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June 14, 2021

The Honourable Vic Fedeli,  
Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation & Trade  
[vic.fedeli@pc.ola.org](mailto:vic.fedeli@pc.ola.org)

The Honourable Lisa MacLeod  
Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism & Culture Industries  
[Minister.MacLeod@Ontario.ca](mailto:Minister.MacLeod@Ontario.ca)

Dear Ministers Fedeli and MacLeod,

I am writing today to lend support to the application for the establishment and implementation of the South Eastern Ontario Production Accelerator Fund (SEOPAF). This stackable incentive will attract Screen-based Production Companies (“SBPC”) with viable film and television projects to the region. It will ramp up capacity across a range of complimentary sectors and inject job creation and growth in a region that badly needs it. Funds like SEOPAF are proven to build revenue, jobs and long-term economic benefits for all of Ontario.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a decimating impact on Ontario’s tourism and hospitality industries. It has slowed certain manufacturing sectors and stalled the growth of industries that struggled to access goods in their supply chains. To remain competitive and to ensure that Eastern Ontario continues to grow, we need to be open to the development of new industries which can help us to leverage our strengths and slow our decline. South Eastern Ontario is in economic decline. It’s an increasingly distressing issue that has become synonymous with regions located outside of major metropolitan areas. Ontario’s Ministry of Finance estimates that our economic region, defined as “outside of Ottawa” experienced a 5.9 % decline between 2009 and 2019. By comparison, the GTA has grown by 23.3%. We need to be pro-active. We need to take steps to ensure that this decline halts. We need to take steps to ensure that our region has the opportunity to grow.

As you know, Ontario has experienced tremendous growth in film production over the past five years. Ontario Creates has released data showing that Ontario’s film and TV industry contributed \$1.5 billion to Ontario’s economy in 2020, while navigating the challenges of COVID-19. This activity created 29,667 high-value full-time equivalent direct and spin-off jobs for Ontarians. The film and television industry is expected to continue to grow over the next five years, with preliminary evidence suggesting it could generate upwards of \$5 billion annually.

**Where Ontario Began**

[sdgcounties.ca](http://sdgcounties.ca)

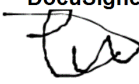
The successful growth of production infrastructure in northern Ontario has shown other regions of Ontario that there are opportunities to expand Ontario's capacity beyond the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area. With investment funds from government, South Eastern Ontario could begin to incentivize production companies and studios to look to some of Ontario's mid-size cities and surrounding areas as alternatives to similar types of locations in the US and other countries.

Last year, during the height of the pandemic, two movies were filmed in our County and later sold to Hallmark Television for release. These productions had a positive impact on our local economy and the site rentals they utilized helped to stabilize two cultural assets that would have otherwise teetered on bankruptcy due the COVID-19 lockdown.

We recognize the enormous potential that the film and television industry has to positively impact our economy. We implore on you to consider this opportunity and to support the South Eastern Ontario Production Accelerator Fund.

*Additional information on this project is available at <https://www.seopaf.ca/>*

Sincerely,

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