



**Written Testimony
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My name is Debby Goedeke, and I am the Albany Film Commissioner, representing Film Albany, a division of Discover Albany here in Albany, NY. I'm here to highlight the tremendous economic impact the NYS Film Tax Credits and the film industry has on Albany, NY and to advocate for the continued investment in this essential program.

For over 19 years, I have had the privilege of working to bring film and television productions to our region. I have seen firsthand how the NYS Film Tax Credit has been a powerful catalyst for economic activity in the Capital Region. Film productions don't just bring cameras and actors—they bring direct spending that fuels our local economy. Our hotels, restaurants, small businesses, and professional services all benefit from this industry's presence.

Right now, an independent film with a budget of approximately \$3 million is shooting in Albany County, in a town of just 9,000 residents. But this is more than just a production—it's an economic engine for the entire community. As this production continues to unfold, we are thrilled to see the immense impact it is having on our local economy and the businesses that keep Albany running. The collaboration between our film team and local vendors has been instrumental in bringing this project to life.

To keep business local, the filmmakers have rented all their gear from Red Shamrock Video and sourced lighting and grip equipment from Atom Burst Productions. Spyglass Locations LLC has helped facilitate key location logistics, while essential services from Countryside Septic Services, County Waste, PODS, Budget Rentals, and Sunbelt Rentals have provided critical support behind the scenes. The production relies on Hannaford, Walmart, Home Depot, Ace Hardware, Home Depot, and Staples to keep daily operations running smoothly. Spectrum Theatre and Armory Studios have played a role in meeting production needs, and a local snowplow operator has been hired to ensure safe access to filming locations.

Beyond vendor support, this production has made a significant investment in the community. The filmmakers have leased a private home for the duration of their two-month shoot at \$45,000 per month—totaling \$90,000—and have hired over 20 local crew members, ensuring that talented professionals can stay in Albany and build their careers, thanks to the NYS Film Tax Credit.

Every single day this production operates, thousands of dollars flow into our local economy. This is why the tax credit is not just an incentive—it's a direct investment in our community's economic vitality, workforce development, and long-term growth.

The numbers speak for themselves.

- **In 2021**, over 10,000 guest room nights were booked due to major productions like HBO's *The Gilded Age*, *White House Plumbers*, *Billions*, and *Three Women*, as well as independent films like *Oathkeepers* and *Resurrection*. While some of these productions filmed outside Albany County, we captured their hotel stays and reaped millions in economic impact.
- **In 2022**, that number climbed to over 11,000 guest room nights. *The Gilded Age* continued filming in Albany, the feature film *The Good Mother* (starring Hilary Swank) made our city a production hub, and Showtime and Hallmark contributed to a surge in industry activity.
- **In 2023**, the industry faced major setbacks with nationwide writers' and actors' strikes. Despite these challenges, we strategically positioned Albany as a prime filming destination, ensuring that when production resumed, we were ready.

The importance of this industry became even more evident during the COVID-19 pandemic. At a time when our local economy was struggling, Amazon chose Albany and Schenectady as filming locations. Their investment brought over half a million dollars to a local catering company and filled thousands of hotel rooms, providing a critical economic boost when we needed it most.

The Association of Film Commissioners International estimates that a single film or television production spends \$125,000 to \$165,000 per day in a community. In Albany County, we've seen this impact firsthand. Productions don't just bring dollars—they create jobs, attract future investment, and enhance Albany's reputation as a thriving hub for film and television.

As we continue to rebound from the disruptions of the past few years, Albany has repeatedly proven itself as a premier filming destination. Our city's diverse locations have seamlessly doubled for Washington, D.C., New York City, Manhattan, Brooklyn, and even Madison Square Garden. And, of course, Albany has become a beloved backdrop for *The Gilded Age*, bringing the late 1800s to life on screen.

The Impact of Film Production in 2024

Paramount Pictures – *Smile 2*

Filmed for one week at MVP Arena, a NYS Qualified Production Facility.

- **Economic impact:** Over \$500,000
- **Local benefits:** 300 background actors, local crew hires, parking lot rentals, and 1,000 hotel room nights.

HBO's *The Gilded Age* Season 3

- **Direct spending:** \$1.2 million in location fees and 4,000 hotel room nights in Albany County. \$13,000 parking fees.
- **Albany Locations:** These included The Woman's Club of Albany, First Presbyterian Church, Washington Park, Lark Street and Brownstone apartments in Center Square area.
- **Infrastructure impact:** Productions helped fund renovations at Lark Hall. In addition, The Woman's Club of Albany was able to purchase a \$50,000 boiler from their location fees. This furnace was needed for years; however, they could never afford the cost.
- **Community benefits:** The success of *The Gilded Age* has sparked local tours, creating new income opportunities for businesses while also providing jobs for local crew members and background actors. We had the unique opportunity to bring a high school film class on set, where students met the actors and crew. Additionally, *The Gilded Age* generously donated to several local organizations that assisted with securing filming locations.
- **Workforce development:** Film Albany partnered with Stockade Works, Reel Works, and Empire State Development to market and launch a costume design and wardrobe training program with HBO. This initiative trained eight designers, prioritizing inclusivity and helping build a diverse, skilled workforce for New York's film industry.

Hallmark Production

- **Support provided:** Background casting, locations, permits, catering, and city services.
- **Economic impact:** 1,200 hotel room nights.

These are not just numbers—they represent real jobs, real businesses, and real people in our community who depend on this industry to thrive.

Albany is not just a backdrop for film and television—it's a partner in production. The NYS Film Tax Credit ensures that we remain competitive, attracting high-quality projects that generate jobs, stimulate local spending, and contribute to the cultural and economic vibrancy of our city and region.

I know this program is working right here in Albany, NY. It delivers tangible benefits to our city and beyond. And with your continued support, we can ensure that our city and New York remains a top destination for film and television production for years to come.

Thank you.