

THE COURIER

OF MONTGOMERY  COUNTY

'Waco' filmmakers denied tax incentives to shoot in Texas

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AUSTIN – The company behind the upcoming feature film “Waco” said this week at the Cannes Film Festival that the Texas Film Commission denied its application for tax incentives meant to encourage more filming in Texas, causing the company to halt plans for a \$30 million project in the state.

Bob Hudgins, director of the Texas Film Commission, told the Austin American-Statesman in Wednesday editions that the movie was denied incentives because of factual inaccuracies in the script, which deals with the federal raid on the Branch Davidian compound near Waco in 1993.

Under a statute passed by the Legislature in 2007, projects that put Texas in a negative light can be denied incentives.

“Waco” is the first film Hudgins has rejected under the provision. He said he reads about 30 feature film scripts each year.

“It’s not censorship at all,” Hudgins said. “After reading the ‘Waco’ script, I did some fact checking and feel very confident in the checking I did. ... This project steps outside an accurate portrayal of those events.”

While attending the Cannes festival, Emilio Ferrari and Tara Wood, executives at Los Angeles-based Entertainment 7, said Hudgins had bowed to pressure from politicians.

Hudgins denied that, saying the decision was exclusively his.

Ferrari said the script is not inaccurate and does not portray Texas in a negative light.

Four federal agents and six Davidians were killed in the initial gunbattle. The 51-day standoff ended when the complex known as Mount Carmel burned, killing group leader David Koresh and nearly 80 of his followers.

The government claimed the Davidians committed suicide by setting the fire and shooting themselves.