL, in Queens New York. I am also a filmmaker,
20 working on my second feature film "The Sound of
21 Southside". Through both my job at JCAL and my
22 efforts as a filmmaker, I have witnessed the impact
23 that the medium of film can have on a community. I
24 ask that the city make a concerted effort toward
25 allocating funds to BIPOC filmmakers, and the

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2 organizations that serve our communities. I believe
3 that this investment would result in a more creative
4 and vibrant New York.

5 At JCAL, I help to produce the annual Ten-Minute
6 Film Festival, where emerging BIIPOC directors are
7 showcased and receive cash prizes. We run this event
8 on a shoestring budget. Still, our festival has
9 become a place for underrepresented filmmakers to
10 showcase their stories and find community. JCAL, and
11 many other organizations are doing the work, and we
12 could expand our reach and impact with the city's
13 help.

14 While there are programs like "Made in NY" which
15 provide incentives for big budget movies to film in
16 NYC, the city is in need of more incentives for
17 microbudget filmmakers, and more funding for the
18 festivals which showcase their work. I am one of
19 these filmmakers. Film has taught me to be
20 resourceful and collaborative. With my most recent
21 film, I raised over \$50,000 and happily paid it right
22 back to the many artists and small businesses that
23 were a part of the film. The community of Jamaica
24 Queens benefited directly from my films production.
25 My spend on everything from the costumes to the

1
2 catering and locations took place within the
3 neighborhood. I also forged relationships with
4 various local artists and businesses. When I premier
5 the film this spring in Queens, attendees will be
6 able to see themselves in their community represented
7 well.

8 Despite my films economic impact, I do not
9 qualify for opportunities like the Made in NY
10 marketing credit or the New York State Film Tax
11 Credit Program. These restraints discourage many
12 local NYC artists from creating or prompt them to
13 make their films elsewhere. My film's story will
14 focus on the resiliency of art in NYC and there are
15 many other artists with stories to tell.

16 I welcome a conversation to discuss ways that the
17 City Council could allocate more funding and
18 resources to BIPOC filmmakers and I'm looking forward
19 to connecting on the issue.

20 CHAIRPERSON OSSÈ: Why don't you qualify for the
21 Made in New York Tax Credit?

22 TYREL HUNT: To my knowledge, there is a million
23 dollar, your budget has to be at least \$1 million to
24 qualify for the tax credit and at least \$400,000 to
25 qualify for the marketing credit.

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CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Thank you.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: We'll now move to the last witness on this panel Houda Lazrak. Again, apologies for any mispronunciations.

HOUDA LAZRAK: No, that was perfect. Thank you. Good afternoon members of the City Council and thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Houda Lazrak and I am here on behalf of the International Studio & Curatorial Program, ISCP, where I am Director of Development and Communications.

We are the fourth largest visual arts residency program in the world, embedded in North Brooklyn in District 34. City Council Gutiérrez, thank you for your continued support.

We are a small sized CDF organization located in a three-story former printing factory with 35 sunlight studios and two exhibition galleries. Each year, over 100 artists come for funded residencies, and among them, at least 25 percent are artist filmmakers, or artists working with the mediums of film or video. We provide them with the time, space, and professional support to develop their craft and create new film works. We also present public

1
2 programming focused on film including indoor and
3 outdoor screenings and talks by artist filmmakers.

4 In 2022, we embarked on a five-year capital
5 campaign to improve our facilities. Among the
6 priorities of the campaign is the creation of a
7 digital editing suite to support the needs of artist
8 filmmakers. We seek to install state of the art
9 production and post production hardware and software
10 available to our residents 24/7 for free. We want to
11 offer them the means to succeed in their filmmaking
12 careers and know that a digital editing suite will
13 significantly increase this possibility. The need
14 for a suite was identified based on the direct
15 feedback from our residents, particularly with the
16 vocal advice of Maliyamungu Muhande Gift.

17 Gift is a young Brooklyn-based, Sundance-
18 acclaimed filmmaker from Congo, whose work explores
19 the global history of the Black diaspora and anti-
20 colonial change. During her six-month residency at
21 ISCP, she directed the film Kobikisa, which was then
22 presented in a solo show in our gallery. The film
23 shows Gift receiving acupuncture and massage
24 treatments at the Life Wellness Center in Bed Stuy,
25 Brooklyn. Through it, she aims to normalize and

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1
2 celebrate images of Black trust, tenderness, and
3 healing.

4 Thanks to the ISCP's exhibition Kobikisa was then
5 picked up by Aubin Pictures, a production company and
6 media distributor focused on films that catalyze
7 social change. So, yeah, the bottom line is that
8 we're having a creative capital campaign and we're
9 seeking support to be able to further support more
10 BIPOC artists like Maliyamungu Muhande Gift, who has
11 been very successful so far. Thank you.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you so much for your
13 testimony. This concludes this panel and we'll now
14 move to the next panel. Again, the Committee will be
15 reviewing written testimony. That can be submitted
16 to testimony@council.nyc.gov up to 72-hours after the
17 hearing. We'll now move to the next in person panel,
18 which is Donald P. Cato, Ryan Ferguson and Peter
19 Kapsalis. If there is anyone else in the room who
20 would like to testify and you have not submitted a
21 witness slip, please do so at this time. If you can
22 please let us know that you're here, we'll be moving
23 to a Zoom panel after this.

24 Okay, so again, we have a two-minute clock, which
25 is on the wall and we will review written testimony.

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2 So, we're following the clock but anything that you
3 don't include will be part of the record. So, we'll
4 start with Donald P. Cato and you may begin your
5 testimony when ready.

6 DONALD P. CATO: Thank you to the Council for
7 having me here today representing. I am Donald
8 Preston Cato, I'm the Co-Founder of the Queens World
9 Film Festival. I'm also the artistic director. My
10 wife is the Executive Director and Cofounder. We're
11 a 501c3. We did read the 2021 Impact Study of the
12 New York City Film Industry focuses largely on
13 production. And that's fair, that's a big chunk of
14 the revenue but it is time to look at what can be
15 done to expand the support for film festivals,
16 especially the smaller festivals around all boroughs.

17 So, in our particular festival, this year we
18 welcomed over 4,000 people to the borough to watch
19 157 films from 27 nations and most of the audience
20 came from outside the borough. We built up a big
21 reputation. We're one of the top film festivals in
22 the world out of over 10,000 festivals. We are
23 ranked in the top 20 for developing new film makers.
24 We also employ a great number of young talent, which
25 is what we pride ourselves in and we work with young

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1 talent in developing them with educational programs
2 that have served over 1,218 students producing over
3 91 short films of every type that you can possibly
4 imagine and some you can't.

5
6 We've provided positions for 262 interns from
7 Reel Works Media Makrs, Ladders for Leaders and
8 others with professional training to prepare them for
9 entrance into the industry, not just in making the
10 film but in what it takes to put on a festival or
11 make a film which is in back office. And so, we've
12 seen however, we have no home like a lot of
13 independent film festivals. We've done this for 13
14 years out of our living room and like other smaller
15 festivals, we would like to find space, which is
16 rare. Just to let you know a couple of our ongoing
17 festivals exhibits or things that we're doing. We
18 have a listening tour which was going around to
19 Queens in the Bronx looking for unheard voices and
20 the interns have to shoot and then put them up in
21 that project with the Queens memory project in the
22 library. And on the 23rd of April, we're doing
23 passionate action, which is young filmmakers, mostly
24 female are to come and have a round robin and meet
25 other professional women from other areas. Not just

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1 filmmaking but from Queens professional roller derby
2 hockey and other sports so that they can meet and mee
3 their dreams and lastly, I wanted to say that go to
4 our website and you'll see one of the most amazing
5 testimonies from a young person who said, part of it
6 was you can't have hope without resilience and that's
7 what the independent film festivals like ours does.
8 We are resilient.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you so much for your
11 testimony. The next person will be Ryan Ferguson.
12 You may begin when ready.

13 RYAN FERGUSON: Good morning or afternoon. My
14 name is Ryan Ferguson. I am a Location Manager in
15 New York. I am a member of the Directors Guild of
16 America. I am also on the Mayor's Industry Council.
17 I also volunteer my time at Brooklyn College to talk
18 to film students every semester. I have lived in New
19 York City my entire life and I have made movies in
20 this city for the last 20 years or more. I have a
21 written statement and I hope you all get to read the
22 whole thing. I'm just going to skip to the important
23 thing about the outreach. This is from all the other
24 various unions in the film community who came
25 together to talk about what we do.

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2 Local 52 Motion Studio Mechanics works with the
3 Bronx Community College to develop talent pipelines
4 where students can learn the required skills for
5 entry level of the film training, into the film and
6 television industry.

7 Scenic artists Local 829 has a program reemerging
8 artists New York based scenic artists for
9 apprenticeship program has the most diverse group in
10 New York workers program, the International Cinema
11 Photographers Guild. I elect to see Local 600 in
12 addition to participating in New York outreach events
13 at inviting students to its screenings has a partner
14 with Warner Brothers and Sony to place interns on
15 productions. Local 600 also provides financing to
16 support BWI administrators of the Made In New York
17 Production Assistance Training Program.

18 The Motion Picture Editors Guild, Local 700 has
19 invited Bronx community college students, the Editors
20 Guild Seminar, screenings, networking events for the
21 past five years, formalizing the relationship between
22 22 by providing funding and member instruction. The
23 Writers Guild of America East has run two full cycles
24 of the Made in New York Writers Room Fellowship, in
25

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2 which is an intensive mentoring program for diverse
3 writers funded by the city through MOME and HBS.

4 I could go on to a lot of other things. I hope
5 you guys read the statement but what I would like to
6 say is, I'm a Working Location Manager in New York
7 and would love to answer your questions about what
8 happens on the streets and the whole permitting
9 process because I'm the guy that does that.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Alright, we'll go to the next
11 panelist and then have questions. The next panelist
12 is Peter Kapsalis. You may begin your testimony when
13 ready.

14 PETER KAPSALIS: Hi, how are you? I appreciate
15 that and mostly not adversarial and supporting our
16 industry. Everyone came here to say something. It
17 seems to have our back, so I'm one of the little guys
18 that grew into big studios. I went to Edward R.
19 Murrow High School through a vocational program that
20 had television cameras, editing and everything you
21 could learn and the person that left that department
22 went to Pratt and moved the whole students there.
23 So, I want to first push that you have to nourish
24 young people to get into our business. They don't
25 know that the cameras they're holding, their iPhones

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their holding, they're becoming little filmmakers.
That has to be nourished at a school, high school
level.

When we're talking about \$120,000 jobs, we're not
talking about college grads all the time, we're
talking about probably 50 to 60 percent of people
that didn't go to college. I went to college because
I was fortunate that we got pulled into a program to
do that sort of thing. So, from college, I got a
\$140 job a week working at a camera rental house.
From the camera rental house, we learned how to
develop equipment. This was all in New York. All in
the Brooklyn and Queens area. We learned how to
develop equipment. That equipment that we developed
was used on Lord of the Rings. It was something
called a Revolution lens system. If you look it up,
it's still popular today. That got us close to
clientele that used you know high end equipment.

They were shooting at studios when the business
transitioned from film to digital, and about 12 years
ago, 13 years ago, we decided to ask our clientele if
they were chewed out of studio. That we opened. We
opened a small advertising studio at Elizabeth Street
in Manhattan. Within two years, we added 145,000

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1 square feet of studios on the Williamsburg
2 Waterfront. By 2011, we added another 125,000 square
3 feet. We just expanded into Long Island City. We
4 added 67,000 square feet. We have plans to develop
5 300,000 square feet in the immediate area.
6

7 Anyone who says that the industry doesn't support
8 local businesses, when you eat are you going to order
9 from the Bronx if you're eating in Brooklyn. You're
10 going to order locally. If the trucks aren't on the
11 job, you know, usually they're on the job when the
12 production is shooting. You know, the rest of the
13 time it's all local. So, you know, let's keep this
14 going. We want the tax credit to continue. It's sad
15 that I'm hearing that you know an eighty-fold of
16 productions has turned into 25 because of an expiring
17 credit. This we saw before. This we're seeing with
18 development for 21A where developers now are stalling
19 projects. This can't happen. The industry has to
20 know in advance that we can produce something with
21 some planning ahead. They're not going to plan a job
22 when they think that production credit is going to go
23 away.

24 So, I'm thankful. I'm sorry I took a little
25 longer. I was last but I've succeeded in this

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2 businesses and you know it's obvious what it does to
3 the neighborhood around you. We're in an IBZ in Long
4 Island City and we do well. Thank you. Thank you
5 for your help.

6 CHAIRPERSON FARIAS: Yeah, thank you. I
7 appreciate you saying that. I do understand. I
8 think many of us understand that when we -- when folks
9 are planning for a series, it's not -- we're not
10 hoping the series doesn't get picked up after a
11 series, you know after one timeframe. We want to
12 plan for three, five years of a series that we're
13 putting forward or at least a production studio is
14 investing in.

15 So, I totally understand that. And in terms of
16 the locality, I think more times than not, what we
17 need to focus on is, how do we actually make that
18 more transparent versus us having to utilize a 311-
19 complaint system or a you know by case by case
20 scenario where people are calling and complaining.
21 How do we make it more fluid and more transparent
22 that the locality is definitely benefiting from
23 productions and what that actually is translating to?
24 So, I appreciate you saying that.

25 PETER KAPSALIS: Thank you.

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2 CHAIRPERSON FARIAS: Yes, and I just have a
3 question for Mr. Cato. I just wanted to ask around
4 what you meant by you'd like to have a home and
5 ideally, what does that mean I guess economically for
6 a space for film festivals, rather that's in the city
7 or in the borough that they're predominantly working
8 and like what does that actually mean? And I guess
9 why is there an inability to have a designated space?

10 DONALD P. CATO: Thank you for the question.
11 Well, after 12 years of operating out of our living
12 room, and really surviving on money from two
13 particular City Council Members who have termed out
14 and then in that change, it caused a great shortfall
15 in terms of what our, part of our budget was but
16 nonetheless, we've been trying to find a space that
17 would be for our home. So, we had an office and put
18 half the teaching area because the one thing we do is
19 we try to do things year around. So, we're not at
20 just a one-time event. Something is going on with
21 our festival. Our festival spots are throughout the
22 year using interns, young people of all types.
23 Inclusion classes, we're working with a
24 neurologically challenged group at Common Pointe and
25 it would be great if we had a place where we could

1
2 have classrooms ourselves in a place that was close
3 to transportation and it's just very difficult to
4 look for it, especially when we're such a small 501c3
5 and that's what I mean by finding a home.

6 We know that there's other companies in the
7 borough of Queens, dance companies and others that
8 have got spaces and we are pursuing with the time
9 that we have to see what is available. What would be
10 a big help, we would also like to have a space where
11 we can screen works in progress by filmmakers, so we
12 can have group critiques and conversations and that's
13 just not possible with the screening facilities that
14 are available. It's a lot of money to go to anything
15 that has projection that's of quality.

16 I mean we're very fortunate Astoria Studios does
17 let us go into their small screening room, 75 seats
18 and we'll take it when we can get it but it would be
19 nice to have a place where we could call this is
20 where Queens World Film Festival resides.

21 CHAIRPERSON FARIAS: Got it. Thank you for
22 sharing that.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you so much. That
24 concludes this panel. So, at this point, we will now
25 move to remote Zoom testimony. Again, we will review

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2 all written testimony later, so I will read the names
3 of the next panelist. It will be Abdula Allen,
4 Austin Smith, David Brendel and Tom Harris.

5 This next panel will be our last panel and we
6 will check for anyone we inadvertently missed after
7 the panels. Just wait one moment and then we will
8 move to the next witness.

9 Okay, so again our next witness will be Abdula
10 Allen. Again, we have a two-minute clock, so when
11 the Sergeant calls the clock you begin testimony and
12 anything not within that two minutes it's still part
13 of the record if it's in written testimony.

14 So, Ms. Allen if you are ready to begin, you may
15 start when the Sergeant calls the clock.

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

17 ABDULA ALLEN: My name is Abdula Allen and I'm
18 here before you to tell you about myself and my
19 experience working in the film industry and film
20 industry as a truck driver theatrical [INAUDIBLE
21 2:47:32].

22 I'm here today just to tell you about the person
23 who I was then to the person I am today. I was born
24 in the Bronx, raised by a mother who was a single
25 parent of four children. My mother was an EKG

1 technician for 30 years. Worked hard to provide us
2 with some important things in life that we needed. A
3 mother who taught us principles and values. However,
4 growing up in the Bronx was not easy. As I allow
5 myself to become a victim of my environment at an
6 early age.
7

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: I'm sorry, we can't hear you.
9 We can see you. Oh, now we can hear you again.
10 Thank you Mr. Allen. Sorry, we can see you speaking
11 but we can't hear you again, just the last sentence.

12 ABDULA ALLEN: Uh, can you hear me?

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: We can hear you now, yes.

14 ABDULA ALLEN: I'm sorry. In April of 1999, I
15 was arrested and charged with criminal possession of
16 a fire arm and drug possession, which led to my
17 conviction of 210 months in federal custody and three
18 years consecutive in the state. Although it's not
19 easy to tell someone that I was incarcerated for many
20 reasons. It doesn't define the person that I am
21 today. While I was incarcerated, I had begun setting
22 goals for my future and one of those goals was to
23 become a truck driver.

24 On November 16, 2016, I was released from prison
25 after serving 17 ½ years in prison. I worked

1 multiple jobs to stay afloat but the focus of
2 achieving my goal was as a truck driver. I've been
3 working in the truck industry for approximately four
4 years. I work for multiple companies looking for
5 that one that treated me the best.

6
7 Not every company is for everyone and a driver
8 must be passionate about working for that company.
9 Unfortunately, I worked with some companies where I
10 couldn't find that passion and love.

11 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time is expired.

12 ABDULA ALLEN: Oh sorry, hello?

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The Chair said you can go.
14 You can finish if you can wrap up please.

15 ABDULA ALLEN: Alright. Uhm, the film industry
16 has changed my ways. I was introduced to the film
17 industry by Joe McDermont. He was running the
18 program, a trucking program for Custodian of Workers
19 Education. He referred me to Bryan Solomon. He gave
20 me the rundown and history of the trucking company.
21 The film industry has changed my ways in ways that I
22 could not have imagined. It exceeded expectations
23 and a better way for me and my family. And with
24 that, I would like to say thank you and thank you for
25 having me.

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2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you so much for your
3 testimony. And again, if there's anything that you
4 did not include in your oral testimony, the
5 Committees will review written testimony. Thank you.

6 The next witness will be Austin Smith. You may
7 begin your testimony when the Sergeant calls the
8 clock.

9 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

10 AUSTIN SMITH: Thank you. Thank you to Chair
11 Ossè, Chair Farias, and Chair Gutiérrez and other
12 members of the Committees for hosting today's
13 hearing. My name is Austin Smith and I represent a
14 museum of the Moving Image in Astoria. Today, I
15 wanted to address the film and education programs
16 that the museum provides to the diverse communities
17 in New York City and in Queens.

18 When the museum first opened to the public in
19 1988, we set out to build a bridge between movie
20 viewers and movie makers, both in front of and behind
21 the camera. Founded in part by the city, the film
22 labor unions and guilds and the New York based film
23 industry professionals, our museum is not just in
24 dedication to the actors and directors who rise to
25 fame. Thanks to film but to the camera operators,

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1
2 prop masters, special effect and sound artists from
3 working families, who come together to create movie
4 magic.

5 The museum not only serves as a hub for creators
6 from all over the world to introduce themselves to
7 New York City but also as a forum for New York City
8 creators to introduce themselves to the world.

9 Through the cords positioned behind the screen as
10 well as our ongoing special programming such as the
11 Queens World Film Festival, which we host in
12 partnership with Mr. Cato. The first festival in
13 Marvels of Media, which is a festival in exhibition
14 dedicated to the works of media makers in the autism
15 spectrum, we give filmmakers the platform and big
16 silver screen to highlight their incredible work.

17 The museums educational program opens the world
18 of possibilities to students and adults. Our work
19 highlights job opportunities in the film industries
20 and other creative industries that might not
21 otherwise have appeared as accessible. The museum
22 proudly welcomes over 70,000 students per year
23 through its doors and introduces a wide range world
24 of filmmaking to the next generation of New York film
25 creators. We're incredibly thankful for the support

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1 that City Council has provided to us in forms of CASA
2 SUCASA and At as a Catalyst for Change Grants.

3 Through these programs we were able to introduce
4 students across Queens to define process in media
5 making and give them the confidence to pursue their
6 passions. Our Teen Council Program invites local
7 teens from under resourced communities with the
8 opportunity to gain experience working in a local
9 cultural institution.
10

11 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time is expired.

12 AUSTIN SMITH: Okay. Alright, thank you for your
13 time.

14 CHAIRPERSON FARIAS: You can close if you have
15 one more sentence or so.

16 AUSTIN SMITH: No, I'm fine.

17 CHAIRPERSON FARIAS: Okay, I appreciate the CWE
18 shoutout, love me some CWE and do not come back here
19 with that Chuckie in the background. Thank you so
20 much.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next witness is David
22 Grindle. You may begin your testimony when ready.

23 DAVID GRINDLE: Good afternoon. My name is David
24 Grindle and I'm the Executive Director of the Society
25 of Motion Picture and Television Engineers. We're

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1 SMPTY for short. I'd like to thank all three
2 Committees and their Chairs for the opportunity to
3 appear before you today to discuss the impact of an
4 expansion of the film industry in New York City.
5 SMPTY has been part of the entertainment industry for
6 over a century. As a society of engineers, our
7 members have been directly responsible for some of
8 the most innovative technological advancements in
9 film and television. We continue to make strides in
10 this regard producing new technologies and standards
11 that shape how media is created and experienced.
12 Engineering and technology is a vital part of the
13 film and television industries.

14
15 Where the New York City film industry to continue
16 to expand, the city would quickly become not just an
17 artistic capital but a technological one as well.
18 The financial impact of such expansion would be felt
19 in every aspect of media production, creating jobs in
20 traditional fields as well as emerging industries.
21 In addition to live shots on the streets of New York,
22 several virtual production studios have already found
23 their way here. The blend of computer science,
24 gaming technology and production means things filmed
25 on these stages in New York City can take place

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2 anywhere in the world or your imagination.

3 Additional support means New York City could become a
4 leader in this frontier. An expansion of the film
5 industry will create well paying jobs for New
6 Yorkers. Institutions such as Borough of Manhattan
7 Community College and City Tech are already
8 developing programs to train their students for these
9 emerging industries. That means a more diverse
10 workforce is ready to meet the growth and expansion
11 of city support will bring. Though often overlooked,
12 the technical side of the industry generates more
13 employment than people typically appreciate.

14 SMTY has always forged a path for film engineers
15 and an expanded film industry in New York City will
16 result in innovation and employment.

17 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time has expired.

18 DAVID GRINDLE: Well into this century and the
19 next. Thank you.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you so much for your
21 testimony. We'll now move to the final witness.
22 This is the final person on this panel as well as the
23 final witness for this hearing and public testimony.
24 We will check for anyone that we inadvertently missed
25

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1 and who registered after this witness. So, Tom
2 Harris, you may begin your testimony when ready.

3 TOM HARRIS: Thank you very much. Good afternoon
4 Chairpersons Ossè, Farias, Gutiérrez and members of
5 the Committees of Cultural Affairs, Economic
6 Development and Technology. My name is Tom Harris.
7 I'm the President of the Time Square Alliance, a
8 business improvement district that's tasked with
9 keeping Time Square clean, safe and desirable for
10 all. The alliance wholeheartedly supports the film
11 industries expansion in New York City and the
12 important cultural and nightlife efforts championed
13 by Commissioner Anne Del Castillo.

14 Commissioner Del Castillo, Kwame, the entire MOME
15 team and all of the unions have been phenomenal
16 partners. New York City's film industry provides
17 tremendous economic benefit to our neighborhood both
18 directly and indirectly. First, Time Square is home
19 to hundreds of film shoots and tens of movie premiers
20 annually, providing local businesses with critical
21 revenue especially in post pandemic, tourism economy.

22 As the theatre hub of New York City the film
23 industry taps into the local Broadway workforce,
24 supporting actors, producers, stage hens and more.
25

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2 Further these shoots and premiers translate to direct
3 spending in our district. Second, the film industry
4 provides an important source of advertising for the
5 neighborhood and for the city.

6 Based on research conducted by the Time Square
7 Advertising Coalition and the Alliance, 90 percent of
8 our visitors have seen Time Square in the media in
9 the last six months. Most commonly through TV and
10 movies. Combine these direct and indirect benefits,
11 help to financially bolster our tourism-oriented
12 neighborhood and promote Time Square as New York's
13 premier cultural destination. Time Square continues
14 to be successful in a post pandemic world because of
15 its brand as the Cultural Crossroads of the World.
16 The film industry helps to support this communal
17 experience driving our local economy while ensuring
18 the neighborhood remains in the heard and minds of
19 tourists and New Yorkers alike. Thank you very much.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you so much for your
21 testimony. At this point, we'll check for anyone we
22 inadvertently missed. We might be having technical
23 difficulties with one witness if you can please just
24 bear with us. We're also checking for Shada Lithgot,
25 Cher Warfield and Nicholas Sherman. Just bear with

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1 us for one moment. And again, if there's anyone in
2 the room who would like to testify, please let us
3 know at this point. We also accept written testimony
4 up to 72 hours after the hearing. It's also possible
5 to amend testimony. It should be sent to
6 testimony@council.nyc.gov.

7
8 We're just checking for Carolyn Gersheson. One
9 moment please. We're just working on a Zoom issue
10 with somebody trying to log on. It will just be one
11 moment.

12 CHAIRPERSON FARIAS: Just some elevator music
13 while we wait.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, we'll move to our final
15 witness at this point. Carolyn Gersheson, you may
16 begin your testimony when the Sergeant calls the
17 clock.

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

19 CAROLYN GERSHESON: Hi. Good afternoon everyone.
20 Thank you for being so patient.

21 CHAIRPERSON FARIAS: You have the hearing on
22 another form of technology, either on your computer
23 open. You'll have to close that because you're on a
24 delay.

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2 CAROLYN GERSHESON: Thank you for being so
3 patient.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, it stopped. We were
5 hearing a loop of the audio. If you want to begin
6 again, we'll start the clock.

7 CAROLYN GERSHESON: How does this sound?

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: We can hear you. Thank you.

9 Okay, alright, thank you for your patience. Uhm,
10 and thank you to the Council for hearing the -

11 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Ma'am, if you're streaming the
12 hearing on another device, you're going to have to
13 close that device out so that when you talk it
14 doesn't double back.

15 CAROLYN GEERSHESON: Okay, how is this?

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: We can hear you.

17 Okay, I think I've got it straight. Thank you
18 for your patience. Uhm and thank you to the Council
19 for hearing this important information on film and
20 television in New York City. I'm Carolyn Gersheson.
21 I am probably part of the smallest division of film
22 in New York City. I am Local 52, part of the medical
23 division.

24 So, we are medics. We take care of illness or
25 injury on set as they occur, if they occur and we're

1 a group of approximately 110 with about 150 on permit
2 waiting for their cards. I've been a nurse since
3 1983. I'm a Native New Yorker, Native of Brooklyn
4 and I have been with Local 52 since 1996. I've
5 actually created the medic department at that time.
6

7 I'm very happy to be here. Thank you to MOMÉ for
8 inviting me here to speak. My concern is diversity.
9 Diversity within, certainly with my small group,
10 diversity is an issue and I'm sure the other
11 departments as well, which I can see apparent on set.
12 Things have gotten better certainly since '96 but
13 that you know has been my concern. And if you have
14 any questions for me that would be great but that's
15 kind of you know my statement that film is very
16 important to New York City but also the diversity
17 that it should bring to the work environment is
18 important as well.

19 CHAIRPERSON FARIAS: Thank you so much for your
20 testimony.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you so much. That
22 concludes this panel. And again, we will be
23 reviewing all written testimony, so if there are
24 additional points you would like to submit in written
25 testimony, that can be submitted up to 72 hours after

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2 the hearing. At this point, we have checked for
3 witnesses that were registered or present. So, this
4 concludes the public testimony portion of the
5 hearing. Chair Farias.

6 CHAIRPERSON FARIAS: I just want to say thank you
7 for everyone who came to publicly testify and thank
8 you for MOME for coming here to address all of our
9 questions. We look forward to reading through
10 additional testimony and following up on items that
11 are outstanding and thank you all again for
12 attending.

13 With that [GAVEL] this hearing is adjourned.
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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 March 12, 2023