

Lawmakers make another attempt to bring filmmakers to Missouri BY JOY MAZUR

JEFFERSON CITY — A bill that would incentivize filmmakers to film in Missouri by giving them tax breaks was heard Tuesday by the Senate Committee on Economic Development.

Bringing moviemakers to the state has been a point of discussion since the provisions of a similar bill ended in 2013, the same year that hit thriller *Gone Girl* wrapped in Cape Girardeau. Since then, films shot in Missouri have dwindled as filmmakers favor states with better financial incentives. Sen. Denny Hoskins, R-Warrensburg, is the sponsor of SB732. Although it has provisions similar to a House bill passed in 2019, it is not the same.

The bill would grant filmmakers a tax credit equal to 20% of their qualifying expenses. An additional 5% each could also be granted if several conditions are met, including filming more than half of a project in Missouri, filming more than 15% in a rural area, hiring Missouri residents in specialized positions and providing positive advertisement for the state.

Hoskins also emphasized that the bill is different than the one that ended in 2013 because the tax credit could only be issued after economic development had occurred. Up to \$16 million a year in tax credits could be issued.

Steph Shannon, director of the Kansas City Film Office, was one of several filmmakers who testified in support of the bill. .

“(Gone Girl) spent \$7.9 million in Missouri,” Shannon said. “The state gave, in tax credits, \$2.36 million back. That leaves \$5.5 million in the state.”

Filmmaker and actress Michelle Davidson testified that most of her filmmaking work required her to leave the state for other states, like Georgia or the Carolinas.

“State film incentives decide where billions of dollars are spent,” Davidson said. “And we want to be there with a seat at that table.”

No one spoke in opposition to the bill.