Testimony

Amy Lemisch, Director, California Film Commission
Brian P. Kelly, Acting Secretary
Business, Transportation & Housing Agency

Little Hoover Commission
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My name is Amy Lemisch and I am the Director of the California Film Commission, a department under the Business, Transportation and Housing Agency (BTH). Previously we were located under the Technology, Trade and Commerce Agency until it was dismantled in 2004. The California Film Commission supports film, television and commercial productions of all sizes and budgets, with a variety of services, including production assistance and coordination, our digital location library and assistance with location searches, free on-line permitting, low cost use of state properties as shooting locations, and we administer the film tax credit program – a six year, $600 million dollar program that targets those productions most likely to leave the state due to incentives offered by other states and countries.

The California Film Commission continually works to create a business friendly environment for the production community via streamlined permits, reducing barriers to filming, and coordinating between various jurisdictions. We interface with all jurisdictions – federal, state, county and city – with the goal of making California an easy place for film companies to get their work done. The motion picture industry is an essential source of economic activity, tax revenue, jobs and tourism in California. It contributes $30 billion dollars annually to our state's economy while supporting over 140,000 entertainment industry jobs.

Unfortunately, California's film production industry is under enormous pressure to move films and TV shows out of state due to aggressive incentives offered in the U.S. and worldwide. It is our mission to retain this business and increase the amount of production occurring in California.

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Within BTH, the Film Commission is classified as an economic development program. Therefore, moving us to the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development makes very logical sense. Our mission will easily align with that of Go-Biz. We are committed to growing and retaining businesses and job creation. I don't anticipate any noticeable impact of this reorganization on the services we provide to our stakeholders.

I realize there are many administration and logistical details to be worked out. We are a very small department consisting of myself plus nine in staff. We run on a very lean general fund budget and therefore we rely on a great deal of administrative support from the BTH Agency. Assuming Go-Biz is able to offer the same level of support – legal, contracting, HR services, etc. and that our budget remains intact, this should be a very straightforward move.

Our most important state partners in the work we do daily are - Caltrans, CHP, Parks and Recreation, and the State Fire Marshal. I look forward to maintaining these relationships and building new ones through our association with Go-Biz.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Lemisch, Executive Director
California Film Commission