

April 15, 2022

21<sup>st</sup> Senatorial District  
Scott E. Hutchinson  
Harrisburg Office  
Senate Box 203021  
Harrisburg, PA 17201-3021

RE: Pennsylvania Film Tax Credit Program

My name is Lela Checco, I'm Key Craft Service to the on set filming sets. Craft Service is a union position that International Alliance of Theatrical State Employees (IATSE) and I am a member of the local branch IATSE 489. I'm a graduate of Edinboro University of PA and have a masters degree from Robert Morris University. Early on in my career, 2003 I left to work in Hollywood, CA because that was where the work was, but was it??? I was ecstatic to come back to my roots in 2012 full time.

I provide crew, cast and background artists snack, drinks and additional meals throughout the 12+ hours work days for the 150-200 on set staff. At times with background actors, I have been able to supply support for over 3,000 people in a days work. I appreciate you including us in the discussion today regarding the Pennsylvania Film Tax Credit Program.

**The Positive:**

As the work has increased over the years due to the Film Tax Credit program, I've purchased two, 24 ft food trailers, 2 – 12 ft trailers for storage and recently a Nissan Cargo Van for shopping. I'm in the works of turning in a Honda Civic for a Ford Lariat Truck.

In the past few years, I've been able to train 12 new members. My team can run 3 productions at a time in our area.

Personally I was able to pay off \$30,000 in credit card dept to owning my own equipment. With the benefits of continued work with films coming to the area I am the process of converting a bus into food truck that will be open to the public in the next year and am building a plan to volunteer with children and give back to underprivileged communities.

### **The Negative:**

It isn't always easy having consistent work though in PA; I've had to supplement my income with part time work to fill the gaps.

I worry about the future since we go from project to project. Anxiety is consistent with me on when one production finishes when will the next one begin. Along with that is the pressure of having my assistant staff of 4-12 staffing crew on standby with out work. The impact is mostly felt by the vendors we support locally.

Since the Height of the Pandemic in 2020, the below figures are amounts spent to local food vendors in area since we returned to work in Western, PA. My typical day consists of these products: Water, Ice, Coffee, Donuts, Meats, Cheeses, Fruit, Vegetables and plenty of snacks to keep a film crew moving along the day. We've extended not only working in Allegheny country but to different filming areas of Allegheny, Beaver, Butler, Erie, Somerset, Washington & Westmoreland Counties...and these were just areas that my crew have serviced.

<b>Production in Western PA</b>	<b>Dates Worked</b>	<b>Local Vending Amount Spent</b>
Archive	9/8/20-5/13/21	625,812.02
American Rust	3/19/21-8/14/21	434,786.17
Cha Cha Real Smooth	8/20/21-9/14/21	38,112.73
Sprung	8/17/21-11/5/21	187,247.39
Rustin	9/29/21-1/24/22	216,395.61
The Pale Blue Eye	12/2/21-3/21/22	195,644.94
A Man Called Otto	2/20/22-4/11/22	67,823.45
		<b>\$1,765,822.31</b>

### **Small Business Impact:**

- My involvement with orders from owner Andy Wincko form the Pittsburgh Smokehouse pushed him to open up a food truck. He started as a catering company when we were filming the TV Series Outsiders in his parking lot and with my orders he has grown to owing a food truck and is about to add a 2<sup>nd</sup> one from Churchill, PA

- Mi Empanada started a pop up vendor at local Farm Markets, since my weekly orders starting in 2017, the owner constantly thanks me on our relationship to the decision of them speeding up opening a store front business in 2020 in Lawrenceville, PA.
- Franks Pizza in Millvale, PA has thanked me due to my purchases they were able to add air condition to their kitchen to comfort their staff while working around hot ovens all day.
- Hungry for Time in Carneige, PA was able to add an additional vehicle for deliveries
- Since vending with the owner of Schenley Market in the Hill District, PA, I now have his daughter as my assistant and I'm proud she is about to be confirmed as a member of IATSE 489 Union. Since meeting him, he now has an impact in supplying catering to back stage of the Rock and Roll Concerts that come through Pittsburgh.

Sourcing from local vendors is to my advantage of Face-to-Face meetings in our community. I often need supplies quick in providing water, coffee, snacks and hot meals. I've created great relationships here and those businesses are relying on their continued growth.

This is my life, career and my passion and I appreciate the opportunity to work with lawmakers to increase the Tax Program for the motion picture industry in Pennsylvania and would be happy to answer any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lela R. Checco". The signature is fluid and cursive, with "Lela" and "R." being more stylized and "Checco" having a more traditional look.

Lela R. Checco  
Key Craft Service, IATSE 489