



UPDATE ON 2024-2025 ACTIVITIES

Dear FilmOntario Members,

We are pleased to provide this report on activities that have taken place since our last Annual General Meeting (AGM) in May 2024.

At the ACTRA Toronto Awards on May 8, Mohamed Firin, Parliamentary Assistant to the Ministers of Tourism, Culture and Gaming and Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development, announced that production spending in 2024 totalled \$2.6 billion, a significant increase over the strike-impacted 2023 production levels. We would like to congratulate all our members on their continued excellent work on making this economic contribution to the province of Ontario – and telling great stories while you do it.

As the global and Canadian industries continue to operate in uncertain times, we truly appreciate the ongoing commitment of our members. The work we do would not be possible without your support.

Advocacy

We continue to hold meetings and work with MPPs from all parties in order to highlight the economic and cultural contributions of Ontario's film and television industry, as well as working with municipalities and regional film offices across the province. This has been a busy year, with new opportunities arising regularly, and we are constantly adjusting our activities in response.

Thank you to all the members who participated in our meetings at Queen's Park last October. This was an opportunity to re-connect with politicians that we had existing relationships with, and introduce our industry to some we hadn't met before. Our messaging in these meetings was threefold: commit to stable, effective and competitive tax credits; champion and promote Ontario's industry; and include the sector in government investments in workforce development.

Over the course of the two days, we meet with 27 different politicians and/or staff in their offices. The FilmOntario Board also held a roundtable with Minister Cho and his Parliamentary Assistant Hardeep Grewal. The FilmOntario contingent were also formally welcomed in the Legislature by Minister Cho and the Opposition Critic Jill Andrew.

Stay tuned for information on another Lobby Day in the fall of 2025.

We have also had the opportunity to tour Ministers and MPPs around sets and other industry facilities. Thank you to all of our members who assist in these tours – we know it is time consuming for your businesses, but it makes a real difference when politicians have the opportunity to witness firsthand the nature of our work and the number of jobs we create.



The FilmOntario Board meets with Minister Stan Cho and PA Hardeep Grewal at the Tourism, Culture and Gaming offices

Tax Credits

Members will recall that the 2024 Ontario Budget repeated the government's commitment to reviewing the regional bonus in the Ontario Film and Television Tax Credit (OFTTC). While an official review process has not yet taken place, we decided to get ahead of it by sending a [letter](#) to Ministers Cho and Bethlenfalvy highlighting the importance of the regional bonus to domestic producers and asking them to ensure that no harm is done when considering any changes. We also provided some ideas for administrative changes that could improve the processing of that credit.

We are aware that members have continued to experience long processing times on their tax credit applications. This is one of the first issues we raised with Minister Stan Cho's office when he was appointed to the position of Minister of Tourism, Culture and Gaming last year. The Minister's Office took a keen interest in finding solutions to this problem, and we are starting to see some results.

Since that time, Ontario Creates has been given permission to hire additional staff in the tax credits department. They have now filled those positions as well as some vacancies, adding to their capacity to deal with a backlog of applications. We have also been in regular conversations with them about what documentation can be adapted or eliminated in order to make processing more efficient for analysts and applicants alike.

Earlier this year, Minister Cho announced on social media that Ontario Creates will be establishing a 12-week service standard for tax credit applications, which will be in place by 2026. We look forward to receiving and sharing more details about this development as they become available. In the meantime, we have heard anecdotally that processing times for some of the credits are starting to come down – a step in the right direction.

Many jurisdictions, both in Canada and around the world, have introduced rate increases, new incentives, and other improvements to their tax credits over the past little while. We have been following these developments closely and, in the next few months, will be engaging in an extensive study on Ontario's competitive position.

We know that Ontario continues to offer great value as a filming jurisdiction – and we continue to be competitive. However, we also know that certain parts of the industry are seeing their business shrink, and the overall global market is tightening. This is why we need to make sure that our offering as a province continues to be relevant and competitive.



Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development David Piccini visits the set of Murdoch Mysteries (Shaftesbury)



Minister Cho's Instagram post regarding tax credit service standards

Our planned study will have two parts: (1) a comparison of where Ontario sits at the present time in terms of tax credit competitiveness; and (2) evaluating proposals to improve the tax credits where needed and building the business case to support those proposals. These proposals will include rate increases, but also other suggestions such as eligible genre changes or bonuses to encourage specific activities. We want to make sure that any proposal that we make to the government is based on evidence, and will lead to effective investments in the sector that are sustainable over the long term.

In addition, we are looking at ways to improve the tax credit process so that funds can flow into the hands of producers sooner. While the processing time improvements noted above are helpful, other mechanisms that will ensure that money is paid out sooner will greatly improve companies' cash flow and contribute to the overall health of the industry. We are open to suggestions in this area, but are considering ideas such as allowing companies to apply for their tax credits earlier in the process, or advancing a portion of the tax credit on filing of a tax credit application, on the issuance of a Certificate of Eligibility, or when a tax return is filed.

Managing Director Cynthia Lynch is also regularly meeting with representatives from the regional film offices as they continue to be interested in developing incentives to encourage filming in their regions. This allows us to be informed of what different regions are proposing and, where possible, to ensure that we are all on the same page when we are talking to government. We are also hoping that this will improve the data we are able to collect on regional activity.

Inter-provincial Barriers

The greater interest in improving business relationships between provinces as a way to shore up the Canadian economy provides some interesting opportunities for our industry. From our members, we know that Ontario can be a great partner for inter-provincial co-productions, but many other provinces have requirements in place that make it difficult to partner with them.

We are currently looking at what rules are in place in Ontario, including residency requirements, that can make it difficult to partner with Ontario companies or make it difficult for Ontario companies to do all of their work here. Our goal is to encourage our province to lead the way in ensuring similar standards across the country, for the benefit of all of us, and to support more work being done in Ontario.

Provincial Budget Submission

FilmOntario was once again pleased to participate in the province's Budget consultation processes. This year, the consultation ended early as the government dissolved the Legislature in advance of February's election. Nevertheless, we did participate in the Ministry of Finance's in-person consultation, in addition to providing [written comments](#).



*Ministry of Finance
2025 Budget
Consultations*

These consultations came in the midst of many jurisdictions announcing improvements to their tax credits and other industry incentives. Our submission focussed on three key areas:

- increasing tax credit rates to maintain Ontario's competitiveness as a production jurisdiction;
- investing in original content creation through the Ontario Creates IP Fund; and
- creating a film and television stream in the Skills Development Fund in order to attract and maintain a skilled and diverse workforce all across the province.

We also used the submission to focus on the current opportunities and challenges facing the industry given the increasingly competitive tax credit environment and uncertainty in our trading relationship with the U.S.

The Provincial Budget was delivered on May 15. There were no specific initiatives for the film and television industry in this year's Budget.

Looking ahead to the 2025 Fall Economic Statement and the 2026 Provincial Budget, we are continuing to work on ways to ensure that Ontario remains a competitive filming jurisdiction. The study above will be the major tool for doing this, as well as our continued monitoring of the changing environment both across Canada and around the world.

Provincial Election

During the election, FilmOntario provided members with [information](#) needed to raise industry issues with local politicians and highlight the sector's importance to the provincial economy. There is no doubt that the focus of the election was on what is happening outside our borders and the voters of Ontario chose to re-elect the Conservative Party with another majority government.

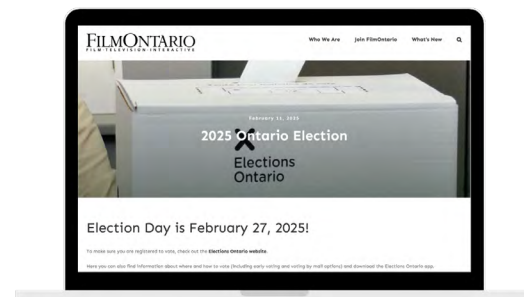
The good news for FilmOntario is that most of the Ministers who can have an impact on our sector were re-elected and re-appointed to their Cabinet positions, including Minister of Finance Peter Bethlenfalvy, Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade Vic Fedeli, Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development David Piccini, and, of course, Minister of Tourism, Culture and Gaming Stan Cho. Key members of the official opposition were also re-elected.

We will continue to work with the government, and with all MPPs, to highlight the importance of our sector.

Promoting Ontario Interests

Tariff and Trade Considerations

Throughout this year, Canada has been working to address the threat of tariffs and instability in the trading relationship with the United States. Our industry has not been immune to this, as President Trump announced in early May that he was contemplating tariffs on films made outside the United States.



This type of announcement naturally causes concern and creates instability in a sector. We were pleased that many politicians and political staff – from all parties and at both the provincial and municipal levels – reached out for information on what the potential impact could be and to see how they could help. Thank you to all our members who helped us collect information on these impacts.

The good news is that this has not caused any productions that were currently filming in Ontario to leave the province. This is a testament to the great value we provide as a jurisdiction – our stable incentives, our great on- and off-screen talent, our world-class infrastructure and our beautiful locations across the province.

That being said, we have seen a bit of a slowdown in some activity for productions – including on the domestic side – that are in development, where decisions on licensing or distribution deals have been delayed or requests have been made to change the filming location. It is difficult to know how much to attribute to the tariff announcement and how much is due to the general tightening we are seeing in the global market.

It is unclear at the present time how or when this situation will be resolved. What is clear is that there is a greater emphasis on keeping production in the U.S., and different states are looking at or improving their incentives. This was activity that was taking place before the tariff announcement, and there is no doubt that it will continue. This is why we must continue to evaluate and promote Ontario's competitiveness as a jurisdiction.

In conversations with government, we have noted the destabilizing effect this type of uncertainty can have on the sector, just as it does in other industries. We are just as integrated across North America as the auto and construction industries, and therefore we have asked the government, should the need arise, to include our industry in any trade dispute mitigation programs that are implemented in other sectors. We will continue to monitor this situation as it evolves.

This is also an opportunity to highlight the importance of Canadian stories and the institutions that support them. The new federal Liberal government made promises during the election to increase their investment in the CBC, and we will continue to press the province to increase its investments in domestic content creation. And, just as importantly, we will continue to promote Ontario as a great partner to international jurisdictions who want to bring their productions here.

CRTC Consultations

This year, we have also represented Ontario's interest as part of the CRTC's consultation on Canadian content for TV and online streaming services (Broadcasting Notice of Consultation 2024-288). We made a [written submission](#), participated in the [public hearing](#), and are currently reviewing our options regarding any final comments we may want to submit.

Our written submission provided high-level responses to the Commission's questions regarding the definition of and support for Canadian programs. Our goal, as always, was to ensure that no harm comes to Ontario's current production ecosystem, and that ideally everyone in the system – domestic content creators, service producers, and the suppliers and services that support their business – is well-positioned to build and grow their businesses.

We repeated these high-level points during the hearing, where we presented ourselves as the biggest cheerleaders for the screen industry in Ontario. We pointed out that, as the centre of Canadian's English-language production centre, Ontario acts as a bellwether for the health of the entire Canadian industry.

We also provided some information to the Commission on our members' training and outreach efforts as part of their review of Diversity and Inclusion in the sector. Cynthia Lynch participated in a roundtable as part of this consultation process.

We will continue to monitor the CRTC proceedings, and intervene on behalf of our province's screen-based industry as appropriate.

Diving Regulations

Last year we reported that concerns had been raised about the regulations in place that govern underwater filming in Ontario. As a reminder, the current regulations require that everyone doing underwater work, including camera operators, stunt performers and riggers, and performers, be certified at the level of a commercial diver. Very few members of the industry have this certification.

Working with the province's Section 21 Health and Safety Committee, which is co-chaired by FilmOntario co-chair Jayson Mosek, we have requested an amendment to the Ontario regulations that will allow underwater work to be performed by individuals with recreational diver certification, under the supervision of a commercially certified diver. While we had hoped to have new regulations in place sooner, we are pleased to report that both Minister Cho and Minister Piccini have recently taken a renewed interest in this file. Stay tuned to your member updates for what will hopefully be a positive report on this issue soon.

Industry Partnerships and Collaboration

We continue to collaborate successfully on marketing projects and other initiatives with the City of Toronto Film Office and Ontario Creates. This collaboration continues through weekly meetings and working together on various projects throughout the year.

Cynthia Lynch continues to represent FilmOntario on the Ontario Creates Screen-based Industry Advisory Committee and the City of Toronto's Film, Television and Digital Media Board. Many FilmOntario members and Board members are also on these advisory groups, and FilmOntario Co-Chair Jayson Mosek is also the vice-chair of the Film Board. Cynthia is also part of the Durham Region Film and Television Advisory Committee.

One of the collaborations that took place last year was a familiarization tour (fam tour) with Ontario Creates in June 2024. FilmOntario was once again pleased to host a members' dinner, giving members the opportunity to meet with the visiting executives in a more relaxed setting. Fam tour participants also met with our local unions and guilds and regional film offices, toured several studios, and visited several regions inside and outside Toronto to get an idea of the types of locations that are available throughout the province. We are looking forward to participating in another successful fam tour during the second week of June this year.



*FilmOntario 2024 FamTour
Dinner*

We were also pleased to support xoTO House at TIFF again in 2024. Last year's event attracted hundreds of guests to celebrate the local film industry, and we look forward to continuing this partnership in the year ahead.

Finally, we are grateful for the continued collaboration with other industry organizations. Sharing data and collaborating with our colleagues has made our advocacy better and helped get results. In addition, we would like to thank the CMPA for their ongoing financial contribution to our government relations activities.

Ontario Green Screen

FilmOntario is proud to have been an Ontario Green Screen (OGS) partner since the beginning. In April of this year, Cynthia Lynch was re-elected as industry co-chair of the Advisory Committee for a second two-year term, and will continue to sit on many of the OGS sub-committees.

Over the past year, OGS has focussed on [training initiatives](#), re-launching both the Sustainable Film Production Fundamentals and the Carbon Calculation Fundamentals Training courses. In addition to the facilitated workshops, the Sustainable Film Production Fundamentals course is also available as an online self-directed course. In November of last year, OGS held a second session of its very popular electric generator training workshop.

OGS also continued to hold quarterly community meetings as well as targeted green table meetings over the past year. Thank you to FilmOntario member David Mintz for participating as a panellist in the most recent community meeting on food waste. New this year, OGS held a green table meeting for the Ottawa film and television community during Prime Time.

For more information on OGS and ways to get involved, please check out the [website](#).



OGS electric generator training, hosted by Pinewood Toronto Studios

Corporate Activities

Membership Drive

Since the beginning of this year, and in particular over the past few weeks, we have been focussing on growing our membership base. FilmOntario's activities are 100% funded by our members, so this is important for the long-term stability of the organization, but it also makes our advocacy better when we have more people at the table.

We have welcomed six new members so far this year, and hope to increase that number as the year goes on. Please help us highlight the benefits of FilmOntario membership by sharing our [member information package](#) and / or introducing potential new members to Cynthia.

We will also be looking at additional ways to ensure the long-term viability of the organization over the next year. This could include a rate increase (the last one was six years ago) and/or new membership categories. Stay tuned for more information on what this will look like.

Getting the Word Out

We continue to work with our communications consultant, Cass Enright, to improve our website and social media presence. Our [website](#) continues to see consistent usage, with traffic up slightly (approximately 5-6%) over the past year. This demonstrates that we are well-indexed from a search perspective, meaning people find our site when looking for information on the Ontario industry.

We have also been consistently improving our social media presence. In spite of its current challenges, [X/Twitter](#) continues to be a platform that is used extensively by politicians and political commentators, and we continue to maintain a presence there.

However, we have also significantly improved our [Instagram](#) presence, with our audience continuing to grow there. Of course, Instagram interest is driven by content; this year, election information was among the most shared. We have recently been using some paid promotion to boost interest in our ongoing membership drive, and our posts welcoming new members have been generating much of our engagement over the past month.

We also launched a [LinkedIn](#) page in September of last year. Our audience on this platform is growing slowly but steadily, and we continue to experiment with what types of content work best for this space.

Please continue to follow us on all platforms, and continue to tag and share with us so we can help share your stories, too!

Updated By-laws

The FilmOntario by-laws were revised and updated at last year's Annual General Meeting. We have filed all the necessary corporate amendments and schedules, and the [new by-laws](#) are officially in effect as of December 31, 2024. We have also instituted new voting practices for this year's AGM, using designated Authorized Representatives as required under the new by-law.

Board of Directors

We would like to take this opportunity to recognize our dedicated Board of Directors and thank them for their hard work:

Mark Bishop
Blue Ant Studios

Paul Bronfman
Comweb

Scott Garvie
Shaftesbury

Victoria Harding
Directors Guild of Canada – Ontario

Alistair Hepburn (Secretary)
ACTRA Toronto

Alex Lalonde
Frame Production Group

Ira Levy
Spike & Sadie Media

Wesley Lui
House of Cool/WildBrain

Angela Mastronardi
IATSE 873

Andy Micallef
EP Canada

Roman Neubacher
IATSE 667

Len Pendergast
Global Incentives Inc.

Magali Simard
Cinespace Studios

Vanessa Steinmetz
Stone Carver Media

Jane Tattersall
Formosa Group

John Weber (Treasurer)
Take 5 Productions

We are sorry to say that Ira Levy has decided to leave the Board this year. Ira joined the Board in 2008 and has been an important voice for domestic producers during all of that time. He has also sat on many Committees, including the Government Relations Committee, and has taken a lead role in recruiting new Board members over the years. His sense of humour and the perspective that comes from his experience in the industry will be missed by all of us at FilmOntario.

Sadly, long-time FilmOntario Board member Paul Bronfman passed away in February of this year. Paul joined the FilmOntario Board in 2007. His unwavering commitment to the organization, and his belief in its mission, were a constant reminder of what we can achieve when we work together.

Of course, Paul's role as an industry leader went far beyond his role at FilmOntario. There is hardly a part of the Canadian industry that has not been touched by his work – whether through his “day job” at William F. White and Comweb, or through his extensive community involvement with TIFF, the Canadian Film Centre, Ontario Creates, and many more. He generously supported the industry and, especially, emerging filmmakers, and was a friend to many. His presence is greatly missed by all of us.



Final Reflections

Once again this year, we have much to be proud of as we take a moment to look back. When faced with challenges, we continue to work together to find solutions and provide a voice for the industry.

Ontario is fortunate to have an industry that is a well-balanced ecosystem between original content creation based on locally owned IP, and service productions that choose Ontario because of all we have to offer as a jurisdiction. It is this balance that has kept us in a relatively strong position as we have faced recent issues, and that will serve us well as we continue to move forward together to build a stronger, more sustainable, more inclusive industry.

Respectfully submitted,



Vanessa Steinmetz
Co-Chair



Jayson Mosek
Co-Chair

Thank you for all your hard work and collaboration over the past several months. We are proud of the work we do at FilmOntario, and we look forward to continuing to do that work with you.

WE COULDN'T DO IT WITHOUT OUR MEMBERS