SAN JUAN COUNTY COMMISSION

Lori Maughan — Chair
Jamie Harvey — Vice-Chair
Silvia Stubbs — Commissioner
Mack McDonald — Administrator

February 11, 2026

Re: Letter of Support – Rural Incentive Program Funding

To Whom It May Concern:

The San Juan County Board of Commissioners unanimously supports the Request for Appropriation (RFA) to extend the Rural Utah Film Incentive Program, a $12 million annual tax credit program requested by Senator Jerry Stevenson.

We respectfully ask that this RFA be prioritized in the State budget. With the assistance of former County Commissioner Bruce Adams, San Juan County actively advocated for the creation of the original legislation to provide competitive incentives for film production in rural Utah, particularly in San Juan County.

The film industry has been part of San Juan County's history since John Ford brought John Wayne to the area more than 100 years ago. Since that time, filmmaking has consistently supported our local economy here in Utah. Our residents have played a meaningful role in this industry, showcasing our culture, landscapes, and communities to audiences around the world.

We appreciated the Legislature's renewal of the program in 2024 after early results demonstrated clear success in expanding rural film activity and generating economic impact. San Juan County has directly benefited from productions such as Kevin Costner's *Horizon* and, most recently, *Tomahawk Springs*, an award-winning film at this year's Sundance Film Festival.

Over the past two years, film productions have spent $423,573 in San Juan County on hotels, restaurants, and local crew wages. The Rural Utah Film Incentive Program is achieving the Legislature's stated goals by leveraging private investment, delivering measurable statewide economic impact, and operating within established fiscal guardrails.

For San Juan County, these incentive funds are essential to remaining competitive with other filming locations. We know that without this program, *Horizon* would not have been filmed in Utah, and the production studio now operating in Washington County would not be located in this state without Utah's willingness to provide competitive incentives.

While it may be easy to underestimate the reach of these incentives, the long-term economic benefits are substantial. Film productions continue to generate tourism long after filming concludes. San Juan County still benefits from iconic films such as *Forrest Gump*, *Transformers*, and *Thelma & Louise*, as visitors from around the world travel to our region to experience these filming locations firsthand.

In a year when every public dollar matters, the Rural Utah Film Incentive Program remains one of the State's most measurable and effective economic development tools. From our perspective, this program represents a smart investment that delivers real, verifiable returns to San Juan County and supports economic diversification in the rural communities that need it most.

Sincerely

Lori Maughan, Commission Chair

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