



## The Daily Dish

# Lights, Camera, Tariff!

DOUGLAS HOLTZ-EAKIN | MAY 6, 2025

A recent Trump tariff update on Truth Social reads in its entirety:

*The Movie Industry in America is DYING a very fast death. Other Countries are offering all sorts of incentives to draw our filmmakers and studios away from the United States. Hollywood, and many other areas within the U.S.A., are being devastated. This is a concerted effort by other Nations and, therefore, a National Security threat. It is, in addition to everything else, messaging and propaganda! Therefore, I am authorizing the Department of Commerce, and the United States Trade Representative, to immediately begin the process of instituting a 100% Tariff on any and all Movies coming into our Country that are produced in Foreign Lands. WE WANT MOVIES MADE IN AMERICA, AGAIN!*

That's right, folks. Put aside the news that the president wants to re-open Alcatraz as a federal prison. The real news is that he is saving Hollywood from the likes of *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, *Godzilla Minus One*, or *Amelie*. What a relief!

Still, it raises a few issues.

To begin, "This is a concerted effort by other Nations and, therefore, a National Security threat" is a major league *non sequitur*. Other nations make a concerted effort to win medals at the Olympic Games. Is that a national security threat? In the process of getting a national security tariff designation, the Department of Commerce must perform an investigation and include that the United States is actually at risk from cheap exposure to German rom-coms. True to form, the Commerce Secretary [wrote](#) in a post on X: "We're on it." But what will they actually be able to defend with a straight face?

There is also the complicated issue of what constitutes a foreign film. Does it have to be shot

entirely abroad, with no American actors, directors, or producers? *The Washington Post* reports:

*The 2025 superhero film “Thunderbolts,” for example, “was mostly shot in Georgia, Utah, and New York, but also had a scene shot in Malaysia,” raising questions about how big a tariff would be in such a case, according to an analyst report from Roth Capital Partners.*

Is this a domestic film or a foreign film? This reflects the 1950s mindset (see: Alcatraz, above) of the tariff-in-chief. Goods are not U.S. or foreign. Goods are made of a mixture of stuff from the United States and stuff from abroad, and trying to draw a line in this stuff is the stuff of fools.

Finally, how, exactly, would the tariff be implemented? Movies are typically thought of as an entertainment service, not a good. But if one ignores that, would the tariff take the form of a tax on movie tickets? How would one handle downloads? Or, would it be when the first reel enters the United States? Without knowing how commercially popular the film would be, how could you estimate its worth?

Has it occurred to anyone in Congress that maybe it has given away to the executive branch too much power over tariffs?