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St. Pete Firm Says Lenfilm Owes $60,000 in Unpaid Bills

By The Moscow Times

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A St. Petersburg-based energy company has filed a lawsuit in the city's arbitration court claiming that one of Russia's oldest film studios is bankrupt because it can't pay up around 2 million rubles ($63,000) that it owes for energy use.

In September, the arbitration court upheld the rights of state-owned Fuel and Energy Complex of St. Petersburg, which covers around 40 percent of the city's thermal-energy needs, to recover energy-supply debts from the studio over a contract totaling 1.35 million rubles, RIA-Novosti reported.

No date has yet been set for looking at the new lawsuit, and the film studio's managers remain optimistic about resolving the matter.

The companies came to an agreement on the unpaid bills in September, so the lawsuit could have been filed because the energy company's lawyers were confused about the previous debt,

Lenfilm's director Eduard Pichugin told the news agency.

"The claim over the bankruptcy of Lenfilm is a misunderstanding, and we hope to resolve the issue today and expect that the lawsuit will be withdrawn," Pichugin said.

This is not the first time that the motion-picture studio, whose history dates to 1918, has had financial difficulties. It was set to be bought up at a bargain price by Sistema Financial Corporation in 2011.

But in August that year, prominent film directors Alexei German and Alexander Sokurov sent an open letter to then-Prime Minister Vladimir Putin asking to stop the privatization of the studio.

The studio's debts are now estimated to be around 80 million rubles, RIA-Novosti reported. Pichugin said earlier that the studio's debts would be repaid in two years, but he admitted at the end of October that the debts had been partially restructured.

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