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For immediate release:

Groundbreaking Ceremony Held for 1888 Studios in Bayonne

On December 16, public officials and film industry executives took part in a groundbreaking ceremony for the 1888 Studios, the motion picture and television production complex that will rise at the foot of Avenue A in Bayonne. The event took place inside a tent on the studio construction site, the former location of the Texaco refinery that closed in the 1980's. The new facility will include 23 soundstages on 58 acres. More than one million square feet of building space will be constructed. The construction phase is expected to produce 2,300 union jobs for the building trades. When the facility is complete and operational, it is expected to produce 2,000 union jobs. Paramount has already signed an agreement for a ten-year lease for a major portion of the 1888 Studios.

Speaking about Bayonne at the ceremony, Arpad (Arki) Busson, the President of the 1888 Studios, said that the production complex "will reshape the city for generations to come" and would make Bayonne "a global connector." Mr. Busson thanked Mayor Jimmy Davis for making Bayonne "a most welcome place to do business."

Paramount's Global Operations executive, Jose Turkienicz, said that his company will lease 285,000 square feet of space at the 1888 Studios. He called the studio complex "a major step forward" and a source of "creative momentum." A former New Jersey resident, Mr. Turkienicz thanked the state's public officials for supporting tax credit programs for the film industry in the Garden State. He said that the 1888 Studios were "building a future."

In his remarks, Mayor Davis recalled meeting with Arki Busson six years ago and hearing of his vision for building a studio complex at the former Texaco property in Bayonne. Mayor Davis said that the discussions and preparations continued during the COVID pandemic. He credited Governor Phil Murphy with delivering tax credits that made the studio project possible. According to Mayor Davis, Governor Murphy's goal is "to make New Jersey nobody's stepchild."

Hudson County Executive Craig Guy congratulated Mayor Davis and said it was "a great day for Hudson County." He thanked the 1888 Studios and Paramount for "a reshaping of Bayonne and Hudson County." Noting the local impact of movies, County Executive Guy recalled that the movie, *The Joker*, was filmed outside his window.

Assemblywoman Eliana Pintor Marin, who chairs the Budget Committee in the State Assembly, expressed satisfaction with "seeing something come to fruition." She said that economic development in New Jersey is having a positive impact on small stores in the state. Assemblywoman Pinto Marin credited New Jersey First Lady Tammy Murphy and State Senator Raj Mukherjee with playing positive roles in economic development.

Senator Mukherjee cited the fact that the film industry began in New Jersey before it went to Hollywood. Now that New Jersey will be the home to so much film production, he argued that Hollywood should be considered “New Jersey West.” Senator Mukherjee suggested that film tax credits attract permanent jobs, not just film shoots. He said that New Jersey will have “a self-sustaining creative economy,” and that the film industry would produce benefits for thousands of union members and their families.

Speaking on his last day on the job, Tim Sullivan, CEO of the New Jersey Economic Development Authority, said that the ground-breaking ceremony was “a great milestone” to mark the end of Governor Murphy’s time in office. He said that the film studio site was being converted from an environmentally damaged property into “a generator of stories that go around the world.” Mr. Sullivan observed that the studios would produce “careers for people,” and that kids could do a training program in film and television.

First Lady Tammy Murphy said it was “really moving to be here today.” She cited the saying that “it takes a village” to get things done. Mrs. Murphy thanked the New Jersey Motion Picture and Television Commission and everyone else who has promoted the industry in New Jersey. She called their efforts “a complete, non-partisan Jersey chutzpah effort.” Mrs. Murphy said the expansion of the film industry to Bayonne was “beyond exciting.”

Governor Phil Murphy said that New Jersey has an “innovation economy,” which includes film and digital industries. “It’s who we are,” the Governor said. He noted that New Jersey gets back \$7 for each \$1 invested in the film industry. Governor Murphy lauded the state’s Film Ready program that prepares communities for the movie and television

business. He noted the three locations of big studio complexes that are on the way: Bayonne's 1888 Studios, Newark's Lionsgate Studios, and Monmouth County's Netflix Studios.

Flynn Busson, Vice President of the 1888 Studios, closed the program by thanking all of the studio team and Paramount. He said the studios would be "fostering thousands of union jobs."

Among the celebrities at the ceremony were model and businesswoman Elle Macpherson; Emmy Award-winning actress Tammy Blanchard, a Bayonne resident; Mark Lipsky, executive producer of such Eddie Murphy films as *The Nutty Professor*, *Beverly Hills Cop II*, and *Coming to America*; and actor and executive Paul DeAngelo, a Bayonne resident.

After the speeches concluded, several public officials and film industry representatives stepped outside for the ground-breaking ceremony.