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September 10, 2024

We are writing to you, on behalf of the members of IATSE Local 634, IATSE Local 411, and ACTRA, to denounce the feature film *40 Acres*, which was shot in our jurisdiction and under our respective collective agreements through the late summer and fall of 2023. Is it profoundly disappointing to learn that *40 Acres* is being showcased at TIFF this year while there are significant outstanding payments to employees and vendors.

When *40 Acres* was first announced and confirmed to film in our jurisdiction, we were all thrilled. The *40 Acres* film production came at a time while the film industry was just starting to make a recovery from the impact the writer's and actor's strikes in the U.S. had across North America. A film of this size coming to Sudbury was going to bring much needed work to Northern Ontario. Not only does a film production of this size benefit local cast and crew, it also provides vital business for local rental companies and small businesses.

Unfortunately, the producers of *40 Acres* left town with unpaid invoices and unpaid wages. The actions of this production company is highly troubling and highlights their disregard for professional ethics and responsibility. All of the unions had to take various measures to pursue payment for their member's wages and kit rentals, some of which are still unpaid to date. We estimate our members combined are still owed tens of thousands of dollars, and vendors are owed substantially more. We pride ourselves on how positive this industry is for our local economy but the producers of *40 Acres* have left many people wondering, for nearly a year now, when they will be compensated for their services rendered. The vendors feel disheartened and ignored. There has not been adequate communication from the producers on this matter.

Our members are all passionate about what they do every day on set and want to see every project they work on be a success, so as the film enjoys its moment in the spotlight, let's also not forget that unpaid wages and leaving local businesses unpaid are actions that are detrimental to our industry and local economy. Crew members have spent years building and fostering working relationships with many local businesses. After the producers of *40 Acres* left unpaid invoices and failed to maintain contact with these vendors, our crew members and other productions are now met with hesitation instead of elation when they are seeking services from local businesses on behalf of film productions. Some businesses are understandably refusing to provide their services to any film productions.

We will no longer stay silent while Jennifer Holness and the other producers of *40 Acres* promote their film at a time when so many people are still wondering when they'll be compensated for the work it took to get this project to where it is today.

We understand if the film cannot be pulled from the remainder of your festival lineup, but we hope that this film will be disqualified from any award recognition while some of the actors, crew, and vendors remain unpaid. We hope the organizers of TIFF can show their support for the hardworking cast and crew of *40 Acres* in this decision. The making of *40 Acres* should not have come at the expense of the well-being and financial security of its cast and crew.

Sincerely,



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