



**MAUI**  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
VOICE OF BUSINESS

**LATE**

HEARING BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS  
HAWAII STATE CAPITOL, SENATE CONFERENCE ROOM 211  
Wednesday, February 19, 2025 AT 10:02 A.M.

To The Honorable Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair  
The Honorable Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair  
Members of the committee on Ways and Means

**SUPPORT SB1641 SD1 RELATING TO THE STATE OF HAWAII FILM COMMISSION**

The Maui Chamber of Commerce **SUPPORTS SB1641 SD1** which establishes the Hawai'i State Film Office within the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism to support the State's film and media industries; establishes the Hawai'i State Film Commission within the Hawai'i State Film Office. Requires investment revenues and returns from made and fees and charges collected by the Hawai'i State Film Office to be deposited into the Hawai'i Film and Creative Industries Development Special Fund; and allows the Department to use the fund to provide the support and development of facilities, film tax incentives, and other initiatives to grow the State's creative industries.

The Chamber has historically been a strong supporter of the film industry. We fully support and appreciate the creation of the commission and its proposed duties, particularly its inclusion of neighbor island film directors. We understand and support the allocation of funding for additional staff to facilitate this initiative. This is a valuable asset to our economic diversification plan.

For these reasons we **SUPPORT SB1641 SD1** and respectfully request its passage.

Sincerely,

Pamela Tumpap  
President

To advance and promote a healthy economic environment for business, advocating for a responsive government and quality education, while preserving Maui's unique community characteristics.

**SB-1641-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2025 4:22:21 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

| Submitted By                      | Organization                              | Testifier Position | Testify                   |
|-----------------------------------|---|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Michael Golojuch, Jr.<br>(he/him) | Testifying for Pride at<br>Work – Hawai‘i | Support            | Written Testimony<br>Only |

Comments:

Aloha Senators,

Pride at Work – Hawai‘i is an official chapter of [Pride at Work](#) which is a national nonprofit organization that represents LGBTQIA+ union members and their allies. We are an officially recognized constituency group of the AFL-CIO that organizes mutual support between the organized Labor Movement and the LGBTQIA+ Community to further social and economic justice.

Pride at Work – Hawai‘i fully supports SB 1641 SD 1.

We ask that you support this needed piece of legislation.

Mahalo,

Michael Golojuch, Jr. (he/him)

President

[Pride at Work – Hawai‘i](#)



# IATSE LOCAL 665

FILM, TELEVISION, STAGE, PROJECTION AND TRADESHOWS  
Since 1937

INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF THEATRICAL STAGE EMPLOYEES, MOVING PICTURE TECHNICIANS, ARTISTS AND ALLIED CRAFTS  
OF THE UNITED STATES, ITS TERRITORIES AND CANADA, AFL-CIO, CLC



Thirty-Third Legislature, State of Hawai'i  
Regular Session of 2025  
Senate Committee on Ways and Means  
Testimony by IATSE 665  
February 19th, 2025

## **SB1641 SD1- RELATING TO THE STATE OF HAWAII FILM COMMISSION**

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and members of the Senate committee,

My name is Tuia'ana Scanlan, IATSE International Trustee and President of IATSE Local 665, the union representing technicians and artisans in the entertainment industry in Hawai'i. **IATSE 665 supports SB1641**, relating to the state of Hawai'i film commission.

As the latest DBEDT figures indicate, in 2024 our film and television industry generated \$324,150,100 in sales or economic activity, \$20,235,960 in estimated tax revenues, and \$74,948,000 in Hawai'i household income generated because of the qualified productions. The film/tv/streaming industry also accounted for 2,247 jobs for 2023.

The logistical complexity and the unique ability of this sector to place images of Hawai'i at the forefront of the world's attention necessitates the creation of a film commission. The creation of a film commission is imperative to affirm public faith in the transparent use of public funds in a fair and equitable manner. When subject matter experts in the film and tv industry are assembled and are committed to reaching consensus in the administrative needs of this sector, it maximizes the effectiveness of the incentive and the value to our community.

**IATSE 665 supports SB1641 SD1. We urge your committee to do the same.** Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

In Solidarity,

Tuia'ana Scanlan  
International Trustee  
President, IATSE 665  
(he/him/his)



Testimony Presented Before the  
Senate Committee on Ways and Means  
Wednesday, MARCH 19, 2025 at 10AM  
by

Beckie Stocchetti, Executive Director, Hawaii International Film Festival (HIFF)

**SB 1641 SD1 - RELATING TO THE STATE OF HAWAII FILM COMMISSION.**

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee:

Hawaii'i International Film Festival (HIFF) is in **support** of SB1641 SD1 with comments. SB1641 SD1 establishes the Hawaii State Film Office within the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism to support the State's film and media industries. Establishes the Hawaii State Film Commission within the Hawaii State Film Office. Requires investment revenues and returns from made and fees and charges collected by the Hawaii State Film Office to be deposited into the Hawaii Film and Creative Industries Development Special Fund. Allows the Department to use the fund to support and develop facilities, film tax incentives, and other initiatives to grow the State's creative industries. Requires annual reports to the Legislature. Appropriates funds.

HIFF fundamentally supports measures that provide increased collaboration, effectiveness, and capital investment to our creative sector, advance development of a stronger media infrastructure across the state and offer more access to opportunities for Hawaii-based artists. The development of the Creative Industries Division Film Fund is an important and strong initiative for our community. HIFF supports the commission and the HI State Film Office as described, we stress maintaining CID management of the Film Tax Credit and Special Fund. Additionally, we hope to see clarification regarding the State serving in a producer capacity on film productions. Finally, HIFF encourages the legislature to see the work and networks of Hawaii's creative industry non-profits that are connected to the independent and international film industry and understand the value a representative from Hawaii's non-profits would bring through serving on the new commission.

HIFF is the largest and only statewide independent film development organization in Hawaii'i, serving over 50,000 residents, tourists, filmmakers, students, and emerging creative artists annually through annual Festivals, Education programs, and Industry/professional development initiatives.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 1641 SD1 and share comments.  
Respectfully and with aloha,

**Beckie Stocchetti**

Executive Director  
Hawaii'i International Film Festival

**SB-1641-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 9:57:14 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

| Submitted By           | Organization                              | Testifier Position | Testify                |
|------------------------|---|--------------------|------------------------|
| Genaro Hale Gualdarama | Testifying for Hawaii Teamsters Local 996 | Support            | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

We support only with amendments.

**SB-1641-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/17/2025 9:04:55 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

| Submitted By   | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify                |
|----------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| sue chipperton | Individual   | Support            | Written Testimony Only |

## Comments:

My name is Sue Chipperton, and I am the owner and operator of Check The Gate, a company specializing in the training and provision of animals for the film and television industry. I have been an active professional in this industry for 30 years, with the past decade based here in Hawai‘i.

Over the years, I have had the privilege of supplying and training animals for numerous high-profile productions, including Hawai‘i Five-0, Magnum P.I., NCIS: Hawai‘i, Jurassic World, and Triple Frontier, among others. Most recently, I worked on Lilo & Stitch.

Since relocating to Hawai‘i in 2014, I have been consistently employed in the industry and have never had difficulty meeting the union work-hour requirements necessary to qualify for health insurance. However, the current state of film production in Hawai‘i has changed dramatically. Since July 13, 2023, I have worked only 23 days—a level of inactivity that is unprecedented in my career.

This downturn is not due to a lack of interest in filming in Hawai‘i, but rather the increasing trend of productions choosing alternative locations. Following my work on Lilo & Stitch, I was in discussions with a major production planning to shoot here, only for them to ultimately relocate to Atlanta. A film set in a tropical environment chose a soundstage in Atlanta over the natural beauty of Hawai‘i. Similarly, I have lost count of the number of times productions have opted for New Zealand instead of our islands.

This decline in production does not just affect me—it impacts a network of local workers. When film projects come to Hawai‘i, I employ numerous local professionals and subcontract horses and other animals, providing income to individuals who have never set foot on a film set.

For the first time in my 30-year career, I did not accumulate enough union hours to qualify for my health insurance.. This is a clear indicator that something must change. We need to take immediate action to incentivize productions to film in Hawai‘i, ensuring the survival of this vital industry and the livelihoods of those it supports.

I urge you to support legislation that strengthens film production incentives and fosters a thriving entertainment industry in Hawai‘i. Thank you for your time and consideration.

**SB-1641-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/16/2025 1:14:10 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

| Submitted By   | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify                |
|----------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Julie Scalpone | Individual   | Support            | Written Testimony Only |

## Comments:

Aloha. I am very much in support of SB1641. I have witnessed friends and peers go from being able to work full-time in Hawai'i's once robust film industry, to now having to seek work in other fields or move away from the islands completely to continue their film careers elsewhere. It is not just those within the film community affected, but also local restaurants and businesses. When a project films here, they use our local businesses to purchase costumes, set dressing, provide shooting locations, and catering for cast and crew. The net of how having projects film here consistently affects Hawai'i expands much further than one may initially suspect. It even increases tourism as viewers of television shows and movies that are shot here see locations that inspire them to plan a trip to visit them in person. Please help us rebuild the film industry, tourism industry, and boost the local economy in Hawai'i as soon as possible by supporting SB1641. Mahalo!

**SB-1641-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/16/2025 2:33:07 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

| Submitted By    | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify                |
|-----------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Natalie Donahue | Individual   | Support            | Written Testimony Only |

## Comments:

I am submitting this testimony in support of lowering Hawai'i's film tax incentives to encourage greater investment in local talent and infrastructure, rather than relying on temporary, out-of-state productions. While the current tax incentives have successfully attracted major film and television projects to the islands, they have not resulted in sustained benefits for local workers and businesses.

When large-scale productions take advantage of tax breaks, they often leave once filming is complete, offering little lasting impact. A more balanced incentive system could encourage companies to train and hire Hawai'i-based crew members, ensuring that our workforce develops the skills necessary to sustain the industry locally.

A locally-driven film industry would allow Hawai'i-based filmmakers to tell authentic stories that reflect our culture and history. By lowering incentives that mainly benefit outside productions, the state can encourage investment in independent Hawaiian filmmakers who are more likely to create jobs for local workers and showcase our unique narratives.

By lowering tax incentives, we can foster a stronger local workforce, reduce dependence on outside productions, and create an industry that truly benefits our people.

I urge the committee to consider these points and take action toward policy changes that will ensure a thriving and self-sufficient film industry in Hawai'i

Mahalo for your time and consideration



**SB-1641-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/16/2025 2:51:17 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

| Submitted By     | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify                |
|------------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Sinilau Tauteoli | Individual   | Support            | Written Testimony Only |

## Comments:

To whom this may concern,

Hello, my name is Sinilau Tauteoli. I know bringing film back to Hawaii will benefit everyone especially the community! So many of my friends and family from Hawaii had to change careers due to the lack of work in film in Hawaii. Everyone thinks it's only actors suffering but forgetting the people behind the camera that it affects the most. Catering, security, transportation, etc. I have friends that have been doing set decorations for film for 20 years and now have to reset and find another career to provide for their loved ones. I have friends from Hawaii with me in Atlanta right now looking for work because nothing is being filmed in Hawaii. There are also Hawaiian stories being filmed in other countries when it should be filmed in Hawaii. The least the government can do is keep Hawaii stories in Hawaii. It will financially benefit the community and help Hawaii grow. Something this simple shouldn't be questioned. It only makes sense to keep film in Hawaii. I hope this message will help you understand the importance of keeping film in Hawaii. Thank you for your time and hope you will make the right decision.

- Sinilau Tauteoli

**SB-1641-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/16/2025 5:28:17 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

| Submitted By         | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify                |
|----------------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Stephen Ryu Pokipala | Individual   | Support            | Written Testimony Only |

## Comments:

As a native Hawaiian from Waianae. I support the hawaii film commission it would be nice to have more jobs out here, it's always just construction or hotel or department store it's fun and exciting and something to strive for when knowing we can work on movies and support Hawaiians and ingenious and Asians stories and support locals in hawaii and support the local economy.

**SB-1641-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/16/2025 5:29:33 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify                   |
|--------------|--------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Iris Pozzi   | Individual   | Support            | Written Testimony<br>Only |

Comments:

I support this bill as it will impact me and the filming community on island. Mahalo

**SB-1641-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/16/2025 6:53:54 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify                |
|--------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Tiffany Gore | Individual   | Support            | Written Testimony Only |

## Comments:

My name is Tiffany Gore. I have experience working in film in Hawaii and I strongly support this bill to help bring more film production to Hawaii.

Hawaii is a unique place, full of beautiful places, beautiful people, and full of local talent.

So many of us have had to leave to make a living on the mainland, but we want to stay. We have the talent here. We have the potential to do this the right way. To support and grow our film industry. It would help everyone.

I have a daughter, Luna Mendonca, she is a talented young actress, and she is signed with a local agency, but there is no work. We want jobs. We want to be here. We know growing our film industry would help everyone here. A strong film industry built with Aloha.

Mahalo for your time.

Tiffany Gore

**SB-1641-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/16/2025 8:23:51 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify                   |
|--------------|--------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Tim Bowden   | Individual   | Support            | Written Testimony<br>Only |

Comments:

I support SB1641. The film industry is a vital to Hawai'i's economy and and should afforded full suport by our state's legislature. Mahalo

**SB-1641-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/16/2025 10:30:48 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

| Submitted By   | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify                |
|----------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Angela Laprete | Individual   | Support            | Written Testimony Only |

## Comments:

I am in support of all steps we make in moving in the right direction to bring back productions to Hawaii and have sustainability of all levels of work and mandate work force development opportunities with each show that comes in. We need a core foundation with the film commissioin and communication is key to work with all of us who are on the frontline. We also need to streamline the process when shows come to town or more importantly, when they don't. We need to educate them and do due diligence promoting our State on how we can keep shows here before they decide not to come or spend only 4 days shooting out of 30 days. As a producer on these productions, I take my responsibility seriously to ensure we take care of our local vendors, cast and crew while meeting the demands and expectations of the studio. We started these discussions 1 1/2 years ago with Senator DeCoite and DBEDT and very happy to see it's finally getting some movement that it deserves. If we don't plan to be competitive with other states and countries, we will continue to fail our viable industy that brings so many opportunities for our homegrown talent and businesses to thrive and it's a factual way of diversifying the State's economy. Mahalo.

**SB-1641-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/17/2025 1:17:51 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify                |
|--------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Eric Uyeda   | Individual   | Oppose             | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Testimony Against SB1641

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

I am submitting testimony in opposition to SB1641 as currently written, though I strongly support the creation of a Hawai'i Film Commission just not under the structure proposed in this bill.

Why SB1641 is the Wrong Approach

## 1. Attaching the Commission to DBEDT &amp; CID Creates More Red Tape

The biggest challenge facing Hawai'i's film industry today is bureaucratic inefficiency. Placing the new commission under DBEDT and CID will only repeat the same slow, ineffective oversight that has limited industry growth for years. The film industry requires agility, transparency, and direct industry engagement something that DBEDT and CID have failed to provide.

## 2. A Film Commission Should Not Be Controlled by the Same Entities That Have Stalled Progress. The current system isn't working why would we create another entity run by the same leadership?

The proposed board structure in SB1641 will likely recycle the same policies and priorities that have contributed to Hawai'i losing productions to competing markets like New Zealand, Canada, and Georgia.

## 3. We Need to Build a New, Independent Commission Even if It Takes Another Year. A rushed, flawed commission will do more harm than good.

If we truly want a functional Hawai'i Film Commission, it must be built from the ground up, independent of DBEDT and CID, and structured to serve the industry, not state bureaucracy.

If that means taking another year to do it right, then that's what we should do. Hawai'i's film industry cannot afford another mismanaged agency.

### The Better Alternative: A Truly Independent Hawai'i Film Commission

Instead of placing the commission under DBEDT and CID, the Hawai'i Film Commission should be an independent body with:

Direct oversight from industry professionals, not career bureaucrats.

A governance structure that prioritizes film incentives, permitting, workforce training, and infrastructure investment.

Funding mechanisms that ensure it remains focused on industry needs, not government politics.

### Conclusion

I fully support the creation of a Hawai'i Film Commission, but I cannot support SB1641 approach. This commission must be built right even if that means waiting another year to establish a truly independent entity. I urge the Legislature to reject SB1641 in its current form and work toward a solution that actually serves Hawai'i's film industry.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.



**SB-1641-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/17/2025 2:29:07 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

| Submitted By     | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify                |
|------------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Chauncy Williams | Individual   | Support            | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Aloha members of the Senate committee,

My name is Chauncy Williams. I graduated with a Bachelors in Digital Cinema from the Academy of Creative Media (ACM) in December of 2018. I am also a member of IATSE Local 665, the union representing technicians and artisans in the entertainment industry in Hawai'i since November 2022. I strongly support SB1641, relating to the film industry.

Hawai'i's film industry supports thousands of working families in the state of Hawai'i. These thriving wage jobs are irreplaceable by other industries. When the film tax incentive is empowered, this industry generates significantly to state GDP, earnings, and even visitor spending. When the film tax incentive is restrained, we not only lose the economic benefits of the industry, but we also lose the ability to tell our own stories. 98% of the live action "Moana" movie was filmed in Atlanta. "Chief of War" filmed a significant portion of their production in Aotearoa, where the currency conversion rate has fluctuated over the past year from NZ\$1.65- NZ\$1.79 to the US \$1. Aotearoa's physical, administrative, and cultural infrastructures are decades ahead of ours. To remain competitive in the global market, it is imperative that Hawai'i strengthens and stabilizes the film tax incentive program. SB1641 will expand the definition of a "Qualified Production" to include broadcast and streaming platforms, will take meaningful steps to empower our film tax incentive program, and will support thousands of working families in Hawai'i.

In closing, it is my dream to work in Hawaii, the place that is my home. I'd hate to be priced out of paradise and we need to more work to provide jobs to us, the locals.

I strongly support SB1641. I urge your committee to do the same. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

In Solidarity,

Chauncy Williams

**SB-1641-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/17/2025 6:55:31 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

| Submitted By                    | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify                |
|---------------------------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Lu Ann Mahiki Lankford-Faborito | Individual   | Support            | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

strong support.

**SB-1641-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/17/2025 7:22:23 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

| Submitted By  | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify                   |
|---------------|--------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Suzanne Green | Individual   | Support            | Written Testimony<br>Only |

Comments:

The film office is failing to answer phone calls from movie/television companies and has thus LOST projects recently which would have come to Hawaii. A commission is NEEDED to provide oversight and the necessary service to companies who want to bring filming to Hawaii.

**SB-1641-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/17/2025 8:29:09 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify                |
|--------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Jacob White  | Individual   | Support            | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Dear Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai, and Members of the Committee:

I, Jacob White, am testifying in support of Senate Bill 1641, Relating to the State of Hawaii Film Commission. SB1641 establishes the State of Hawaii Film Commission to strengthen and expand

Hawaii's film and media industry.

Hawaii has long been a sought-after filming location, but without a dedicated commission to coordinate efforts, streamline permitting, and enhance workforce development, the state risks losing opportunities to other regions. This bill creates a commission to develop a five-year strategic plan, improve tax incentives, attract global productions, and support local storytelling initiatives. Additionally, it ensures better coordination between state, county, and private entities, making the production process more efficient.

Investing in Hawaii's film industry creates jobs, boosts the economy, and showcases our unique culture on a global stage. I urge the committee to pass this measure to solidify Hawaii's place as a premier destination for film and media production.

I respectfully ask to pass Senate Bill 1641.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

**SB-1641-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/17/2025 9:51:03 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

| Submitted By           | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify                |
|------------------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| La Fa'amausili-Siliato | Individual   | Support            | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Dear Members of the Committee,

My name is La and am writing to express my strong support for SB1641. As someone who was recently involved in the filming of the Moana live-action movie, I experienced firsthand how tax incentives can significantly influence location decisions.

There were at least 80 of us who were flown out to Georgia, housed for 4-8 weeks, and on top of our pay, were given food stipends. All that money was then pumped straight back into Georgia's economy.

Despite the rich cultural heritage and breathtaking landscapes of Hawai'i, we filmed in Georgia because their tax incentives were better. Passing SB1641 would help ensure that future productions choose Hawaii, benefiting our local economy and preserving the authenticity of our stories.

Thank you for considering my testimony.

Sincerely,

La Fa'amausili-Siliato

**SB-1641-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/17/2025 10:08:36 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

| Submitted By    | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify                   |
|-----------------|--------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Tiffany Soriano | Individual   | Support            | Written Testimony<br>Only |

Comments:

This bill will boost the economy of Hawaii so we aren't relying on tourism alone. It will also keep many locals here with stable jobs so we aren't losing anymore locals or talent to the mainland.

**SB-1641-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/17/2025 10:33:08 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify                   |
|--------------|--------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| John Salanoa | Individual   | Support            | Written Testimony<br>Only |

Comments:

Aloha,

I stand behind this bill as we have always needed a film commissions office to help streamline productions from start to finish. It is very very important to have Kanakas assigned to some of these positions.



TO THE SENATE  
KA 'AHA KENEKOA

THE THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE  
REGULAR SESSION OF 2025

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS  
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair  
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

DATE: Wednesday, February 19, 2025  
TIME: 10:02 AM  
NOTICE OF DECISION MAKING **SB1641 SD1**

Bill No. **SB1641 SD1**

POSITION: STRONG SUPPORT

I am in strong support of this bill. Hawaii's film industry needs centralized leadership to attract business, streamline processes, and expand its workforce. The latest DBEDT figures indicate that in 2024 our film and television industry generated \$324,150,100 in sales or economic activity, \$20,235,960 in estimated tax revenues, and \$74,948,000 in Hawai'i household income generated because of the qualified productions. The film/tv/streaming industry also accounted for 2,247 jobs for 2023.

The film industry is one of the strongest mechanisms that improve the overall economic activity which directly affects the velocity of money (how many times a dollar circulates) through the local economy. This in turn leads to tax revenue that benefits the state and can be used in a manner the legislature deems fit.

As we continue to compete with other states for film productions, we must have the right support in place. The competitive nature of this industry requires such measures as establishing a film commission here will give the industry the resources needed to promote our state film industry and remain competitive.

In summary, the passage of this measure will help to solidify Hawaii in the global film industry. Therefore, I recommend that SB1641 SD1 be passed by this committee. I hope all changes to this bill will be in keeping with the intent. The passage of this bill will increase the standard of living for all workers in Hawaii. Thank you for the opportunity to submit my testimony.

Mahalo,

Ken Farm

Chair Emeritus,  
Former Chair Neighborhood Board No. 15  
Speaking in my personal capacity,

**SB-1641-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/17/2025 10:49:52 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

| Submitted By                   | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify                   |
|--------------------------------|--------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Mihyun (aka.Daisy)<br>Murakami | Individual   | Support            | Written Testimony<br>Only |

Comments:

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Daisy Kim Murakami, and I am a creator and actor based in Hawaii. I strongly support SB 1641 as it will provide significant benefits to Hawaii's film and media industry, helping independent creators like myself thrive in a competitive environment.

As a content creator and artist, I rely on local production opportunities to grow my career. However, the current industry landscape presents many challenges, such as limited resources, high production costs, and a lack of incentives for independent creators. SB 1641 addresses these issues by streamlining production processes, improving tax incentives, and attracting more productions to Hawaii. This bill would not only create jobs but also support local storytelling and infrastructure development, fostering a sustainable creative economy.

With the passage of SB 1641, Hawaii can become a more attractive and viable place for creators, filmmakers, and media professionals. It will allow local talent to remain in the state rather than seeking opportunities elsewhere, ultimately strengthening our community and cultural representation.

I urge you to support SB 1641 for the growth and sustainability of Hawaii's creative industry. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Daisy Kim Murakami



**SB-1641-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/17/2025 12:55:48 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

| Submitted By      | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify                |
|-------------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Aubrey Lee Staley | Individual   | Support            | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

My name is Aubrey Lee Staley, and I am a Kanaka 'oiwi, the owner of ALA Hawaii, a talent agency representing over 200 local actors and creatives. I also have experience in production, casting, and industry development across film, television, and live events from Los Angeles, New York, North Carolina and here in Hawaii.

I strongly support SB 1641 because it is a crucial step toward strengthening Hawaii's creative economy, providing opportunities for local talent, and ensuring that productions continue to invest in our state. As someone actively working to develop Hawaii-based talent, I have seen firsthand how limited resources and inconsistent industry support have forced many creatives to seek work elsewhere.

By improving Hawaii's Film Office and providing structured investment in our creative sector, this bill will help retain talent, attract sustainable productions, ensure that our local industry continues to thrive, and help to expand our stories as Native Hawaiians. I urge you to pass SB 1641 and invest in the future of Hawaii's creative workforce.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Aubrey Lee Staley

**SB-1641-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/17/2025 1:26:00 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

| Submitted By   | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify                   |
|----------------|--------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Barrie Kealoha | Individual   | Support            | Written Testimony<br>Only |

Comments:

Hawaii's artistic community deserves the international spotlight and support for project as outliuned by this bill. Please support it!

**SB-1641-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/17/2025 1:31:33 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

| Submitted By  | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify                   |
|---------------|--------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Pono Cummings | Individual   | Support            | Written Testimony<br>Only |

Comments:

I support this bill to help make Hawaii's film industry more better and create more jobs and share more indigenous stories on our land.

**SB-1641-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/17/2025 2:00:13 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

| Submitted By   | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify                   |
|----------------|--------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Kristi Lundell | Individual   | Support            | Written Testimony<br>Only |

Comments:

I am in support of SB 1641. Let's make Hawai'i a great place for film. It starts with fixing many of the current problems with our film office. SB 1641 is a great start!

## TESTIMONY

The fact that I have to submit yet another testimony, this one in support of SB1641 SD1, is proof of a recurring problem this state has when it comes to supporting the film industry. The problem is that state legislators simply are tone deaf and unaware of what is going on in our industry.

For decades, Hawaii's attempt to keep up with modern economics and culture has been feeble at best as we lag behind in an industry which has flourished in many states on the continent.

Here are the facts:

In the independent film sector, our local storytellers suffer from lack of representation. Recently we learned of a grant we can apply to. That's one \$400,000 grant for dozens of local filmmakers. Most local artists get by with low budget rinkidink films, some of which play at HIFF, but for the most part goes nowhere because of lack of education regarding distribution and PR.

In the Hollywood sector, big studios pass us by to film elsewhere, like Canada or New Zealand, when they realize they can save money by doing so. They may pass us by because Hawaii no longer looks like a tropical paradise that is suitable for these big budget films.

Add to this the commercialization of Hawaii which leads studios to prioritize films in which Hawaii is portrayed as a tourist mecca while ignoring the personal lives of locals who actually live here.

Problems upon problems that compound, scaring away Hollywood and independent filmmakers—problems that have one root cause. Our government simply doesn't take the film industry seriously enough.

This bill should have been drafted decades ago, and I proudly endorse it. But this is only the beginning. Hollywood does not have a monopoly on the film industry and we have the resources to compete with the industry in New Orleans, New York, North Carolina and Georgia.

And while experts in all areas mentioned in the bill are important, it is equally important to educate local filmmakers on fundraising and marketing.

Sincerely,

Tony Young  
Pacific Invasion Media



**SB-1641-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/17/2025 3:29:20 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify                   |
|--------------|--------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| J Menting    | Individual   | Support            | Written Testimony<br>Only |

Comments:

I support

**SB-1641-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/17/2025 3:43:42 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

| Submitted By   | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify                   |
|----------------|--------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Alice Rietveld | Individual   | Support            | Written Testimony<br>Only |

Comments:

I just moved to Maui as of Jan 1st and would love to see a thriving industry here! It's packed with talent, the locations are pristine, everyone has worked tirelessly to bring the industry here, and I fully support this bill. It's time for Hawai'i to be the next Los Angeles!

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM**

**SENATOR LYNN DECOITE, CHAIR  
SENATOR GLENN WAKAI, VICE CHAIR**

**SB1641**

**Relating to the State of Hawaii Film Commission**

Thursday, February 6, 2025, at 1:15 PM

Conference Room 229 & Videoconference

Dear Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai, and Members of the Committee:

I am testifying in support of Senate Bill 1641, Relating to the State of Hawaii Film Commission. SB1641 establishes the State of Hawaii Film Commission to strengthen and expand Hawaii's film and media industry. Hawaii has long been a sought-after filming location, but without a dedicated commission to coordinate efforts, streamline permitting, and enhance workforce development, the state risks losing opportunities to other regions. This bill creates a commission to develop a five-year strategic plan, improve tax incentives, attract global productions, and support local storytelling initiatives. Additionally, it ensures better coordination between state, county, and private entities, making the production process more efficient. Investing in Hawaii's film industry creates jobs, boosts the economy, and showcases our unique culture on a global stage. I urge the committee to pass this measure to solidify Hawaii's place as a premier destination for film and media production. I respectfully ask to pass Senate Bill 1641.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

-Kyla Hee

**SB-1641-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/17/2025 4:03:55 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

| Submitted By               | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify                |
|----------------------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Priscilla Galvez-Delahoyde | Individual   | Support            | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

I support and want this bill passed

**SB-1641-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/17/2025 4:11:55 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

| Submitted By  | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify                   |
|---------------|--------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Sheela Sharma | Individual   | Support            | Written Testimony<br>Only |

Comments:

Dear Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai, and Members of the Committee:

I am testifying in support of Senate Bill 1641, Relating to the State of Hawaii Film Commission. SB1641 establishes the State of Hawaii Film Commission to strengthen and expand Hawaii's film and media industry.

Hawaii has long been a sought-after filming location, but without a dedicated commission to coordinate efforts, streamline permitting, and enhance workforce development, the state risks losing opportunities to other regions. This bill creates a commission to develop a five-year strategic plan, improve tax incentives, attract global productions, and support local storytelling initiatives. Additionally, it ensures better coordination between state, county, and private entities, making the production process more efficient.

Investing in Hawaii's film industry creates jobs, boosts the economy, and showcases our unique culture on a global stage. I urge the committee to pass this measure to solidify Hawaii's place as a premier destination for film and media production.

I respectfully ask to pass Senate Bill 1641. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

**SB-1641-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/17/2025 4:12:28 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

| Submitted By    | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify                   |
|-----------------|--------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Keilaisha Lyles | Individual   | Support            | Written Testimony<br>Only |

## Comments:

To silence our voices especially in this moment if our worlds existence, is against what we should stand for. How can an Island who has fought so hard for their independence and freedom, deprive another expression of independence from others. This is why we're sign this, to allow growth in our society through an incredible art that come from decades of beautiful talents all over the world; and not only talent but the innovative inventions from creativity itself. I ask again, why would we deprive the creativity of others?

**SB-1641-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/17/2025 4:21:17 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

| Submitted By    | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify                   |
|-----------------|--------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Samantha Benson | Individual   | Support            | Written Testimony<br>Only |

## Comments:

As an actor based in Hawaii I fully support the is bill. These productions that come out here have provided income for me and my family and friends that work in this industry. Since the decline in films and shows out here myself and many others have struggled financially. This bill will steer other to come back out here and bring jobs and dreams to thousands.

**SB-1641-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/17/2025 4:22:56 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify                   |
|--------------|--------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Mark Sanders | Individual   | Support            | Written Testimony<br>Only |

Comments:

Film production is a great way to grow our economy in an environmentally friendly way.



**SB-1641-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/17/2025 4:26:24 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify                |
|--------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Philip Maher | Individual   | Support            | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Dear elected officials,

As a Hawaii resident, taxpayer, and working actor, I urge you to pass SB 1641. This important bill will help the local economy immeasurably by supporting our local film industry. Without your help, forward- thinking states like Georgia will continue to reap the benefits of a vibrant film-making industr - at our expense.

The film- making industry supports our local economy in many ways - not just by supporting local actors like me, but by bringing in film crews who spend money, and by promoting Hawaiian tourism.

Please pass the bill!

Mahalo,

Philip (Manny) Maher

1126 Wainiha Street, Unit A

Honolulu, HI 96825

**SB-1641-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/17/2025 4:30:15 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

| Submitted By  | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify                   |
|---------------|--------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| ANDREA TORRES | Individual   | Support            | Written Testimony<br>Only |

Comments:

SUPPORT THIS BILL!!!

-build more film studios

-train local talent

support Hawaiian stories on screen

bring more movies and TV shows to Hawaii please!!!

**SB-1641-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/17/2025 4:58:26 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify                |
|--------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Betty Bolton | Individual   | Support            | Written Testimony Only |

## Comments:

I have been a resident of Hawai'i since 1962 and I have never felt strongly enough to take time to to submit anything to the our legilature. Now, I really must express my support of SB1641 and related bills. I have been hearing from local government for decades that we need to diversify our economy and expand beyond tourism and the military. That govenrment is concerned about our people moving away from Hawai'i because of limited job oportunities. Well, HELLO, here is your chance to help! Make it possible for Film and TV organizations to do business in Hawai'i. Look around at other States like California, New Mexico, Texas, Georgia, and I'm sure more. They make filming much eassier. The Film Industry, when welcomed in Hawai'i, provide thousands of jobs! That has dried up, shut down, moved away and left us with nothing. No jobs and no income for the Sate either. Please pass SB1641 and be proud of providing jobs and multiple new industries for our people and State. Thank You

**SB-1641-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/17/2025 6:29:51 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify                   |
|--------------|--------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| David Starr  | Individual   | Support            | Written Testimony<br>Only |

Comments:

This bill would create jobs for people in the film industry, as well as help support businesses in connection with them.

Also, it would help inform the rest of the world about the lives and cultures of our local and indigenous communities.

The more we do these things, the better!

**SB-1641-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/17/2025 6:40:49 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify                   |
|--------------|--------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Andrew Erwin | Individual   | Support            | Written Testimony<br>Only |

Comments:

I support

**SB-1641-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/17/2025 6:50:53 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

| Submitted By     | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify                   |
|------------------|--------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Akemi N Bischoff | Individual   | Support            | Written Testimony<br>Only |

## Comments:

State Hawaii is losing film productions to other countries and states because they offer tax incentives for the film producitons. The beauty of our island is simply not enough to bring crew anymore. Please sign this bill into a law so we can have competitive film and TV production industry here in Hawaii again.

**SB-1641-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/17/2025 8:41:26 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify                   |
|--------------|--------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Kaliko Fase  | Individual   | Support            | Written Testimony<br>Only |

Comments:

The state of Hawaii would benefit greatly by diversifying its income. Hawaii also has a bunch of stories to tell and with a booming film industry we can have more jobs and opportunities to share these stories to the world.

**SB-1641-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/17/2025 8:59:10 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

| Submitted By  | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify                |
|---------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Kristen Davis | Individual   | Support            | Written Testimony Only |

## Comments:

My name is Kristen Davis, and I am a mother of 4 kids. I have been an active professional in this industry for 4 years. Although I have not been in the industry long, I have been greatly impacted by the lack of work on Oahu, including not even meeting the union work-hour requirement necessary to qualify for benefits. My mentor has been in the industry for over 30 years and has never been disqualified for medical insurance before.

This downturn is not due to a lack of interest in filming in Hawai‘i, but rather the increasing trend of productions choosing alternative locations. Following my work on Lilo & Stitch, I was in discussions with a major production planning to shoot here, only for them to ultimately relocate to Atlanta. A film set in a tropical environment chose a soundstage in Atlanta over the natural beauty of Hawai‘i. Similarly, I have lost count of the number of times productions have opted for New Zealand instead of our islands.

This decline in production does not just affect me—it impacts a network of local workers and their families. For the first time many professionals are unable to put in enough hours to even qualify for health insurance through their union. This is a clear indicator that something must change. We need to take immediate action to incentivize productions to film in Hawai‘i, ensuring the survival of this vital industry and the livelihoods of those it supports.

I urge you to support legislation that strengthens film production incentives and fosters a thriving entertainment industry in Hawai‘i. Thank you for your time and consideration.



**SB-1641-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/17/2025 11:50:54 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify                   |
|--------------|--------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Kelsey Sugai | Individual   | Support            | Written Testimony<br>Only |

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Committee Members,

I am in strong support of this bill to further grow and support our local film industry. Keep our creative and talented entertainment workforce in Hawai'i!

Mahalo nui loa

**SB-1641-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 12:13:47 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify                |
|--------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Orion Tom    | Individual   | Support            | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Dear Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in support of this bill as I believe it will improve tax incentives and attract global productions to film in our State, making the production process more efficient. This would (in my opinion), eventually allow local artists an opportunity to engage in bigger roles through film productions as I believe everyone should be given a chance at opportunity toward furthering their passions and dreams. In our state, I see many people with stoic faces, going through life day by day dealing with their same old life issues and it seems like nothing can be done for them. I see the film industry as a platform that changes everyday as they have to film in different locations at times and film different scenes. The greatest thing about the film industry is that the film crew, the actors, and everyone associated with filming are working together to create something new and something for other people to enjoy. I don't know of any other platforms in Hawai'i trying to create something new for others to enjoy, considering that our State is corrupt. Not the most corrupt, but still is.

I respectfully ask the Senate to pass this bill for the sake of opportunity. Thank you for allowing me to testify.

**SB-1641-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 5:04:59 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

| Submitted By   | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify                   |
|----------------|--------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Kahiau Machado | Individual   | Support            | Written Testimony<br>Only |

Comments:

I support SB1641

**SB-1641-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 5:59:26 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

| Submitted By   | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify                |
|----------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Lee Washington | Individual   | Support            | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM SENATOR LYNN DECOITE, CHAIR SENATOR GLENN WAKAI, VICE CHAIR SB1641 Relating to the State of Hawaii Film Commission Conference Room 229 & Videoconference Submitted by Lee Washington.

Dear Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai, and Members of the Committee: On behalf of Lee Washington, I am testifying in support of Senate Bill 1641, Relating to the State of Hawaii Film Commission. SB1641 establishes the State of Hawaii Film Commission to strengthen and expand Hawaii's film and media industry. Hawaii has long been a sought-after filming location, but without a dedicated commission to coordinate efforts, streamline permitting, and enhance workforce development, the state risks losing opportunities to other regions. This bill creates a commission to develop a five-year strategic plan, improve tax incentives, attract global productions, and support local storytelling initiatives. Additionally, it ensures better coordination between state, county, and private entities, making the production process more efficient. Investing in Hawaii's film industry creates jobs, boosts the economy, and showcases our unique culture on a global stage. I urge the committee to pass this measure to solidify Hawaii's place as a premier destination for film and media production. I respectfully ask to pass Senate Bill 1641. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

**SB-1641-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 8:02:55 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

| Submitted By      | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify                |
|-------------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Margaret Pearlman | Individual   | Support            | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Aloha Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai, and the Members of the Committee,

I am in full support of SB1641.

As a Kanaka Mā'oli Indigenous Writer, Actor, Director and Producer, this Bill will support our Hawai'i Nei through economic growth, support our workforce, as well as develop future workforce for the industry to provide jobs to our members of our community so that they don't have to seek work outside of Hawai'i. We have lost out on too many productions, that now we find ourselves behind the eight ball. Hawai'i and its talent is too precious to ignore this fact. A film commission will provide the organization to ensure maximum effectiveness in carrying out logistical administrative duties in a fair and equitable manner so that Hawai'i can thrive and grow in this sector.

Mahalo nui loa for this opportunity,

Margaret Pearlman

**SB-1641-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 8:57:09 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify                |
|--------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| M. Carr      | Individual   | Support            | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Aloha,

I am writing in support of SB1641. The Hawai'i Film Industry is in desperate need of revitalization. Creating the film commission and restructuring the film office is a great first step. We are in desperate need of better tax incentives to remain competitive with other cities and to draw tv and film projects back to Hawai'i. The passage of this bill will hopefully allow us to bring back thousands of jobs not only within the film industry but the many other industries that benefit from the millions spent statewide by productions. This bill will help give structure and lay the ground work for a successful film office to support Hawai'i's film industry into the future.

**SB-1641-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 9:07:07 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

| Submitted By        | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify                |
|---------------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Steven Kekoa Shelby | Individual   | Support            | Written Testimony Only |

## Comments:

For too long, we have allowed other states and countries to tell our story. We are losing money on the homefront by allowing other states to be ahead of us with the Film incentive. Our economy and our people struggle to get our stories told, and our voice is heard. With tourism funds coming to our state, we can also tap into the funds of non-local actors and performers coming to our state, spending money in our communities and employing our local unions. This will strengthen our foothold and our footprint in the industry, as well as strengthen the homes in the community

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM  
SENATOR LYNN DECOITE, CHAIR  
SENATOR GLENN WAKAI, VICE CHAIR**

**SB1641  
Relating to the State of Hawaii Film Commission**

Thursday, February 6, 2025, at 1:15 PM  
Conference Room 229 & Videoconference

Submitted by **Your Organization Name**

Dear Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of **Your Organization Name**, I am testifying in support of Senate Bill 1641, Relating to the State of Hawaii Film Commission. SB1641 establishes the State of Hawaii Film Commission to strengthen and expand Hawaii's film and media industry.

Hawaii has long been a sought-after filming location, but without a dedicated commission to coordinate efforts, streamline permitting, and enhance workforce development, the state risks losing opportunities to other regions. This bill creates a commission to develop a five-year strategic plan, improve tax incentives, attract global productions, and support local storytelling initiatives. Additionally, it ensures better coordination between state, county, and private entities, making the production process more efficient.

Investing in Hawaii's film industry creates jobs, boosts the economy, and showcases our unique culture on a global stage. I urge the committee to pass this measure to solidify Hawaii's place as a premier destination for film and media production.

I respectfully ask to pass Senate Bill 1641. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



**SB-1641-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 9:22:28 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

| Submitted By    | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify                   |
|-----------------|--------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Cassie Fillhart | Individual   | Support            | Written Testimony<br>Only |

Comments:

I respectfully ask to pass Senate Bill 1641. Thanks you for the opportunity to testify.

Cassie Fillhart

**SB-1641-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 9:24:02 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify                   |
|--------------|--------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Taylor       | Individual   | Support            | Written Testimony<br>Only |

Comments:

Supporting the film industry and its workers, creating jobs, story telling, growing the community:)

**SB-1641-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 9:24:05 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify                |
|--------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Chloe Amos   | Individual   | Support            | Written Testimony Only |

## Comments:

I am a Hawai'i resident asking the legislature to support SB1641. I've been part of Hawai'i's film industry as an actor since I was twelve years old, and in adulthood I've had success getting cast in shows such as Magnum P.I. and Doogie Kamealoha. However, I have also considered leaving my home on O'ahu with my family to pursue acting in other cities with more opportunities. I believe anything that helps to grow the film industry in Hawai'i is beneficial for local actors and crew. SB1641 is also extremely important for its emphasis on fostering indigenous storytelling initiatives, and training and expanding the local talent pool. Thank you for your consideration and please support SB1641.

**SB-1641-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 9:32:41 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify                |
|--------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Truc Mai     | Individual   | Support            | Written Testimony Only |

## Comments:

I, Truc Mai, support Legislative Bill 1641 for Hawai'i's media and film industry. I support the commission's objectives, which include developing a five-year strategic plan, providing policy recommendations to enhance tax incentives, diversifying the state's film and media production industry, establishing partnerships with local and global media entities, streamlining permitting and production processes, and promoting Indigenous storytelling initiatives.

Passing this bill is important to me and many others working in the film community. In addition, Hawai'i is our home, and we need to work for our people to make money for ourselves, our families, and our community. This bill will boost Hawai'i's economy and bring stable jobs in the long run.

**LATE**

**SB-1641-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 10:42:49 AM  
Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

| Submitted By       | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify                   |
|--------------------|--------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Cheyenne Valentine | Individual   | Support            | Written Testimony<br>Only |

Comments:

I am in support of SB1641

**LATE**

**SB-1641-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 12:13:23 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify                   |
|--------------|--------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Cheryl Ho    | Individual   | Support            | Written Testimony<br>Only |

Comments:

I am in full support of this bill. As someone who depends on productions for income. This bill will support job creation, money coming into the state & more tourism allure. I believe it's a great return on investment.

**LATE**

**SB-1641-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 12:54:24 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

| Submitted By        | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify                |
|---------------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Shaun Skinner Wolfe | Individual   | Support            | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Please pass this bill. Many of us film industry workers in Hawai'i have been struggling for years to survive. The film industry employs so many residents in Hawai'i and brings in a massive amount of money, all while causing much less harm than other big economic drivers like tourism. If you want to help Hawai'i and it's residents, this is one fantastic way to do so. If not, we will continue to see some of our most skilled filmmakers and film crews leave the island to work elsewhere.

**LATE**

## Testimony in Support of SB1641

Aloha,

My name is Kimee Balmilero, and **I am writing in strong support of SB1641**, a bill that is crucial to the continued growth and sustainability of Hawai'i's film and television industry.

**As a local girl born and raised in Hawai'i, the opportunity to return home and build a career in this industry has been life-changing.** I have been fortunate to work as an actor in major productions filmed here, including my role as Medical Examiner Noelani Cunha on *Hawai'i Five-0* and *Magnum P.I.*, a recurring guest star on *Doogie Kameāloha, M.D.*, and a lead in the Hallmark movie *Two Tickets to Paradise*. Because of the work available in Hawai'i, I was able to purchase a home, start my own businesses, and, most importantly, stay close to my family—something that would not have been possible if I had to seek opportunities elsewhere.

**Beyond just actors, the film and television industry provides thousands of jobs for Hawai'i residents in a wide range of fields.** Productions employ local crew members, caterers, transportation services, set builders, costume designers, and many more. **The impact extends well beyond the set—when industry professionals like myself can live and work here, we reinvest in the local economy by supporting local restaurants and shopping at small businesses.** Additionally, **Hawai'i's presence in national and international productions brings invaluable exposure to local businesses and products, strengthening our state's economic and cultural reach.**

**The industry is not just about entertainment—it is a key economic driver that provides sustainable livelihoods, supports small businesses, and amplifies Hawai'i's unique stories on a global stage.** By supporting SB1641, you are investing in a future where Hawai'i remains a competitive and thriving hub for film and television production.

**I urge you to pass SB1641 and ensure that our local workforce, businesses, and communities continue to benefit from this vital industry.**

Mahalo for your time and consideration,



**Kimee J. Balmilero**

Kaneohe, HI

Castle H.S. c/o 1997



**LATE**

## **Testimony in Support of SB1641 SD1**

*Submitted by Adam Wong*

*Kūmau Productions*

*Date: February 18, 2025*

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Adam Wong and I am part of the local filmmaker community dedicated to telling authentic stories that reflect the diverse cultures and histories of Hawai‘i. I strongly support SB1641 SD1, which establishes the Hawai‘i State Film Office and the Hawai‘i State Film Commission to develop and promote the film industry in our state.

Hawai‘i is home to some of the richest cultural narratives in the world—stories that have been passed down through generations, rooted in our unique landscapes, languages, and traditions. However, independent local filmmakers face significant barriers in bringing these stories to life. We struggle with limited funding, lack of access to production facilities, and an industry that often prioritizes big-budget mainland productions over homegrown talent.

This bill represents a critical step in changing that dynamic. By establishing a dedicated film office and commission, SB1641 SD1 ensures that local storytellers receive the institutional support necessary to create films that truly represent Hawai‘i and its people. I commend the bill’s emphasis on workforce development, infrastructure expansion, and indigenous storytelling initiatives, all of which are essential to building a sustainable and thriving film industry for future generations.

## **Proposed Amendments**

### **1. Appropriation of \$500,000 per Year to Support Local Filmmakers**

While this bill provides a solid foundation, I urge the committee to amend SB1641 SD1 to include a direct appropriation of \$500,000 per year for the next two fiscal years to the Hawai‘i Film and Creative Industries Development Special Fund. This funding would be allocated specifically to support independent local filmmakers in developing, producing, and distributing culturally authentic films.

#### **Justification for the Amendment:**

- **Direct Investment in Local Talent** – A dedicated fund would empower local filmmakers to pursue projects without having to rely solely on external investors or mainland productions.
- **Cultural and Economic Benefits** – Supporting locally produced films ensures that our stories are told by those who understand them best, fostering cultural preservation and community pride while generating revenue for the state.
- **Equitable Industry Growth** – Large-scale productions bring jobs, but they often do not invest in the long-term sustainability of our local creative sector. By funding local filmmakers, we cultivate a homegrown industry that can thrive independently.

This funding will enable projects that reflect the diverse voices of Hawai‘i—including Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, Asian, and other underrepresented communities—ensuring that our film industry remains as vibrant and inclusive as the people who call these islands home.

## **2. Modification of the Hawai‘i State Film Commission Membership**

I propose an additional amendment to **replace the commission’s designated seat for a member with expertise in studio development and infrastructure with a member who shall be a representative of a community organization who shall have deep ties to Hawaii’s greater independent filmmaking community.**

### **Justification for the Amendment:**

- **Ensuring Representation of Local Creators** – The independent filmmaking and nonprofit film communities are the true incubators of local talent and cultural storytelling. Their voices must be prioritized in shaping film policy.
- **Balancing Economic and Cultural Priorities** – While infrastructure development is important, independent and nonprofit filmmakers provide critical perspectives on workforce needs, funding challenges, and cultural representation that would otherwise be underrepresented.
- **Enhancing Community Engagement** – By incorporating an additional community-based member, the commission can ensure that policies better reflect the needs of local creators rather than being overly influenced by large-scale commercial interests.

This change will allow the commission to be more inclusive of the independent and grassroots sectors that form the foundation of Hawai‘i’s authentic storytelling community.

## **Conclusion**

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of SB1641 SD1. I urge the committee to pass this bill with the proposed amendments to provide direct funding for local filmmakers and to ensure the commission reflects a broader range of perspectives within the local filmmaking community. These changes will help create a flourishing film industry that tells the true stories of Hawai‘i and its people.

Mahalo nui loa,  
Adam Wong  
adam@acwventures.com  
Kūmau Productions

**LATE**

## **Testimony in Support of SB1641 SD1**

*Submitted by Aaron and Jordan Kandell - Filmmakers and Writers Date: [2/18/25]*

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee,

We are Aaron and Jordan Kandell, born and raised on Oahu, working filmmakers, writers, and producers still proudly based in Hawaii. We strongly support SB1641 SD1.

As lifelong residents who have dedicated our careers to storytelling, we've witnessed firsthand both the incredible potential and the significant challenges facing our local film community. Through our work mentoring aspiring filmmakers at local schools, non-profit organizations, and creative collectives across the islands, we've seen the depth of talent and passion that exists here. However, we've also seen how many promising projects and voices never reach their full potential due to lack of resources and institutional support.

The stories of Hawaii are unique and powerful – shaped by the convergence of cultures, traditions, and histories that make our islands unlike anywhere else in the world. While our state has long served as a backdrop for mainland productions, we believe it's crucial to develop and empower local storytellers who can authentically capture the nuanced realities of life in Hawaii, from Native Hawaiian perspectives to the diverse immigrant experiences that have shaped our community.

This bill represents a vital step toward building a sustainable ecosystem for local filmmakers. Through our experience producing independent films and working with talented local creators, we've seen how even modest funding can make the difference between a story being told or remaining untold. The establishment of a dedicated film office and commission would provide the structural support needed to nurture the next generation of Hawaii's storytellers.

### **Proposed Amendments**

#### **1. Appropriation of \$500,000 per Year to Support Local Filmmakers**

While this bill provides an excellent foundation, we strongly urge the committee to amend SB1641 SD1 to include a direct appropriation of \$500,000 per year for the next two fiscal years to the Hawaii Film and Creative Industries Development Special Fund. As producers who work to secure financing for independent films, we can attest that this level of state support would be transformative for local creators.

#### **Justification for the Amendment:**

- **Catalyst for Local Production** -- Through our mentorship work, we've encountered numerous promising projects that only need modest seed funding to move forward. This appropriation would enable local filmmakers to develop their stories without having to compromise their vision or rely solely on mainland funding sources.

- **Community Investment** -- Supporting local productions creates a multiplier effect, as these projects typically hire local crew, support local businesses, and reinvest in our community's creative infrastructure. We've seen how even small-budget independent films can provide valuable training opportunities for emerging talent.
- **Cultural Authenticity** -- When local storytellers have the resources to tell their own stories, it ensures that our diverse cultural heritage is represented with the depth, nuance, and respect it deserves. This is particularly crucial for Native Hawaiian stories and perspectives that have historically been misrepresented by outside productions.

## **2. Modification of the Hawaii State Film Commission Membership**

Based on our experience working with various community organizations and independent filmmakers, we propose amending the commission's composition to replace the designated seat for studio development expertise with a representative from Hawaii's independent filmmaking community.

### **Justification for the Amendment:**

- **Grassroots Representation** -- The independent film community is where much of Hawaii's most innovative and culturally significant work originates. Their perspective is essential in shaping policies that will truly serve local creators.
- **Educational Connection** -- Through our work with educational programs and non-profits, we've seen how vital it is to have commission members who understand the pipeline from education to professional opportunities. This modification would ensure that workforce development initiatives align with community needs.
- **Balanced Growth** -- While infrastructure development matters, we believe prioritizing the voices of independent creators will lead to more sustainable and equitable industry growth that benefits the entire community.

## **In Conclusion**

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of SB1641 SD1. As filmmakers who have chosen to build our careers here in Hawaii while working to support other local creators, we believe these amendments are crucial to developing a film industry that truly serves our community. We urge the committee to pass this bill with the proposed changes, ensuring that Hawaii's unique stories can be told by the people who know them best.

Aaron and Jordan Kandell  
Twin Ink, Inc  
3210 Melemele Place  
Honolulu, HI 96822  
[twinink@gmail.com](mailto:twinink@gmail.com)  
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**LATE**

**SB-1641-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 4:02:37 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

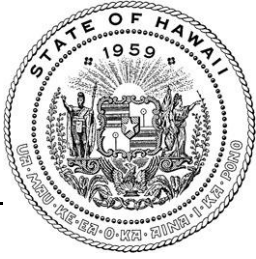
| Submitted By  | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify                |
|---------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Michael Gueso | Individual   | Oppose             | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Distinguished Chair Delacruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and esteemed Committee members,

My name is Michael Gueso, and I have been a Department Head in Hawai'i's film industry for the past 13 years, with a total of 20 years' experience. While I commend this effort to finally establish a film commission, I strongly oppose this bill, particularly given the inclusion of the State Film Office and its proposed amendments.

Although I have been a vocal proponent of a dedicated film commission since 2023, I am deeply concerned that the current Film Office's involvement will lead to a repetition of past failures and further exacerbate the decline of our film industry. Let us not lose sight of the original impetus for establishing a true film commission.



DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS,  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM  
KA 'OIHANA HO'OMOHALA PĀ'OIHANA, 'IMI WAIWAI  
A HO'OMĀKA'IKA'I

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE  
LT. GOVERNOR

JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA  
DIRECTOR

DANE K. WICKER  
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Telephone: (808) 586-2355  
Fax: (808) 586-2377

Statement of  
**JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA**  
Director

**LATE**

Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism  
before the

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS**

Wednesday, February 19, 2025

10:02 AM

State Capitol, Conference Room #211

In consideration of  
**SB1641, SD1**  
**RELATED TO THE STATE OF HAWAII' I FILM COMMISSION**

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki and members of the Committee. The Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT) **supports with amendments** SB1641, SD1 which seeks to establish a Hawai'i State Film Office in DBEDT for administrative purposes, and within it, a Hawai'i State Film Commission. SD1 further defines the composition and duties of each entity, requires amendments to Chapter 201, adding new sections to Part IX which defines the purposes, highlighting responsibilities including infrastructure development, investment from revenues, returns made from fees collected by the office for deposit into a special fund, and adds an appropriation.

DBEDT and its Creative Industries Division (CID) agrees with the importance of evolving our film industry to expand growth, implementing a short- and long-term strategic vision, with the aid of an industry led commission. We request language be inserted to clarify that the existing four staff in CID Film Industry Branch, aka Hawai'i Film Office, to include one pending FTE position in this year's budget request, be codified with required language to migrate to the attached agency as proposed.

While the department supports many aspects of the measure, we call to your attention the following areas which will further clarify current roles which remain in DBEDT/CID and the proposed Hawai'i State Film Office and the Hawai'i State Film Commission.

### **Proposed Amendments to SB1641 SD1:**

#### **Establish a Hawai'i State Film Industry Development Special Fund**

The department recommends establishing in statute a new Hawai'i State Film Industry Development Special Fund to ensure dedicated funding for the growth and sustainability of the state's film industry. This fund would align with the purpose outlined in Sections 1 and 2, ensuring continued investment in film production, workforce development, and infrastructure.

##### **Hawai'i State Film Industry Development Special Fund**

(a) There is established in the state treasury the Hawai'i State Film Industry Development Special Fund, into which shall be deposited:

1. Appropriations made by the legislature;
2. Donations and contributions made by private individuals or organizations;
3. Grants provided by governmental agencies or any other source;
4. All revenues, fees, and charges from the processing of the motion picture, digital media, and film production income tax credit pursuant to section 235-17; and
5. All revenues, fees, and income received by the department from its management of public facilities that support film production and workforce development, excluding the Hawai'i Film Studio.

(b) The fund shall be used by the department for:

1. Film Production Incentives and Development – Programs providing financial support and seed capital for motion picture, digital media, and television productions that contribute to the local economy and global visibility of Hawai'i;
2. Workforce Development – Initiatives that expand the skills and capabilities of Hawai'i's resident workforce in film production, digital media, and related technical fields;
3. Industry Promotion and Marketing – Efforts to attract film production, investment, and business opportunities in Hawai'i; and
4. Infrastructure and Facility Support – Repair, maintenance, and related costs for state-managed public facilities that directly support film industry workforce and business development.



### **Amendments to the Existing Creative Industries Development Special Fund**

To reflect the establishment of the Hawai'i State Film Industry Development Special Fund, the Hawai'i Film and Creative Industries Development Special Fund (HRS §201-113) should be amended to:

1. Retain funding and activities only for non-film and non-media sectors of the creative industries (e.g., music, fashion, digital design, performing arts, and other creative content sectors);
2. Remove revenue sources specifically related to film production tax credits and public facilities supporting film and media; and
3. Continue supporting workforce development, business incubation, and market expansion for creative industries outside of film and media.
4. Donations and contributions made by private individuals or organizations;

### **Strengthening the Authority and Investment Nexus of the Hawai'i State Film Office**

The following amendments are proposed to ensure clarity, alignment with existing statutes, and appropriate oversight regarding the Hawai'i State Film Office's authority and investment responsibilities:

1. Authority to Effectuate Rules Adoption – Amend Section 1, item (c), line 20 to include a reference to HRS 201-113, ensuring statutory consistency in the office's rulemaking authority related to film and creative industries development.
2. Clarification of Investment Authority and Policy Role – In Section 1, page 2, line 7, item (5), which authorizes the Hawai'i State Film Office to “serve as an assistant producer and invest in local productions to generate revenues for the state,” additional rulemaking language should be included to provide clarity on the scope and framework of such investments. While the ability to invest in local productions is valuable for industry growth, clear delineation is needed regarding the office's dual role in investment decisions and tax policy recommendations, particularly concerning HRS 235-17 (motion picture, digital media, and film production income tax credit). This clarification would reinforce transparency and prevent potential conflicts of interest in the administration of incentives and funding programs.

DBEDT remains committed to fostering innovation and economic diversification through newly proposed incentives in SB 1641, SD1. When layered with the current film incentive becomes a game changing opportunity to grow our local and indigenous film

industry while attracting production, validating the need for facilities to service both sectors of the film ecosystem.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

**Testimony in Support of SB1641 SD1**

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Christopher Makoto Yogi. As a writer and director born and raised in Hawai‘i, who has independently produced two feature films in the islands, with another Hawai‘i film in active development, I have intimate experience of both the high highs and the continuing struggles of making quality independent work here at home.

The highs are evident: Hawai‘i is home to some of the richest cultural narratives in the world—stories that have been passed down through generations, rooted in our unique and diverse landscapes, languages, and traditions. The workforce is top notch and passionate about local and homegrown storytelling. And I’ve personally found that audiences all around the world want to see films that tell our rich, lived-in experiences and histories.

But the struggles are enormous and get tougher by the year. While the talent is here, the infrastructure and systemic support for homegrown independent work is almost nonexistent. And with competition from around the globe ratcheting up, in the form of competitive tax rebates, incentives, and support infrastructure, I’ve found it more and more difficult to convince studios and financiers to fund the work that I am hoping to produce in the islands. If things don’t change, these films by numerous local filmmakers will never get made. This will be a huge opportunity loss – culturally, economically, jobs-wise.

This bill represents a critical step in changing that dynamic. I commend the bill’s emphasis on workforce development, infrastructure expansion, and indigenous storytelling initiatives, all of which are essential to building a sustainable and thriving film industry for future generations.

**Proposed Amendments****1. Appropriation of \$500,000 per Year to Support Local Filmmakers**

While this bill provides a solid foundation, I urge the committee to amend SB1641 SD1 to include a direct appropriation of \$500,000 per year for the next two fiscal years to the Hawai‘i Film and Creative Industries Development Special Fund. This funding would be allocated specifically to support independent local filmmakers in developing, producing, and distributing culturally authentic films.

**Justification for the Amendment:**

- **Direct Investment in Local Talent** – A dedicated fund would empower local filmmakers to pursue projects without having to rely solely on external investors or mainland productions.
- **Cultural and Economic Benefits** – Supporting locally produced films ensures that our stories are told by those who understand them best, fostering cultural preservation and community pride while generating revenue for the state.

- **Equitable Industry Growth** – Large-scale productions bring jobs, but they often do not invest in the long-term sustainability of our local creative sector. By funding local filmmakers, we cultivate a homegrown industry that can thrive independently.

This funding will enable projects that reflect the diverse voices of Hawai‘i—including Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, Asian, and other underrepresented communities—ensuring that our film industry remains as vibrant and inclusive as the people who call these islands home.

## **2. Modification of the Hawai‘i State Film Commission Membership**

I propose an additional amendment to **replace the commission’s designated seat for a member with expertise in studio development and infrastructure with a member who shall be a representative of a community organization who shall have deep ties to Hawaii’s greater independent filmmaking community.**

### **Justification for the Amendment:**

- **Ensuring Representation of Local Creators** – The independent filmmaking and nonprofit film communities are the true incubators of local talent and cultural storytelling. Their voices must be prioritized in shaping film policy.
- **Balancing Economic and Cultural Priorities** – While infrastructure development is important, independent and nonprofit filmmakers provide critical perspectives on workforce needs, funding challenges, and cultural representation that would otherwise be underrepresented.
- **Enhancing Community Engagement** – By incorporating an additional community-based member, the commission can ensure that policies better reflect the needs of local creators rather than being overly influenced by large-scale commercial interests.

This change will allow the commission to be more inclusive of the independent and grassroots sectors that form the foundation of Hawai‘i’s authentic storytelling community.

## **Conclusion**

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of SB1641 SD1. I urge the committee to pass this bill with the proposed amendments to provide direct funding for local filmmakers and to ensure the commission reflects a broader range of perspectives within the local filmmaking community. These changes will help create a flourishing film industry that tells the true stories of Hawai‘i and its people.

Mahalo nui loa,  
Christopher Makoto Yogi

**LATE**

**SB-1641-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 11:56:50 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

| Submitted By  | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify                   |
|---------------|--------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Jordan Brooks | Individual   | Support            | Written Testimony<br>Only |

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Jordan Brooks and I am a Native Hawaiian model and actor. I currently reside in Hawai'i and am writing in to submit my support for SB1641. I have worked in the television / media industry in the Hawai'i market in various roles for over 20 years. Most recently I have been trying to work with county and state representatives to increase tax incentives and infrastructure improvements to attract and retain productions. The landscape is extremely competitive and in my opinion Hawai'i has been left behind. There has been a mass exodus of productions; many of whom choose to film in other countries who offer generous tax breaks and larger studios/sound stages for example. I managed a local modeling and talent agency that struggled with the loss of productions and have since signed with a Los Angeles based company. I am their Hawai'i market Talent Agent and currently teach acting lessons and believe the television and film industry can be an enormous economic driver for the State Of Hawai'i. This is a opportunity to help diversify our economy and create high paying jobs for locals. I always say: There is a problem that needs fixing- so, how can I be a part of the solution?

Mahalo for reading my written testimony.

with kind regards,

Jordan Brooks

**LATE**

**SB-1641-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/19/2025 1:31:37 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2025 10:02:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify                |
|--------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Ty Sanga     | Individual   | Support            | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Ty Sanga, and I am a local filmmaker dedicated to telling authentic stories that reflect the diverse cultures and histories of Hawai‘i. I strongly support SB1641 SD1, which establishes the Hawai‘i State Film Office and the Hawai‘i State Film Commission to develop and promote the film industry in our state.

Hawai‘i is home to some of the richest cultural narratives in the world—stories that have been passed down through generations, rooted in our unique landscapes, languages, and traditions.

However, independent local filmmakers face significant barriers in bringing these stories to life. We struggle with limited funding, lack of access to production facilities, and an industry that often prioritizes big-budget mainland productions over homegrown talent.

This bill represents a critical step in changing that dynamic. By establishing a dedicated film office and commission, SB1641 SD1 ensures that local storytellers receive the institutional support necessary to create films that truly represent Hawai‘i and its people, fostering indigenous storytelling initiatives.

I commend the bill’s emphasis on workforce development, infrastructure expansion, and indigenous storytelling initiatives, all of which are essential to building a sustainable and thriving film industry for future generations.

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## Conclusion

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These changes will help create a flourishing film industry that tells the true stories of Hawai‘i and its people.