

Josh MacDonald



Like many before me today, I'm here to propose amendments to the Financial Measures Act of 2015 (Bill 108), specifically as it pertains to the new incentives program created by government: the Nova Scotia Film & Television Production Incentive Fund.

As a concerned member of the Industry, and a concerned Nova Scotian taxpayer, I'd like to propose removing Clauses 15-17, and Clauses 21-23 from the bill, therefore leaving the film tax *credits* as they were before the initial budget proposed on April 9<sup>th</sup>.

Failing that, I would propose an amendment to Clause 55, so that those earlier clauses would *not* come into effect until the year 2020... which would then also fulfill the *honest* spirit of Premier McNeil's currently-broken election promise to voters to *extend* the Film Tax Credit for five years (and I quote directly from Premier McNeil's campaign materials) "as a means of strengthening Nova Scotia's Heart & Soul—and to support our thriving cultural industries".

The changes proposed to the Film Tax Credit in the April 9<sup>th</sup> budget, and now your revised plan to create an Incentive Fund, do *not* honour Premier McNeil's promise, or *merely* do so by the flimsy letter and not at all in spirit. The changes of April 9<sup>th</sup> killed our industry dead-- full stop-- because government did *no* meaningful consultation or proper due-diligence to figure out how our industry actually works (or how it finances itself, in accordance with the rest of the film industry, by North American standard).

I have to ask myself why Premier McNeil stated that the most recent Economic Impact Study for Film & TV happened in 2004, but then, last Thursday, when Maureen MacDonald tabled a Gov't Crown Study from the year 2008, McNeil said "yes", that study *had* been factored into decision-making. Well, if that's so, then why didn't he acknowledge that study's existence when initially speaking to the House—did he just forget it?? Plus, you guys have an odd way of factoring this report into your decisions, because that report is GLOWING. It says that in 2007, the Government of Nova Scotia made an investment of \$768,644 and stimulated a direct GDP of 81.1 Million and a total GDP of \$150.5 million, while also creating app. 2700 total jobs.

If the budget changes of April 9<sup>th</sup> killed our *entire* industry dead, then the revisions which followed it—to create the Incentive Fund—have instead killed *three-quarters* of us. As a 25% All-Spend with a CAP of 10 million dollars, you've effectively told our industry we'll top out at \$40 million dollars in the future. Also, the 25% All-Spend will only work for the Biggest Players—the kind of Come From

Away productions which can *now* defray the costs of building massive period sets & elaborate period costumes, for instance, where the smaller Nova Scotia stories (which are primarily labour-based) will have no such additional costs to tabulate.

Finally, with the closure of Film & Creative Nova Scotia—which I would *also* urge this committee to reconsider—you've eliminated the Equity financing which was *the* critical seed for indigenous filmmakers to get their stories told. Without that seed money, the smaller, *truly* provincial filmmakers will not be able to leverage bank investment or outside investment in order to make their films.

I am one of those indigenous filmmakers, as a Nova Scotia-born screenwriter. My feature films *The Corridor* and *Faith, Fraud & Minimum Wage* have employed local cast & crew over a hundred strong, created spinoff economic benefits, and disseminated Maritime stories worldwide when those movies went on to international distribution and awards.

In 2010, I wrote a family entertainment about two boys who get caught up in a comedic race from Seaview Park in the North End to Point Pleasant Park in the South, where they can only travel in a straight beeline, no matter what obstacles lie ahead of them. From a Doberman-populated backyard to a 25 storey building, the boys can always & only move *over, under* or *through* the challenges that lie in their path. This is my love-letter to Halifax, *literally* set in our backyards, and it cannot be made anywhere else. Under the Liberal "new deal", it simply will not be made at all.

I mention this film-- *OVER UNDER THROUGH*-- because on the strength of its story I was selected as the *first* North American screenwriter to attend a prestigious workshop in Germany, also in 2010. I was surprised, some months later, when I received in the mail a copy of Liberal MLA Andrew Younger's Resolution #1978, where it was resolved "that members of the House of Assembly join me in congratulating Josh MacDonald on his outstanding achievement, and wishing him continued success in his future artistic endeavours".

I kept this resolution in my office with pride, Mr. Younger, and this is my one-and-only original copy. Today I tell you that the Liberals' headstrong plans, without better consultation, will mean that I *have* no "future artistic endeavours" in my home province. So I'm going to leave this resolution here, and ask that you fix the problems—each and every one—that your government has imposed on my industry... and then maybe you'll have the class to bring this back to me. And if you can't or won't fix the problems you've created, then, respectfully, I'd ask you to throw your commendation into the trash, sir, where it can sit with the letters and futures of the other 2700 concerned workers & taxpayers I call my peers.



## RESOLUTION No. 1978

**MOVED BY:** *Andrew Younger, MLA  
Dartmouth East*

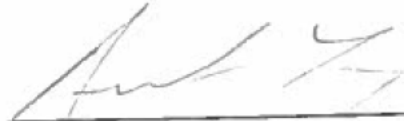
*Whereas the éQuinoxe Germany Screenwriters Workshop is a prestigious and internationally-recognized program facilitating effective script development in collaboration between writers and filmmakers around the world; and*

*Whereas Josh MacDonald of Dartmouth is one of only 10 screenwriters selected by an international jury to participate in the éQuinoxe Germany Screenwriters Workshop for his project, *Over Under Through*, from October 25th to November 1st; and*

*Whereas Josh MacDonald is the first North American screenwriter to participate in the éQuinoxe Germany Screenwriters Workshop;*

*Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly join me in congratulating Josh MacDonald on his outstanding achievement and wish him continued success in his future artistic endeavours .*



  
**Andrew Younger, MLA  
Dartmouth East**

*This Resolution was presented in the Nova Scotia Legislature on November 8<sup>th</sup> 2010. It appears on page 3166 in Hansard, the official record of the Legislature of Nova Scotia.*