

September 28, 2023

Honourable Victor Fedeli
Ontario Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade
College Park, 18th Floor, 777 Bay Street,
Toronto, ON M7A 1S5
MEDJCT.Minister@ontario.ca

Re: Follow-Up on SEOPAF Municipal Delegation with Minister Fedeli and a Continued Request for Incentive fund Investment in the Film Sector for South Eastern Ontario

Dear Minister Fedeli,

On August 24, 2023, we presented a municipal delegation in support of the South Eastern Ontario Production Accelerator Fund (SEOPAF) proposal that has been previously sent to your ministry. Thank you for taking the time to meet with us. We continue to urge you and government via your Ministry to invest in regional incentive fund initiatives like the SEOPAF that will result directly in a high return on economic investment for our region, its businesses and its residents. Your government's support of the SEOPAF's regional approach through a film stream incentive fund would amplify opportunities across related sectors and build capacity.

Over 100 letters of support for the SEOPAF from key stakeholders were sent to the Premier, Minister Bethlenfalvy and yourself throughout the past three-years (2021 to 2023). It is clear from Municipal studies and reports that even intermittent film production positively impacts communities' economies. A regional film stream fund like SEOPAF would amplify that impact by generating new business and creating a stable sustainable industry base for film production in this region.

In follow-up, the SEOPAF municipal delegation re-iterates its request that the Ontario Government commit to have new film stream policy ready by the Government's 2024 Spring Budget and announce this commitment as part of the Fall 2023 Economic Statement.

The purpose of this investment policy will be to implement the SEOPAF Proposal by providing \$25 million annually of additional financing for a dedicated regional film stream fund in south eastern Ontario to be separately administrated through MEDJCT's Eastern Ontario Development Fund (EODF).

As a Minister whose riding is in the north, you have publicly commented on the positive cross sector benefits generated in the north from a similar film stream incentive fund administered in a programme within [NOHFC](#). The northern fund has been successful in attracting, growing and retaining new film industry to the northern region.

So successful in fact that this near 20-year-old film stream fund has made **northern Ontario the fourth largest film production region in Canada** adding over \$400 million in additional revenue to Ontario's treasury in 2022 from a reported \$40 million dollar film stream incentive fund. This serves as an example of the potential for an additionally strong economic return on a regional investment for south eastern Ontario.

Delegation Recap and Real Examples of Return on Investment in the SEOPAF

Ahead of our August delegation, a briefing document had been sent with addendum research documents. That municipal delegation included the Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus (EOWC) Chair, Warden Peter Emon; the Eastern Ontario Mayors' Caucus (EOMC) Chair, Mayor Jeff Leal; the City of Kingston Mayor, Bryan Paterson whose municipality has setup its own Kingston Film Office; Tara Kirkpatrick, Director of Economic Development for the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry; and Jeremy Laurin representing Loyalist College. All representatives indicated their strong support for the SEOPAF proposal and the need for provincial investment to support the region of south eastern Ontario by expanding its economic growth potential.

During the delegation, as one example, Kingston's Mayor Paterson highlighted the importance of the creative industries impact on Kingston's municipal growth by making it a priority sector in 2019. To support that, the Kingston Film Office was opened that same year to respond to the film industry's needs and capitalize on the sector's return on investment (ROI). Mayor Paterson further shared the cross sector high ROI from their trial of a small additional Municipal film industry incentive fund via a limited commitment of their MAT tax.

As impressive as that ROI has been to Kingston, Mayor Paterson underlined how the costs for that incentive fund could not be sustained by their municipality given the potential greater scale of this new industry's growth profile. It led Mayor Paterson to conclude that supporting the SEOPAF's regional approach through a film stream incentive fund with a longer term and larger commitment from government would amplify other regional opportunities and strengthen film industry interest. And that a film stream incentive fund is key to not only longer term retention of the film industry and workforce growth opportunities because of that but as well to exponentially greater growth and return for every municipality in related sectors such as accommodations, food/catering, truck and equipment rentals, construction materials, wardrobe and set purchases to name only a few..

Conclusion

In conclusion, we believe **the SEOPAF request is achievable: that is for government to announce its regional film stream fund commitment in the 2023-2024 timeline outlined.** As ever, the SEOPAF municipal delegation is ready and open to continue the conversation with you, Minister, your Ministry staff, and your government as a whole to make SEOPAF a success for the entire region.

SEOPAF

SOUTH EASTERN ONTARIO PRODUCTION ACCELERATOR FUND

We look forward to your response as we move ahead. As an organization representing a large stakeholder group invested in the success of this Proposal for this region, we are here to help.

On behalf of The SEOPAF municipal delegates,



Heather Haldane,
Chair of the Volunteer Working Committee
SEOPAF www.seopaf.ca



Peter Emon
2023 Chair
Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus



Jeff Leal
2023 Chair
Eastern Ontario Mayors' Caucus



CC: Hon Doug Ford

Hon Peter Bethlenfalvy

Hon Neil Lumsden

Hon David Piccini

Hon Todd Smith

Hon Graydon Smith

All other Eastern Ontario MPPs

Mayor Bryan Paterson