

TO: The Value-Added and Technology Commercialization Task Force

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FROM: Rick Roberts
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SUBJECT: Diversity in Alberta's Economy: Try the Film Industry

I am a Film and Television Production Designer based in southern Alberta since 1973. I have shared in two Academy Award nominations for Art Direction (UNFORGIVEN, and LEGENDS OF THE FALL) and an Emmy Award nomination (INTO THE WEST).

In your attempts to identify areas in which the government may foster a more diversified and globally competitive economy, I would suggest that you take a close look at the Alberta film and television production industry.

This industry is above all 'green', knowledge based, and has serious "spin-off effect" with tourism and promotion.

Currently production activity levels hover around the \$110 -130 million (Can) annually, where they have languished for the past six or seven years, while adjacent jurisdictions have seen continued growth.

Why not in Alberta? For one reason, we do not have a progressive tax incentive program; we have a ridiculously low cap of \$1.5 million (Can) per project in the Alberta Film Development Fund; no sound stages to foster any thing but location shooting when we have snow on the ground for up to six months of the year. And above all else, we have negligible support or understanding of our industry in the provincial government or Cabinet; low priority in formulating new policy (reportedly 18 to 24 months before new Cultural policy will be struck.) At least under the Klein regime, the film industry was under the wing of Economic Development, not lumped in with Parks, Recreation and Culture... obviously low on the totem pole of priorities.

For more information on this subject I would urge you to contact Alberta Motion Picture Industry Association (AMPIA) or IATSE Local 212, Calgary.