



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

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Statement of
GEORJA SKINNER
Administrator, Creative Industries Division
Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism
before the
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Tuesday, April 7, 2026
10:31 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 211

In consideration of
HB1576 HD1 SD1
RELATING TO FILMING

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and members of the Committee. The Creative Industries Division (CID) in the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT) supports Section 2 of HB1576 HD1 SD1, which incorporates language from the Administration's HB2269 measure to expedite the approval process for productions use of the Hawai'i Film Studio through amending Chapter 166 and respectfully offers comments on Section 1 which requires DBEDT and its Hawai'i Film Office to issue public notices for all state film permits, as well as productions registering or qualifying for the 235-17 HRS, the Hawai'i Motion Picture, Digital Media, Film Production Income Tax Credit within five days of either process, including emailing or mailing notices and posting on DBEDT HFO websites.

DBEDT recognizes the intent of Section 1 of this measure to increase transparency and community awareness related to film production activities across the state. We bring your attention to actions implemented by the department, CID and its Tax Credit Unit (TCU) as it relates to Section 1, for example:

- 1) Currently, notification emails to all entertainment industry labor unions are issued by the TCU team once a project has been registered and their documentation of the Start of Principal Photography (SOPP) Productions has been received. They must submit a formal notification letter on the filing entity's official letterhead to affirming advance notice, at least seven business days prior, of the start of principal photography for a film or media production in Hawai'i. TCU confirms receipt of required production information, including the production name, filing entity, island location, scheduled shoot dates, and the start and end dates the production will be in the state.
 - a. This is a requirement that applies to all productions with budgets exceeding \$1,000,000, and the filers must approve release of this information through acknowledging DBEDT's authority to notify applicable Hawai'i-based entertainment industry labor unions, including IATSE Local 665, Teamsters Local 996, SAG-AFTRA, and, if applicable, IBEW, of the project's production start date. Guilds will be added in, including Directors Guild of America (DGA), Writers Guild of America (WGA), Producers United and Producers Guild of America (PGA).
- 2) DBEDT/CID provides Annual Reports to the Legislature and has done so since the inception of the credit. The report compiles all estimated production direct spend into the state's economy, the aggregate data of those productions identified by project, and includes estimated spend, hiring data, workforce development for internships and cash contributions to public education institutions to grow film workers from Hawai'i in DOE and UH.
- 3) DBEDT/CID TCU also provides all granular data by spend, type of positions hired for above and below the line, and vendor spend for the annual Cost Benefit Report published by the Research and Economic Analysis Division (READ) in DBEDT.

Section 1 seeks to set notifications parameters for all film related permits under

201-14 HRS, including the multiple locations of standard permits, online open and accessible and is a layered process with inherent challenges. This is dependent on 1) when the department with jurisdiction of the permitting approves and designates conditions for each production, 2) will require approval of each production – large or small – to ok the notification to the public and posting and 3) is also weather dependent as dates, times and locations may change.

While we recognize the intent may be to provide information to the community-at-large in order to inform and foster positive relationships between the film industry, residents, and local stakeholders, this can inadvertently compromise production schedules and operations in general in CID and its film office.

Because it is not an industry best practice to provide public notice of film productions as part of the film permit application process, we are concerned the requirement as proposed could act more as a dis-incentive to attract new production business to Hawai'i.

The Office of the Attorney General has reviewed the proposed legislation and stated proposals could create potential privacy, confidentiality, and safety considerations, primarily depending on how “designated representative” is defined and the operational implications of publicly releasing detailed filming information long before productions are released in theatres, on television or streamed.

We all recognize the economic diversification the film industry brings to Hawai'i, and an anchor of Hawai'i's creative economy, and provides meaningful employment opportunities for local residents and vendors.

DBEDT looks forward to working collaboratively with our Legislature, sister agencies, industry partners, and community stakeholders to refine the measure in a way

that advances transparency goals while ensuring that implementation is practical, sustainable, and appropriately resourced.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.



IN OPPOSITION TO HB1576 SD1

Let's be direct about what this bill is and isn't. It isn't reform. It isn't accountability. It is a notification system for a giveaway. It is a way to let Hawaii's taxpayers know, politely and after the fact, that their money has been handed to a major entertainment corporation so that a movie or television show can be filmed here.

Hawaii's Motion Picture, Digital Media, and Film Production Income Tax Credit offers qualifying productions a refundable credit of up to 27 percent of their production costs. Refundable means that if a studio owes less in taxes than the credit is worth, the State writes them a check for the difference. It is a subsidy. It flows overwhelmingly to companies that have no particular loyalty to Hawaii, its workers, or its communities. These are companies that will pack up and leave the moment it's convenient.

HB1576 does not fix any of this. It asks DBEDT to post a notice on a website and send emails to subscribers. It tells the public the name of the company receiving their money. It does not say how much they received. It does not say what they promised in return. It does not say whether they delivered, or who is checking. That is not transparency.

The SD1 amendment makes things worse. It exempts public land dispositions for film studio use from Board of Land and Natural Resources approval. Public land belongs to every resident of this state. It can, under this bill, be set aside for a private and taxpayer-subsidized industry without going through standard oversight. The BLNR process exists precisely because public land deserves robust protections. Weakening it to streamline a corporate subsidy program is not something the Libertarian Party of Hawaii will support.

We urge this Committee to reject HB1576 SD1. We also urge a harder question: Should the film tax credit exist at all? Hawaii's residents deserve a legislature that works for them, not one that frivolously calls subsidized studios economic development.

For liberty,

Abbra Green | LPHI Secretary | LibertarianHawaii.com | (808)824-LPHI



State of Hawai'i
The Thirty-Third Legislature
Ka'aha Kenekoa
Committee on Ways and Means (WAM)

Tuesday, April 4, 2026
10:31 AM – Room 211, HI State Capitol

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 1576 HD1 SD1
RELATING TO FILMING

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

The Hawai'i Film Alliance (HFA) submits this testimony in **support of HB 1576 HD1 SD1**, provided it is amended to address critical safety and operational concerns for film productions in our islands.

While HFA supports the bills intent to foster community trust through transparency, the current language regarding the nature and timing of public notifications creates significant security risks. In the age of real-time social media, disclosing specific locations and direct crew contact information can lead to unauthorized crowds, safety hazards for talent, and disruptions that threaten a production's timeline and budget.

HFA respectfully requests the following amendments to protect production safety:

1. **Provide only company information, names and emails of individuals (Section 1(c)).** This allows the public to report concerns without compromising the safety of individuals.
2. **Generalize location disclosures.** Limit public notification to the general district or neighborhood and the anticipated dates of filming. This provides residents with the information they need to plan for traffic or noise while preventing the real-time social media tagging of specific and sensitive sets.
3. **Align notification with permit issuance (Section 1(b)).** Delay public notification until a film permit is officially issued. This ensures the public receives actionable information about confirmed activity rather than speculative data.

By focusing transparency on the community impact (traffic, noise) rather than production specifics (exact location, direct contacts), we can achieve a balance honoring the public's right to know while ensuring Hawai'i remains a safe and professional destination for global film production. Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony. **Please pass HB1576 HD1 SD1 with these protective amendments.**

HB-1576-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/5/2026 6:48:47 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/7/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
sandra DeCoite Chung	Testifying for Hawaii Teamsters 996	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I sandra DeCoite Chung Stand in full support of HB11576

HB-1576-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/6/2026 7:11:15 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/7/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kevin K. Holu	Testifying for Hawaii Teamsters 996	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

STRONG SUPPORT FOR HB176

HB-1576-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/6/2026 7:14:26 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/7/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jodie Holu	Testifying for Hawaii Teamsters 996	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

STRONG SUPPORT FOR HB1576

HB-1576-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/2/2026 5:09:39 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/7/2026 10:31:00 AM

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

Comments:

TESTIMONY REGARDING HB1576 SD1

RELATING TO FILMING

POSITION: Oppose

DATE: March 30, 2026

To the Honorable Chair and Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to HB1576 SD1. As a professional working within the Hawaii film industry, I have seen firsthand how production logistics and state bureaucracy intersect. While I understand the desire to streamline the industry, this bill creates dangerous shortcuts that undermine public trust and industry integrity.

My opposition is based on the following points:

1. Circumvention of Proper Land Procedure

Section 2 of this bill seeks to exempt "lands set aside for filming and film studio operation" from the prior approval of the Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR). Public lands belong to the people of Hawaii. Removing the BLNR's oversight for film-related dispositions is a move toward "special treatment" that we do not need. Every other industry must follow the proper legal channels to utilize state land; the film industry should be held to the same standard.

The film industry in Hawaii thrives when there is a level playing field. By bypassing traditional board approvals, this bill opens the door to favoritism and "back-room deals" regarding who gets access to state resources. We already see enough internal politics in this business; we do not need the State Legislature to codify a system where specific productions or studio operators can bypass public transparency.

2.. Misplaced Focus on Permits

The bill spends a significant amount of time on the minutiae of public notice for permits and tax credit registration. While transparency is fine, these administrative hurdles feel like a distraction

from the larger issue: the erosion of land use protections. To use a sports analogy, we are "talking about practice"—the small administrative details—while the "game"—the actual protection and management of Hawaii's physical land—is being compromised.

3.. Long-Term Industry Health

Genuine film industry growth comes from sustainable infrastructure and tax incentives that benefit the local workforce, not from exempting studios from land-use laws. If a film studio project is viable and beneficial to the community, it should be able to stand on its own merits and pass through the standard BLNR approval process.

Conclusion

I urge this committee to reconsider the exemptions found in Section 2. We should be focused on making Hawaii a competitive place for film through fair legislation, not by creating "express lanes" that ignore the proper procedures meant to protect our islands' resources.

Please vote No on HB1576 SD1.

Mahalo,

HB-1576-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/2/2026 8:04:22 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/7/2026 10:31:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair and members of the committee,

Hawaii Teamsters & Allied Workers Local Union 996 stands in full support of bill HB1576.

HB1576 has much stronger language with the word "SHALL" instead of "best efforts". There is more transparency and accountability in this bill. We ask this committee to please pass bill HB1576.

Mahalo Nui,

HB-1576-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/5/2026 5:20:19 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/7/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
fabienne lequertier	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members,

My name is Fabienne Lequertier , and I respectfully submit testimony in support of this measure.

This bill promotes transparency and public awareness by ensuring that information related to film production permits, agreements, and tax credit qualifications is made accessible to the public. Providing clear and timely notice strengthens accountability while allowing communities to stay informed and engaged.

At the same time, maintaining an efficient process for productions is essential to preserving Hawai‘i’s competitiveness and supporting local jobs. Improved communication, combined with streamlined procedures, will benefit both the industry and the public.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,
Fabienne Lequertier

Fandom of Magnum

HB-1576-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/5/2026 8:02:09 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/7/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joelle Hussey	Testifying for Hawaii Teamsters Local 996	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I fully support this bill.

Mahalo Nui,

Joelle F. P. Hussey

HB-1576-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/6/2026 12:55:19 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/7/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Felipe Anguiano	Testifying for Hawaii Teamsters Local 996	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Standing in full support of HB1576