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July 19, 2011

Councillor Michael Thompson, Chair
CITY OF TORONTO
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
City Hall, 100 Queen Street W.
Toronto, ON. M5H 2N2

Dear Councillor Thompson,

With regard to your Economic Development Committee meeting on July 19th 2011, at which you will be considering various cost efficiency recommendations by City-retained consultants KPMG, we would ask that you please consider our strong support in favour of the retention of the Toronto Film and Television Office within the City's new cost-efficiency framework.

We are an almost 25-year veteran of the film and television production industry in Toronto. Having developed over 1 million square feet of studio space over 5 separate film studio facilities, we have seen Toronto blossom from a simple and nascent film and TV location into a mature, world-class film and television jurisdiction.

It is precisely this world-class stature that compels us to relay our strong support for maintaining the infrastructure we have right now, and this includes the Toronto Film and Television Office. Both our domestic and international clients have a whole host of jurisdictions also courting their business, promising competitive tax credits, attractive locations, and other "sweeteners". They have a difficult time however, matching Toronto's established base of technicians, actors, locations, and we also submit the City's Film Office: a quarterback-type operation that coordinates the complexities of location filming on the streets of Toronto and whose staff act as both problem solvers and cheerleaders for our City's renowned film and television crews.

Indeed, Toronto maintains this preferential standing today against all odds: our industry was built on a 67-cent dollar, and today we stand at just over par; Ontario was a film and TV tax-credit pioneer, and since then multiple U.S. states have implemented copycat tax-credit schemes; Toronto once had many more film studio facilities, yet some ill-advised decisions have crippled our total studio capacity. With this ongoing yet tentative hold on our world-class stature as a top jurisdiction, the very last action we should be taking is excising the nerve centre of our permitting, location and problem-solving operations.

It is highly unlikely that any other office at the City facilitates the functioning of an industry that triggers hundreds of millions of dollars of spillover spending into Toronto's local economy. For this reason, and the reasons stated above, we ask you to retain the Toronto Film and Television Office, once again with the operational or financial adjustments required to meet the City's new cost efficiency framework.

Regards,
CINESPACE FILM STUDIOS

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Jim', with a large, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

D. Jim Mirkopoulos
Vice President