

REVISED MOTION BY SUPERVISORS SHEILA KUEHL AND MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS

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Supporting the Growth of the Los Angeles County Film and Digital Media Industry

The creative economy has been a continuous and important pillar of the Los Angeles region. Numerous studies and reports have cited the importance of the creative industries, which encompass the fields of arts, sports, entertainment and culture, to the broader well-being of the regional economy. The Otis College of Art and Design, in their 2018 annual report, identified 12 key industry sectors ~~that comprise~~ within the creative economy, including entertainment, digital media, visual and performing arts, and art galleries, to name a few. Together, these 12 sectors are responsible for a total economic output of \$198 billion and generate \$9 billion in tax revenues in the LA Region.

One of the strongest and fastest-growing industries within the creative economy is the Film and Digital Media Industry. In a recent report – Film and Digital Media Industry: Los Angeles County Perspective – commissioned by the Los Angeles County Chief Executive Office (CEO), Beacon Economics reports that the LA County Film and Digital Media Industry not only grew faster than the national rate of growth for this industry but also is growing faster than the rest of the County’s economy. The industry

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RIDLEY-THOMAS	_____
HAHN	_____
BARGER	_____
KUEHL	_____

added 49,500 jobs between 2011 and 2016, for a total of 640,500 jobs, and is projected to grow by more than 16,000 jobs in the next three years. This consistent growth has been of great benefit to the regional economy and has translated into more than \$58 billion in income for labor and \$158 billion in annual economic output.

In spite of growing competition from regions across the country, Los Angeles continues to lead the nation in this industry. Beacon Economics attributes this to LA's core strength and continuing role as a national leader in the Film Sector, which has been additionally strengthened by the emergence of Digital Media. Additionally, the Film and Digital Media Industry in Los Angeles is bolstered by a skilled and talented workforce and by the entire sector's long term infrastructure, which has also fed the steady growth of related industries.

Historically, however, the workforce in both "above-" and "below-the-line" occupations has failed to represent the rich ethnic and racial diversity of Los Angeles. The industry in LA County has traditionally relied on strong and close-knit professional networks that kept those who were already in the industry employed and only added only those new talent with access to those networks ~~as new talent~~. As a result, people of color were routinely excluded. Although change has been slow, there has been some progress in the last 10 years, with racial minorities outpacing growth over non-Hispanic whites in the industry. Still, recent campaigns such as #oscarsowhite and #metoo and what they represent speak to the need for the industry to increase its efforts towards inclusion. Increasingly diverse audiences and global media consumption are adding pressure on the industry to diversify.

There is no better place for the industry to find that diverse talent than Los

Angeles, which is one of the most diverse regions in the world and also a hub that attracts global talent. At the same time, the industry has experienced significant changes due to the emergence of digital distribution of content and emerging online platforms that present fewer barriers to entry. These have provided more opportunities for diverse voices and perspectives and allowed for a growing number of small digital media firms across the County with concentrations in eastern parts of the County and west and southwest of downtown Los Angeles, traditional strongholds in the industry.

The strong and continued growth in the LA Film and Digital Media Industry, combined with an increasing demand for diverse voices and perspectives, creates opportunities for collaboration between the County, industry employers and stakeholders, unions, local talent and other intermediaries such as community-based organizations and colleges dedicated to developing that talent. The County has worked on strengthening its relationship with the industry through the CEO's Film Liaison and by its efforts to address issues concerning permits, fees and enforcement. The County now has the opportunity to advance more expansive goals as outlined in the recommendations of the Beacon Economics report including supporting the industry's efforts to develop and attract diverse talent into its ranks, create opportunities for the emerging digital sectors in underrepresented communities and connect the LA Film and Digital Media Industry to global markets.

WE I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors direct the CEO to work with the Department of Workforce Development, Aging and Community Services (WDACS), the Arts Commission, the Department of Consumer and Business Affairs (DCBA), and any other relevant County departments or partners; as well as non-County

entities such as labor organizations and educational entities such as the various Community College Districts and school districts in the County to develop a County Plan based on key recommendations outlined in the Beacon Economics report, and report back to the Board in 90 days, with a plan that includes the following:

1. A proposal for the development of a Film and Digital Media career pathway program led by WDACS that serves targeted populations, including County clients, and is incorporated into workforce development programs offered across County Departments. This program should include:
 - a) Collaboration with intermediaries that have a proven track record of preparing and connecting participants to career opportunities in the Film and Digital Media Industry, in order to develop a pathway for targeted populations, and County clients, into those programs;
 - b) Collaboration with intermediaries, employers and unions in the Film and Digital Media Industry to develop job readiness standards that can be applied across all County programs responsible for referring participants to vocational training programs, internships or employment in the creative economy;
 - c) Collaboration with intermediaries, employers and unions in the Film and Digital Media industries to identify and support the development of additional vocational training curricula and apprenticeships needed to meet workforce demands in occupations with projected growth; and
 - d) Proposed metrics to evaluate the outcomes of the program.

2. A proposal to support local emerging businesses within the Film and Digital Media Industry, such as growing number of small digital media firms. This should include an evaluation of the County's ability to facilitate and support the development of digital media incubators and the possibility of developing concierge services especially tailored for small, emerging businesses within the creative industries.
3. A proposal to create the first Los Angeles County International Forum on Film and Digital Media that connects legacy and emerging segments of LA County's Film and Digital Media Industry with international markets, provides a venue for the exchange of innovative strategies and best practices, and provides opportunities to further diversify the Film and Digital Media Industry and secure new investments in the Los Angeles region. This proposal should include:
 - a) A proposed budget and timeline for planning the Forum;
 - b) An analysis of local small businesses that would most benefit from increased foreign direct investment in the Film and Digital Media Industry; and
 - c) Strategies to retain talent in the region and maintain Los Angeles County's role as the leading hub for the creative economy.
4. A process to identify both public and private funding resources related to the creation of the County Plan outlined in the above directives, along with a proposed budget for the implementation of these economic development programs for the Film and Digital Media Industry.

5. Direct the Chief Executive Officer to work with the Los Angeles County Legislative Delegation to advocate for and support legislation which promotes the growth of the creative economy.

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