

## **Address to the Law Amendments Committee – May 5, 2015**

My name is Kim McTaggart and I was born and raised in NS. I have been working as an editor and producer for 28 years. Currently, I am editing a TV series called Studio Black that is helping to give an underrepresented community in Nova Scotia a voice, both in front of and behind the camera. I'm very proud to be a part of this important show. Everything I've done in the last 35 years has led me to this. From the 15 year old who decided that someone had to make these TV shows so why can't it be me, to the kid in York U Film School in Toronto who thought she had died and gone to heaven, to the new graduate who came back to NS in 1987. At that time I did something I never thought I would do when I left for Toronto, I fell madly in love with my province and developed a deep desire to never leave here again. Although there were no film incentives, the province was full of enthusiasm for the industry and ground-breaking work was being done by a dedicated group of Nova Scotians intent on building an industry here. On to the twenty-nine old who stuck it out in NS and really began to build a career when the government decided that the film industry was a good return on investment and instituted a tax credit, to the 38 year old new mother and homeowner who had finally decided that this was the place – roots were firmly planted. The next several years saw the industry go through peaks and valleys, but an excellent living was made, bills and taxes were paid, and successes and national awards came for our shows and crew members. It's been an exciting 25 years watching the life span of our industry.

I feel it all ended on April 9<sup>th</sup> when my government suddenly decided that the film Industry was no longer a viable industry, that the cultural foundation it built was no longer welcome in our province. They gutted the industry to the core by rendering the Tax Credit useless. Equally distressing was the elimination of Film and Creative Industries NS, thereby pulling out the structural foundation of the industry. Programs that helped to foster and build the community were lost, the people who knew and understood our seemingly complex industry were given pink slips, programs to help bring our films to the world are gone. The all-important equity

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investment is gone. This investment was not there to help the Hollywood, it was there to help us build an indigenous film community – and it was indeed doing that. It was an essential piece of the puzzle that allowed us to create our own work. I have a production company that produces documentaries. Our very first doc received equity financing, as did all of them, but for the first one, it was absolutely essential – it is what allowed the film to happen and allowed us to continue making more. We have paid back almost all of the provinces initial \$52,000 investment on that film and I am certain, in time will have all equity returned. That is something of which I am quite proud. The loss of this program will have a devastating effect on those newer companies that are looking to get that first film made like I did. These companies are full of young, creative, talented people who, just like me are looking to establish roots in the place where they love.

I am deeply disappointed in my government, and trust has been lost. I voted for the Liberals based on a broken promise. It was very difficult and disheartening to then hear our premier so arrogantly and disrespectfully declare that the credit was still in place. As he was saying those words, films and shows were being cancelled or lost to other jurisdictions for the upcoming season. The effects on the industry and on me personally have been immediate. While public pressure brought us the new fund, it is not without major problems. A limited fund again puts us in an unstable, almost unworkable place. It is not the sign of a committed government. We know it, and our potential investors will know it. Mr. McNeil needs to let the world know that NS is open for business and they will not be turning it away. Until this is done, we are living in uncertainty, a place no investor wants to enter.

This all came about because the government says that it cannot afford the program. The industry says how can the government NOT afford to foster this industry and all it offers to Nova Scotians. How was it decided that it was not affordable? There was no impact study done, there was no true understanding of the return on investment, there was no meaningful consultation, there was no acknowledgement it's cultural significance to Nova Scotians, and there was no acknowledgement of past studies that did show the benefits. How does anyone know that we cannot

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afford this? How does anyone know that a simple market-correction of our tax credit percentage may have been the correct, prudent choice?

I am asking for a change to the July 1<sup>st</sup> deadline. Allow time to do proper studies and consultations before cutting an industry off at the knees. I am also asking you to not pass clause 15 and 16 which effectively ends Film and Creative NS and all real commitment to the film industry – let the consultations and an in depth analysis of the economic and cultural contributions of film determine Film and Creative NS's worth to the backbone of this industry.

For the first time in my life I am even remotely considering relocating. Not so much for me and my career, I am at a point where I could perhaps get by even when the industry does the inevitable shrink to a fraction of it's former size. No, I am thinking of my children. For the first time ever, I am wondering if this is really the place that I want to raise my children. And that makes me profoundly sad and very angry.