



c/o County of Renfrew 9 International Drive, Pembroke ON, K8A 6W5

April 28, 2023

The Honourable Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario
Legislative Building, Room 281
Queen's Park
Toronto, ON, M7A 1A1
premier@ontario.ca
doug.fordco@pc.ola.org

Re: Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus Support for Launch of South Eastern Ontario Production Accelerator Fund (SEOPAF) via implementation of a new film stream fund within Eastern Ontario Development Fund (EODF)

Dear Premier Ford,

The [Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus](#) (EOWC), comprised of the Heads of Council of the 13 upper and single-tier municipalities across rural eastern Ontario, representing 103 municipalities and their residents, is in full support of the establishment of the South Eastern Ontario Production Accelerator Fund (SEOPAF) via implementation of a *new* film stream fund within the Eastern Ontario Development Fund (EODF).

The Ontario Government has seen its commitment to bolster the ongoing growth of this great revenue generating industry in Ontario (via tax credits and an incentive fund to the north (NOHFC) give great revenue returns to the province. With the over-subscription of facilities and crews in the north and in the GTHA, the SEOPAF proposal is a simple and effective framework to grow annual revenue totals from the film and TV industry and accelerate the growth of the industry into a new region – south eastern Ontario. The industry itself is interested in bringing more business to this region. But without an incentive fund presenting an alternative Ontario regional option – similar to the north – that industry will continue to take business out of Ontario to other jurisdictions with better incentives.

SEOPAF is an initiative that presents a clear plan to bolster regional economic growth. SEOPAF focusses regional growth where it is *most* needed (as per government studies



2009-2019). South eastern Ontario is a region that for over the last year has been fast tracking the preparedness needed at the municipal level to scale up for production based on proximity to the GTHA and a deep knowledge of what that industry needs to succeed.

SEOPAF is simple to implement. In creating a new film stream fund within an existing regional fund like the EODF, government builds on an existing success model. The proof of “success” is the positive regional impact of a screen-based fund in the north, where a stackable incentive was specially set up as a film stream fund within NOHFC nearly two decades ago. That northern film stream created a sustainable \$400 million+ year-over-year industry (2022 statistic) with an impressive return on investment (ROI) – over 7-to-1. We believe SEOPAF can match or exceed that return in south eastern Ontario within a few years.

Kingston’s film office (one of the most active in this region to date) has statistics on its recent ROI from its small local film investment that are impressive. Stakeholder interest in SEOPAF remains high – witness letters of support such as this, but others that have already been sent from across the region, as well as within the industry.

The Caucus and its member municipalities understand that long time riding support for SEOPAF from regional MPPs has also been confirmed (post-election) along with that from Minister Piccini, Minister Smith and Minister Clark. With active interest already confirmed from the Ministry of Finance, inter-ministerial co-operation between Economic Development and Culture would make the SEOPAF goal possible.

Government investment into SEOPAF will bring a guaranteed revenue boost and generation into the south eastern region and its economy. The EOWC believes that this proposal is positioned to become another regional success story for Ontario.

The south eastern Ontario region has the resources necessary to be the next centre of excellence. It is primed for this initiative. The EOWC strongly encourages your government to give SEOPAF - *a bold Proposal for much needed regional economic recovery* - full policy consideration and ensure its implementation in 2023.

We are very encouraged with the economic numbers documenting the progress of the film industry in Ontario as announced by Minister Lumsden in recent weeks. It is our opinion this recovery could be further emboldened and enhanced by implementing the



above recommendations which would diversify our local economy and also the economy of Ontario.

Our region has the resources and locations in place with a lower price point which will encourage the industry to ramp up production.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Emon', is written in a cursive style.

Peter Emon
Chair, 2023, Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus

CC:

The Honourable Peter Bethlenfalvy, Minister of Finance
The Honourable Vic Fedeli, Minister of Economic Development and Trade
The Honourable Neil Lumsden, Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport
The Honourable Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
The Honourable Todd Smith, Minister of Energy
The Honourable David Piccini, Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks