

## Bill Would Give Filmmakers Tax Break

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City council members have agreed to support a piece of legislation that would have significant influence in the future of Santa Clarita's role in major film and television productions.

Assembly Bill 777 would provide a 12 percent refundable tax credit of qualified wages and vendor spending, and could be applied against state income tax. An eligible film or television production must fall into a certain budget amount in order to qualify for this tax credit.

The council will provide statements of support to State Assembly Speaker Fabian Nunez and several other politicians involved in the bill's production.

"In the past, we've had dozens of films shot here every year," said Jason Crawford, film administrator for the city. Now, rather than stay for a month, a feature will film for only a few days.

Tax incentives in Australia, Canada and other U.S. states have attracted film production, to the detriment of workers throughout California's communities.

"This will help us level the playing field," said Crawford. "This bill will translate to more spending in the local economy."

Runaway production is a significant issue for Santa Clarita, where a large population of residents are employed by the film industry.

Crawford illustrates the effects of runaway production on the city by providing the recent "The Dukes of Hazzard" film as an example of the hazards of runaway production.

Much of the original television show was shot in and around the Santa Clarita Valley. When producers considered locations for the feature film, Santa Clarita was among the potential sites. However, producers chose to shoot the film in Louisiana due to its appealing tax incentives.

"People think of the glamorous part of film," said Crawford. However, he explains that 90 out of the 100 people who might work on a film set are average citizens who work a regular job.

"We're losing those jobs," Crawford explained. "It is our neighbors that are being affected."

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