


Good evening and thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak before you.

My name is Katrina Walsh and I own a small independent production company in Halifax. I've been working in the film and television industry for over two decades in various capacities, the past fifteen years having been spent as a producer of children's television.

Over the years, here in Nova Scotia, we have produced many award-winning, internationally acclaimed children's programmes, including Poko, Lunar Jim, ~~Monster Math Squad, Bo on the Go, The Mighty Jungle, Artzuka, and many, many, more.~~ We are renowned for our excellence in production, both in live action and animation. And that has all happened – not by chance – but because of strong support for the industry from previous governments – governments that understood both the positive financial impact of such an industry and also its importance culturally.

Most recently my company completed production on a series for KidsCBC entitled "The Moblees", which began airing in December 2014. It is now the top-rated show on KidsCBC. The broadcaster has ordered 20 more episodes, depending on our being able to finance the series. That one small show engaged 50 Nova Scotians in creative, well-paying jobs, purchased and rented <sup>pieces</sup> all equipment locally, and once again proved to the world that we are a significant player in this field. 

The order came in two days before the proposed budget came down. I can tell you the response from my partners was immediate and alarming and I am definitely still reeling. The usual next steps, once we had the broadcaster commitment, would be for my company to:

- First - apply for the Film and Creative Industry NS Equity Investment Programme – (maximum contribution of \$300,000) - as the office was shut down immediately the day the budget was announced with no warning or indication of where we should go for information, I was unable to complete that step. I now understand this fund is no longer available.

- Second - Apply for the Eastlink TV Independent Production Fund (maximum contribution of \$300,000) - This private fund was administered by Film and Creative Industries NS and since they were shut down, for weeks I have tried unsuccessfully to get information about what is happening with this fund. In my earlier calls, it became apparent that NSBI wasn't even aware of the fund. Since then I have called and written almost daily in repeated attempts to get clarity. Everyone I spoke to has been very pleasant. They simply don't know anything about the industry or its workings, so are operating blind. At one point I was told that the CRTC was the body who certified corporations who could administer the fund. I spoke directly with CRTC who told me that they in fact have nothing to do with the Eastlink fund. Someone is confused. Meanwhile, I doggedly pushed until NSBI agreed to accept my submission for the fund though they did warn me that it might not actually be offered. I still have no answer. Without an immediate assurance that the fund will remain in place and be applied to productions like mine, that have already submitted applications, I will definitely lose the production – and my business.
  - Third - complete the part "A" Tax Credit application – with the devastating announcement and ensuing confusion, I was unsure what process I should follow – and again – the people I would normally ask would be Film and Creative Industries NS. When I phoned NSBI they directed me to the old Film and Creative number. When I phoned there I got a message to phone NSBI who again directed me back to the Film and Creative number and the cycle goes on. As far as I can tell, under the proposed system, the Government is scrapping the Equity Investment Program, scrapping the tax credit and putting in place a fund that we are supposed to believe will "replace" the old funds. I've done the math and it simply doesn't work.
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- Finally – once all Provincial forms have been completed then I would move on to applications outside this Province (Federal Tax Credits etc). All of the above need to happen very quickly so that the broadcaster is assured the project will happen. If not, they re-allocate the money to a different project.

Without the promised support of this government the show will simply not happen – at least not here.

The most disheartening thing for me personally is that based on the promise of this government to leave the tax credit alone for the next five years, I borrowed a substantial amount of money to build my company, thus positioning it to produce television here. If this budget doesn't change I will lose that money, and amidst all the uncertainty, with no foreseeable revenue unless things change, I am yet obliged to continue to meet my business obligations – rent, salaries, office expenses, etc. or face the consequence of not being in a position to move forward should you make the right decision.

*In addition, people I've worked with including my own son, have been forced to seek work outside the province*  
This should not be happening. Governments needs to be held to account for the promises they make.

I implore you all to reflect on the impact this unwise decision is having and reconsider. Let the industry work with you to continue to build an industry in this province, and leave the tax credits and Equity fund in place until a reasonable proposal can be worked out.

Thank you for your time.