

ca 89



DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY
1-19 VICTORIA STREET
LONDON SW1H 0ET

Telephone (Direct dialling) 01-215) 5147
GTN 215) 5147
(Switchboard) 01-215 7877

From the Minister of State
for Industry and Information Technology

GEOFFREY PATTIE MP

David Waddington Esq QC MP
Minister of State
Home Office
Queen Anne's Gate
LONDON
SW1H 9AT

MBM

18 March 1986

Dear Sir

DEREGULATION FIRE SAFETY IN CINEMAS AND MISC 121

I have seen a copy of your letter of ^{WITH MSA} 28 February to David Young which dealt in part with cinema safety regulations.

I am concerned that there is a slight ambiguity in your letter, which refers to the new regulations having been "drafted in consultation with the Cinema industry (who fully support them)". The industry, represented by the Cinematograph Exhibitors' Association (CEA) are in fact firmly opposed to the section of the draft regulations which requires the provision of a specified number of staff on the premises, related to the number of members of the public who are present (the staff/patron ratio). The CEA believe that such requirements should be transferred from the regulations to the accompanying guidance document and should represent a ceiling level. This would have the effect of giving local authorities who are responsible for the licensing of cinema authorities in their area some flexibility below this ceiling, as to how these requirements are to be applied in particular cases, taking account of new developments (eg wider aisles, continuous lighting throughout performances, increased space between rows facilitating a quick exit, etc) which may be more effective in ensuring safety than having a number of young staff on the premises. The CEA's view has been endorsed by the British Screen Advisory Council in a letter of 13 February to Simon Glenarthur.

MR3/MR3AAY

17 86
19
BOARD OF TRADE
BICENTENARY

COVT MACH
Raynor P120

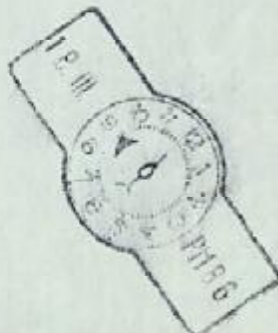


There are two other aspects of the regulations about which the CEA have some reservations. The first concerns flammable film. As your letter suggests, the industry have been content with the regulations in so far as they relate to flammable film. However, I understand that the International Standards Organisation (ISO) have recently put forward proposals in this area and the CEA believe it is important that these should be considered before the regulations are finalised. The second aspect concerns the disabled.

The CEA are sympathetic to the needs of the disabled wishing to see a film in a cinema, but they are concerned that the new draft guidance document accompanying the regulations takes account of these needs in a way which could be detrimental to the industry and to other customers. For example, they believe there is a possibility that in aiming to secure admission for people in wheelchairs, the draft guidelines could have the effect of removing the cinema manager's discretion to refuse admission to drunks or tramps, to the detriment of everyone wishing to enjoy the film. I understand that discussions between the CEA and your officials are continuing on this point.

I hope this letter helps to clarify the latest position and I look forward to meeting Simon Glenarthur to discuss some of these issues further. I am copying this letter to him and to members of MISC 121.

GEOFFREY PATTIE



MR 3/MR 3AAY

17
19 **86**
BOARD OF TRADE
BICENTENARY