



North Carolina
Department of Commerce
Division of Tourism, Film, and Sports Development

Pat McCrory, Governor
Sharon Allred Decker, Secretary

Aaron L. Syrett, Director

June 29, 2014

Richard Lindenmuth
Interim CEO
Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina

RE: EDP Offer

Dear Richard;

I am in receipt of the offer to join the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina ("EDP"). I appreciate the confidence the EDP has in me to continue a job I have excelled at for the past 15 years (8 years in Utah and 7 years in North Carolina). However, in good consciousness, I cannot commit to the time frame outlined to accept the offer, due to the lack of certainty provided and the current legislative atmosphere surrounding the film industry.

When the PPP was first pitched to the employees at the department of commerce its purpose was to:

- Be more nimble
- Attract high-level talent
- Pay a competitive private industry wage
- Create a bonus structure tied toward performance
- Offer Competitive private sector benefits

The employees were also told that a severance package would be offered, regardless of being asked to join the PPP due to the reduction in force (RIF) process by the State of North Carolina. A requirement of a mandatory resignation was never presented as an option.

Moreover, the offers presented to me and the staff of the North Carolina Film Office do not meet the standards originally set forth, nor do they give perspective employees any certainty of what they are to expect. The only commitment offered by the EDP are intentions, yet we are expected to give the EDP certainty by an arbitrary date and time of Monday June 30th at noon. That is less than two business days to make a very important and life altering decision.

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As you may or may not be aware, the film industry in North Carolina is undergoing a drastic change that may limit our ability to continue to grow North Carolina's film industry. I expect, as in any other private sector company, we will be judged on productivity. With this looming uncertainty and not knowing what will be in our tool kit, I cannot consciously commit to something on June 30th when this possibility of change will not be resolved for another two weeks. Nor, would I expect or want my staff to commit to something without having all the answers.

Furthermore, I have been asked again to eliminate one person off my staff without any consultation of what impacts that may or my not have. This reduction will result in a 50% loss of staff since 2009. There is a point of diminishing returns.

To that end, I am very concerned for the future of my staff; they have been given hypothetical unproven conditions and a pathway for questions to be answered at a later date, without any increase in compensation that would compete with any private sector position. Also, I was disheartened to learn human resource representatives were not made available the past two days to council employees on their options. How can people be expected to make a human resource decision with zero participation from human resources? As an executive level position I have serious concerns this process does not foster compassion or build an institution of confidence needed to create a successful new corporation.

When I was recruited to North Carolina over 7 years ago, it was very clear the offer I accepted. North Carolina was not in the top 20 states for film production. We worked hard and created one of the smartest programs in the nation. We were able to do this because we knew our tools and limitations. North Carolina is once again a leader in the motion picture and television industries. I am confident we can continue this trend if we know what all our tools will be, therefore, I am asking you to retract your offers until a more appropriate time when we can make an educated decision that will benefit all involved parties.

Best regards,



Aaron Lee Syrett
Director, North Carolina Film Office

CC:

Secretary Sharon Decker
Timothy Mayes
Witt Tuttle
Guy Gaster
Cheryl Mauro