



**ANNUAL REPORT  
OF THE**



**As required by § 2–1257, Senate Bill 452**

**Respectfully submitted to the General Assembly of Maryland by**

Meryam Bouadjemi, Chair

Secretary Kevin Anderson, Department of Commerce

401 East Pratt Street

Baltimore, MD 21202

October 2024



Wes Moore, Governor | Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor

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## **Mission**

The mission of the Maryland Entertainment Industry Council (MEIC), established by Chapter 434 of the 2023 Senate Bill 452, is the following:

- 1) Assess Maryland's existing assets, opportunities, and competitive position within the film, television, and entertainment industry.
- 2) Study Maryland's State, local, and private assets that currently support Maryland's film, television, and entertainment industry, including key infrastructure, existing workforce, workforce pipelines, scenic profile, emerging specialties, and independent creative communities; (ii) existing State programs, agencies, offices, grant programs, and commissions across State agencies that support the film, television, and entertainment industry; (iii) models, competitive profiles, methods, and legislation that states have utilized to incentivize necessary infrastructure and workforce to support the film, television, and entertainment industry; (iv) industry needs, disruptive trends, and emerging technologies within the film, television, and entertainment industry; and (v) complementary industries, aligned businesses, and potential corporate, philanthropic, and other partners for the film, television, and entertainment industry.
- 3) Make recommendations on the development of a coordinated, comprehensive strategic plan to position Maryland as an emerging leader in the film, television, and entertainment industry.

In further support of the industry and to broaden the Council's impact, the Maryland General Assembly passed House Bill 1487 in 2024, which was signed by Governor Moore and renamed the Council to the Maryland Entertainment Industry Council. The Council's capabilities were also expanded, terms were staggered, the sunset provision was removed, and the submission of an annual report was mandated.

## **Membership**

The enactment of House Bill 1487 of 2024 altered the Council's membership by adding 12 individuals who have general experience in the film, television, or entertainment industries, the Secretaries of Commerce, Labor, and Housing and Community Development, and a representative of the Maryland Senate and House of Representatives. As of July 2024:

- A) The Council consists of:
  - 1) One member of the Senate of Maryland, appointed by the President of the Senate.
  - 2) One member of the House of Delegates, appointed by the Speaker of the House.
  - 3) The Governor's appointed Senior Advisor on Film, Television, and Entertainment.
  - 4) The Secretary of Commerce, or the Secretary's Designee;
  - 5) The Secretary of Labor or the Secretary's Designee;
  - 6) The Secretary of Housing and Community Development or the Secretary's Designee;
  - 7) The following 19 members appointed by the Governor, in consultation with the Secretary:
    - I) One expert in the business of the film, television, and entertainment industry, such as an executive, producer, studio representative, or an individual holding a leadership role within the industry;
    - II) One expert in workforce development or higher education related to the film, television, and entertainment industry;

- III) One expert in emerging technologies or specialties of the film, television, and entertainment industry, such as an expert in gaming, artificial intelligence, visual effects, animation, post-production, or another related specialty;
  - IV) One expert in legal or policy fields specific to the film, television, and entertainment industry;
  - V) One representative of the independent film and television community;
  - VI) One representative of nongovernmental entities or philanthropic institutions that support film, television, or entertainment directly or creative economies more broadly;
  - VII) One representative of organized labor in the entertainment industry;
  - VIII) 12 individuals who have general experience in the film, television or entertainment industries;
- B) (1) The Governor may appoint up to three additional individuals as honorary cochairs of the Council who are:
- I) Individuals with extraordinary cultural capital and commanding significant influence within the film, television, and entertainment industry.
  - II) Business leaders commanding a significant stake within the film, television, and entertainment industry; or
  - III) Individuals who have defined the current cultural brand of the film, television, and entertainment industry within the State.

Ms. Meryam Bouadjemi, the Governor’s Senior Advisor on Film, Television, and Entertainment, was appointed Chair of the Council in 2023. Ms. Bouadjemi has an extensive filmmaker career, is an Academy Award-shortlisted producer, and consultant based in Baltimore and Los Angeles. She is the creator and executive producer of a limited comedy-drama currently in development at Warner Brothers under her production banner, Tambourine Pictures. Previously, Bouadjemi was the sole Baltimore producer on Charm City, the critically acclaimed feature documentary. Bouadjemi started her industry career as an impact producer for the Emerson Collective. She served as a senior advisor at the Sundance Episodic Lab, FX’s Creator Incubator, and is currently supporting the Pillars Artist Fellowship. Bouadjemi is also the founder of New Market Discovery. She is a graduate of the University of Maryland Robert H. Smith School of Business and the Peter Stark Producing Program at the University of Southern California.

Due to labor and contractual issues within the entertainment industry, there were delays in the appointment process. It was in December 2023 that Andy Forssell, Sumi Parekh, Ruchi Bhowmik, Renard Jenkins, David O’Ferrall, and Judee Ann Williams were appointed. In June and October 2024, Jimmie Briggs and Jane Brown were appointed by the Governor to serve on the board.

In July 2024, as per legislation, Secretaries Kevin Anderson, Portia Wu, and Jake Day began serving. In September, Delegate Melissa Wells was appointed as the House of Delegates appointee. Each Council member brings valuable experience and insight related to physical production, technology and entertainment, and arts and culture, and hold or have held senior executive positions in the industry. The Council members extensive careers can be found in the bio booklet found in Appendix B.

### **2024 Meetings**

Seven (7) meetings were held in 2024 by the Council. With the exception of the first meeting being held at the Maryland Chamber of Commerce, all others were held at the World Trade Center in Baltimore, in

the offices of the Department of Commerce. All meetings were held in person with some Commissioners electing to join virtually. Meetings were held in February, March, April, May, June, September, and October.

The first activity of the Council was the review of its mission and examination of the State's assets through a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis to understand its competitive position within the film, television, and entertainment industry. The Council concluded that Maryland has a diverse landscape, available workforce and pipeline, and resources that are ideal for a variety of productions and opportunities. The Council was briefed on the mission and operational structure of the Department of Commerce and the Maryland Film Office, which is housed in the Office of Tourism and Film within the Department. Background on the entertainment productions and projects in the state were reviewed, along with the incentives offered by the state to the industry.

Throughout the year, the Council focused on examining state, local, and private assets that support the industry, including structures, models, incentives, accomplishments, and best practices of competitor states. It also researched and began discussions on collaborations related to emerging technologies and disruptive trends, while seeking to identify potential corporate and philanthropic support for industry activities.

At each meeting, Council members offered ongoing intelligence on the industry to assist in guiding the direction and focus of the Council. Throughout the year, the Council members discussed opportunities to elevate the State's attributes; build industry workforce; create a hub of innovation by incorporating an artificial intelligence (AI) lab model; leverage the resources of the Maryland State Arts Council; and further defined short and long terms goals and associated projects.

Over the course of the year, the Council refined its areas of concentration. Three (3) pillars and informal workgroups were established to guide the activities of Council. They are Arts, Culture and Major Events, Physical Productions, and the Intersection of Technology and Entertainment. These pillars and workgroups were a result of assessing the state's existing assets, opportunities, and competitive position within the industry through the studying of:

- 1) Maryland's State, local, and private assets that currently support the state's film, television and entertainment industry (including key infrastructure, existing workforce, workforce pipelines, scenic profile, emerging specialties, and independent creative communities).
- 2) Existing state programs, agencies, offices, grant programs, and commissions across State agencies that support the film, television, and entertainment industry.
- 3) Models, competitive profiles, methods and legislation that states have utilized to incentivize necessary infrastructure and workforce to support the film, television and entertainment industry.
- 4) Industry needs, disruptive trends, and emerging technologies within the film, television and entertainment industry.
- 5) Complementary industries, aligned businesses and potential corporate, philanthropic and other partners for the film, television and entertainment industry
- 6) Maryland's existing assets, opportunities, and competitive position within the film, television and entertainment industry

Building on this foundation, the Council decided that beginning in 2025, the Council will meet on a quarterly basis and the workgroups will meet more informally.

Accomplishments of the Council to date include:

- 1) Development of the three (3) pillars and associated informal workgroups
  - a. Arts, Culture and Major Events;
  - b. Physical Productions; and

- c. Intersection of Technology and Entertainment.
- 2) Submission of a Request for Information (RFI) for the 2027 relocation of the Sundance Film Festival to Maryland. This was an unprecedented effort and pitch to the Sundance Institute which highlighted the state assets to the Sundance community.
  - 3) Engagement of media and entertainment industry sponsors as partners in the Governor's Office of Service and Civic Engagement. This effort supported the advancement of the workforce in the industry.
  - 4) Engagement of the Maryland State Arts Council and the independent artist grant program to support upcoming filmmakers and associated artists in the industry.
  - 5) Coordination and engagement of the Governor to address the Maryland Film Festival and its celebration of the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. The engagement highlighted the importance and support of the industry and the commitment from the Administration to elevate the industry.
  - 6) Engagement and support of the Governor in addressing and pitching Maryland to the Motion Picture Association (MPA) Board of Directors at its annual meeting, as invited by Charles Rivkin, Chairman and CEO of the Board. This unprecedented speech to the MPA Board allowed the Governor to share his vision for Maryland as a leader in the media and entertainment industry. Governor Moore engaged and interacted with the Chief Executives of every major studio including Tom Rothman of Sony Pictures, Bela Bajara of Netflix, and JB Perrette of Warner Brothers.
  - 7) Spearheaded the legislation that expanded the Council's membership to be more inclusive, removal of the Council's sunset to reflect the industry's importance and its capabilities.
  - 8) Facilitation of Council members to elevate the visibility of the industry in Maryland and promotion of business development activities through their organizations and relationships.
  - 9) Identification of best practices from other states.
  - 10) Recommendation of the need to upgrade the State's main outward facing marketing tool – the Maryland Film Office website.
  - 11) Recommendation to eliminate the \$10 million cap per project in the Maryland film tax credit program.

Details of each meeting can be found in Appendix C.

### **Closing Statement**

The MEIC is comprised of an interdisciplinary group of experts across the field of entertainment and is charged with assessing and making recommendations in order to bolster Maryland's position in the globally-competitive media and entertainment industry. The Council reached a consensus on recommendations for the legislature and Governor that would better position Maryland's Film Office. The Council identified that the \$10 million dollar cap per project is a major obstacle in securing large budget projects that could provide great economic impact and publicity. Also, to stay competitive within the industry, it is imperative that Maryland's film incentives remain available past 2026. Current legislation would lower the incentive program back to \$12 million in 2027, which undermines Maryland's claim in the entertainment industry. Furthermore, the Council was able to secure the Governor's appearance at the Maryland Film Festival, a step towards greater engagement with the creative industries. Additionally, an RFI was submitted to the Sundance Music Festival. The Council also agreed that increasing the profile of signature Maryland events is imperative for marketing Maryland as a hub for entertainment. This requires capitalizing off events such as Preakness and National Events in DC, which should be on par with events in other states such as the Kentucky Derby. Drawing celebrity interest and utilizing new marketing strategies is vital in this regard. These adjustments would signal that Maryland is a serious player within the industry and would lead to significant economic growth in the coming years.

## APPENDIX A

### Maryland Economic Industry Council

Meryam Bouadjemi, Chair	Senior Advisor on Film, Television, and Entertainment, Office of the Governor
Kevin Anderson	Secretary, Maryland Department of Commerce
Ruchi Bhowmik	Vice President for Public Policy, Netflix
Jimmie Briggs	Principal, Skoll Foundation
Jane Brown	President and Board President, Robert W. Deutsch Foundation
Jake Day	Secretary, Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)
Andy Forssell	Former Head, HBO Max, Former CEO Hulu
Renard Jenkins	President, Society of Motion Pictures & Television Engineers, Formerly Warner Bros. Discovery
David O’Ferrall	Business Agent, Mid-Atlantic Studio Mechanics & Broadcast Technicians, Local 487, IASTE
Sumi Parekh	Executive Director, Group Effort Initiative
Melissa Wells	House Delegate, District 40, Baltimore City
Judee Ann Williams	Global Head of Impact, Creative Arts Agency (CAA) Sports
Portia Wu	Secretary, Maryland Department of Labor

#### **Commerce Support:**

Julie Woepke	Executive Director, Maryland Economic Development Commission
Tim McGowan	Council and Commission Program Specialist
Liz Fitzsimmons	Executive Director, Office of Tourism & Film
Jack Gerbes	Executive Director, Maryland Film Office
Catherine Batavick	Deputy Director, Maryland Film Office
Jerel Registre	Chief of Staff
Steven Skeritt-Davis	Executive Director, Maryland State Arts Council (MSAC)
Leslie Gillard	Executive Assistant/Council Liaison, MSAC

## Meet the Council Members



**Meryam Bouadjemi**  
**Senior Advisor to**  
**Governor Wes Moore**

### Chair

Meryam Bouadjemi is an Algerian-American filmmaker, Academy Award-shortlisted producer, and consultant based in Baltimore and Los Angeles. She is the creator and executive producer of a limited comedy-drama currently in development at Warner Brothers under her production banner, Tambourine Pictures. Previously, Bouadjemi was the sole Baltimore producer on *Charm City*, the critically acclaimed feature documentary. Bouadjemi started her industry career as an impact producer for the Emerson Collective. She served as a senior advisor at the Sundance Episodic Lab, FX's Creator Incubator, and is currently supporting the Pillars Artist Fellowship. Bouadjemi is also the founder of New Market Discovery. She is a graduate of the University of Maryland Robert H. Smith School of Business and the Peter Stark Producing Program at the University of Southern California.



**Kevin Anderson**  
**Secretary**  
Department of  
Commerce

Kevin Anderson became Maryland's Secretary of Commerce in 2023. He is Founder & CEO of Cardinal Atlantic Holdings, an economic and community development firm targeting scaled social impact and investment in urban centers. Anderson previously held leadership positions at EVERFI, Inc., City First Homes, Inc., and Jair Lynch Companies, Inc. In 2000, he served as Special Assistant to the City Administrator and Chief of Staff at the D.C. Department of Transportation. Anderson began his professional career at the investment banking firm of Pryor, McClendon, Counts & Co., Inc. in Philadelphia, PA as an Institutional Bond Salesman.





**Jake Day**  
**Secretary**

Department of Housing  
and Community  
Development

Jake Day serves as Secretary of the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development. Previously, Secretary Day served as the 28th Mayor of Salisbury, Maryland and served as City Council President. Secretary Day also worked for the Eastern Shore Land Conservancy as Director of the Center for Towns, utilizing design, planning, and development assistance to establish vibrant, sustainable small cities and towns. He served as national president of the American Institute of Architecture Students, and as editor-in-chief of CRIT, a journal of architecture. He was also elected 79th president of the Maryland Municipal League and was one of Maryland's representatives to the Chesapeake Bay Program's Local Government Advisory Committee. A U.S. Army Major, Secretary Day is a Cavalry, Information Operations, and Special Technical Operations Officer assigned to Special Operations Detachment-NATO. He is a veteran of the Global War on Terrorism and was deployed to Somalia, Kenya, and Djibouti.



**Portia Wu**  
**Secretary**

Department of Labor

Portia Wu serves as the Secretary of Labor for the State of Maryland. Secretary Wu has spent her career developing and implementing policies that benefit America's workers. Previously, Secretary Wu was Assistant Secretary for Employment and Training at the United States Department of Labor (DOL). During her time at DOL, she led the implementation of the bipartisan Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2015. Before joining DOL, Secretary Wu served at the White House Domestic Policy Council as Special Assistant and Senior Policy Advisor for Labor and Workforce. Secretary Wu also served as Labor Policy Director.



**Melissa R. Wells**  
**Delegate**

District 40, Baltimore  
City

Melissa Wells is a State Delegate representing the 40<sup>th</sup> legislative district in the Maryland General Assembly. She serves as Chief Deputy Majority Whip, Chair of the Baltimore City House Delegation, and 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Chair of the Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland. Currently she serves on the House Ways and Means Committee. She is passionate about growing the vitality of the film and production industry as well as access to sustainable careers for Marylanders in industry that offer economic security. In her professional capacity, Delegate Wells serves as Special Assistant to the President of North America's Building Trades Unions for Diversity and Inclusion. Prior to working for NABTU, Melissa spent 7 years as a Director for the Baltimore-D.C. Building Trades Council. In her role, she built and strengthened relationships with community and faith-based organizations in the Baltimore-D.C. Building Trades' region.

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**Ruchi Bhowmik**  
**Vice President for  
Public Policy**

Netflix

Ruchi Bhowmik serves as vice president of public policy, developing strategy for the Netflix relationship with key stakeholders in the United States and Canada. Prior to joining Netflix, Bhowmik was global vice chair - public policy at EY and was responsible for the firm's public policy operations in more than 150 countries. She previously served as the senior vice president for global public policy and government affairs for PepsiCo. Between 2013 and 2017 she served as chief of staff to the global CEO of EY with a focus on emerging markets and inclusive capitalism. Before entering the private sector, Bhowmik was a senior advisor to President Barack Obama. She also served as legislative director and legislative counsel to then-Senator Barack Obama. Bhowmik has served on numerous boards and commissions. She holds a B.A. in History from Yale University and received her J.D. from the University of Virginia.



**Jimmie Briggs**  
**Principal**  
Skoll Foundation

Jimmie Briggs serves as principal of the Skoll Foundation. He first joined the Foundation in 2020 with more than two decades of experience as a journalist, author and activist. Briggs was a co-founder and executive director emeritus of Man Up Campaign, a global initiative to activate youth to stop violence against women and girls. This led to his selection as the winner of the 2010 GQ Magazine “Better Men Better World” search, and as one of the Women’s eNews ‘21 Leaders for the 21st Century’. Jimmie has served as an adjunct professor of investigative journalism at the New School for Social Research and was a George A Miller Visiting Professor in the Department of African and African-American Studies at the University of Illinois: Champaign-Urbana. For a decade, he has been an adjunct teacher of documentary journalism at the International Center of Photography. As a journalist, he has written for scores of publications following staff tenures at The Washington Post, The Village Voice, LIFE magazine and others. He authored the book, *Innocents Lost: When Child Soldiers Go to War* and he currently contributes to Vanity Fair magazine.

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**Jane Brown**  
**President and Board President**  
Robert W. Deutsch  
Foundation

Jane Brown serves as the President and Board President of the Robert W. Deutsch Foundation. She has led the foundation’s grant making and operations since 1995, supporting innovations in science and technology; arts and culture; media; education; digital equity and social justice. Brown also created the Ruby’s Artist Grants Program and co-founded the Baltimore Arts Realty Corporation. Previously she worked as an editor, writer and journalist. She holds a BA and two MAs.



**Andy Forssell**  
**Former Head, HBO Max**  
**Former CEO, Hulu**

Andy Forssell most recently served as the head of HBO Max at WarnerMedia (now Warner Brothers Discovery). He previously served as the chief operating officer of Otter Media through its successful sale to AT&T. He previously served as CEO of Showyou, a video aggregation service that was sold to Vevo in 2015. Prior to Showyou, Forssell spent close to seven years at Hulu where he established and led the programming business, including its push into original programming, and finished his tenure as its interim CEO during a year in which it surpassed a billion dollars in revenue. He began his career as a cavalry officer in the U.S. Army, followed by ten years at Siebel Systems in a variety of product sales and general management roles. Forssell earned bachelor's degrees from the United States Military Academy and Carnegie Mellon University, and received his MBA from Harvard Business School.



**Renard Jenkins**  
**President**  
Society Motion Picture &  
Television Engineers

Renard Jenkins currently serves as president of the Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers. He is a recipient of numerous awards, including two national Emmys, a Peabody, 2 Headliners, a 2020 Broadcasting and Cable Technology Leadership award, and the 2017 Innovator of the Year award. Most recently he served as Warner Bros. senior vice president of Production Integration and Creative Technology Services [PICTs]. Jenkins was also the technical lead and designer of the Digital Backlot initiative which focused on extending the useful lifespan and monetization possibilities of visual effects, animation, artists, and production elements and assets across multiple content creation verticals. Prior to joining WarnerMedia and Warner Bros., Jenkins served as vice president of operations, engineering, and distribution at PBS. He also created PBS's Advanced Format Center and worked for TV One, Discovery, ESPN, and Turner Broadcasting. He is a champion and advocate for ethics, inclusion, diversity, and accessibility in the industry.



**David O'Ferrall**  
**Business Agent**  
Mid-Atlantic Studio  
Mechanics & Broadcast  
Technicians, Local 487,  
IATSE

David O'Ferrall is the business agent for Local 487, I.A.T.S.E., representing the craftspeople who work on the technical side of motion pictures, television production, and broadcast sports in Delaware, Maryland, Washington, D.C., and Virginia. His responsibilities include negotiating agreements, enforcing those agreements, assisting productions in crewing, and engaging the state legislatures on issues important to the industry such as film and television incentives. He has worked for the Local since 1992 and has served as business agent since 2011. O'Ferrall started in the industry in 1985 and has worked in various positions on motion pictures, television productions, and commercials. He holds a J.D. from the University Of Baltimore School of Law and a B.S. in Mass Communications from Towson University. He is a regional vice president for Maryland State and D.C. AFL-CIO and a member of the executive board for the Metropolitan Baltimore AFL-CIO.



**Sumi Parekh**  
**Executive Director**  
Group Effort Initiative

Sumi Parekh is the executive director for the Group Effort Initiative (GEI), an organization launched and financed by Ryan Reynolds and Blake Lively that creates a pipeline for members of underrepresented communities to get real experience toward lasting careers within the entertainment industry. Prior to her role at GEI, Parekh held several positions in the office of Los Angeles Mayor Garcetti, focusing on improving diversity, equity, and inclusion within Hollywood. She started the Evolve Entertainment Fund, dedicated to building career pathways in film, television, and music for women, people of color, and low-income Angelenos. She also helped to launch LA Collab, an unprecedented effort to connect Latinx talent, executives, and creators to opportunities in the entertainment industry. Parekh was a program manager at the Mayor's Fund for Los Angeles and was the director of legislative affairs and programs at the Los Angeles Business Council (LABC). She earned a Master's in Public Policy from the University of Southern California and a B.S. in Mathematics from the University of Texas at Austin.





**Judee Ann Williams**  
**Global Head of Impact,**  
**CAA Sports**  
Creative Artists Agency

Judee Ann Williams is the global head of impact across CAA Sports at the leading entertainment and sports agency, Creative Artists Agency (CAA). She is also the global lead of CAA Social Impact, a strategic consulting team that sits at the intersection of CAA's deeply experienced brand consulting and highly connected foundation groups. During the Obama Administration, she supported the entertainment councils for both the White House and United Service Organizations. She has advised clients including Google, Walmart, KPMG, The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Reebok, and the Alzheimer's Association among others. Additionally, Williams is a prominent member of the philanthropic community and holds various appointments on boards and advisory councils. She was named to Variety's 2019 Power of Women New York Impact List and a Champion for Children in 2019 by the Boys & Girls Club of America. Williams received her B.A. in Political Science with a minor in Business from Shepherd University.

**Contact:** Julie Woepke, Executive Director | [juliane.woepke@maryland.gov](mailto:juliane.woepke@maryland.gov) | (443) 324-0861  
**For more information:** <https://commerce.maryland.gov/commerce/maryland-entertainment-council>  
**Wes Moore, Governor** | **Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor**



## APPENDIX C



February 9, 2024  
60 West Street, Suite 100, Annapolis  
1:00pm – 2:30pm  
Minutes

### **Members in Attendance:**

Meryam Bouadjemi, Chair	Office of the Governor
Ruchi Bhowmik	Netflix – Virtual
Andy Forssell	HBO Max, Hulu – Virtual
Renard Jenkins	Formerly Warner Bros. Discovery – Virtual
David O’Ferrall	IASTE Local 487
Sumi Parekh	Group Effort Initiative – Virtual
Judee Ann Williams	Creative Arts Agency – Virtual

### **Guests:**

Jennifer LaHatte	Department of Commerce – Virtual
Julie Woepke	Department of Commerce
Jerel Registre	Department of Commerce
Walter Donohue	Department of Commerce
Liz Fitzsimmons	Department of Commerce
Jack Gerbes	Department of Commerce
Catherine Batavick	Department of Commerce
Nick Manis	Manis Canning & Associate

### **I. Meeting called to Order**

Chair Meryam Bouadjemi called the meeting to order at 1:05 PM and welcomed all members and attendees. She thanked the Maryland Chamber of Commerce for hosting the inaugural meeting of the Maryland Entertainment Council.

Chair Bouadjemi thanked the Council members for serving and emphasized the importance of the Council in creating a more equitable, competitive, and innovative economy by investing in the industries of the future. She acknowledged the breadth and wealth of talent among the Council members and relayed the gratitude of the Moore Miller Administration to Council members as well.

### **II. Welcome & Introductions**

Chair Bouadjemi opened the meeting to all members and guests to provide a brief personal introduction.

### **III. Mission of the Council**

Chair Bouadjemi reviewed the mission of the Council: to identify and leverage our assets to expand the economic impact of Media and Entertainment and to set Maryland on the path to be a leader in the future of this sector.

### **IV. Role of the Council - Governor's Economic Agenda**

On behalf of the Moore-Miller Administration, Chair Bouadjemi introduced the Governor's new State Plan and the importance of measuring the key performance indicators (KPIs) of the plan. She specifically stressed the Governor's charge of organizing an interdisciplinary slate of leaders across entertainment to shape Maryland's strategic position in the Media and Entertainment industry, as the Council's "north star." She expressed the goal of making Maryland an integral part of growing entertainment revenues, as the State could receive massive returns on investment in this industry. She noted that the focus of this Council should be on the future of the entertainment sector, and that the Moore Miller Administration has given the Council permission to 'dream big' in their recommendations.

### **V. Council Organizational Items**

Ms. Julie Woepke, Executive Director of the Maryland Economic Development Commission, began by presenting an overview of the Department of Commerce to the Council members. She briefly described the mission and operations of the Department and referenced a handout that detailed the functions of the Business and Industry Development office and the loan and grant programs; tax credits; impacts from incentives; composition and purpose of the Regional Business Growth and Retention Team; Office of International Investment and Trade; Military and Federal Affairs; Marketing and Public Relations; Maryland Marketing Partnership; Tourism; Maryland State Arts Council; Maryland Film Office; and the Boards and Commissions that partner with the Department. She cited the pages related to the Tourism and Film Offices and the Arts Council.

Ms. Woepke guided Council members through a summary of Maryland's public ethics law, highlighting the conflict-of-interest section and urging members not to use their position on the Council for personal financial gain. Ms. Woepke also referenced expense report forms and noted that members may need to file these forms if they choose to travel to Maryland's Film Festival in early May. She offered assistance.

### **VI. SWOT Analysis**

Chair Bouadjemi started her presentation with an overview of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) within Maryland's entertainment industry. She noted the entertainment industry in Maryland matches most other economic sectors, in that it is asset rich, but strategy poor.

Chair Bouadjemi praised the State for having great scenic and cultural diversity, which allows for a broad spectrum of film production possibilities. She also pointed out that Maryland's proximity to Washington, DC offers potential for Maryland to establish a fruitful relationship with DC-based entertainment programs like the White House Correspondents Dinner. Maryland's geographic location also allows for overnight travel to one-third (1/3) of the United States population, making the state a good landing spot for long-distance productions. Similarly, she noted that Maryland offers great entertainment workforce potential between its highly reputable film crews and promising undergraduate and graduate film and television programs.



As for the State's weaknesses, Chair Bouadjemi pointed to Maryland's high cost of living, lack of permanent entertainment facilities, limited depth of Union Workforce, and disjointed tax policy surrounding the Media and Entertainment Industry as reasons why the entertainment industry has not grown in the State. She proceeded to discuss the State's entertainment industry opportunities, including the increase in film production incentives, budding local live events and culture hubs, and a surging creator economy. She concluded with a discussion of potential threats to entertainment industry growth, including artificial intelligence (AI) worker displacement and related labor disputes and a competitive, rapidly evolving regional market.

## **VII. Maryland's Film Production Activity Income Tax Credit Program & Past Productions**

Mr. Jack Gerbes, Director, and Ms. Catherine Batavick, Deputy Director, from the Commerce Film Office presented a brief history of Maryland's film production tax credit programs and major productions over the last decade. They noted that Maryland's film tax credits varied significantly, having flowed up and down over the last decade.

Mr. Gerbes and Ms. Batavick discussed additional inhibitors to the growth of the entertainment industry in the State, including the inconsistency of available warehouse space for lease to production studios—especially as data centers take up a majority of warehouse real estate. Additionally, they pointed out the success of local graduate film programs but shared that most students cannot find employment in Maryland due to the low number of productions in the State. However, they expressed their optimism for the film industry thanks to Governor Moore, who is the first governor in Maryland to openly express his support for the film industry.

## **VIII. Discussion and Next Steps**

To conclude, Council members discussed setting a cadence for future meetings and inviting guest speakers from the Moore-Miller Administration. Members also discussed possible future meeting dates, and asked Commerce staff to provide information related to Maryland's existing financial incentives for entertainment infrastructure development.

## **IX. Adjournment**

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned at 2:30 PM.



March 15, 2024  
401 E. Pratt Street, 17<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room  
Baltimore  
1:00pm – 2:30pm  
**Minutes**

**Members in Attendance:**

Meryam Bouadjemi, Chair	Office of the Governor
Ruchi Bhowmik	Netflix – Virtual
Andy Forssell	HBO Max, Hulu – Virtual
Renard Jenkins	Formerly Warner Bros. Discovery – Virtual
David O’Ferrall	IASTE Local 487
Sumi Parekh	Group Effort Initiative – Virtual
Judee Ann Williams	Creative Arts Agency – Virtual

**Guests:**

Jennifer LaHatte	Department of Commerce – Virtual
Julie Woepke	Department of Commerce
Jerel Registre	Department of Commerce
Walter Donoughe	Department of Commerce
Liz Fitzsimmons	Department of Commerce
Jack Gerbes	Department of Commerce
Catherine Batavick	Department of Commerce
Portia Wu	Secretary of Labor
Ashley Sharp	Department of Labor
Tess Hetzel	Department of Service & Civic Innovation
Jonny Dorsey	Office of the Governor
Camille Blake Fall	Parkway Theatre
KJ Mohr	Maryland Film Festival
Brett Egan	Parkway Theatre

**I. Meeting called to Order**

Chair Meryam Bouadjemi called the meeting to order at 1:03 PM and welcomed all members and attendees.

**II. Minutes of the February 9, 2024 Meeting**

Upon a motion made and duly seconded, the minutes of the February 9, 2024 meeting were approved.

**III. Chair’s Report**

Chair Bouadjemi reported that she has been working with Commerce staff to make progress on the Council’s short-term initiatives discussed during the February 9, 2024 meeting. Over the last month, Chair Bouadjemi and staff reached out to businesses, organizations, and agencies that could be potential sponsors for the State’s new service year program; surveyed options for researchers; started drafting a statement of work for the Council’s industry study; and partnered with the Maryland Film Festival to host

a Governor's VIP reception before the opening night of the festival's 25th-anniversary celebration. She then invited Council members to participate in a panel interview with Governor Moore after the opening with more details to come related to programming and logistics.

#### **IV. Maryland Film Festival**

Ms. Camille Blake-Fall, Vice-Chair of the Parkway Theatre and Maryland Film Festival began the presentation with a brief overview of the Theatre's history. She discussed that the Parkway's mission is to raise awareness for emerging films and filmmakers in Baltimore and that several filmmakers who have been featured by the Parkway have since enjoyed successful careers as nationally renowned directors.

Ms. Blake-Fall introduced Mr. Brett Egan, Acting Director of the Parkway Theatre, to discuss the Parkway's evolution, current outlook, and future needs. As a nonprofit site, the Parkway is an important test case for the future of non-profit exhibition centers. Mr. Egan said that Parkway is working to rethink the value of films in the face of modern entertainment markets, and how film culture can be integrated with new media such as streaming, gaming, and augmented reality. He noted that there is still demand for a 'safe space' for independent filmmakers to network and receive training/funding. Parkway leadership has been working to meet these demands, especially following the COVID-19 pandemic, by expanding to host events to promote forms of entertainment beyond film media alone. Presentation on file.

Mr. Egan then introduced KJ Mohr, Programming Director for the Maryland Film Festival, to provide an overview of what council members could expect during the Film Festival in May. She told members that an official program would be available on April 7<sup>th</sup>.

#### **V. Service Year & Apprenticeship Programs – Opportunities for MEIC Engagement**

Mr. Jonny Dorsey, Deputy Chief of Staff to Governor Wes Moore, began with a discussion about the Maryland Council on Innovation and Impact. The Council was created by Governor Moore to connect philanthropy, government, and nonprofit organizations to make Maryland the leading site for change initiatives in the country. Mr. Dorsey explained some significant achievements of the Council, including a partnership between the Maryland Department of Health and Upstream USA to increase access to contraceptive care and increasing funding for life coaches from the Thrive Academy to help high-risk young people in Baltimore City and Baltimore County.

Mr. Dorsey transitioned the presentation to Ms. Tess Hetzel, Chief of Staff to Service and Civic Innovation Secretary Paul Monteiro, who presented information on the new service year program. Ms. Hetzel stated that Maryland has created a service year program unlike any other in the country in that the state is partnering with for-profit organizations as well as state agencies, unions, and nonprofits. She noted that participants would commit 30 hours each week during the program to work and learn at their respective organizations, and 10 hours each week would be designated for professional development programming. She said that tailoring the program to include entertainment and the arts is an exciting opportunity and planned to continue conversations with MEIC members to develop this strategy moving forward.

Ms. Hetzel then introduced Labor Secretary Portia Wu, who gave an overview of the State's Employment Advancement Right Now (EARN) grant program and registered apprenticeship reimbursement and tax credit programs. Secretary Wu expressed her excitement about expanding these programs to the media and entertainment industry, especially if existing talent related to advanced tech and gaming could be engaged as well.

#### **VI. Discussion and Next Steps**

No further items were discussed.

## **VII. Adjournment**

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned at 2:25 PM.



April 19, 2024  
401 E. Pratt Street, 17<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room  
Baltimore  
1:00pm – 2:30pm  
**Minutes**

**Members in Attendance:**

Meryam Bouadjemi, Chair	Office of the Governor
Andy Forssell	HBO Max, Hulu – Virtual
Renard Jenkins	Formerly Warner Bros. Discovery – Virtual
David O’Ferrall	IASTE Local 487
Sumi Parekh	Group Effort Initiative – Virtual

**Guests:**

Julie Woepke	Department of Commerce
Liz Fitzsimmons	Department of Commerce – Virtual
Jack Gerbes	Department of Commerce – Virtual
Catherine Batavick	Department of Commerce

**I. Meeting called to Order**

Chair Meryam Bouadjemi called the meeting to order at 1:02 PM and welcomed all members and attendees.

**II. Minutes of the March 15, 2024 Meeting**

Upon a motion made and duly seconded, the minutes of the March 15, 2024 meeting were approved.

**III. Francis Scott Key (FSK) Bridge Update**

Chair Bouadjemi explained that the FSK Bridge Collapse on March 26<sup>th</sup> and its recovery has brought national and international attention to the State and the City of Baltimore. The Governor is messaging that it is time to seize this moment, live Maryland Tough Baltimore Strong and use the incident as an opportunity to show the world the support, dedication, and remarkable assets of Maryland. For a closer look, Ms. Julie Woepke will provide a brief given by Commerce Secretary Kevin Anderson to the Maryland Economic Development Commission this week, on the Key Bridge progress and the State’s response to businesses, individuals, and families.

Ms. Woepke began the presentation by providing statistics on the impact of the Port of Baltimore with respect to jobs, income, and business, state, county, and municipal tax revenues. She reviewed the chronology of the re-opening and expected the fully operational 50 foot deep Federal Channel to be cleared by the end of May 2024. Ms. Woepke reviewed the Governor’s Executive Orders and legislative actions to help business, families, and workers impacted by the collapse. She focused on describing the business outreach surveys, the launching of a central website for resources, and the coordinated communication that has occurred in the response. She concluded by describing the Maryland Tough Baltimore Strong Alliance, which has raised \$15 million and is comprised of leaders and organizations from philanthropies, businesses, and the surrounding communities to support the

families, port workers, first responders, small businesses, and communities affected by the collapse of the FSK Bridge. Presentation on file.

#### **IV. Chair's Report**

Chair Bouadjemi began her report by stating that due to the bridge collapse and recovery efforts, several adjustments have been made to the Governor's calendar. One such adjustment is the Governor's reception at Opening Night and 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Maryland Film Festival. She explained that the reception has been removed from his calendar. However, he is committed to providing opening night remarks, which we are assisting the communication team in developing with an emphasis on the importance of the media and entertainment industry, work of the Council, and collaborations. She also stated that there are plans to invite the Council to the Government House in Annapolis this summer.

Chair Boudadjemi thanked Council member Judee Ann Williams and her colleagues at Creative Artists Agency (CAA) for a recent call to discuss the ability of CAA client base to assist in spreading the news on the bridge progress and opportunities to support. She stated that they are collaborating on the best avenues to leverage the CAA clients and that she would forward the list of clients to the Council. She also mentioned a potential additional fund that is being discussed.

She continued by stating that she had a few additional updates. Last month Secretary Paul Monterio of the Department of Service and Civic Innovation attended the Council meeting to describe the Service Year Program, first in the country. She explained the application deadline has been extended to May 1<sup>st</sup> and that she was working with the Maryland State Arts Council and the Office of Tourism & Film to submit applications. With the bridge response, she said that the State is identifying even more opportunities for young individuals to provide service.

Additionally, after the last meeting, there was a discussion about creating an Artificial Intelligence (AI) Wet Lab involving Christy Wyskiel from Johns Hopkins University Ventures, Will Castleberry, Chair of the Maryland Economic Council and Netflix Executive, and Council Member Renard Jenkins. She explained Johns Hopkins is in the process of establishing an AI Institute and is in the process of hiring professors. She explained it was a very positive conversation and that there is interest in collaboration. She also noted that the University of Maryland College Park just launched an AI Interdisciplinary Institute. Chair Bouadjemi indicated that there are also discussions with the Governor's Office to identify existing infrastructure to house an advanced production facility.

Ms. Bouadjemi and Council member Jenkins then reviewed several programs at various universities that a lab could be modeled after. Presentation on file.

Lastly, she reported that Maryland's legislative session has concluded. HB 1487 was passed and signed by the Governor which expands the number of Council members: 12 individuals who have general experience in the film, television, or entertainment industries and the Secretaries of Commerce, Labor and the Department of Housing and Community Development. It also requires the filing of annual reports to the legislature starting January 1, 2026.

Discussion occurred among the Council which included how the new members would be selected; AI lab models; a potential project at Baltimore Peninsula; need for further discussion on apprenticeships; schedule for the Maryland Film Festival; movement of productions to Pennsylvania for lower wage rates; and update on service year program.

#### **V. Good of the Order**

No further items were discussed.

## **VI. Adjournment**

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned at 2:01 PM.



May 2, 2024

VIA Google Meet

Meeting ID [meet.google.com/wza-tupb-uzo](https://meet.google.com/wza-tupb-uzo)

Phone Numbers (US)+1 304-981-5496

PIN: 685 692 927#

1:00pm – 2:00pm

**Minutes**

**Members in Attendance:**

Meryam Bouadjemi, Chair	Office of the Governor
Andy Forssell	HBO Max, Hulu
Renard Jenkins	Formerly Warner Bros. Discovery
David O’Ferrall	IASTE Local 487
Judee Ann Williams	Creative Artists Agency (CAA)

**Guests:**

Julie Woepke	Department of Commerce
Liz Fitzsimmons	Department of Commerce
Jack Gerbes	Department of Commerce

**I. Meeting called to Order**

Chair Meryam Bouadjemi called the meeting to order at 1:00 PM.

**II. Minutes of the April 17, 2024 Meeting**

Upon a motion made and duly seconded, the minutes of the April 17, 2024 meeting were approved.

**III. Administrative Items**

Ms. Julie Woepke, Department of Commerce reviewed the list of attendees for the opening night for the Maryland Film Festival and the confirmed reservations for the hotel.

**IV. Chair’s Report**

Chair Meryam Bouadjemi, provided updates on the following:

- Opening Night and the Governor’s remarks and planned interaction with the Council.
- Submission of the Sundance Request for Information to the Sundance Film Festival. Letter to be forwarded to the Council.
- Thanked Judee Ann Williams of CAA for her assistance with connections with clients to support the Maryland Tough Baltimore Strong Alliance and other opportunities with the State.
- She reminded Council members to forward the link to the Governor’s Appointments Office to potential candidates.
- Plans are underway for a reception this summer at the Government House with new Councilmembers.



**V. Good of the Order**

Councilmember Williams suggested a group calendar of events to coordinate when Council members or clients may be in town.

**VI. Adjournment**

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned at 1:20 PM.



June 28, 2024  
401 E. Pratt Street, 17<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room  
Baltimore  
1:00pm – 2:30pm  
**Minutes**

**Members in Attendance:**

Meryam Bouadjemi, Chair	Office of the Governor
Jimmie Briggs	Skoll Foundation
Andy Forssell	HBO Max, Hulu
Renard Jenkins	Warner Bros. Discovery
David O’Ferrall	IASTE Local 487
Sumi Parekh	Group Effort Initiative
Secretary Kevin Anderson	Department of Commerce
Chuck Cook for Secretary Jake Day	Department of Housing & Community Dev.
Ashley Sharp for Sec. Portia Wu	Department of Labor

**Guests:**

Julie Woepke	Department of Commerce
Jack Gerbes	Department of Commerce
Catherine Batavick	Department of Commerce
Jerel Registre	Department of Commerce
Steven Skeritt-Davis	Department of Commerce
Leslie Gillard	Department of Commerce

**I. Meeting called to Order**

Chair Meryam Bouadjemi called the meeting to order at 1:06 PM.

**II. Minutes of the May 2, 2024 Meeting**

Upon a motion made and duly seconded, the minutes of the May 2, 2024 meeting were approved.

**III. Chair’s Report**

Chair Bouadjemi began her remarks by reminding members of the shared calendar and encouraged members to add cultural events that could help elevate the media and entertainment industry in the state and Maryland’s visibility globally. She added that in addition to the Council’s role in advising, the Administration seeks the Council’s partnership in bringing opportunities in the form of introductions, projects, and investors. She noted that partnerships will be extremely valuable during the AI Lab discussion to bring institutes and labs to fruition. She thanked Andy Forssell for his support with the request for information (RFI) response to the Sundance Institute for the International Film Festival pitch and letter.

Chair Bouadjemi then introduced the Council’s newest member, Jimmie Briggs, Principle of the Skoll Foundation and welcomed him to give his background and interests.

#### **IV. Governor's Office Update**

Chair Bouadjemi reported on behalf of Manny Welsh, Deputy Chief of Staff. She recently met with Mr. Welsh and was reminded of the severity of the State's budget for FY2025 and beyond. This budget will impact the funding of both existing and future projects, highlighting the need to support top-line priorities. She added that the Council prioritizes business development and seeks to assist with attraction and scaling the State's economy. She stated the Administration is seeking actionable plans that can be implemented and added based on the importance of building capacity within the Department to avail new opportunities.

#### **V. Maryland State Arts Council**

Chair Bouadjemi stated that she recently had the honor of attending the Maryland State Arts Council (MSAC) meeting where she updated the Council on the MEIC's purpose and initiatives. MSAC expressed interest in coordination with the Council. At the meeting, she also learned of the grant program that supports independent filmmakers in the State. She then turned the presentation to Steven Skerritt-Davis, MSAC Executive Director, to provide an overview of the Council and the array of programs and grants available for the creative industry. Presentation on file.

#### **VI. Artificial Intelligence (AI) Lab Concept**

Council member Renard Jenkins, was introduced and presented the AI Lab Prospect Report which outlined the elements of an incubator, suggested partnerships, commercial impact probability, and the fastest areas of growth within the integration of AI in media and entertainment. He then described several models to consider and research for applicability in Maryland.

Mr. Jenkins took questions from the Council.

#### **VII. Good of the Order**

Chair Bouadjemi inquired whether any of the members had additional information to share. Discussion occurred on the date for the next meeting. It was the consensus to hold the next meet in September.

#### **VIII. Adjournment**

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned at 2:25 PM.



September 6th, 2024  
401 E. Pratt Street, 17<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room  
Baltimore  
1:00pm – 2:30pm  
**Minutes**

**Members in Attendance:**

Meryam Bouadjemi, Chair	Office of the Governor
Jimmie Briggs	Skoll Foundation - Virtual
Ruchi Bhowmik	Netflix - Virtual
Renard Jenkins	Formerly Warner Bros. Discovery – Virtual
David O’Ferrall	IASTE Local 487
Frank Dickson for Secretary Jake Day	Department of Housing & Community Development
Caroline Bauk for Secretary Portia Wu	Department of Labor – Virtual
Jerel Registre for Secretary Kevin Anderson	Department of Commerce

**Guests:**

Sarah Flammang	Department of Service and Civic Innovation
Julie Woepke	Department of Commerce
Jack Gerbes	Department of Commerce
Catherine Batavick	Department of Commerce
Tim McGowan	Department of Commerce
Steven Skerritt-Davis	Department of Commerce
Emily Sollenberger	Department of Commerce - Virtual

**I. Meeting called to Order**

Chair Meryam Bouadjemi called the meeting to order at 1:03 PM.

**II. Minutes of the June 28, 2024 Meeting**

Chair Bouadjemi announced an amendment to the minutes to include Steven Skerritt-Davis and Leslie Gillard to the meeting attendance. Upon a motion made and duly seconded, the amended minutes of June 28, 2024, were approved.

**III. Chair’s Report**

Chair Bouadjemi gave a presentation of the Chair’s Report, which included a recap of the previous meeting and a brief overview of the focus and goals of the MEIC. First, she proposed that the Council meet on a quarterly instead of monthly basis and to have smaller groups meet more frequently. These smaller groups would be organized based on key areas of focus, which include physical production, technology and entertainment, and arts, culture, and promotion. Meeting in these smaller groups will lead to focused discussions and provide more flexibility with the Council members schedules. The Council approved of the changes and Meryam said she will send a follow-up email with more details.

Chair Bouadjemi continued by discussing some of the MEIC's accomplishments, such as increasing sponsorships at the Maryland Film Festival and engaging with the Governor. Additionally, Chair Bouadjemi articulated the importance of increasing the profile of signature Maryland events, such as Preakness and national events in DC. She expressed the Governor's desire to elevate Preakness' reputation to that of the Kentucky Derby, which can be accomplished by attracting celebrities and pursuing new marketing avenues.

Chair Boudajemi invited Jerel Registre to give a brief overview of the strategic plan. Mr. Registre explained the development of the plan, which utilized Vision Planning Consultants and McKinsey + Associates to draft the initial research and then the Maryland Economic Development Commission's expertise to provide strategic direction. Mr. Registre explained that following the feedback from the Governor, key areas were identified within the initial subsectors to provide further focus to the economic plan. Thus, the initial subsectors of life sciences, technology, and manufacturing were converted to computational biology, quantum computing, and aerospace, with a focus on navigation hardware and artificial intelligence in all sectors. Mr. Registre explained that Maryland can be a leader in these industries due to its highly educated population and its current standing within these fields. Furthermore, he urged the Council to evaluate how these developments effect the MEIC's outlook, specifically on how AI and quantum could affect the entertainment industry and create new opportunities.

#### **IV. Film Incentive Report**

Chair Bouadjemi referenced the presentation on the research that was conducted focusing on film incentive comparisons. She thanked Mr. Timothy McGowan for conducting the research and welcomed the Council to reference the larger presentation throughout the discussion. Chair Bouadjemi continued by highlighting some of the main takeaways, which included eliminating the \$10 million cap per project provision, updating the website, and exploring new marketing strategies. She illustrated the Maryland Film Office website which appears outdated compared to our near competitors such as North Carolina and Virginia. She urged the Council to explore ways the Film Office can better position itself without increasing incentives given the budgetary challenges the state faces.

The discussion was opened to the Council. Councilmember Ruchi Bhowmik noted that the Governor of New Jersey was deeply involved in events regarding the entertainment industry and that he is positioning the state for long term growth. Also, she noted that other film offices are more engaged, regularly flying out to Los Angeles and New York City for intelligence. Ms. Catherine Batavick mentioned that she recently attended the Association of Film Commissioners International (AFCI) Event in Los Angeles. She talked to experts in the industry and explained that while the entertainment sector is facing economic challenges, film production companies are gearing up for 2025. While production budgets may remain low, the number of projects is expected to increase in next year. With that in mind, Ms. Batavick reiterated that the Maryland Film Office is focused on securing projects with independent production companies, which usually have lower production budgets. Councilmember David O'Farrell added that the intelligence gathered is proof that these trips are vital. The Council agreed that the Film Office's low marketing budget was an obstacle to the State's success in the industry.

Mr. O'Farrell said that Kentucky was able to spread out their modest incentive program over 75 projects by attracting small film productions. In his opinion, this secured more jobs than spending all their incentives on one huge show. Also, Mr. O'Farrell opposed eliminating the \$10 million cap per project as he prefers utilizing smaller film production companies. He also said that the cap was not an obstacle in securing Lady in the Lake, so there would be no need to eliminate the provision. Mr. Jack Gerbes responded that Lady in the Lake was an unusual circumstance as they would not have been able to secure the show had the budget approximations been accurate. Ms. Julie Woepke proposed instating a waiver, which would allow the Film Office to utilize more than \$10 million if there was a project of particular significance. Ms. Ruchi Bhowmik was in favor of this proposal.

Furthermore, Mr. Renard Jenkins and Mr. O'Farrell addressed changes in the industry. Mr. Jenkins noted that certain independent production companies are changing their financial structures and are putting more money in the hands of creators. Also, some shows and movies are infusing gaming aspects into their projects, which increases engagement with the audience. Mr. O'Farrell mentioned that production companies are improving ways to profit off streaming services, such as having their shows on multiple streaming services despite being competitors. Also, Mr. Jimmie Briggs was wondering whether Maryland can capitalize off the SXSW festival.

The Council then engaged in general discussion.

#### **V. Governor's Service Year Report**

Chair Bouadjemi invited Deputy Secretary Sarah Flammang to give a presentation on the Department of Services and Civic Innovation's (DSCI) Service Year Option. Sarah Flammang explained that DSCI is placing high school graduates and transitioning adults in work placements to prepare them for their next professional steps. The second class launches on September 11<sup>th</sup> and is expected to have over 500 members, which is going to grow to 2000 by 2026. While the program supports all industries, 20% of the class had apprenticeships in the creative industries, which include social media, digital media, digital marketing, and community outreach roles. Ms. Flammang urged the Council to think of ways it could support these young adults within the entertainment industry. The Council noted that growing the talent within the entertainment industry is vital to Maryland's success. Also, the MEIC plans to leverage this program as an incentive for production companies to invest in the state.

#### **VI. Good of the Order**

No additional information was shared.

#### **VII. Adjournment**

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned at 2:28 PM.

**DRAFT MINUTES to be reviewed at the Council’s January 31, 2025 Meeting**



October 4, 2024  
401 E. Pratt Street, 17<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room  
Baltimore  
2:00pm – 3:30pm  
**DRAFT Minutes**

**Members in Attendance:**

Meryam Bouadjemi, Chair	Office of the Governor
Jimmie Briggs	Skoll Foundation - Virtual
Andy Forssell	Formerly HBO Max, Hulu
Renard Jenkins	Formerly Warner Bros. Discovery – Virtual
Sumi Parekh	Group Effort Initiative
Andrew Fuliniti for Secretary Portia Wu	Department of Labor – Virtual
Julie Woepke for Secretary Kevin Anderson	Department of Commerce

**Guests:**

Athena Hernandez	Office of the First Lady
Pansy Watson	Maryland Ethics Commission
Jennifer Gibbons	Entertainment Software Associates
John Favazza	Manis Canning & Associates
Jack Gerbes	Department of Commerce
Catherine Batavick	Department of Commerce – Virtual
Steven Skerritt-Davis	Department of Commerce – Virtual

**I. Meeting called to Order**

Chair Meryam Bouadjemi called the meeting to order at 2:03 PM.

**II. Minutes of the September 6, 2024, Meeting**

Chair Bouadjemi welcomed the Council to review the minutes and offer any amendments. Council Member Renard Jenkins suggested changing his title to “Former Warner Bros. Discovery” to better reflect his employment status. Upon a motion made and duly seconded, the amended minutes of September 6, 2024, were approved.

**III. Ethics Commission Update**

The enactment of House Bill 1487 of 2024 altered the Council’s membership, in addition to renaming it the Maryland Entertainment Industry Council, expanding its capabilities, staggering terms, removing the sunset provision, granting it the authority to hire consultants, and requiring the submission of an annual report. Due to the Council’s increased authority, each Council member is required to submit a financial

disclosure statement. Chair Bouadjemi invited Pansy Watson, representative of the Maryland Ethics Commission, to give a presentation on public ethics law and the process of submitting financial disclosures. She started the presentation by giving an overview of the functions and purpose of the Maryland Ethics Commission, which establishes ethical guidelines and financial disclosure reporting for elected and public officials, state employees, and board and commission members. Mrs. Watson then continued by describing the various conflicts of interest, which include participation in matters one or a qualifying relative has a vested interest in, conflicting employment, receiving gifts, utilizing one's prestige, and releasing confidential information. Finally, Mrs. Watson explained where the council members can find the financial disclosure form and how to complete it. She assured the Council that it is a quick process and that the commission was there to aid them if needed. Presentation on file.

A few questions were raised during the presentation. For example, Executive Director Julie Woepke was wondering whether the members that were appointed in December would still be able to apply for exemptions. Pansy Watson said they would likely be able to but that she would check with her team. Furthermore, Meryam Bouadjemi was wondering if Ruchi Bhowmik's employment at Netflix would pose any problems for her membership on the Council. Mrs. Watson said it would be fine if there were no direct dealings between Netflix and the Council.

#### **IV. Chair's Report**

Chair Bouadjemi described the Governor's appearance at the Motion Picture Association (MPA) Board of Directors meeting. Some of the most important industry leaders were in attendance, including representatives from Warner Bros, Paramount, Sony, Disney, and Netflix. Governor Moore's speech conveyed a long-term commitment to the entertainment industry, signaling to the attendees that Maryland is a destination for film productions.

Chair Bouadjemi continued by announcing that the Council will support the removal of the cap per project provision. She acknowledged Council Member David O'Farrell's opposition to the reform and explained that his concerns were valid. Chair Bouadjemi reiterated that the Council will make bolder recommendations the following year, which could include increased funding for Maryland's film tax credit program. However, such recommendations cannot be submitted to Governor Moore given the budgetary landscape and the MEIC's recent establishment. Chair Bouadjemi explained that it is important to first demonstrate the MEIC's capabilities and successes before promoting a bold plan. Supporting the removal of the cap per project is a good first step in signaling serious reform while not making unrealistic demands.

Additionally, Chair Bouadjemi discussed the workgroups that were created, which will meet independently between MEIC meetings. Council Member Jimmie Briggs agreed to lead the Arts, Culture, and Promotion workgroup. The other two workgroups, Physical Production and Technology and Entertainment, are to be formalized in the coming weeks. She explained that an email will be sent out with further information on the workgroups and that members can provide feedback on the proposed plan.

Finally, Chair Bouadjemi introduced Athena Hernandez, the Chief of Staff to the First Lady. Mrs. Hernandez thanked the Chair for inviting her and described her eagerness to work with the Council. She spoke about Preakness, a horse racing competition held in Maryland each year. She urged the MEIC to elevate the event's status and reach to match that of the Kentucky Derby. Mrs. Hernandez hoped that a performing arts element could be integrated into Preakness to give it a broader appeal.

#### **V. Entertainment Software Associates**

Chair Bouadjemi invited Jennifer Gibbons, representative of Entertainment Software Associates (ESA), to give a presentation on the video game industry, which provided demographic and economic data on the industry. For example, she provided male vs. female participations statistics, age participation statistics,



device usage, motivations to play, and top genres. On the economic side, the number of jobs created in the US, contributions to total GDP, contributions to tax revenue, and employment data were provided. What was particularly useful was that the presentation displayed both national data and Maryland specific statistics. For example, the total economic impact of the Maryland Video Game Industry is \$1 billion and covers 3,687 jobs. This places Maryland as the 12<sup>th</sup> best state for video game employment and economic output. Overall, the presentation highlighted that the video game industry is exponentially growing and a significant contributor to the creative economy. Presentation on file.

Council member Renard Jenkins thanked Mrs. Gibbons for her presentation and stated his support for investing in this industry. He continued by saying that the video game industry contracted in 2024 and asked Mrs. Gibbons if this was only seen within the dominant video game companies or whether it was an industry-wide phenomenon. Mrs. Gibbons was unsure about the financial situation of small firms so was unable to provide a proper analysis of the industry. However, she assured Mr. Jenkins that the industry is facing temporary challenges but that the long-term trends are still exponential and positive.

## **VI. Good of the Order**

Chair Bouadjemi directed Timothy McGowan to send an email to the Council with the Maryland Ethics Commission link and all the meeting materials. The next MEIC meeting will be held January 31<sup>st</sup>.

## **VII. Adjournment**

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned at 3:28pm.