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## AJC

Atlanta. News. Now.



Company to invest \$150 million, despite calls for Georgia film boycott

[BUSINESS](#) | Sept 03, 2019

By [Christopher Quinn](#), The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

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Despite calls by some in Hollywood to boycott Georgia because of controversial legislation passed this year, two financiers plan to invest \$150 million in film productions in the state.

Mark Damon of Los Angeles and Adi Cohen of New York, the principals of DCR Finance, plan to invest in Georgia productions that use the duo's Atlanta partner company, Go Media Productions, for post-production work such as editing and adding special effects and sound. That could help establish infrastructure and expertise in a segment of the industry that's lacking in the state.

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One of the major complaints of media companies filming in Georgia's \$2.7 billion industry is that there are few post-production workers, said Ethan Tussey, an associate professor of film and media studies at Georgia State University.



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The financiers are side-stepping the hot cultural issue.

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Cohen said he never mixes politics and business. “It is a bad practice. I understand the situation, but I am against boycotts at any level. It usually achieves nothing.”

Some stars and producers — from Jason Bateman, who is filming “Ozark” in metro Atlanta, to Netflix, the producer of “Stranger Things” — are threatening to pull out of Georgia in protest of HB 481.

Others have already done so. Actor Kristen Wiig and Amazon Studios each canceled productions in the state after the bill passed, according to [The Los Angeles Times](#). And California and other states have stepped in to try to poach Georgia film business because of the controversy.

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“The only thing I can do is try to persuade them that this is not the way to fight for their cause,” Cohen said. “... It’s preventing middle-class people from having jobs.”

Cohen and Damon will invest the money in independent films that are nearing completion. The money is earmarked for work in Georgia only, he said.

Georgia has grown its industry by leaps and bounds in eight years by giving the nation’s most lucrative tax credits for film work, up to 30%. The incentives have put back more than \$1 billion into filmmakers’ pockets since 2009, according to an Atlanta Journal-Constitution analysis of state tax data and a 2016 Georgia State University study

Len Gibson and Wayne Overstreet are the partners behind newly established Go Media. They say they plan to create partnerships with local college programs and will hire and train a new generation of artists and craftsmen.

“We are going to look for experienced editors, colorists, sound design, the whole gamut,” Gibson said.

“It is the people of Georgia that will benefit. Regardless of anyone’s politics, we want to see the people of Georgia win,” he said.

Overstreet said post-production jobs are longer-term jobs than those for specific films, which tend to last for weeks or months.

Others in the industry are concerned that Georgia is losing its edge in the business and could see it shrink because of the backlash.

Actor Ric Reitz said it’s good to see new investment, but he’s taking a wait-and-see approach on the political issue.

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