



## Economic Development Campaign Gaining Traction For New \$25M South Eastern Ontario Film & Television Fund

TORONTO, March 1, 2023 - Unifor Nabet 700-M, DGC, ACTRA and William F. White International, along with Loyalist College, join a long list of industry supporters and regional municipal stakeholders which include Renfrew, Cornwall, Belleville, Prince Edward County, Kingston, Peterborough, Northumberland County, and Kawartha Lakes, to promote a new film fund initiative campaigning to rapidly grow the South Eastern Ontario film and television industry. The proposed **South Eastern Ontario Production Accelerator Fund (SEOPAF)** would help the Province of Ontario reach Premier Ford's \$5B provincial target for the industry by 2028.

The proposal for the \$25M accelerator fund, which focuses on regional job creation and spending, has been quietly building momentum over the last two years thanks to a volunteer industry committee of South Eastern Ontario residents. Independent producer **Heather Haldane** and **John Galway**, former Bell Media Executive Director of the Harold Greenberg Fund, have recently been elected as committee co-chairs. Additional committee members include Bay of Quinte Regional Marketing Board Executive Director, **Dug Stevenson**, **Donnie McIntyre**, the newly appointed Kingston Film Commissioner who joined the working committee following Alex Jansens' departure from that office, independent filmmakers **J Joly**, **Marion de Vries**, **Chad Maker**, **Albert Botha** and **David Cormican**.

The South Eastern Ontario Production Accelerator Fund (SEOPAF), requests that the Province's Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade (MEDJCT), launch a separate film stream fund under the Eastern Ontario Development Fund (EODF). Ontario Finance and Treasury advisors are actively interested in the SEOPAF initiative as a revenue generator for the province but more specifically for South Eastern Ontario which lags behind all other regions with the lowest rate of economic growth based on 10 year studies/data released by the Ontario Government.

The new SEOPAF fund is intended to mirror the successful Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation's (NOHFC) film stream funding. In 2022 the Northern region generated over \$400M in production revenue. Thanks to the positive results of the NOHFC's film stream fund, in terms of both economic and industry growth, the Ontario government recently increased its annual investment by \$15M to \$40M.

The SEOPAF revenue generation bar is set at \$150M in Year 1 for the region. Nova Scotia, following its own recently established \$25M Film and Television Incentive Fund, saw a quick revival of its declining film and television industry and a direct return of \$180M in provincial revenues annually. With such immediate local impact, funding was topped-up to \$40M after Year 1 and is being considered as a permanent Incentive funding level for Nova Scotia.

“As an independent producer of movies and mini-series, I understand the important balance of creative vision and financial incentives. The working committee’s valuation of South Eastern Ontario’s revenue growth potential is based on our experience as filmmakers. A regionally focussed incentive fund like SEOPAF is the secret sauce in expanding the film and television industry in Ontario,” shares SEOPAF Committee Co-chair Heather Haldane.

“Through my own community in Port Hope, I have seen the tremendous impact that filming can have on a local economy and culture,” said Northumberland—Peterborough South MPP David Piccini. “In order for Ontario to remain a competitive filming location, we must continue to support rural communities in their efforts to attract creative industry.”

The SEOPAF committee has gained the endorsement of over 15 MPPs (including three regional Ministers (Hon. David Piccini, Hon. Todd Smith and Hon. Steve Clark, as well as two former Ministers), two MPs and more than 18 Mayors and Wardens as well as their economic development departments from across the region. While an announcement of increased film industry support is expected in the Ontario Government’s upcoming Spring Budget, work to grow engagement with other stakeholders from within the region (including Indigenous band councils and post-secondary training institutions, as well as the formation of a regional media support hub) continues.

The committee is enhancing its efforts at engagement with the Government heading into the final days of the province’s pre-budget period, including an informal reception that took place February 28th between regional MPPs, Municipal and Provincial officials and several industry stakeholders. The event was sponsored by David Mintz Catering, Closson Chase Vineyards, Norman Hardie Wines, Casa Dea Estates and Karbon Brewing Co. ([Link to photo](#))

**Founding industry supporters of SEOPAF:** The Directors Guild of Canada (Ontario), ACTRA Toronto, Unifor NABET 700-M, Producers Roundtable of Ontario, William F. White International, His4 Production, Corrib Entertainment, Key Art + Design, Don Carmody Television (DCTV), Sphere Media, Shaftesbury, The Film Farm, Byron A. Martin Productions, Mythic Productions, Alcina Pictures, Hangar 18 Media, Maclaren Productions, and Federgreen Entertainment.

**Founding county and municipality supporters:** Dundas, Renfrew, Stormont, Glengarry, Brockville, Greater Napanee, Township of Elizabethtown-Kitley, Belleville, Brighton, Trent Hills, Port Hope, Cramahe, Peterborough, Gananoque, Cobourg, Lennox, Addington, Quinte West, Bay of Quinte, Cornwall, Kingston, North Frontenac, Northumberland County, Kawartha Lakes and Prince Edward County.

**Founding Chamber of Commerce supporters:** Brighton, Northumberland, Belleville, 1000 Islands Gananoque, Brockville and District, Cornwall & Area, Trent Hills, Port Hope and District, Northumberland Central, Brighton, and Prince Edward County.

**Additional Arts, Educational and Tourism founding supporters:** Loyalist College, Bay of Quinte Regional Marketing Board, Cornwall Tourism, Tourism 1000 Islands, Lower Trent Conservation, Les Mercredis Économiques, Le Franco Fonds de Microcrédit, Belleville Downtown Docfest International Documentary Film Festival, and Quinte Arts Council.

Organizations and Individuals seeking additional information, or to provide support to the SEOPAF initiative, are encouraged to visit [www.seopaf.ca/learn-more](http://www.seopaf.ca/learn-more)

**Link to Image:** [SEOPAF Committee members with Hon. David Piccini on February 28, 2023](#)

**Caption:** Hon. David Piccini with SEOPAF Committee members David Cormican, Heather Haldane and Albert Botha

**Courtesy:** SEOPAF Committee

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## **ABOUT SOUTH EASTERN ONTARIO PRODUCTION ACCELERATOR FUND (SEOPAF)**

The South Eastern Ontario Production Accelerator Fund (SEOPAF) will be a stable separate film funding stream of \$25M that will boost original domestic screen-based production in Ontario while growing local industry in South Eastern Ontario (SEON). By attracting to the region Domestic Screen-based Production Companies (DSBPC) with viable film, TV and documentary projects, SEOPAF will offer new entry level jobs in SEON while building capacity across a range of support sectors (ie: hotels, catering, construction, etc.) including key infrastructure builds such as expanded broadband and studio capacity.

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